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Interview: Catharine MacKinnon on Abortion and Misogyny

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We know that opposition to abortion was, for some on the right, a political strategy to manufacture an issue that would mobilize religious voters. What is the interrelationship between the use of abortion as a means to mobilize voters and a deeply embedded misogyny?

Abortion as an issue is available to mobilize some voters due to the misogyny it taps into, including by sexualizing women through attributing promiscuity and sexual irresponsibility as the reason abortion is needed. Abortion can also be supported by those who buy into the notion of "sex positivity" that in reality gives women no control over access to their intimate space, requiring abortion to eliminate its reproductive consequences for women, keeping them sexually available.

Over the last decade, we have witnessed the growth of new misogynistic movements, e.g., so-called "men's rights activists" and incels. Indeed, this has had far-ranging appeal, including in India. In what relation does this seemingly new misogyny relate to older forms of misogyny? Is this, in fact, something new?

This misogyny is not new at all, although the internet has enabled it to be newly widespread and effective. Incels, for example, resent women's sexual unavailability to them – that we make our own choices of sexual partners, them not included – and make it their defining cause, as if they have a pre-existing entitlement to sexual interactions with women simply by virtue of being men. Presuming this traditional male entitlement to sexual access, they are outraged, sometimes murderously, at being denied it. This sense of entitlement, which is not new, has metastasized with the exponential growth and spread of the pornography industry, and been made to seem all the more voluntarily acceded by women by the genre of online pornography that purports to be of women volunteers. Some may be; many, we know, are not. Along the same lines, "men's rights" activists have long pushed the "family values" that are, in essence, male dominance in the family.

I'm interested in your thoughts on placing the overturning of Roe in the context of a broader tradition of legal theory that has revolted against interpretations of the Fourteenth Amendment, the current manifestation of which goes at least as far back as Raoul Berger's work. Do you see the overturning of Roe as part of a broader ideological agenda that seeks to overturn a whole swath of rights that have been enshrined via the interpretation of substantive due process?

Without purporting expertise on Raoul Berger's federalism and anti-"interpretivism," it seems obvious that the rights that have been granted under substantive due process appear newly vulnerable. Myself, I have always disagreed with the moralism involved in the substantive due process approach, finding it vulnerable and often beside the point. Those extensions of rights could have been more solidly grounded as substantive equality, with a foundation in the Fourteenth Amendment's text as well as much of its original thrust. Of course, sex was not originally intended to be covered by the Fourteenth Amendment's requirement of equal protection of the laws. But a substantive approach to equality arguably was. My casebook, Sex Equality, has spelled this out since its publication in 2001, in the approach I have taught since 1977. It seems to me outrageous that due process, which Is fundamentally procedural, has been granted a substantive component (the content of which is morality, meaning endlessly debatable values), while equality, which was originally intended to be substantive, and has real substance, has effectively been reduced to a procedural abstraction.

Does thinking about about the loss of a woman's right to choose in the context of broader right-wing strategies and theories of constitutional interpretation distract from misogyny as a discrete, but nonetheless, foundational issue?

Not if that thinking is properly grounded in an argument for the abortion right as a substantive equality right, it doesn't. It makes the right-wing approach irrelevant.

You have long warned that the justification for Roe in a right to privacy rendered it vulnerable from the start. Has the Court's ruling exploited the weaknesses you recognized? If so, what are your current thoughts on alternative means for protecting abortion rights?

See above. The question is not whether "life" is involved, but why the pregnant woman/person should be the one to make this life and death decision. Sex inequality is the answer. The reason women must be able to protect our fertility is that, to date, we have not been allowed to protect our sexuality. Sexual coercion, which is endemic under gender inequality, is gender-based, resulting in the vast quantity of abortions that are needed, because sexual intercourse with men occurs under conditions that women are not permitted to control.

Many scholars have tracked the right's long-term strategy of cultivating generations of lawyers to combat, not just Roe, but a host of progressive reforms. To what extent was the success of the right a product of an unjustified complacency, even as we knew the conservative legal movement was gaining ground?

It was more than complacency. The white liberals have prevented any argument except theirs from being made on this subjet. They silence any substantive arguments on the ground that if we use substance, we open the door to the other side's substance. Well guess what. These cases (and many others as well) have been decided on substance all along, previously covert. We've spent our time demystifying that, exposing their substance as the real driver behind their rulings. Now the right's substance is out in the open; their position of hegemony means they can afford it to be. The question is whether anyone will ever argue the substance of our

side, if by now they even know what it is, having been disabled all this time, and excluded from legal teaching except, say, in my courses.

How much of Dobbs is a product of a resistance to bolder feminist thinking of the kind that you have encouraged? Why has that resistance been so entrenched?

Honestly, I don't think the Dobbs opinion is a product of resistance to feminist thinking so much as that any such thinking is irrelevant to the Dobbs majority. Women do not matter to them because we do not matter to power.

Some immediate responses to the Court's decision have ranged from focusing on winning Senate seats for Democrats to bringing cases on the basis of religious freedom. What should be the short-term strategy for winning back women's access to abortions? What is the long-term strategy for protecting them?

Some of the current strategies using state law, including state ERAs, should make substantive sex equality arguments along with anything else that might win. Long-term, we need the federal ERA for this and many other reasons. ERA is actually now part of the Constitution, having met all the constitutional requirements, although that recognition will undoubtedly be contested in courts and needs to be established.

Already in the 1980s, deep rifts within feminism became visible. In some scholarly circles, feminism became grounded in theories that owed more to literary analysis than political or legal analyses. How might this shift in the theoretical groundings of feminism have contributed to a loss of focus on practical political concerns?

I think the real problem has been the failure to address sexual abuse in any meaningful way due to the continued hegemony of what is euphemistically called "sex positive" politics, which actually cedes power to define and use female and feminine people sexually by anyone who has more power than we do. The current version of the rift within feminism involves trans politics, in which a biological essentialism is substituted by trans-negative feminists for the long-recognized social basis of the dominance of masculinity. Some attempt to attribute this to the literary analysis to which you refer. In fact, it seems instead that many who have long done good feminist work never took in the clear recognition with which contemporary feminism began that biology is not destiny: sex is equal but gender is unequal. Women's problem is not our sex but gender socially defining it as inferior, and masculinity as superior. This was not a literary theory but a political one, and long preceded postmodernism's simultaneous theft and denial of its politics. Once the social foundation of women's subordination Is grasped, trans women – who, for instance, are routinely sexually abused as women — are women and no rift is possible.

At the level of popular culture, feminism has lost much of the stigma that its opponents tried to brand it with. Given the real consequences of Dobbs, what, if any, were the practical political gains of the popularization of feminism? Was this a feminism without any real content? If so, how can we correct this situation?

The #MeToo movement, in which women in the millions went public with their sexual abuse, had real content. It built on the laws against sexual harassment and the resistance to workplace and campus sexual violation that preceded it. The consequences are ongoing, reverberating.

Introduction to Martin Heidegger's "The German Student as Worker" and "The German University"*

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> Under the Third Reich, the true meaning of the pseudo-revolutionary concept of *Arbeit* was best demonstrated by Heidegger. Taking his cue from Ernst Jünger, Heidegger exalted work "existentially." He demanded that his students surrender their academic insularity for the more demanding and risky life of *Arbeitsdienst* or "labor service." Emblematic of these developments was the unspeakable motto that greeted prisoners as they entered the *Arbeits-* and *Todeslager* at Auschwitz: "Arbeit Macht Frei."
>
> Frank Trommler, „The Nationalization of *Arbeit*"

I

The publication of Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* has provoked a wide-ranging reassessment of his philosophy as well as a re-examination of the philosophical motivations that catalyzed his support for National Socialism during the early 1930s. The *Notebooks* reveal that Heidegger attributed to National Socialism a pivotal ontological-historical role in the transition from the "Greek beginning" to "another beginning" (*anderer Anfang*). In his eyes, National Socialism prefigured the overcoming (*Überwindung*) of "European nihilism" as diagnosed by Nietzsche, Spengler, and other *Zivilisationskritiker*. This accounts for Heidegger's encomium, in his 1936 Schelling lectures, to Europe's reigning fascist dictators, Hitler and Mussolini, for having "*introduced a countermovement to nihilism*." [i]

Heidegger consistently imputed unique eschatological significance to what he termed the "metaphysics of German Dasein." [ii] As he declaimed in the *Black Notebooks* circa 1933: "*Only someone who is German* [*der Deutsche*] is *capable of poetically articulating Being in an originary way*" – an avowal which confirms that Heidegger articulated his commitment to the ideology of "German exceptionalism" in *ontological-historical terms*. [iii] Heidegger reiterated this view toward the end of the 1930s, maintaining that, *"The anticipatory and essential moment of decision concerning the essence of history is reserved to the Germans."* [iv]

With the publication of Heidegger's correspondence with his brother, Fritz, it became clear that Heidegger's commitment to National Socialism dated not from 1933, but from 1931. Heidegger's letter to Fritz of 13 December 1931 attests that, so enamored was Heidegger with *Mein Kampf* that he sent a copy of the "Hitler book" to Fritz as a Christmas gift. The missive to Fritz clarifies that Heidegger's "enlistment" for National Socialism was, in no small

measure, motivated by his fascination with Hitler's charisma. Toward the end of the letter, Heidegger's reflections on contemporary politics devolved into a panegyric to the Führer's spellbinding leadership qualities:

No one who is insightful will dispute the fact that, whereas often the rest of us remain lost in the dark, this is a man who is possessed of a sure and remarkable political instinct. In the years to come, many other forces will fuse with the National Socialist movement. It is no longer a question of petty party politics. *Instead, what is at stake is the redemption or destruction [Rettung oder Untergang] of Europe and Western Culture*. Whoever fails to grasp this fact today will succumb to the gathering chaos. Reflection on such matters does not stand in opposition to the peace of the Christmas season. Instead, *it leads us directly to the essence and mission of the Germans* – that is, to the 'origin' of this wonderful celebration. [v]

Three years later, in "The German University" (1934), Heidegger restated his view of Hitler as a contemporary *roi thaumaturge*, claiming that, "The essence of the National Socialist Revolution derived from Adolf Hitler's elevation and implementation of the new Spirit of *Gemeinschaft* as the determinant power of the new order of the *Volk*." [302]

The December 1931 letter to Fritz is significant, since it demonstrates that, for Heidegger, the stakes of National Socialism were not merely "political" in the narrow sense. Instead, they were *metaphysical*, insofar as they concerned "*the redemption . . . of European and Western Culture*."

II

The two Heidegger texts that follow – neither of which, heretofore, has been available in English – are indispensable for clarifying the philosophical and ideological bases of Heidegger's engagement for National Socialism.

The first text, "The German Student as Worker," was presented by Heidegger as a radio talk on 25 November 1933. Although Heidegger delivered the address in Munich, it was simultaneously broadcast on six regional stations: Frankfurt, Freiburg, Kassel, Trier, Cologne, and Stuttgart – a circumstantial aspect that attests to its importance. At the time, Heidegger was engaged in a struggle for the philosophical leadership of the Nazi movement; in the words of Otto Pöggeler, he was seeking "to lead the leader" (*den Führer führen*). [vi] Apart from Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede*, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," "The German Student as Worker" contains Heidegger's most detailed and thoroughgoing philosophical justification of National Socialism as a movement that portended the "total transformation of German Dasein."

"The German Student as Worker" reflects the immense impact that Ernst Jünger's theories of "Total Mobilization" (1930) and *The Worker* (*Der Arbeiter*: *Gestalt und Herrschaft*; 1932) had on Heidegger's political thinking at this point.[vii] *In Zu Ernst Jünger* (GA 90), Heidegger

commented on Jünger's importance for his understanding of contemporary politics as follows: "Ernst Jünger was the only figure to produce an interpretation of World War I that grasped the war's military essence [*seinem kriegerischen Wesen*] . . . Jünger's account is *unequalled* in the way that it grasps the *metaphysical precept* that defines this age . . . : *Nietzsche's 'Will to Power.'* Jünger replaces . . . Nietzsche's principle with a term that is more adequate to our century, one that stems from the tradition of German metaphysics since Leibniz: *'Arbeit.'*" [viii]

During his rectorship, Heidegger repeatedly addressed the ontological value of "work" or "Arbeit": in "Labor Service and the University" (14 June 1933), "The Call to Labor Service" (23 January 1934), and other texts. [ix] In "The Self-Assertion of the German University," Heidegger stressed the importance of "Labor Service" (*Arbeitsdienst*), in addition to "Military Service" (*Wehrdienst*) and "Knowledge Service" (*Wissensdienst*), as the central pillars of his planned university reforms: as part of his program to reestablish, as he put it, "the spiritual world of the *Volk* [through] . . . *forces that are rooted in the soil and blood of the Volk* [*erd- und bluthäftigen Kräfte*]." To reconceive "the spiritual world of the *Volk*" in this manner would allow Germany to "overcome" (*überwinden*) the idea of "spirit" as a free-floating "cultural superstructure" which predominated under liberalism. [x]

For Heidegger, the ontological significance of "Arbeit" transcended "politics" in the customary and narrow sense. To judge by Heidegger's treatment of "Arbeit" in *Logic as a Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (1933–34), he was at pains to re-conceptualize "Arbeit" as an expression of "authenticity" (*Eigentlichkeit*). Heidegger viewed "Arbeit" as being on a par with other the "existentials" of *Being and Time*: "formal indications" such as "Care" (*Sorge*), "Decisiveness" (*Entschlossenheit*), and Historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*). Heidegger's reassessment of "Arbeit" as a modality of "Being-ready-to-hand" (*Zuhandenheit*) signified a rethinking of his seminal discussion of "tools" (*Werkzeuge*) and "equipment" (*Zeuge*) in *Being and Time*, Division I.

Additional evidence suggests that Heidegger, under the influence of the Third Reich's *Arbeitsideologie*, viewed "Arbeit" as an autonomous mode of ontological "unconcealment" (*Unverborgenheit*) whereby the "Being of beings" is revealed. Thus, in *Logic as a Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, Heidegger exalted *Arbeit* "existentially" as a capacity that "*transports Dasein into the openness of what is*." As Heidegger explained: "*Arbeit = the Present* [*dieGegenwart*]. The present is not the 'Now' [*das Jetztige*]; rather, it is the Present insofar as it transposes our Being into *the work-related emancipation of beings* [*werkgerechte Befreiung des Seiendes*]. As someone who works [*Arbeitender*], man is transported into the openness of what is. This Being-transported toward things belongs to the essence of our Being." [xi]

National Socialism's "ideology of work" – the initials NSDAP stood for the National Socialist German *Workers*' Party – had a profound influence on Heidegger. It is well known that, in the aftermath of the November Revolution (1918), which brought World War I to an end and precipitated the collapse of the Kaiserreich, the German Right viewed the challenge of winning the working class over to the cause of German nationalism as a matter of extreme political

urgency. In this respect, Spengler's political tract, *Prussianism and Socialism* (1919) – a pendant to *The Decline of the West* (1918) that celebrated the merits of "German Socialism" as opposed to Marxian "international socialism" – established an important precedent. Following the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, the Third Reich's *Arbeitsideologie* escalated into full gear. Within the first few months of the regime, the Social Democratic trade unions were crushed and the *Reichsarbeitsfront* (RAF) was established to indoctrinate German workers with the Nazi credo. *Reichsarbeitsdienst*(national labor service), *Arbeitslager* (labor camps), and *Schönheit der Arbeit* (Beauty of Labor) were set in motion to convince the German working class that the Nazi dictatorship had its best interests foremost in mind – a claim that, needless to say, was little more than propaganda.

Following the important precedents established by Spengler and Jünger, Heidegger perceived Nazism, first and foremost, as an *Arbeitswelt* and an *Arbeitergesellschaft*. His understanding of National Socialism as a "totally mobilized" *Arbeitersstaat* represents a crucial thematic link between "The German Student as Worker" and "The German University."

Heidegger's assertion in "The German University" that "German socialism demands *hierarchy*, unconditional *service*, and the irreproachable honor of *Arbeit*" coalesced with Spengler's definition of socialism in *Prussianism and Socialism* in terms of the Prussian values of "duty" (*Pflicht*), "authority" (*Herrschaft*), and a "readiness for struggle" (*Kampfbereitschaft*). [xii] In keeping with Jünger's claims in *Der Arbeiter*, Heidegger regarded the universalization of the *Arbeiter* "Gestalt" as an invaluable "metaphysical" blessing: at a stroke, the National Socialist *Arbeitergesellschaft* had eliminated the lacerations and divisions of political liberalism; thereby, it paved the way for a unified and militarized *Volksgemeinschaft*: a renascent "national community" that was united in *Arbeit* and *Kampf*. (Nazi *Arbeitsideologie* – in what seemed to be a tacit nod to Jünger's thesis in *Der Arbeiter* – frequently referred to "workers" as *Soldaten der Arbeit*, or "soldiers of labor.") As Heidegger commented in "The German University": "On what basis does the *Volk* attain its true composition and unity? Only insofar as the actions and reactions of every individual, group, and social stratum are conceived as *Arbeit*. Thanks to the new spirit of *Gemeinschaft, Arbeit*, for the first time, attains its *authentic meaning*. 'Der Arbeiter' is not, as Marxism would have it, a simple object of exploitation … whose salvation lies in class struggle. *Arbeit* is neither a commodity, nor does it merely serve to produce goods for others." [xiii]

Heidegger insisted that, in contrast to Marxism's "degraded" understanding of the worker as an "object of exploitation" and capitalism's base utilitarian approach to work, National Socialism endowed *Arbeit* with a "spiritual" meaning. Hence, Heidegger held that with the advent of the Third Reich, *Arbeit* had, for the first time, become "something spiritual" (*etwas Geistiges*.) Thereby, Heidegger acknowledged another key component of Nazi *Arbeitsideologie*: its exaltation of the "nobility of work" (*Edel der Arbeit*). [xiv]

III

Heidegger presented “The German University” to a summer course for foreign students that was held at the University of Freiburg on 15 and 16 August 1934, some three months after he resigned as rector. Although the text was written with a specific occasion in mind, it occupies a unique niche in Heidegger’s oeuvre.

In “The German University” Heidegger presented a succinct interpretation of the course of German history from the Wars of Liberation (1812–13) to the Nazi seizure of power. Although the German university’s “spiritual mission” had been formulated by Wilhelm von Humboldt in conjunction with the founding of the University of Berlin in 1810, Heidegger maintained that, until recently, that mission remained woefully unfulfilled. Heidegger disparaged the course of German historical development during the nineteenth century as an age in which “technics,” materialism, specialization, and the fragmentation of the *Volk* into warring “classes” and “parties” predominated. At the same time, he insisted that, despite this condition of acute disunity and “inner disintegration” (*innerer Verfall*), the redemptive promise of “secret Germany” (*geheimes Deutschland*) consistently shone through.

In Heidegger’s chronology, the First World War signified a major turning point in Germany’s spiritual and historical development. Although the German defeat of 1918 represented a low point of national self-abasement, Heidegger, unambiguously alluding to Hitler, claimed that, out of the ashes of catastrophe, there miraculously emerged a man of providence: a “Führer,” who reawakened the *Volk*’s “existential Will” (*Daseinswille*) and redirected it toward its historical “calling” (*Bestimmung*). As Heidegger explained, “The real preparation for the National Socialist Revolution began, unwittingly, during the [First] World War. At the Front, there emerged an entirely new experience: an entirely new idea of *Gemeinschaft*. The new Spirit of the Front bore within itself the Will to become, in the years that followed, the *defining power of the Volk’s Dasein*.”

Heidegger interpreted the *Fronterlebnis*, as did many radical nationalists at the time, as a prefiguration of the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft*. In the “War Memorial” address that Heidegger delivered a few months earlier in May 1934, he took this argument a step further by insinuating that Germany’s two million war dead, “whose tombs encircle the Reich and German-Österreich like a mysterious [*geheimnisvoller*] wreath,” had risen from their graves to make common cause the “National Awakening” (*Nationaler Aufbruch*) of 1933. On these grounds, Heidegger insisted, “It is not we who . . .summon the memory of our dead through remembrance. Instead, *it is the dead themselves who summon us toward decision and put us to the test*.” [xv]

Heidegger reassured his audience that the spiritual liaison between the *Frontgeneration* and the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* portended neither the advent of “militarism” nor the preparation for a “new war.” Instead, the “Front*geist*” (sic) signified “the *spiritual conquest* and *creative transformation of war*.” Whereas other nations remained hopelessly mired in the technological entrapments of modern warfare, the German approach to war

was *spiritual*, insofar as it was conducted in the name of the *Volk's* exalted "mission" and "destiny."

Heidegger's prodigious efforts to "spiritualize" the *Kriegerlebnis* reflected the German philosophy guild's attempt, twenty years earlier, to exalt the war as a "spiritual struggle," thereby refuting the charge leveled by Germany's opponents that German "war enthusiasm" (*Kriegsbegeisterung*) was merely the logical culmination of the spirit of "Prussian militarism." With the outbreak of war, renowned German philosophers such as Max Scheler, Rudolph Eucken, and Paul Natorp rose to the occasion, claiming that the war was being waged on behalf of the higher precepts of "Kultur" and "deutsche Innerlichkeit," in opposition to the instrumentalist–utilitarian mindset that was characteristic of Anglo-Saxon *Zivilisation*. Thus, in *The Genius of War and the German War* (1915), Scheler maintained that Germany was fighting the war in order to emancipate Europe from "alien, neo-capitalist forms of life" that had been unleashed by the Anglo-Saxon powers. [xvi]Similarly, in "Der Tag des Deutschen" (1915), the Marburg neo-Kantian Paul Natorp argued that, "[As Germans,], we feel ourselves to be warriors of God against a 'world of devils': as those whose appointed task it is to fulfill the sublime prophecies of humanity." [xvii]

Following the lead of Scheler and Natorp, German mandarins insisted that Germany's war effort reflected the attributes of "German national character" (*die deutsche Art*). In support of these claims, leading German philosophers cultivated a "Deutschland Metaphysik" – a "sacralization" of German spiritual and historical traditions – in their quest to ennoble the Second Empire's war aims, and thereby, to spread the gospel of "German exceptionalism."

Heidegger's own *Deutschtümelei* – his boundless metaphysical enthusiasm for "things German" – reflected the "Deutschland Metaphysik" that was contrived during the Great War by influential predecessors such as Scheler, Natorp, Werner Sombart, and Ernst Troeltsch. Thereby, his attribution of a salvific, eschatological "mission" to "secret Germany" coalesced with the paradigm of "metaphysical nationalism," whose origins may be traced to Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* (1808).[xviii] As Fichte cautioned his fellow Germans at the time: "Should the German not assume world government through philosophy, the Turks, the Negroes, the North American tribes will finally take it over and put an end to the present civilization." [xix] "If you go under, all humanity goes under with you, without hope for any future restoration." [xx]

Heidegger's assertion in the *Black Notebooks* that, "The essence of the German calling [*Berufung des Deutschen*] is not merely something *conditional*. . . It is *unconditional*, insofar as, through the Germans, *the essence of Being itself becomes an object of struggle*" was entirely consonant with this tradition of metaphysically imbued German national chauvinism. [xxi] His cynical attempt, in the previously cited December 1931 letter to Fritz, to reconcile the brutality of National Socialism with "the peace of the Christmas season" exemplified the distinctive amalgam of "barbarism and civilization" that, in so many respects, defined the essence of Nazi rule. [xxii]

One of the central problems of Heidegger's metaphysical glorification of "German exceptionalism" – an orientation that was based on Heidegger's conviction that *Deutschtum* possessed privileged access to the "sendings of Being" (*Schickungen des Seins*) – was that it denigrated other *Völker*, *ex hypothesi*, as *ontologically inferior*. Hence, Heidegger's reprehensible claim in *Logic as a Question Concerning the Essence of Language* that, "Although Negroes [*Neger*] are men, *they have no history*." [xxiii] Similarly, in *Nature, History, and State* (1934), Heidegger proposed that, "The nature of *German space* is revealed in a distinctly different manner to a Slavic *Volk* than it is to us. *In the case of Semitic nomads, it will perhaps never be revealed at all*." [xxiv] It was but a short step from Heidegger's celebration of the existential uniqueness of "*deutsches Raum*" to his racial condemnation of "Negroes," "Slavs," and "Jews," whose cognitive incapacities were, according to Heidegger, the mark of a more deep-seated, ontological inferiority.

Heidegger's repeated indictment of other peoples as "rootless" (*bodenlos*), "worldless" (*weltlos*), and "unhistorical" (*geschichtslos*) was not merely a regrettable lapsus or "one-off." Instead, they went to the very heart of Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte* itself, which, as the *Black Notebooks* attest, was predicated on a doctrine of *Germanmetaphysical superiority*. To wit, Heidegger's assertion, circa 1940, that*"The anticipatory and essential moment of decision [Entscheidung] concerning the essence of history is reserved to the Germans."* [xxv] Heidegger's exaltation of *Germanentum* qua *Herrenrasse* was ontologically-historically conditioned. True to the ideology of German exceptionalism, he held that the Germans displayed an inborn, existential capacity for ontological insight that had been denied to other peoples. As he argued in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, the Germans' status as the "most metaphysical *Volk*" (*das metaphysische Volk*) corresponded to Germany's *Mittellage*, its geopolitical situatedness in the European "middle." [xxvi]

*We would like to express our immense gratitude to the late Hermann Heidegger for granting permission to translate the two texts that follow, "The German Student as Worker" (1933) and "The German University" (1934) into English.

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Notes

[i] Heidegger, *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, GA 42

(Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995), 40-41.

[ii] *„Mein liebes Seelchen*!“ *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seiner Frau Elfride*, 1915-1970, Gertrud Heidegger, ed. (Munich: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 116.

[iii] Heidegger, *Überlegungen* II-VI, GA 94, 27. In *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland*: *Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1974), Hermann Lübbe describes the emergence of a dogmatic “Deutschland Metaphysik” as an integral component of the “Ideas of 1914.” As the epitome of this *mentalité*, Lübbe cites Marburg neo-Kantian Paul Natorp’s (1854 – 1924) dictum: “The German aims to conquer the world, not for his own sake, but instead for that of humanity; not in order, thereby, *to gain something*, but instead *as an act of generosity*” (194). Lübbe traces the development of this “Deutschland Metaphysik” back to J. G. Fichte’s *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807-08). According to Lübbe, Fichte, by elevating “German thinking, German philosophy, and German science” to the status of a metaphysical *summun bonum*, endowed “what was merely factual with the character of necessity.” Hence, Fichte’s demarche is only “comprehensible as the metaphysical doubling of what is merely factual, thereby transforming it into an inner essence” (196 – 97).

[iv] Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII-XV,* GA 96, 235; emphasis added.

[v] *Heidegger und der Antisemitismus*: *Positionen in Widerstreit. Mit Briefen von Martin und Fritz Heidegger*, W. Homolka and A. Heidegger, eds. (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 21-22.

[vi] See Pöggeler, “Den Führer führen: Heidegger und kein Ende,“ *Philosophische Rundschau* 32 (1985), 26–67.

[vii] Jünger, “Total Mobilization,” in *The Heidegger Controversy*: *A Critical Reader*, Richard Wolin, ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 119–139. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter: Gestalt und Herrschaft* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982).

[viii] Heidegger *Zu Ernst Jünger*, GA 90 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2001), 226-27.

[ix] Heidegger, „Labor Service and the University” and “The Call to Labor Service,” in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, 42-43 and 53-55; “Der deutsche Student als Arbeiter,” in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000), 198-208.

[x] Heidegger, “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” in *The Heidegger Controversy*: *A Critical Reader*, 33-34.

[xi] Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1998), 153.

[xii] Heidegger, „25 Jahre nach unserem Abiturium,“ *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16, 281-82.

[xiii] Heidegger, „Die deutsche Universität,“ *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, 302-03.

[xiv] For an excellent discussion of the “nobility of work,” see Joan Campbell, *Joy in Work, German Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989): 327-28.

[xv] Heidegger, „25 Jahre nach unserem Abiturium,“ 280.

[xvi] Scheler, *Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher,1915), 74.

[xvii] Natorp, *Der Tag des Deutschen: Vier Kriegsaufsätze* (Hagen: Otto Rippel, 1915), 55. Natorp (1854-1924) was instrumental in bringing Heidegger from Freiburg to Marburg in 1923. Also see Hermann Lübbe, „Die philosophischen Ideen von 1914,“ *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte*, 171-235. See also, Nils Bruhn, *Vom Kulturkritiker zum „Kulturkrieger“: Paul Natorps Weg in den „Krieg der Geister,“* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007).

[xviii] On this lineage or vector, see the important study by Kurt Flasch, *Die geistige Mobilmachung: die deutschen Intellektuellen und der erste Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Alexander Fest, 2000).

[xix] Fichte, *Nachgelassene Werke* III (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1962), 265.

[xx] Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, Gregory Moore, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 48, 195.

[xxi] Heidegger, *Überlegungen* VI-XI, GA 95, 372.

[xxii] See Ulrich Sieg, *Geist und Gewalt: Deutsche Philosophen zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Hanser, 2013). Also see Ernst Troeltsch’s remarks in “Naturrecht und Humanität in der Weltpolitik” (1922): “The political thought of Germany is marked by a curious dualism that cannot help but strike every outside observer. On the one hand, you will see in abundance remnants of romanticism and lofty Idealism. On the other hand, you will see a realism that verges on cynicism and utter indifference to all morality and ideals. But, above all, what you see is . . . an astonishing combination of these two elements: an effort to *brutalize romanticism* and to *romanticize cynicism*.”

[xxiii] Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 81.

[xxiv] Heidegger, „Über das Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte, und Staat,” *Heidegger-Jahrbuch* 4 (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2009), 82.

[xxv] Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII-XV,* GA 96, 235; emphasis added.

[xxvi] Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40 (Frankfurt: Klostermann,1983), 41.

The German Student as Worker: Matriculation Ceremony Speech November 25th, 1933

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

Translated by Christian Struck, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University

German students and teachers!

Dear guests!

Matriculation is the act by which students join the ranks of the academic community of the university. Thereby, the student becomes an "academic citizen." He* acquires *rights*, including the following: to enroll in lectures, after payment of the mandatory fees, and to make use of the departments and clinical institutions. He assumes *duties*, including the following: to attend, if not to enroll in a minimum of lectures; to be in residence, to follow the house rules, and so forth.

The rights and duties of a student, as well as the totality of a student's *Dasein*, emanate from the prevailing objectives on the part of the university and its relation to the State. The task of the university is academic instruction that is grounded in scholarly research, which, in turn, shapes the academic qualifications for free and public [staatlichen] 'higher' vocations. The university's relationship to the State is limited by its quality of being a public body. *Wilhelm von Humboldt* formulated the standard interpretation of this relationship between university and state.

In preparation for the founding of the University of Berlin—the model nineteenth-century university —*Wilhelm von Humboldt*, then director of the Prussian education system, wrote an essay on "The Internal and External Organization of the Higher Scientific Institutions in Berlin" (1810). There, one reads the following: "It [the State] must thus always remain conscious that it […] is always an impediment as soon as it interferes [in matters of the university], that the matter itself would proceed infinitely better without it […]".[1]

On the other hand, according to Humboldt, the State has the "*duty*" to "procure" the means for the "treatment of science."[2]

Thus, the *Dasein* of the German student is defined through the "domains" of science and State. And from both, matriculation receives its meaning and its form.

But then how! if the *State* is in total upheaval? How then! if science transforms itself root and branch? And how! if both are produced by the relentless drive of a new German Reality? In that case, the very *Being* of the German student will change. Then, matriculation also acquires a new meaning.

Precisely this act—if we *consciously* perform it differently—forces us to ask: *Who is this—the German student in the new German reality?*

For us this question is so essential that its unfolding must turn into a celebration. With this question, the German student embarks to a new, if unbloody act of self-sacrifice, so that, henceforth, we will turn this celebration into reality under the sign of *Langemarck*.

Who is that—the new German student? Is he an "academic citizen"? Of course not! The German student now passes through the *Arbeitsdienst*; he serves in the SA; he carries out his *Geländedienst* [rural service]. That is new. And we wholly welcome this—even more so, when it is guaranteed that the student now really "studies". "Study" now goes by the name of "knowledge-service" [*Wissensdienst*]." Soon, it will be arranged that all these services are coordinated with one another.

The new student rejects all that: No—that is not *our* reality; that is merely the consummated and warmed-over and renamed *old* reality, which is increasingly slipping away from us.

Because of the way that the current situation has been portrayed, it has become impossible to experience who we are. The new German student will not simply be present-at-hand [*vorhanden*]. He is just beginning to advance. Thus he *is* not yet and therefore has no boast. Far from it! The new student *is*—and precisely this advancing, this pressing forward defines the *Being* of that student. This Being does not simply, gratuitously, or suddenly emerge from nowhere. It responds to the commanding power [*Befehlkraft*] of the new German reality.

Only when we learn to understand what *occurs* [*geschieht*] in this reality, will we learn who that *is*—the new German student.

What is occurring? The Germans are becoming a historical *Volk*. As if they had not already had a long checkered history! Certainly—but "having" history does not yet mean *being* historical; for this means: *knowing as a Volk* that history is not the past, and even less the present, but the acting and bearing that reaches through the present on the basis the future. The future of a *Volk* does not consist of that which *is not yet*. It *is* precisely as arriving. It is arriving, and arriving it *is there* in the knowing decision by which the *Volk* arrives at itself, thereby extending into the pressing approach of its destiny.

"Being historical" means: acting *knowingly* by reaching ahead to what is arriving in order, thereby, to free the past of its power of constraint and to sustain it in its changing Greatness.

This knowledge, however, realizes itself *in that* the *Volk* becomes the State; this knowledge is the *State*. *It* is the waking and binding edifice in which the *Volk*, by an act of submission, is subjected to all great powers of human Being. The State *is becoming* and *is* through *enforcing* those powers within the *Dasein* of the *Volk*.

For example, *nature* reveals itself as the space for a *Volk*, as landscape and *Heimat*, as ground and soil. Nature is released as power and law of that concealed tradition of *heredity* [*Vererbung*] of essential predispositions and instinctual directives. Nature is turning into the decisive rule as *health* [*Gesundheit*]. The more freely nature prevails, the more noble and measured the formative power of authentic *technology* must be made subject to her. Bound to nature, borne and sheltered by nature, catalyzed and limited by her, thereby, the *history* of the *Volk* is realized. In the struggle to forge a *path* for its essence and to secure its perseverance, the *Volk* grasps its Self within the growing constitution of the State. In the struggle to prefigure its potential greatness and destiny as essential truth, it represents itself decisively in *art*. The latter only attains stylistic greatness insofar as it absorbs the entire *Dasein* of the *Volk* within the imprint of its essence.

What then occurs when the *Volk* becomes a State? Those powers—nature, history, art, technology, and the State itself— are being implemented [*durch*gesetzt], and through their implementation their boundaries are determined. Thereby, that which renders a *Volk* secure, bright, and strong becomes manifest. The manifestation of these powers is the essence of *truth*.

By implementing these powers, the developing State transposes the *Volk* back into its authentic *truth*. On the basis of this truth arise the authentic capacity- for-knowledge, obligation-to-knowledge, and will-to-knowledge [*Wissenkönnen, Wissenmüssen, und Wissenwollen*] However, knowledge means: *to clearly master the essence of things and, by virtue of this mastery, the determination to act* [*zur Tat entschlossen sein*].

Hence, the *claim* to this knowledge only becomes a reality by virtue of the implementation of these great powers in the State itself. This claim-to-knowledge establishes the standard for all that is *worthy* of knowledge and all that is not. What is worthy of knowledge defines the *limits* in terms of which authentic questioning is grounded and preserved.

Science, however, *does not create* the original knowledge of the powers of the *Volk's Dasein*. It merely brings this knowledge to maturity and solidifies it, and prepares the way for it under the aegis of the grown *concept*.

The *prerequisite* of all science is, therefore, the awakening and implementation [*Durchsetzung*] of the power of an authentic claim to knowledge. The implementation of this claim and thus the creation of those prerequisites is what occurs in the becoming of our State.

How and where are these measures achieved? Clearly, it can only take place where the *Volk*, unspent, reaches down to the roots of its *Dasein*, where it audaciously presses towards itself—in German *youth*. *German youth* has no choice. It *must*. It knows — in accordance with *its* own knowledge— the goal on which it is fixated: to implement its new claim to

knowledge within the becoming of the State.

To be focused on the conquest of this goal—that is what it means to be a German student.

Who then *is* this, the new student? An "academic citizen"? We dare not persist in uttering this appellation.

How then can the *student* take on that hidden mission in order to implement this new claim to knowledge? In principle, *he* still has much to learn! When will we, at long last, cease taking youth so seriously and refrain from elevating it to an exaggerated importance? Yet we know how things are! How incurably "primitive" are the students, especially today?

Yes, "primitive", certainly and fortunately. For does "primitive" merely mean: having far *less* competence than the savants, being *less* adroit in their long-practiced methods? Does "primitive" not mean: to stand present where something is beginning, to stand present with what is first and most simple, borne and driven by its force? Precisely *because* the student is "primitive", he is qualified for and summoned to implement the new claim-to-knowledge. –

Good! If the new student already is "primitive", then he should "study" after all. Yet whence do we derive the definition of this vocation?

"To study"—is that the stolid eagerness of undertaking a well-defined pedagogical task we call a "lesson"? To study—is that the harmless diligence of those who are gifted, those who never take leave of the over-stuffed cage of books, apparatuses, and scholarly disputes in order to arrive at the things themselves?

"Studying" is the vocation of the student. Indeed. Yet, what the student *does* is defined by what he *is*. And he *is* what he *becomes* by subordinating himself to the commanding power of the new German reality for the sake of implementing the new claim to knowledge.

How does the student serve this process of implementation? He challenges us by asking, for instance: What is your relation to nature? In your research, where and how does the force of nature break into our world? The student challenges us by inquiring: What is your relation to Kant's philosophy? Is he really merely the "Chinese from Königsberg", or did his work effect a rupture in human Dasein that can still be felt today?

The student challenges us by inquiring: What is your relation to the *State*? Are we supposed to acknowledge only what has previously been thought "about" the State? Should the reality of our State be imposed on us by means of a network of dead concepts, or, alternatively, do your questions place us in the center of the force field of this reality?

The student challenges us by inquiring: What, generally speaking, is your relationship to the various domains of science? Are they solely areas of the most meticulous, individual research and textbook summaries? Or are they not instead the source of what is essential: something that impresses itself upon *us* and forces you to make decisions that you yourselves, like a

confession, adventitiously or belatedly add to your private Weltanschauung?

With these challenging questions, the *up-and-coming* student will, unfailingly and incessantly, maintain the spirit of the new claim-to-knowledge; thereby, a new pedagogical will arises. By virtue of these challenges and "attacks," the will of youth has *opened itself up* to the forces that shape the State.

By virtue of such challenges and attacks, youth follows the lead of its own self-assured Will. By his willingness to follow, the individual no longer feels himself to be isolated—he has surrendered his individual will to the powers-that-be [*Mächte*]. Thereby, everyone who aligns himself with these "attacks" will already be linked with everyone else.

Following a leader [*Gefolgschaft*] produces *comradeship*—not the other way around. Such comradeship educates those nameless and unofficial *Führer* who *do* more, insofar as they endure and sacrifice more.

Comradeship forms the individual beyond himself. It shapes [*schlägt*] him into the mold of a very distinct "type" [*Schlages*] of *Jungmannschaft*. We recognize the firmness of their facial characteristics, the taut clarity of their gaze, the decisiveness of their handshake, the recklessness of their discourse [*Rede*].

The solitary individual as well as the inchoate and directionless masses will be *shattered* by the punch [*Schlagkraft*] of this "type" of youth.

This "type" of student no longer "studies", i.e., he does not remain *seated* somewhere in comfort while merely "*striving*" to be somewhere else. This new "type" of knowledge-seeker [*Wissenwollenden*] is always on the move. This student then becomes a *Worker*.

Alone—has he not always been alone? Work means "occupation" and effort. "Studying" means exertion of the brain. And thus one speaks today of the "intellectual worker" [*Arbeiter der Stirn*] and places him adjacent to "manual worker" [*Arbeiter der Faust*]. However, is "Worker" merely a broad, collective term? And the discourse of an "intellectual worker," is that merely a contemporary concession to those *Volksgenossen* who were formerly referred to simply as "workers" and who were regarded as a lower caste of the *Volk*? Or, conversely, has the *essence of work and the worker also changed* with the new German reality?

It has, indeed! Consequently, the *negative* concept of work [*Unbegriff der Arbeit*], which was both *racially foreign* [*volksfremde*] as well as *racially* destructive [*volkszerstörerische*], has been swept away. With the *negative* concept of work , the worker was degraded to a mere object of exploitation; he was destined to join the class of the disenfranchised and to disappear in the logic of class struggle. Also anachronistic is that concept of work that understood work merely *economically* as the production of goods and as opportunity earning a wage. Moreover, work is not a concept that has been inherited from the old regime that separates "the workers" from other "estates." Finally, work is not merely a cultural concept in the sense that the worker could be regarded as in need of a so-called "higher education."

Yet, on what legal grounds are we entitled to *reject all* these conceptions of "work" and "workers"? Insofar as they fall short of the *essence of work*; instead, they merely elevate subaltern or spurious determinations of work to the level of what is essential about the concept.

The term work is ambiguous. On the one hand, it means working as completing an action. But it also means the finished product as something that has been worked on, as a product, and as the end result of that action. In keeping with this broad and twofold meaning, every human action—insofar as it is concerned *with* something—is "*work*" and "*care*" [*Sorge*].

However, what is essential in the essence of work is neither *completing* an action, nor the *result* per se, but instead, in *that* which *actually comes to pass*: that, *as someone who work*s, a human being places himself in a confrontation with beings as a whole [*dem Seienden im Ganzen*]. In this confrontation, there takes place the mastery, the implementation, the organization [*Fügung*], and the subduing [*Bändigung*] of all the powers that shape the earth.

When understood in this way the essence of work *thoroughly and fundamentally* determines human *Dasein*. Our *Dasein* begins to shift to a different mode of Being [*Seinsart*], whose character I formulated years ago as *care*, a designation that was unanimously rejected by the philosophers' guild in its entirety. Recently, *Ernst Jünger*, proceeding from a creative understanding of Nietzsche and the experiences of the battles of matériel during the Great War, interpreted the mode of Being [*Seinsart*] of the man-of the-future through the *Gestalt* of the worker.

Work transposes and organizes the *Volk* in the sphere of activity of all essential powers of Being. The structure of *völkisch* Dasein, taking shape *in* work and *through* work, is the *State*. The National Socialist State is the work-state [*Arbeitsstaat*].

The new student knows himself to be set for the implementation of the *völkisch* claim-to-knowledge: *hence, he is a Worker*. Previously, students were workers only insofar as they "studied". Conversely, the new student "studies" *because he is a Worker*. Henceforth, "studying" means: the unfolding of the Will-to-knowledge in order to solidify and expand *that* knowledge that makes our *Volk* a historical *Volk*.

The new German student *is a Worker*. But where do we find this student? At any university, there might be half a dozen, perhaps *even* fewer, and, all-in-all, not even the *seven* with whom the *Führer* originally began *his* work—the *Führer* who, today, is way beyond the year 1933, and way beyond us, and who has ignited a new movement among all nations [*Staaten*] on the earth.

A decade from now – or perhaps it will take a lifetime – the German student of the new "type" [*Schlag*] will dominate the university, since, at that point, he will have acceded to the ranks of the new *Arbeitsfront* of the university faculty.

However, it behooves us to acknowledge that the *threat* to the German university is not that its

previous approach to science will descend into barbarism; instead, the danger is that *we*— beknownst or unbeknownst to ourselves — obstruct the implementation of the new claim-to-knowledge.

It is not that which we can ascertain in the here and now, but instead, the magnitude of unsolved challenges and the gravity of still undeveloped *questions* that, in the future, must become the yardstick of authenticity and the measure of student Dasein.

We professors measure up to this Dasein as long as we keep in mind what it means to question: for us, questioning is not the ungrounded play of *curiosity*. For us, questioning does not mean to *mindlessly persist*, come what may, in *doubting*. Instead, for us, questioning means exposing oneself to the sublimity of things and their laws; for us, questioning means: to *not* close ourselves off to the terror of what is untamed and the chaos of the dark. — At all events, for the sake of *this* questioning we call into question and refuse to subordinate ourselves to those who have grown tired and their complacent addiction to cheap answers. We know: the questioning courage to experience and persist in the *abysses* of Dasein is *in itself* already a *higher* response than the overhasty information furnished by artificially contrived systems of thought.

The new student joins up into the new order of political [*staatlichen*] Dasein and its *völkisch* knowledge, in such a way that he himself assists in the co-creation of this new order.

From now on, matriculation is no longer merely admission to a pre-existing entity. It becomes a *decision*. For the new student, the "examination" does not take place *following* his studies, it precedes it. This exam challenges him either to demonstrate that he has grasped his Dasein, or else to retrogress to the ideas and customs of a moribund world.

Matriculation is Decision. Every authentic decision transposes us into the immediacy of acting within a determinate *situation* and *environment*.

German students! You have made a decision for the University of Freiburg. This city, its land, and its national character [*Volkstum*] are dominated and colored by the Black Forest. However, in light of the commanding power [*Befehlskraft*] of the new German reality, for the German student, even the Black Forest has *changed* its essence. The Black Forest is no longer *merely* a stimulating winter sport region, or a glorious destination for excursions and summer travels. Henceforth, those of us who hail from University of Freiburg will experience the Black Forest as: the native mountains, the native forests, and the native valleys of [the Nazi martyr] Albert Leo *Schlageter*.

(Matriculation)

And now I ask working student [stud. phil. Fischer] to step forward to perform by proxy for all of you the formal commitment:

I bind you to the will and the work of our Führer Adolf Hitler. I bind you to the law of Dasein of

the new German student. I demand from you discipline and severity and rigor towards yourselves. I command you to self-sacrifice and an exemplary conduct towards all German *Volksgenossen*.

Heil Hitler!

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*All personal pronouns are masculine in the original, which has been kept for this translation.

[1] Quoted from https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/docpage.cfm?docpage_id=4222 (access: June 8, 2020)

[2] Ibid.

The German University

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(Two addresses delivered at summer courses for Foreign Students at the University of Freiburg, August 15-16, 1934)

Translated by Christian Struck, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University

You would like to know what the German university is. *Above all*, you want to learn how the German university is *today*.

The best way to answer these questions is to describe the institutions and make-up that comprise the German university. We will take a quick look at the diverse character of individual universities. If we proceed in this manner, we will attain an *external* view of the German university. Yet in so doing, we will not have grasped its *inner* essence. And that alone is what is essential.

How then are we supposed to comprehend the inner essence of the German university? The *history* of the German university will provide us with some preliminary answers; for the history of the German university is the history of the German *Geist*. And the history of the German *Geist* is the fate of the German *Volk*.

Over the course of two short lectures, we cannot trace this history in detail. Nor is this necessary, insofar as the *Gestalt* of the contemporary German university is still relatively young. It originated 125 years ago, when the University of Berlin was established. Thereafter, existing universities were restructured according to this model, which also became the basis for future universities. (Breslau in the East; Bonn in the West). Hence, the history of the German university is the history of the nineteenth Century.

But for us, history is not only something that is in the past. History is *also and expressly* what is occurring *today* – the *present*. The present, however, derives its meaning from anticipating the future in order to shape it. Contemporary Germany is experiencing a vast transformation that pulsates through the entire historical Dasein of our *Volk*. We see the beginning of this transformation in the National Socialist Revolution.

Our discussion is divided into three parts. We will trace:

I. The external organization and construction of the German university.

II. The gestation of the contemporary German university in the nineteenth century.

III. The development of the future German university in the immediate present.

In today's session, we will treat parts I and II; tomorrow, we will turn to part III.

I. The external organization and construction *of the German university*

Each day you enter and leave the university building. You have witnessed the end of the semester and watched the students go about their activities and lives. The students' work follows a basic sequence. They attend the docents' lectures. In tutorials and seminars, they work in greater depth on specific questions and tasks related to their respective fields. The tutorials and seminars are divided into classes for beginners and for advanced students. The same is true for the practical work that takes place in scientific institutes and clinics. For the most part, university instruction provides academic training for advanced professions: for judges, physicians, professors, and ministers. These professions are considered "advanced," insofar as their execution is based on *academic* [*wissenschaftliche*] training. "Scientific" means a *higher form of knowledge*.

At universities, the instructional program is divided into different fields of the equal rank. In keeping with tradition, their order of importance is as follows: the departments of theology, of law, of medicine, of philosophy.

At some universities – as is true for Freiburg – philosophy is subdivided into the department of philosophy proper (the philosophical-historical subfield) and the scientific-mathematical subfields; occasionally, departments of agriculture or forestry are added. Conversely, the training of engineers and architects takes place at so-called polytechnical universities [*Technischen Hochschulen*].

Each department is directed by a dean. The five deans, together with an equal number of professors, comprise the *faculty senate*—which, like the university as a whole, reports to the *rector*. Until this year, both the rector and the deans were *elected* annually by the faculty. The general administration is comprised of the university administration and treasury. Each university has its own independent university *library*.

Instructional periods are divided into a summer semester (May, June, July) and a winter semester (November, December, January, February). Every student who has been accepted for matriculation is enrolled at a department. He is also entitled to attend lectures and tutorials offered by other faculties. Only those with a *Reifezeugnis*[1] are permitted to study at the university; these credentials are obtained upon passing a final exam that is administered by one of the "higher schools": *Gymnasium*, *Realgymnasium*, *Oberrealschule*.

The *goal* of university study usually is the state exam: a scholarly exam that is administered by a public examining body and required by the state. This exam is a prerequisite for pursuing the vocations of physician, judge, and teacher.

There are specific curricula for each respective field of study. But each student is free to set up

his own course of study. The duration of these studies usually spans 8–12 semesters (4–6 years). Since both tuition fees and residence costs in the university city are born by the student himself, he often desires to graduate as soon as possible. Students without means may be eligible for a reduction or a complete waiver of the fees. Owing to war and inflation, traditional endowments for stipendia have almost completely been eliminated.

In addition to the state exam, there is also the possibility of pursuing a doctorate. In this case, the scholarly exam is administered by the departments themselves and entitles one to receive a *doctoral degree*.

Students are not bound to one university; they can freely transfer from one to another. Owing to this freedom, students from Northern Germany get to know the south; those from Western Germany get to know the East, and vice versa. For similar reasons, students choose a larger university over of a small one; conversely, some move from cities to more restful and idyllic university towns. Professors also change places, since they can be appointed to other universities. Each of the 23 German universities largely is constituted in the same way. They only differ with respect to size. The largest university, the University of Berlin, has about 14,000 students; the smallest, in Rostock, 900; Freiburg has roughly 3,000 students.

Over the last 25 years, the number of students has grown considerably in comparison with former times. Between 1910 and 1930, the numbers of students at the universities rose from about 50,000 to 100,000. The number has doubled, although the number of universities has only grown by three: Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg. From this number, the University of Strasburg must be subtracted, since it was lost after the World War I. One often hears that the educational proficiency of German universities has suffered greatly from the overcrowding that took place after the war. But the opposite is the case. The universities permitted this overcrowding because their inner strength had already been damaged. We will only understand how this came to pass this by turning to the second theme now.

II. The Emergence of the Contemporary German University in the Nineteenth Century

Now we will inquire into the *history* of the German university, in order to grasp its *inner essence*, or *spirit* [*Geist*], as we say for short. Thereby, we address the orientation or conviction on the basis of which the university undertakes and justifies its task. By »*spirit*«, we mean the *attitude* by which the university implements and justifies its task. When we inquire about the university's history, we disregard questions concerning the genesis of its external arrangements. We may leave such questions aside insofar as many of these institutions date from the Middle Ages. Hence, their capacity to endure is quite strong. Hence also, the following important fact, which one must not overlook in evaluating the university: often, although the external structures remain the same, the spirit has changed. Conversely, the institutions may often change, although the spirit (or the "anti-spirit"[*Ungeist*]) remains the same.

We enquire: how and whence at the beginning of the nineteenth century did a new spirit find

its way into the new German university? The previous century, the eighteenth, we refer to as the age of Enlightenment and the French Revolution. These spiritual currents and political movements derived their power and orientation from the emergence of the modern spirit – *Modernity* [*Neuzeit*] – which actively dissociated itself from the Middle Ages. The development of the modern spirit occurs as a transformation of man's position within the totality of beings [*des Ganzen des Seienden*]. More specifically, this transformation occurs via man's *liberation* from his previous ties. Henceforth, man begins to reflect on his *own* powers and capacities. This liberation takes place in three principal movements:

1. Separation from the supernatural way of life of the Christian church and from the authority of dogma. Man transposes his actions and his knowledge to his own capacities for calculation [*Weltberechnung*], for invention, and to discover and conquer foreign lands and continents.

2. Man's separation from his ties to everything that is life-like, organic, and that grows in nature. The reinterpretation of the totality of nature in terms of what is mechanically calculable, controllable, and machine-like.

3. Man's separation from *Gemeinschaft* and from all primordial orders. The self-certain individual man becomes the benchmark and template for the new order [of life]. *Gemeinschaft* now becomes *Gesellschaft*, i.e., an association of individuals that is established on the grounds of rational agreement and contract. The state, too, is founded on a contractual basis.

Emancipation and freedom in this multifarious sense become the shibboleths and mantras of the coming centuries.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Germans became many things—but not free. The old Reich [the Holy Roman Empire] had disintegrated as a unified power and dissolved into a rootless and disoriented *Kleinstaaterei*. Prussia – the only German state that remained grounded in itself – was overthrown by Napoleon and his allies in 1806/07. Nevertheless, despite the political impotence and misery of the *Volk*, a secret Germany remained alive, as is the case today. From this extreme inner affliction and the pressures of external bondage, a *new freedom* awakened. That is to say: the essence of freedom was conceived anew, implanted into the knowledge and the will of the Germans.

Three great powers played a role in this development: 1. The new German poetry (Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, and the Romantics), 2. The new German philosophy (Kant, Fichte, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Hegel), 3. The new German political will of the Prussian statesmen and soldiers (Freiherr von Stein, Karl August von Hardenberg, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Gerhard von Scharnhorst, August Neihardt von Gneisenau, and Karl von Clausewitz). Poets and philosophers created a new spiritual world in which the workings of nature and the powers of history could be yoked and thought together as unified in the essence of the Absolute.

Thereby, an awareness arose that faith and knowledge, language and art, poetry and education find their roots and standard in the *Volk*. It is the natural and historical essence of

the *Volksgeist*, rather than the rules of mere intellect, or the calculations of a free-floating world reason [*Weltvernunft*], that define the essence of man. Not by chance, during this period the word *Volkstum* emerged. This new knowledge and will necessarily also extended to the State. The State was no longer conceived of as a blind, one-sided power that, through the actions of a handful of violent individuals, makes everything serviceable. Instead, the State was perceived as an organic system and law through which the *Volk* attained its unity and its certainty of perdurance.

In this way, among the Germans freedom acquired a new tone and meaning. Freedom meant: submission to the law of the *Volksgeist*, which emerged in an exemplary manner in the works of the poets, philosophers, and statesmen. Freedom meant an obligatory commitment to the will of the State. Freedom meant responsibility for the fate of the *Volk*.

This spirit rose up and established the Germans' historical task. The path to its realization would prove to be a very long and difficult one.

We now *ask*: How did the new German university develop out of this new spirit of freedom? Freedom means: committing oneself to the law of the Whole [*Gesetz des Ganzen*]. Such commitment [*Bindung*] is realized in the *knowledge* of the whole and its laws, and in the *Will* to it. Knowledge and Will must be awakened, guided, solidified, and always renewed. That is the meaning and task of *education*. In the awakening of the new freedom as commitment, there arises an inner demand for new education. Education to knowledge takes place in school. Education to the highest knowledge of the laws and the realms of the *Volk's Dasein* is the raison d'être of the highest of schools. In this way, the plan to establish a new university emerged. It had to be situated where, at the time, the knowledge and the will of the new freedom had gathered: in Berlin. The Prussian king appointed Wilhelm von Humboldt as director of the educational system. Despite his brief term in office (five years), in 1810, he instituted the blueprint of the University of Berlin that had been prepared by the philosophers.

Four facts are relevant to understanding the origins of this university:

1. It was a new creation: thus, the new tasks were not simply transposed from the rigid habitudes and directives of an already existing university. The new foundation was not burdened by what was old and outdated.

2. The main emphasis was not placed on the external organization, but on the appointment and assembly of the most capable men: men who were creative thinkers and exemplary teachers. At the time, W. v. Humboldt explicitly wrote: "One appoints capable men and, thereafter, the new university will take shape, accordingly."

3. The pacesetter and defining center of the new university was the department of philosophy. Education to knowledge was guided by a comprehensive philosophical orientation which defined the inner coherence of all essential realms of knowledge and the respective methods of instruction.

4. The founding was not considered as a narrowly Prussian affair. Instead, it was explicitly intended to be a model university for catalyzing and creatively developing the German spirit. On these grounds, the *State's influence* was expressly restricted. The university's instructional and pedagogical freedom was predicated on and framed by this larger mission.

The new university was not established in order to advance the practical- technical aspects of professional education; nor for the purpose of transforming instruction and scholarship. Instead, by means of this new construction, the State declared its determination to educate the *Volk* to its innermost essence, in accordance with its own historical spirit; to bind it to its innermost law and, thereby, to liberate and unite it.

This Will of the State [*Staatswillen*] created the university as a free educational establishment and accorded it the highest possible vocation.

In this way, a formidable task was set. To what extent was the German university able to realize this task over the course of the nineteenth century? To what extent was it able to uphold this task? To what extent has the State remained faithful to its originary Will?

In the present context, we can only answer these questions in broad outline. With this end in mind, within the overall history of the university in the nineteenth century, we can distinguish two stages. The first stage extends from 1830 to 1860/70. The second stage lasts from Bismarck's establishment of the Second Empire to World War I.

During this initial period, the university's mission developed productively in at least *one* specific respect: the *Geisteswissenschaften* were widely and successfully established. Concurrently, in the natural sciences research institutes were founded that produced distinguished scientists and instructors. The historical and natural sciences flourished because their methods of thinking and questioning remained under the influence of the great philosophy of German Idealism. Even though these philosophers' systems and doctrines had already lost some of their initial influence, their *indirect* influence persisted. This was true for historical research on the development of language, on the forms of great poetry, and the understanding of organic nature. Scientific inquiry remained guided by philosophical knowledge concerning the totality of what is knowable; hence, its questioning was directed toward the essential correlations and laws in the various fields. ›Science‹ [*Wissenschaft*] retained the meaning of knowledge that aims at the whole and that, hence, is necessarily philosophical. Consequently, the investigations of the historical and natural sciences still commanded widespread respect.

Through the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl von Savigny, historical thinking influenced jurisprudence and political science [*Staatswissenschaft*]. As a result, both fields were forced to vigorously rethink the *Volksgeist* as well as the development of law [*Rechtsbildung*] and the State. Savigny showed that law does not derive primarily from a formal understanding of norms and legislation. Instead, like language, it emanates from the *Volksgeist* of individual peoples [*Völker*]: from their beliefs and their traditions. With respect to the essence of the

State, Savigny showed that political freedom and unfreedom do not depend on the form of the State [*Staatsform*]. Instead, they are primarily determined by the extent to which State authority [*Staatsgewalt*] is rooted in the nature and history of the *Volk* – in contrast with political forms that are consumed in the arbitrariness of individual strongmen or governments.

In natural science, Alexander von Humboldt superseded philosophical speculation, thereby attaining a comprehensive and rich conception of nature. On the cusp between the historical and natural sciences, Karl Ritter initiated the field of comparative geography. The natural sciences, for their part, constructively influenced medicine. In this way, the scientific spirit radiated forth from the two main fields of philosophical study, history, on the one hand, and nature, on the other, and extended their influence to the fields of law and medicine. Nature and history were perceived as significant manifestations of Absolute Spirit, as construed by philosophers. During this period, philosophy was regarded as the center and fundament of the various sciences. Even theology – both in its historical (church history and exegesis) and as well as its speculative subfields (dogmatisms and ethics) – took its bearings from the vital spirit of philosophical study.

Nevertheless, despite this efflorescence of the sciences, there already existed a hidden peril. The spheres of knowledge became distended and the content of what was knowable became increasingly variegated. Increasingly, researchers were firmly bound to *individual* domains of study. The relationship between the various spheres of knowledge was disrupted; and *within* the individual domains, the whole was increasingly ignored. As a result, the vital philosophical *drive* disappeared from scholarship. The more the sciences individuated themselves, the more emphatically they rejected philosophy. Increasingly, science counted as "science" the more it individuated itself and the more it broke with its philosophical roots. The individuation and uprooting of the sciences were reinforced by the advent of *technology* and technological thinking. Process and method attained predominance; they were viewed as superior to what could be achieved by method.

Technology promoted industrialization and the formation of the proletariat; it tore the *Volk* apart into classes and parties.

A primordial and unified binding spiritual power was lacking. Weltanschauung was determined by the "standpoint" that was assumed by individuals, groups, and parties. The primordial meaning of *freedom* as obligatory commitment to the law of the *Volksgeist* was perverted into its opposite: intellectual arbitrariness and individual opinion.

The State increasingly regarded the university as a practical-technical training ground for bureaucrats. The individual faculties were turned into functional establishments – in essence, trade schools.

Such was the spiritual state of the German university circa 1870. The subsequent interval, which lasted until World War I, induced within the universities another intensification of their vital efforts. Progress in the sciences [devolved into] an unending series of pointless

discoveries; [it was followed by] the growing internationalization of the individual sciences. The latter were transformed into autonomous spheres of cultural value. Research for its own sake, regardless of its object or end, became the guiding principle.

It became increasingly self-evident that the individual sciences subsisted in a state of mutual incomprehension. Literature about various topics and themes became more important than the topics themselves. Similarly, literature soon became a matter for publishers and their business ventures.

The individual university departments were implacably transformed into self-contained professional schools. They took on the character of a large and productive business concern [*Betrieb*]. The individual sciences increasingly derived their sense of unity from the international congresses of their respective fields, which only exacerbated the overall dispersion. Increasingly, they became removed from the originary unity of knowledge [*des Wissens*]. The university lost its spiritual integrity [*Geschlossenheit*]. The various faculties were only held together, externally and ad hoc, by a common administration and by the hollow awareness that they were contributing to the aimless advance of a self-subsistent "culture."

However, the university's *most significant error* was its belief that it was actually fulfilling the mission that it had been assigned by virtue of its historical origins. Yet, when measured against this mission, the history of the German university during the nineteenth century – the glow of external accomplishment, notwithstanding – is a tale of error and inner decomposition. When measured against the increase and diffusion of scientific themes, the number of discoveries, the quantitative increase of literature, the refinement and certification of methods and research techniques, and the breakthroughs of individual researchers, this development represents an unqualified "advance."

What *is* the measure we must and should employ to evaluate "science"? That is the *question* that must be decided [*der Entscheidung*]. It is a question that was authentically posed by a small circle of German Youth immediately prior to the outbreak of the World War. Its outstanding prophet was Friedrich Nietzsche: the last great German philosopher, whose message, even today, has barely been understood.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, genuine philosophizing was decisively and emphatically driven out of science.

By the end of this century – anticipating what was to come – the philosopher stood alone. The ultimate decision concerning the meaning of science and the essence of the university remained premature.

Before it could come about, we had to endure the great hardship of the World War as well as the even greater hardship of the "collapse" that was caused by the Marxist revolt. The afflictions that the *Volk* endured gradually engendered new necessities. It awakened in the *Volk* the need for a *Führer* who could lead the *Volk* out of its condition of self-loss [*Selbstverlierenheit*], to its innermost calling and to a new Will to Dasein [*Daseinswillen*].

Tomorrow, we will address the challenge that the new German Reality poses for our universities – what type of "Will" is at issue here.

III. The Development of the Future German University in the Immediate Present

The immediate present is the time in which we currently stand. What is occurring now is the transformation of German Reality. This transformation means restructuring the future. What is now taking place has been gestating since the World War. We can only understand the development of the future German university once we situate the position and calling of the university in relation to what is now taking place. We will do that in three sections. We will consider:

1. The defining forces that prepared the way for the National Socialist Revolution and the attitude of the university

2. The essence of the National Socialist Revolution as transformation of the German Reality

3. The new task of the German university

Of course, our presentation will have to confine itself to basic outlines. The description of individual events and related circumstances – everything "anecdotal" – must be left out. However, even if time constraints allowed us to delve into such matters, we must resist this urge, since here we are concerned with understanding what is essential. This understanding alone will allow for an adequate view of the so-called facts.

By the same token, we must also insist on the following: if we attempt to understand the essence of the events that are unfolding before us, this cannot mean that we seek to explain it rationally, i.e., to deduce it from prior causes. History, and especially *decisive history*, defies causal explanation. It remains a *secret* [*Geheimnis*]. And we can only grasp what is secret by deciding *for or against it*: by contributing to it and acting in unison.

1. *The defining forces that prepared the way for the National Socialist Revolution and the attitude of the university*

The genuine preparation for the National Socialist Revolution began, unconsciously, at first, during the World War – even by means of it. At the Front, an entirely new experience emerged. There developed an entirely new idea of *Gemeinschaft*. The new spirit of the Front bore within itself the strong Will to become effective, after the war, as defining power of the *Volk's Dasein*. Thereby, something came to pass that we only fully comprehend and appreciate today. We are accustomed to perceiving and evaluating historical events, such as war, in terms of their apparent consequences. We firmly establish winners and losers. We observe a change in national borders and the like. However, the historical meaning of the enormous event that we call the »World War« transcends, with respect to its causes, questions of guilt and innocence, not to mention questions of imperialism or pacifism.

The real decision does not pertain to determining winners and losers. The real decision is a spiritual one. It concerns the convictions and dispositions of the peoples. The World War is a great test for *every Volk* to see if it is capable of transforming this event in a spiritual-historical inward sense. The World War is a challenge to all individual peoples to see if, by virtue of this event, they become younger or older.

The emergence of the *Frontgeist* during the war and its reaffirmation after the war signifies the creative transformation of this event as a formative power of future *Dasein*.

The *Frontgeist* is the knowing Will to a new *Gemeinschaft*. *What kind of Gemeinschaft is it?* This *Gemeinschaft* is characterized by *camaraderie*. It is the belonging-to-one-other in which everyone vouches for everyone else, unconditionally and always. Camaraderie is such readiness. And wherein lies its basis? That each and all recognize the same demands, experience the same hardships, endure the same dangers, i.e., subordinate themselves to the same mission. As the elementary form of *Gemeinschaft*, camaraderie can only develop by subordinating oneself to the same duties and obligations [*aus der Gefolgschaft im Dienst an derselben Verpflichtung*]. The conventional and superficial view is that, first, one must form a *Gemeinschaft* and that "following" [*Gefolgschaft*] will arise therefrom. No! The opposite is true. Through and in "following," *Gemeinschaft* qua camaraderie is first established. "Following" requires: the ability-to-listen and the ability-to-obey [*Hören- und Gehorchenkönnen*]; it also requires knowing and wanting what is necessary and essential.

Only those who can truly listen and obey can also *lead* [*führen*]. *Führer* is not he who is placed-in-front of others, but he who can even more unconditionally listen and even more decisively obey the law. *Führer* is he who does more than the others, because he endures more, dares more, and sacrifices more.

The new spirit of *Gemeinschaft* as camaraderie carries within itself, as its governing structure, the vital relationship of leading and following [*Gefolgschaft und Führerschaft*].

The *Frontgeist* became the decisive force in the preparation for the National Socialist Revolution. However, the development and clarification of the *Frontgeist* does not mean increasing militarism; nor does it mean working towards a new war. The *Frontgeist* means precisely *spiritually conquering* war and transforming it creatively.

During the post-war years this new spirit became increasingly vital. It became a necessity owing to the growing fragmentation of the *Volk* into classes and parties, and the increasing rootlessness and aimlessness of the State. At the same time, the inner development and clarification of the new spirit, as well as its formal implementation, did not take place mechanically as the execution of a program. Instead, it occurred *historically*, i.e., it entailed numerous casualties, disappointments, and setbacks, many doubts and hardships, in addition to great determination and strong belief.

And what was the attitude of the university during this period? The simple answer is: it failed to measure up to the new challenges. The various faculties failed to comprehend what was

happening; a few individuals grasped this, albeit belatedly. This is an undeniable fact. However, merely to state this fact is *not* enough. We must ask: *why* did the university fail, why did it *necessarily* fail? The answer: because, for decades, its *inherent, original spiritual unity* was lacking. Thus, it was unable to contribute, as a cohesive spiritual force, to the awakening, anticipatory formation, and inner restructuring of the newly emerging spiritual world. The university in its entirety lacked a clear, comprehensive, and obligatory pedagogical goal. For decades, it lacked a defining ideological standpoint. It was an island-unto-itself. Research was unfocused and teaching was directionless. Both pursuits had become lost in the purely »quantitative«: in the accumulation and dissemination of disjunctive approaches to knowledge. As a result, the university was no longer internally strong enough to defend itself against increasing massification by implementing more rigorous standards and more focused requirements.

By enumerating the university's failings, we do not in any way excuse its behavior. Nor is this depiction meant as a personal reproach against individual teachers. It is not intended to denigrate the scientific achievements of individual researchers. Instead, the foregoing account was necessary in order to extract lessons that are decisive for the restructuring the university; hence, the conclusion that merely to ›reform‹ this or that feature of the individual faculties would be futile. By recourse to such piecemeal measures, one will never surmount the current state of things. Instead, everything depends on whether or not the university as a whole can reinstate a primordial, unified spiritual world; on whether it can reawaken the cohesive and enduring force that leads to authentic ›self-affirmation‹ [*Selbstbehauptung*]. Is this possible? Yes! Why? Because the National Socialist Revolution has transformed German reality in its entirety. Through this transformation a new basis for the entire historical-spiritual Dasein of the *Volk* has been created. What is the essence of the National Socialist Revolution? We well answer this question in the next section:

2. The essence of the National Socialist Revolution as transformation of the German reality

The essence of the National Socialist Revolution consists in the fact that Adolf Hitler has elevated and implemented the new Spirit of *Gemeinschaft* as the determinant power of the new order of the *Volk*. The National Socialist Revolution is not simply the external takeover of an existing State authority by a powerful party, but the inner reeducation of the entire *Volk* toward the ends of unity and cohesion. The *Volk* acknowledges the new State insofar as it seeks to realize its innermost mission. The authority [*Herrschaft*] of the State oversees the responsible implementation of the *Führer*'s Will [*Führerwillen*]. The obedient trust of the *Volk* authorizes this leadership [*Führung*]. The State is not a mechanical legal apparatus that alongside other institutions such as the economy, the arts, science, and religion. Instead, the State signifies a living order: an order that is governed by trust and responsibility, in and through which the *Volk* realizes its innermost historical Dasein.

The *Volk* is neither an amorphous mass, devoid of direction and will – hence, at the mercy of self-interested oppressors; nor is it the sum of shifting and fickle allegiances to numerous parties and classes who are continually at loggerheads with one other.

How, then, does the *Volk* acquire its genuine structure and coherence? Insofar as the activities of every individual, every group, and every class are regarded as *Work* [*Arbeit*]. Through the new spirit of *Gemeinschaft*, »Work« acquires for the first time a different and authentic meaning. In contrast with Marxism, the »Worker« is not merely an object of exploitation at the mercy of the ruling class. The estate of Work [*Arbeiterstand*] is not the class of those who have been expropriated and who are gearing up for universal class war. Work is neither a commodity, nor is it merely the production of goods for others. Nor is Work simply a means and occasion for earning a wage.

Instead, Work is every self-conscious activity that is performed out of Care [*Sorge*] for the *Volk* in accordance with the Will of the State. "Work" occurs everywhere that man makes use of his unfettered power of decision in order to implement a responsible Will. Thus, work *becomes* "Work" by virtue of conviction, disposition, and understanding-of-work [*Werkverständnis*]; in this way, it becomes something *Spiritual* [*Geistiges*]. Work is neither punishment nor toil; it is the prerogative of a man who is free. Consequently, animals are denied the privilege of Work.

We speak of "manual" and »intellectual labor" [*Arbeiter der Faust und Arbeiter der Stirn*] and of their common bond. This does not mean that someone who creates "spiritually" is being degraded to a "mere" "worker," since to be a worker is nothing inferior. To characterize the scholar as a »worker« is not merely a fashionable concession to the manual laborer; for the so-called mere worker has no need for such a concession.

Instead, it is by virtue of their respective vocational affiliations [*Arbeitskreis*] that peasants and craftsmen, miners and engineers, scholars and soldiers, first acquire their own rank and estate [*Rang und Stand*]. By virtue of its work, every estate is borne and led by Care [*Sorge*] for the historical vocation of the *Volk*. This vocation remains a secret. Although the secret remains hidden, the conviction and mood of the *Volk* in keeping the secret is overt: it is *awe* [*Ehrfurcht*]—the Care for the dignity and decisiveness of its essence. As a result of the *dignity* of the *Volk* and its preservation, there arises a barrier that separates what can be demanded of a *Volk* and what cannot.

Work

Volk – State – Dignity – Knowledge – Scholarship

Mission

The new spirit of the German *Volk* is not an unfocused, domineering and militaristic nationalism, but National *Socialism*. Socialism, however, does not mean merely a change in economic behavior; it does not mean a sterile egalitarianism and a glorification of those who are inadequate; socialism does not mean the indiscriminate pursuit of the common good. Instead, socialism is Care for the inner structure of the *Gemeinschaft* of the *Volk*. Thus, Socialism envisions a hierarchy that is predicated on vocation and deed [*Werk*]; it seeks dignity for every type of work and inviolable honor for the historical Dasein of the *Volk*. Now, we are

sufficiently prepared to proceed to the last section.

3. The new Task of the University

We have shown how the National Socialist Revolution produces a new German reality. And we claimed only thereby will the university return to solid ground. How? The basic character of the new spiritual-political movement that suffuses the *Volk* depends on the education and *reeducation of the Volk to the Volk by the State*. Where the most profound and general *education* is at stake, should not the initiative come from the highest school?

Certainly, the university is the locus of scientific education. Science is a preeminent form of knowledge. And science undergoes a decisive renewal when the essence of knowledge is experienced more primordially. And that is the case. As much as the words »work« and »worker« have acquired new resonance and significance, the words »knowledge« [*Wissen*] and » science« [*Wissenschaft*] have acquired new meaning.

» Science« is not the possession of a privileged class of citizens, nor should it be abused as a means of struggle in the exploitation of the so-called »working class«. No! Science is merely a more rigorous and more responsible form of knowledge that the entire *Volk* must demand and seek out in order to obtain truth and permanence for its historical Dasein.

Knowledge means: to be *equal* in decision [*Entscheidung*] and in advancing toward the task to which each is assigned, be it tilling the fields, felling a tree, inquiring about the laws of nature, or elucidating the power of history.

When it comes to knowledge, neither the extent nor the amount is decisive; what counts instead is whether knowledge has developed primordially; whether, in our knowing, we *take responsibility* for our actions and our behavior. We no longer distinguish between the »educated« and »illiterates« – not because they are same, but because our judgment *no longer depends on this distinction*. Instead, we distinguish between *true knowledge* and apparent knowledge. Both the peasant and the craftsman have genuine knowledge in their respective fields, as the scholar does in his area of expertise. Moreover, the scholar, despite all of his erudition, might still only traffic in pseudo-knowledge.

The task of the university is to educate according to the standards of the highest and most rigorous knowledge. To educate to knowledge in this way means to *teach* [*Lehren*]. Until now, the assumption has been that teaching should derive from research; however, the arbitrariness of research has made teaching aimless. [The new model should be] not research supplemented by teaching, but teaching and *through* teaching doing research. Teaching is the *more primordial* task. Thereby, teaching as education to knowledge acquires a new meaning. *Teaching* does not mean: the dissemination of arbitrarily acquired random intellectual findings.

Teaching means: *letting learn* [*Lernenlassen*]. Teaching means: to thoughtfully approximate what is essential and simple. Teaching means: letting-know [*Wissenlassen*] what

has *rank* and *necessity* and what does not. Teaching means: securing knowledge about what is essential. Teaching means: leaving aside what is *non*-essential. Teaching means: bringing students to a point where they no longer need to remain students.

Only from such teaching can true research develop: i.e., an approach to research that is aware of its limits and its necessary commitments.

This will-to-education reconnects work at the university with its primordial basis. By virtue of this approach to knowledge and this education-to-knowledge [*Wissenserziehung*], the *question* concerning how science that has become removed from life can be made worldly again. All new measures and arrangements will be predicated on this will-to-education: for example, the administrative consolidation of the educational system under the Reich Ministry of Education; the consolidation of the various German student organizations and the introduction of obligatory *Arbeitsdienst* [labor service]; the introduction of new forms of community work [*gemeinschaftlichen Arbeit*] in the individual departments and in the student aid societies [*Kameradschafthaus*].

We know: none of the tasks that I have mentioned can be performed on demand: neither today, nor tomorrow; perhaps we will realize the new university-of-the-spirit [*Hochschule des Geistes*] in 50 years.

The series of new events confronting our *Volk* is fundamentally quite simple. Simplicity, rather than the outlandish and peculiar, is the mark of greatness. Something is "great" if, after it occurs, everyone says that it is truly obvious. The *Führer* possesses certain knowledge of what is simple. He also possesses the unbreakable will to ensure its implementation.

Whoever desires to perceive greatness must himself be great; those who are small-minded see only what is small – which, of course, also always exists where greatness occurs, just as one finds shadow only where there is light.

Education of the Volk to the Volk by the State: that is the meaning of the National Socialist movement, that is the essence of the educational power of the new State [*der neuen Staatsbildung*]. Education to the highest knowledge is the task of the new university.

By means of this education, the *Volk* becomes truly self-reliant. Self-reliant *Völker* are the highest and sole guarantee of *peace;* self-reliance is committed to the manly respect of others and demands of itself the unconditional honor of the other.

Europe will only save itself from collapse [*Untergang*] and rise anew if each of its *Völker* acts out of a spirit of self-reliance and unconditional honor. *Gemeinschaft* among peoples does not need to be artificially produced by a "league"; instead, it is already *there*, primordially and enduringly.

[1] The equivalent to a high-school diploma, A levels, or IB; today's *Abitur*.

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[*] Heidegger, „Die deutsche Universität," *Reden und Andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 2000), 285-307.

The Alt-Left and Ukraine

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

In the period following the invasion of Ukraine, I began monitoring the interventions of what I'm calling the Alt-Left, having been especially struck by the behavior of *The Nation*, a periodical with which I'd been associated for many years. This account proceeds with some quotations from The Nation, DSA, and several well-known Left intellectuals, along with comments in brackets on those statements.

To begin with, two explicitly official editorials from *The Nation*'s Editorial Director and Publisher, Katrina Vanden Heuvel, set the tone for everything that followed:

"The Nation condemns the decision of Russian President Vladimir Putin to abandon the path of diplomacy by attacking and undertaking 'special military operations' in Ukraine. These actions violate international law and fuel a dangerous escalation of violence….We urge all parties to immediately cease hostilities, de-escalate, and seek a diplomatic solution to mitigate the risk of full-scale war."

And, on the Eve:

"Certainly Russia is to blame for the current crisis, by deploying such a large force within striking range of Ukraine's border and by issuing ultimatums to the West. But the West also shares responsibility by rebuffing Moscow's repeated warnings that deploying NATO forces in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania while promising Ukraine membership in the alliance posed a significant security threat to Russia."

The editorial goes on to add that "Ukrainians in the East are already suffering,"and adds that Russia "may face a [costly] prolonged guerilla war." .
It also warns that the "crisis" might be used as an excuse for "military hawks" to raise the Defense budget.

[Have so many euphemisms ever appeared in so few sentences? Putin the murderous dictator, dedicated to the re-conquest of those areas to which the USSR ceded their independence while denying that the Ukrainians are a people or a state, "abandoned diplomacy." With respect to "diplomacy" and "hostility," as well as "escalation," the wording almost explicitly puts Russia and Ukraine on the same footing. The editorials take no notice of the fact that one is an aggressor with the world's second-largest military, a large portion of which is sitting on Ukraine's border, and has already mounted two previous invasions of a sovereign state's territory.]

In a *Washington Post* op-ed (May 23rd) Vanden Heuvel doubled down on all these arguments,

adding the ugly ad hominem claim that “Before the war ends, many Ukrainians and Russians will die while Raytheon, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman make fortunes. “

From the same period, two other statements from regular contributors. First, Andrew Bacevich:

“Is the Confrontation Over Ukraine Joe Biden’s “Wag the Dog” Moment?…The people now gunning for a showdown with Putin were gunning for a showdown with Saddam Hussein two decades ago—with the same promises of a happy outcome.”

[What? Is the US President who absolutely foreswore any military engagement with the invader of a friendly nation “gunning for a showdown?” Who are “these people?”]

Then, David Bromwich:

“Russia responded to the U.S.-backed coup in Ukraine by annexing Crimea… Vladimir Putin explained that when he next visited Sebastopol, he would prefer not to be greeted by NATO sailors in the Black Sea”….and he ““clarified his demand” against the expansion of NATO,” a promise that Ukraine will not be admitted.”

[In truth, there was no “coup” in 2014: this is part of Putin’s own Big Lie, according to which Ukrainian “Nazis”orchestrated the Maidan– which lie *The Nation* has picked up on more than once. Yes, there were demonstrations and riots against the pro-Russian President. The result of the rebellion, which was preceded by two Russian invasions of Ukrainian territory, was a peaceful transition of power in which the Parliament turned against the President and fired him–which is the way parliamentary democracies get rid of leaders who’ve “lost their confidence”: cf., Teresa May, or Neville Chamberlain.

This was followed by a free and fair election resulting in the accession of Zelensky–an election in which the Nazi party received 1% of the vote; and in which “Nazi” Ukraine elected the only Jewish leader of a sovereign nation not presiding in Jerusalem.]

So, per Bromwich, Putin didn’t actually do anything wilful or destructive, but merely “responded” and “explained” and “clarified.” Emulating the O.E.D., I’ve tried to create sentences using those words. As: “The U.S. responded to 9/11 by invading Iraq. President Bush explained that Saddam Hussein shared responsibility for the attack. Colin Powell clarified for the U.N. that Iraq possessed hidden Weapons of Mass Destruction.” Indeed.]

The Nation also continued its coverage by approvingly publishing selections from a DSA statement on the invasion. DSA called on the United States to withdraw from NATO to “end the imperialist expansionism that set the stage” for the conflict. It “forcefully denounced Russia’s escalation, expressed solidarity with the working classes of Ukraine and Russia, demanded the acceptance of all refugees, and urged an immediate cease-fire and the total withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine.”

A spokesperson added that “We are a US-based socialist organization, and so our primary duty is to oppose our own militarism, our own imperialism, and broadly our own capitalist class. That’s where we have to take a hard position and to call out and recognize the role that we have escalating and fomenting and creating war around the world.”

This statement, as quoted in *The Nation*, moves From “urging” a cease-fire to “anti-imperialist dissent” to “The idea that NATO expansion is among the leading causes of the current crisis.” Thus Russia and its violence wholly disappears from view, and with it any possible understanding of “the current crisis.”

Highlighting the real-world abstractions of these slogans is the absurdity of the appeal to the “working classes of Ukraine and Russia,” as though these were minutes from a meeting of the Communist International in 1914. As the politics of barbarism advances around the world, it is surely a “duty” of any soi-disant democratic organization wherever democracy is besieged, to defend democracy as much as it usefully can. That is not in contradiction with “working to go beyond capitalism:” as is an abstention from common humanity.

Moreover, you would never know from the invocations of American imperialism as the root of this moment, that NATO was founded in 1949, and that at that time the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and half of Germany were controlled by Communist Parties backed up by Soviet forces that intervened when necessary to maintain control; or that the Soviet Union itself contained varieties of what we slightingly call “the stans” (not to forget Georgia and Chechnya) that had at various times been absorbed into the Russian Empire–or “Imperium” to use a more suggestive term.

Whatever kind of imperialism you want to call the birth of NATO, it confronted at the very least an equal and threatening imperialism: that of the Soviet Union. Let us not allow that unpleasant fact to disappear from view, as too often happens these days when critiques of “the New Cold War” manage to dispense entirely with the lived experience of European nations..

In this distribution of blame, it’s often claimed that NATO was created to block Soviet expansion. However, that’s only half of the story. It was also created–at the instigation not of Americans, but of British and French leaders, to neutralize Germany, which from the standpoint of the men who created NATO was the source of two terrible World Wars. And it succeeded. (For a thorough and factual review and chronology of NATO’s history, see ‘A Bridge Too Far’ by Fred Kaplan, in the New York Review of Books, April 7, 2022).

Nor would you know that it was not a cabal of American hawks, but rather Václav Haval and Lech Wałęsa who pleaded with President Clinton to support the entry of Eastern European nations into NATO–which he then did. Nor that NATO troops in Estonia are there expressly at the invitation of the Estonians, who along with the other Baltic states have once again been made quite aware over the past three decades of what it means to be bordered by the Russian empire–regardless of which version of authoritarianism is dedicated to expanding it.

In any event, does Putin really fear a NATO incursion in the Black Sea? None has never been even faintly threatened. In that sense there is no equivalence here. He has made plain, to anyone listening, that he desires control of Eastern Europe, and considers it Russia's right; he has called the break-up of the Soviet Union a "disaster" and Ukraine neither a "real" nation nor a "real"people. That's plain enough.

In reality, the ground of conflict here is not even NATO membership, it's the possibilities of Europeanization, which is profoundly desired by a large majority of the people of Ukraine's West, and many in the East. And in that respect, what recourse do the people of Ukraine and Moldavia and the Baltic States have against Putin's self-aggrandizing "significant security interests?" *The Nation* did not let George W. Bush get away with such officialese drivel.

To put it bluntly, *The Nation* has never had any interest in the views of the nations on Russia's border. It's as though only possession of nuclear weapons conveys equal rights to self-determination, let alone affects the question of whether democracy or tyranny is a better form of government.

In fact *The Nation* has nothing to say about Ukraine that wouldn't satisfy Putin, who has along the way "explained," as I noted above, that the break-up of the Soviet Union was a "disaster" that needs to be rectified. Is anyone at the magazine listening?

In sum, what I am calling the alt-Left is at heart still wedded to the notion that the worst ills of the world are brought about by the United States; and in particular that the U.S. rather than the Soviet Union was the primary cause of the original Cold War, and of whatever may follow the Second. In this perspective, the invasion is almost an afterthought.

To conclude this summation of the Alt-Left standpoint, here are statements from two leading Left intellectuals, the historian Jackson Lears (in the NYRB), and Noam Chomsky (in The Intercept):

Jackson Lears:

"(The) US has failed to put a cease-fire and a neutral Ukraine at the forefront of its policy agenda there…"

"It has dramatically increased the flow of weapons to Ukraine, which had already been deployed for eight years to suppress the separatist uprising in the Donbas."

"Meanwhile, the Biden administration has refused to address Russia's fear of NATO encirclement."

"US policy prolongs the war and creates the likelihood of a protracted insurgency after a Russian victory, which seems probable at this writing."

[Pity the poor Russians, facing a protracted insurgency. Sometimes intellectuals can be truly repellent.]

“How does one negotiate with any potential diplomatic partner while ignoring its security concerns? The answer, of course, is that one does not.”

And, Noam Chomsky:

“One option is to pursue the policy we are now following… to fight Russia to the last Ukrainian [cf., Afterword]. And yes, we can pursue that policy with the possibility of nuclear war. Or we can face the reality that the only alternative is a diplomatic settlement, which will be ugly — it will give Putin and his narrow circle an escape hatch…We know the basic framework is neutralization of Ukraine, some kind of accommodation for the Donbas region, with a high level of autonomy, maybe within some federal structure in Ukraine, and recognizing that, like it or not, Crimea is not on the table. You may not like it, you may not like the fact that there’s a hurricane coming tomorrow, but you can’t stop it by saying, ‘I don’t like hurricanes’ or ‘I don’t recognize hurricanes.’”

No, but then “hurricanes” aren’t determined to kill you for personal satisfaction.

Taken together, these two reflections are remarkable. As with The Nation’s positions, and DSA’s, they display no interest in the Ukraine and its inhabitants, who become just pawns in a US/Russia “New Cold War.” Who, exactly, according to Noam Chomsky, is the “you” that is supposed to be realistic about “hurricanes?” Would it not be relevant first to find out what President Zelensky thinks about this solution to the Ukrainian problem, instead of telling him what he ought to think? He was actually elected to make such decisions. And his decision, which by all accounts the mass of Ukrainians have heartily endorsed, is the one recommended by Sun Tzu many centuries ago in The Art of War, “In death ground, fight.”

But no, from all these sources the language about Russia is exculpatory. In the East, it would seem the “uprising” has been non-violent, apparently occurring without the use of weaponry or Russian assistance; and being innocently separatist despite the fact that even a majority of Russian-identified Easterners oppose separation; and are themselves being punished by the savage attacks on certain Eastern cities.

As for “neutrality,” There’s a decisive difference between being “neutral” and pleading your neutrality at the point of a gun. And it’s not our choice to make. The time to discuss the Ukraine/Russia relationship was before invading, not after. There is not one scenario in a thousand in which armed aggression was justified.

In this context, at one point Chomsky refers to the United States as a “rogue state.” I’m not going to argue about that characterization: Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, The Horn et al surely might seem to pose a problem for those Left intellectuals such as myself, who are taking the side of Ukraine; and therefore the U.S. and NATO. Either way, though, that aphorism entails

nothing about the unprovoked savaging of Ukraine by Russia. Is Russia not "a rogue state?"

In short, Putin is treated throughout all these statements from which I've quoted as though he's merely taken the wrong tack, hasn't understood the rules of the game or the stakes; let's have a do-over. And then the big Ask: the almost explicit plea to Ukraine to "cease hostilities" and "de-escalate," and "seek." In the entire world there's only one state engaging in hostilities and escalating–is self-defense against unleashed destruction escalation? How does the only person to threaten nuclear war since the expansion of nuclear weapons capability manage to get put in the same category as his victims?

Apparently all this even-handedness is justified because Russia has a "fear of encirclement"–by whom? The NATO troops in Estonia? This is the language of projection we're used to hearing from the Right. Over and over, Putin is treated as just another pursuer of "national security,' and you'd never know that he's waging a total war of imperial re-conquest in that effort. Since when has the Left deserted human values for the "realism" of international politics?

I have two concluding comments about causal and moral reasoning:

First, the trouble with going to "history" for "responsibility" is the absence of any serious thinking about causality. It might be helpful here to consult Aristotle on the difference–and distance–between "immediate causes" and "final causes." Concretely, in human affairs there's always a "before," a carpet that the previous history has been swept under.

So for Russia, Eastern Europe is supposedly a threat, and must be a cordon sanitaire against those who would use it as a stepping stone for a third invasion of Russia. But for the nations of Eastern Europe, especially the Baltic States, it's the other way around: Russia was once the occupying and totalitarian Soviet Union, and Putin seems to be an appropriate successor. And no one (except perhaps Nazi Germany) "shares" any responsibility for that.

Furthermore, with regard to Ukraine itself, it has been threatened and sometimes absorbed by the Russian empire since the 14th Century; and the worst manifestation, that still must live in the historical memories of Ukrainians today, was Stalin's decision to starve millions of Ukrainian farmers ("Kulaks") to death in 1931, in order to eliminate their opposition to collectivization.

Second, on the notion of "provocation" to which the apologists often retreat, what one commentator called the "low-hanging fruit of NATO expansion" was indeed provocative. Still, it's a serious mistake to confuse philosophical determinism, the logic of cause and effect in that one always precedes the other, with the actuality of historical determination. Nothing in human affairs had or has to happen until some actual human being or beings has made it happen.

Rather, as with the tango it takes two be provoked or aggrieved. To note a current example:

the Canadian trucker anti-vaxxers were not “provoked” by vaccine mandates, nor discriminated against in any way that would constitute grounds for a genuine grievance. They just happen to be persons who feel no obligation to accept the rule of law wherever they happen to live. As to that, Putin prefers to make his own law. Nothing compelled him to reconstitute the Soviet Empire: that is his megalomania at work. An explanation is not an excuse.

So finally it was indeed a lack of insight on the part of decision-makers not to realize the possible outcome of inviting the East European and Baltic States into NATO. But it was the right thing to do; as it turns out, not to do it would have been an open invitation to Putin to reconquer that part of the Soviet Union.

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The Right-Wing Myth of “Gender Ideology”

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

In March of 2022, Florida’s Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis signed into law the controversial “Parental Rights in Education” bill – informally known as the “Don’t Say Gay Bill.” The bill specifically prohibits “classroom instruction by school personnel or third parties on sexual orientation or gender identity…in kindergarten through grade 3 or in a manner that is not age appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards”. If violated, parents can sue for injunctive relief and may be entitled to damages. The law will take effect on July 1, 2022, and is hailed by Republican leaders as a measure to “reinforce fundamental right of parents to make decisions regarding upbringing & control of their children.” In defense of the bill, DeSantis claimed “Elementary school kids should not have woke gender ideology injected into the curriculum. That is inappropriate, that’s not what we want in our school system” (CBS News Miami, 2022). Former US President and Republic heavy weight Donald Trump vocalized his support at the 2022 Faith and Freedom Coalition’s annual conference, stating “Pushing woke gender ideology, woke gender ideology, think of it, on young people is nothing less than child abuse. No teacher should be allowed to teach transgender to our children without parents’ consent” (in Rupar, 2022).

Likening trans-affirming education and care to child abuse is not new. In February 2022, Texas Governor Greg Abbot (2022) issued a letter to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), where he claimed that trans affirming care constituted child abuse. He then called on the DFPS to open child abuse investigations against parents who provide gender-affirming care to their transgender children. This mandate has been upheld by the Texas Supreme Court and to date, is actively being executed. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton (2022) has called these efforts “a win for families against the gender ideology of doctors, big pharma, clinics trying to ‘trans’ confused, innocent children.”

While ‘gender ideology’ tropes may be new in U.S. political discourse, it has a long history of being used to mobilize along political lines. For more than two decades, anti-gender camps have leveraged ‘gender ideology’ rhetoric to delegitimize, thwart, and reverse feminist and LGBTQ+ rights. Anti-genderism, as it is commonly understood among academic circles, is a global phenomenon that emerged in the mid-1990’s in direct response international policy that embraced to new understandings of gender, sex, and sexuality as socially and culturally constructed (Corredor, 2019). Resistance to feminist and LGBTQ+ social movements is not new, and conservative politicians and religious organizations have regularly organized to oppose their agendas and challenge their progress over the decades. Anti-genderism and its ‘gender ideology’ rhetoric, however, is distinct in that it is an explicit counter to the epistemological turn within feminist and queer discourse and to attempts among feminists to reconceptualize and operationalize gender into international policy.

Anti-genderism

Genesis

The first mobilization against gender and sexuality as social constructs emerged at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, where feminist and lesbian activists proposed a new definition of gender to be included in the Conference's Declaration and Platform for Action. The proposed definition read gender as "the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are socially determined. Gender is related to the way in which we are perceived, in the way we are expected to think and act as women and men, according to the way d society is organized and not by our biological differences" (in Alzamora Revoredo, 2003, p. 472). The Declaration and Platform for Action draft also included multiple mentions and protections for bi- and homosexual women. The Vatican – which is a Permanent Observer at the UN – openly opposed the new definition and the inclusion of sexual rights. It argued for definitions of gender to be grounded in "biological-sexual identity, male or female" and to omit "dubious interpretations based on wide-spread conceptions, which affirm that sexual identity can adapt indefinitely, to accommodate new and different purposes" (Glendon, 1996). In the end, the Vatican was successful. The proposed definition of gender as a social construct, as well as all mentions of sexual orientation and sexual rights, were eliminated from the comprehensive roadmap on global women's rights and empowerment.

In the years following, the Vatican manufactured the term 'gender ideology' to vilify feminist and LGBTQ+ evolving definitions of gender. In 2003, the Pontifical Council for the Family published its *Lexicon: Ambiguous and Debatable Terms regarding Family Life and Ethical Questions*, a compendium of articles that clarifies the Holy See's stance on issues concerning family and life. Here it claimed that so-called gender ideology was responsible for erasing differences between men and women, promoting homosexuality, and inciting gender confusion. 'Gender ideology' was said to be an "ideological aggression against girls and women" (Rice Hasson, 2019) that is rooted in the "rejection of the family" and motherhood (Alzamora Revoredo, 2003, p. 475), and promotes "abortion…homosexuality, lesbianism and all the other forms of sexuality outside of marriage" (Alzamora Revoredo, 2003, p. 465).

Anti-"Gender Ideology" Mobilizations

Over the next few years, conservative civil society groups and politicians across Europe – particularly those operating in Catholic dominated countries – leveraged Vatican discourse on gender to challenge domestic feminist and LGBTQ+ policy. The 'gender ideology' framed served as "symbolic glue" (Brustier, 2015) for a whole host of issues culled from a diverse constellation of social and political theories and policy agendas. In France, Italy, Croatia, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Germany, Austria, and Slovakia, programs and legislation that sought to enhance gender and sexual equality – such as increased access to abortion, same sex marriage, reproductive rights for LGBTQ+ persons, and the revamping of

sex education programs – faced significant resistance and, in many cases, were abandoned.

Such opposition was not limited to national politics. In 2011, the Council of Europe introduced a human rights document entitled the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, which today is commonly known as the Istanbul Convention. The agreement aims to "protect women against all forms of violence, and…contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women" (Council of Europe, 2011, p. 2). Within the text, gender is defined as "socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men" (ibid, , p. 3). This definition caused uproar among right-wing governments, who claimed that the convention promotes 'gender ideology' (Berthet, 2022). Some states, which had ratified the convention, have since withdrawn, including Bulgaria and Turkey. Others outright refuse to sign, like Slovakia and Hungary.

By 2015, other religious and conservative forces outside of the Catholic Church emerged as major players in anti-gender campaigns. Latin America is a prime example, where the conservative evangelicals have played a key role in thwarting feminist and LGBTQ+ policy. In September of 2016, tens of thousands of protestors mobilized in Mexico to oppose so-called gender ideology in sex education curriculums in public schools and same-sex marriage. Right-wing populist parties have also used gender ideology rhetoric as a political platform, as seen in presidential campaigns of Costa Rica's Alvarado Muñoz and Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro in 2018.

In August of 2016 in Colombia, anti-gender campaigns derailed a national program aimed to curbing bullying against LGBTQ+ youth in public schools. The national program was developed in partnership with the United Nations and sought to provide teachers and school administrators with tools to support LGBTQ+ students. Led by both Catholic and evangelical forces, hundreds of thousands of protestors took the streets across the county claiming that the program constituted 'gender ideology.' The pressure campaign was successful, and the program was scrapped.

Just two months later, another anti-gender campaign emerged, this time around Colombia's 2016 peace agreement which was set to end 52 years of violent civil war with the country's longest standing guerrilla group known as the FARC. The peace agreement included an extensive gender perspective, which explicitly stated that women and LGBTQ+ communities must be taken into consideration during the transition from war to peace and in the rebuilding of a peaceful Colombia. Opposition against the peace agreement's gender perspective was led primarily by conservative evangelical leaders and politicians who claimed that 'gender ideology' had infiltrated the peace agreement and was promoting "a new anthropology of being, which ignores sexual distinction and denies the difference and reciprocity between men and women" (Castaño Díaz et al., 2016, p. 1). Oppositions did not view the gender perspective as a matter of equality but rather as a surreptitious attempt to "redesign [Colombia's] legal system, the family, marriage, the right to life and religious freedom" (Semana, 2016). The anti-

gender campaigns joined forces with other opponents of the peace agreement, and initially they were successful. In October of 2016, the public voted against the adoption of the peace agreement and negotiators were forced to go back and revise the text. The peace agreement was passed through senate just a few months later with the gender perspective intact (Corredor, 2021); nonetheless, the anti-gender campaigns, which had taken the nation by surprise, shook women's and LGBTQ+ peacebuilding movements worldwide.

"Gender Ideology" as Ontological and Epistemic Violence

As seen in the discussion above, "gender ideology" as a rhetorical mobilizer has been incredibly successful around the globe. It is a powerful empty signifier "capable of adjusting to different national contexts and different sexual issues" (Garbagnoli, 2016, p. 201). Its flexibility allows anti-gender camps to garner support from multiple sites of resistance, demonstrating not just it's national organizing power, but also its transnational and discursive might.

Yet 'gender ideology' rhetoric is more than a mobilizing tool used to contain policy developments associated with feminist and queer agendas; it is first and foremost an epistemological and ontological response to emancipatory claims about sex, gender, and sexuality (Corredor 2019). It serves to misrepresent and ultimately reduce a wide range of complex and emancipatory theories on gender, biological sex, and sexuality and distil them into a single, fabricated ideology/theory that threatens the heteronormative family, innocent children, the nation, and civilized moral order.

These camps insist on a stable and predictably correlated relationship between biological sex, gender identity, and heterosexual orientation (which the Vatican sees as the one and only natural unity of mind, body, and soul). These principles are then used to "Other" those who do not conform to patriarchal, heteronormative, and cis-gender standards. In other words, anti-genderism aims to exert ontological power in their effort to control the narrative around how we define and understand gender, sex, and sexuality. This in turn is used to construct an imagined past and future rooted in traditional social and moral order. Anti-genderism and it's 'gender ideology' are also a form of epistemic violence. The assertion of a single inflexible "truth" contingent on marginalization regularly denies the lived realities of those that they "Other."

Take the Heritage Foundation's as an example. This U.S.-based conservative think-tank that has incredible influence over national public policy, regularly publishes on issues of 'gender ideology' and 'transgender ideology.'[1] Between 2018-2021, the Foundation published 139 commentaries (similar to blog posts) on gender. The vast majority of these commentaries focus on transgender issues as they pertain to U.S. policy issues, such as gender-neutral bathrooms, transgender athletes, and workplace discrimination. In line with anti-gender groups around the globe, the Heritage Foundation regularly distorts and oversimplifies the complex theoretical debates within feminist and transgender studies around gender, the body, and sexuality. It also habitually engages in 'Othering' of trans people by using a discourse that associates transgender identity with deviance and dehumanization. After reviewing and coding all 139

commentaries, my preliminary findings show that the most common ways trans people were 'Othered' is by portraying them as either victims of mental illness who need to be fixed (and thus can return to 'normalcy') or as sexual predators in disguise, (aka people to be feared). At the core of these interpretations is a refusal to acknowledge the lived experience of trans communities as real and legitimate. In other words, the Heritage Foundation's language denies their experiences and seeks erasure of the transgender individuals. This is not only apparent in their portrayals of transgender experiences, but also in their language, where they strictly use of the term 'biological male' when referring to transwomen and/or non-binary individuals who were born male (as opposed to their preferred pronouns and gender identity).

Concluding Remarks

As 'gender ideology' discourse takes hold in the U.S., we must remember that this is not simply a political strategy wielded to gain media attention nor a merely populist tactic to garner votes. Anti-genderism and its 'gender ideology' rhetoric ultimately serves to "delegitimise feminist and LGBTQ studies and struggles and to reaffirm that sexual norms transcend historical and political arrangements" (2016, p. 187). In their attempt to assert epistemological and ontological control over the meanings of sex, gender, and sexuality, anti-gender camps try to not only shore up an existing social order or the *status quo ante,* but also to endorse an imagined future rooted in exclusions and repression, whereby women's rights would exist only in a space of victimization and subordination, and LGBTQ+ communities – particularly trans individuals – would remain invisible.

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[1] University of Pennsylvania’s *2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report*, which that ranks leading global think tanks in a variety of categories, ranked the Heritage Foundation #1 out of 86 in “Best Use of Social Media and Netowrks;” #1 out of 65 in “Think Tanks with the Best Use of the Internet;” and #2 out of 92 in “Best Advocacy Campaign.” It was also recognized as the 2017-2019 winner of the category entitled “Think Tanks with the Most Significant Impact on Public Policy Center of Excellence for 2017-2019.”

The Novel in Ireland and the Language Question: Joyce's Complex Legacy

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The undiminished impact of Joyce in world literature, as well as the great critical and commercial popularity of contemporary Irish fiction, can blind us to the fact that the novel has an uneasy place in the Irish literary tradition. For more than a century, Irish fiction has enjoyed popularity and esteem on the world literary stage out of all proportion to the size of the country's population. But whereas in poetry and drama one can easily discern relationships and lineages amongst Irish writers, and identify shared concerns, influences, and practices shaping their work, it is very difficult to describe the contours of "the Irish novel" or to account, collectively, for its success. There is very little, on the surface, to connect the linguistic experimentation of Anna Burns' *Milkman*, the satirical comedy of Claire Kilroy or Paul Murray, the unadorned, quasi-didactic prose of Sally Rooney, and the vernacular flights of Patrick McCabe. It is harder still to perceive a clear connection between contemporary Irish novelists and their pioneering forebears in the twentieth century. Moreover, while Irish novels continue to win prizes and acclaim, and abroad Ireland is viewed as a veritable fiction factory, in the Irish popular imagination at home, in a way unimaginable in France, England, the United States, or Italy, the emblematic image of "the writer" has stubbornly remained (or at least did until very recently) that of a poet or a playwright rather than a novelist.

Leopold Bloom sees a woman, but the tram blocks his view in *Ulysses*

The sense that there is something un-Irish about the novel has a long and concrete history. A Marxist analysis considers that the toxic socio-economic relations which prevailed under colonial rule made it impossible for a robust tradition of novelistic realism, with its plots of social reconciliation and development of individual sympathy, to take root in nineteenth-century Ireland. An Irish *Middlemarch* or *Buddenbrooks* or *Comédie humaine* was simply an impossibility: it was a society unintelligible in those terms. Even though – an argument which has been made persuasively in recent years – the nineteenth-century Irish novel offers riches which have been overlooked, it remains the case that the Irish models whom Joyce responded to or the Irish rivals he competed with in his mind were not novelists, but rather poets and playwrights; compare this with his fellow modernist novelists, Woolf and Proust, who found predecessors and competitors in, respectively, Dickens and George Eliot, Balzac and Flaubert.

None of the emblematic works of the Irish Revival took the form of the novel. It was a revolution of playwrights, poets, critics, and intellectuals – not of novelists (and this was overwhelmingly the case, almost a century later, of the Field Day movement of the 1980s and 90s). Joyce's adoption of the novel as his chief form of expression was in itself a statement of distance from the Revivalists. But, like an architect who buys and renovates old houses, Joyce

had to re-invent the genre from the ground up in order to make it fit for his ambitious Irish purposes. Starting with Joyce, the landmark contributions Ireland went on to make to the novel form, were very often tricksy, form-breaking works which dazzled and awed but did not easily admit of a response, or heirs, even of imitation. Unlike poetry and drama, the landscape of the modern Irish novel does not present mappable mountain ranges, but rather sporadic, sudden peaks of inimitable originality which tower and glitter in isolation on a plain.

There are many brilliant Irish novels, but no obvious tradition of "the Irish novel".

Leopold Bloom eats a gorgonzola sandwich in *Ulysses*

This cannot be attributed to external material conditions, since it has persisted through vastly different economic cycles in Ireland. Nor can we consider it be a quality inherent to the genre of the novel itself, since in other places – Latin America, Italy, France, North America, etc. – one can readily trace clear, self-conscious lineages, schools, traditions and counter-traditions amongst novelists.

I am referring here to Irish novels written in English (or, in the case of Beckett, French). However, one way to understand the puzzling nature of the novel in Ireland might be to look at the minor strain of what Thomas Kinsella called the "dual tradition" – the novel in the Irish (Gaelic) language. Modern Irish, amongst the many struggles it faces as an endangered language, has always had an overtly troubled relationship with the novel form. In his seminal study of the subject, "An tÚrscéal nár tháinig", ["The novel that never came"], Cathal Ó hÁinle shows that over the course of the seventeenth century, romances and tale collections in Irish were developing along the same lines as those in other European languages, becoming less formulaic and florid, de-emphasizing the fantastical and the miraculous, gradually taking on continuous narrative frames and centering individual psychological motivation.[1] It looked like a language whose literature was headed, like its western European siblings, for the novel. This organic development was prematurely cut short for material reasons arising from colonialism: lack of access to the printing press, exclusion of Irish-speakers from institutions of higher learning, the absence of a bourgeoisie literate in the language. In the eighteenth century, when the novel was starting to boom in other European languages, Irish, although still widely spoken, was falling rapidly out of use as a written medium. By the middle of the nineteenth century, even though Irish counted several millions of native speakers, literacy in the language had become a rarity. Other than occasional political or religious tracts, the only literary production was in the form of song, verse, and folklore. The result was that the only novels written in Ireland were in English. Two of the most popular novelists of nineteenth-century Ireland, William Carleton (1794-1869) and Charles Kickham (1828-1922) were native speakers of Irish, but it never occurred to them to write in their native language; even if they had, there would have been few able to read what they wrote.

Nineteenth-century Ireland was a diglossic society in the throes of a rapid and traumatic language shift. The now rarely written Irish language, as Margaret Kelleher and others have shown, haunted the fiction that Irish writers were producing in English. But it was always a

force external to narrative voice, unassimilable to the novelistic world (in the words of Tom Dunne, the Irish novel in English "could draw attention to, but not fully integrate, the Gaelic dimension that made Ireland exotic and interesting for English readers").[2]

With the nationalist language movement at the close of the nineteenth century, Irish began a second, revived life as a written literary medium. By 1922, the restoration of the language was one of the two key aims of the newly independent state; Irish was compulsory in schools, required for many government jobs, and a central part of official national life. Now that it was being acquired in schools and universities, literacy in the language became common. Irish was the object of utopian hopes in the new state, including literary ones. It was also beset with problems. Irish had survived as a native language only in a variety of highly divergent dialects, and even though it was being written and read more than perhaps at any other time in its history, it did not have a stable written standard with which all speakers could identify.

In my book, *Languages of the Night*, I argued that the ragged, unstable character of the language in the early twentieth century, and its complicated relationship to daily speech, turned out to offer a unique and valuable medium for modern poets.[3] Post-independence Irish, however, could not lend itself to fiction in the same way, producing an odd situation whereby poetry has been the dominant mode in modern Irish-language literature, not just in volume of output but also in impact and influence. This imbalance has been a source of explicit worry and complaint within the Irish-speaking cultural establishment. It is not that there were no novels in Irish: there were a number of true masterpieces produced during the twentieth century, but these felt like the exceptions rather than the rule. The frustration about the Irish-language novel stems rather from a bafflement the novel had remained inexplicably peripheral to the project of Gaelic literature. Novels in Irish existed in isolation rather than being part of a recognizable, ongoing "tradition" – quite unlike the situation in modern Gaelic poetry which had schools, generations, rivalries, and a recognizable economy of influence, interpretation, and interaction.[4]

The problem for the Gaelic novel after independence was no longer material conditions – there was a large pool of middle-class readers, a captive audience in schoolchildren following a set national curriculum, and substantial state support for publishing in Irish. The trouble was at least in part a sociolinguistic issue, a set of narratological difficulties thrown up by the way the language had survived. There are only a few, small communities where Irish remains the spontaneous language of everyday interactions. The challenges created by this situation for the creation of a fictional universe – who, in real life, speaks Irish to whom and when – are in evidence in Irish-language television drama, where writers come up with a variety of different devices to explain the fact that characters are speaking to each other in Irish rather than English. The same challenges are apparent in a different way in the Irish-language novel – and they illuminate aspects of the novel itself, as a genre, which are present but much harder to detect in major languages.

Chief among these is the relationship between narrative, literary language, and socio-economic class. The novel as exemplified by Austen, Dickens, Eliot, and Balzac, is the genre of *change*, of

moving from rags to riches, and, in parallel with this alteration in material circumstance, social and psychological transformation. In colonial situations this process often has an explicit linguistic component. In *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1981), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o describes the function English – as opposed to what was called "vernacular", in his case the Gikuyu language – had in the Kenya of his youth: "English became *the* main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education … English was the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom."

This linguistic dynamic is not confined to colonies or post-colonies. Less explicit versions of it are an essential structural feature of novels even in the most metropolitan contexts. Oliver Twist, brought up in workhouses, brothels, and criminal dens, inexplicably speaks the Queen's English, whereas those around him, who share the same upbringing – the Artful Dodger, Charley Bates, Nancy, Bill Sikes, Fagin – all speak a colourful cockney. Through his respectable speech, the novel is letting us know that Oliver's inner self is already at odds with the social class he has been born into, and that his rise into another class is inevitable; the plot will match him up with his appropriate linguistic sphere.

The key point is that this sphere is not just that of certain respectable characters in *Oliver Twist*. It is also the language of the novel's narrating voice; the language, by implication, of the reader to whom the story is being told. Oliver is one of *us*, he speaks *our* language. When plot removes him from those who speak marked, proletarian forms of English and delivers him to Mr. Brownlow, it is returning him to *us*, to the linguistic regime of the novel and of the bourgeoisie.

Oliver Twist is a particularly extreme demonstration of the way in which the novel is, linguistically as well as otherwise, the genre of the middle classes. The more normal (and realistic) version of this, of course, is for the protagonist to have started out life speaking a proletarian variety and to have exchanged it for the standard in parallel with his or her rise into a higher class. This concomitant linguistic and socio-economic transformation is necessary for the novel to be narrated at all: the protagonist must learn the language and attitudes of the bourgeoisie in order to tell their story intelligibly. In the classic novel of social advancement, we rarely hear much of the way the protagonist used to speak before their elevation. They address us, the reader, in the bourgeois standard; they have moved into "our" implied social sphere and speak to us from there. Their new language allies them with us, the readers, and emphasizes the clear water they have now put between themselves and the humble origins they are telling us about, whose language is, for them, now forgotten.

This socioeconomic connection between plot and language is more starkly visible in Italian fiction where there is a clear binary between "dialect" and standard. In countless works of modern Italian prose, from the stories of Verga to the novels of Fenoglio, conversations that are reported to have happened in dialect are retroactively "dubbed" for us by the narrator into standard Italian. A particularly telling example – because the movement from dialect to standard Italian is a key component of its plot – is Elena Ferrante's four-volume Bildingsroman, *L'amica geniale* (2011-2014) (often called the *Neapolitan Novels* in English).

Ferrante's long novel of social ascent begins with an impoverished childhood in a deprived neighbourhood in 1950s Naples, where, we are told, the family and neighbours speak Neapolitan, ("dialect"), and Italian is a foreign language that only those with some schooling have mastered. All of the dialogue from this world, however, is rendered for the reader in standard Italian, with just the occasional tag "*disse in dialetto*", "he/she said in dialect", or "*disse in italiano*" to let us know what language the characters were "really" speaking. In fact, across the four volumes of this novel, there is barely a single word of dialect. The language of the protagonist's proletarian childhood has been translated for us.

The effect of this strategy is naturally not visible in English translation. In the original Italian, however, it is an unavoidable reminder that, now that the narrator has entered the social class that writes novels, the world of her working-class childhood is accessible only indirectly, its language has been effaced. As in *Oliver Twist*, the protagonist's voice can speak to us only in the middle-class, educated standard, which we are presumed to share. The language of Ferrante's novel is the sign of the outcome of its plot: the protagonist has left the proletariat and its language for the middle class. The absence of dialect in the narrating voice is thus part of the novel's meaning (this is one of the reasons why the television adaptation, in which, naturally, we can hear whether characters are speaking Italian or dialect, is in some respects a wholly different work).

A linguistic trajectory like this one is impossible to conceive of in Irish. No middle-class register exists in the Irish language for a protagonist to acquire as she climbs a social ladder, no lower-class dialect or accent for her to abandon and erase. There are many varieties within Irish, but they are regional inflections, not class gradations. Every form of native Irish reflects, by necessity, the speech of a particular, geographically locatable rural community. There is no bourgeois idiom of native Irish: one can be more or less local in one's speech, or more or less idiomatic, but one cannot sound posher or déclassé (without importing English words).

This imposes huge constraints on the Irish-language novelist, and the major achievements of modern Irish-language fiction have usually come about because of these constraints rather than in spite of them. Flann O'Brien's *An Béal Bocht* (1941), [*The Poor Mouth*, (1973)], for example, feels uncomfortably, if hilariously, like a novel about the impossibility of writing a novel in Irish at all. It is written in a mixture of dialects; characters spout chunks of Revival Irish which no person would ever naturally utter; some of the dialogue is meaningless unless back-translated into English. The novel's plot proceeds as though the scattered enclaves of Irish-speaking Ireland – pockets in reality hundreds of miles apart – were a single, contiguous territory. The novel, this is to say, rearranges the physical geography of Ireland in accordance with the ideology and hopes of the language movement. This imaginary topography is illustrated in a frontispiece of the novel ("The Big Wide World as seen by the People of Corca Dorcha").

In this way, the novel highlights the enormous gap between the fragmented, isolated geography of the Irish-speaking world and the territory and market towns which can host the plots of Eliot or Hardy:

“The Old Grey Fellow was in Dingle one day buying tobacco, when he heard news which amazed him. He did not believe it because he did not trust the people of that town. The next day he was in the Rosses and heard the same news from them there; he then gave half-credence to the story, but still did not believe it fully. He was in Galway city on the third day and the story had got there before him.” [my translation]

Even though the novel’s overriding tone is one of sharp satire, there is also a hint of longing in the way O’Brien’s parody evokes a counter-factual Gaelic utopia in which there would be a large, varied, cohesive Irish-speaking territory; he is showing what would be needed for it to be possible to build a novelistic world in Irish – the map of what kind of real-life linguistic territory could carry a Gaelic *Middlemarch*.

Máirtín Ó Cadhain’s *Cré na Cille* (1949) is widely considered to be the greatest work of modern prose fiction in the Irish language. Like *An Béal Bocht*, it is a novel whose set-up seems deliberately to evoke the impossibility of conceiving of a realist fictional world in Irish. For a start, *Cré na Cille* consists entirely of dialogue (avoiding the problem of a neutral-sounding written standard). Moreover, all of this dialect is uttered by corpses buried in a graveyard squabbling and gossiping amongst themselves. These characters are going nowhere, in all possible senses of the term, yet right from its first lines the novel insists on social climbing as its principal narrative preoccupation. The opening sentences is a pointed satire on the great question that shapes realist fiction from Dickens to Ferrante: that of where on the social ladder one will “end up”:

“I wonder am I buried in the Pound Plot or the Fifteen-Shilling plot? The devil possessed them if they buried me in the Half-Guinea plot …” [my translation]

Narrative suspense comes in the form of fresh corpses being lowered into the earth who are bombarded with questions as soon as they arrive. What Ó Cadhain’s dead want to learn from them, however, is not the outcome of the Second World War, or descriptions of thrilling new technologies, but obsessive questions related to their own place on the socio-economic ladder: the amount of money collected at their funeral mass, how much was spent on their wake, and, especially, the size and cost of headstones that lie above them. It is a novel of social striving and ambition in a situation where this is absurdly futile. One of the voices in the graveyard is a woman called Dotie from an Irish-speaking area on the other side of Galway, where she says the land is better and the customs of the people more gracious and the Irish more refined. Dotie’s repeated encomiums to her home place, and her bitter regret at having come down in the world to be buried where she is, provide yet another parodic gesture on the novel’s part towards the plots of development and change that are no longer possible in the Irish-speaking world. The extraordinary linguistic richness of the language used in *Cré na Cille* (the reason for its unparalleled status in Irish-language prose) is in contrast with Dotie’s imaginary linguistic snobbery: she harps on the supposed superiority of her east Galway dialect over that of the local corpses, remarking that her people have more elegant ways of saying a host of things, from “prophesy” to “fire-irons”. The effect is to highlight the fact that the Irish language is in truth a medium incapable of registering social difference, that its internal variety can be used

to dazzling effect, but cannot indicate gradations of social class.

Leopold Bloom enters Davy Byrne's Pub in *Ulysses*

The limitations which the Irish-language novelist has to work around (with, as is the way with literary constraints, some spectacular results) are a consequence of writing in a small, embattled language. Nonetheless, something of the same predicament as it relates to social class also applies to the Irish novel in English. Starting in the late nineteenth century, and then with increasing intensity through to the middle of the twentieth, Irish writers were expected to grapple, in some shape or form, with the "language question", and were thus faced with a linguistic choice which their counterparts from other parts of the English-speaking world did not. For most of them, of course, writing in Irish was not an option, since they did not know the language well enough or even at all; nonetheless, every writer was considered obliged to make some sort of implicit acknowledgement of their decision: to write in English was still to not write in Irish. More importantly, they had to find a way to write in not-Irish, come up with a form of English that offered in itself a justification for itself. In drama and poetry there were many options available, including a myriad of ways to write in a form of English that longed for Irish: in drama, Hibernicised vernacular dialogue in the manner of Synge and O'Casey, in which Gaelic syntax and rhythms were palpable; in poetry, lyrical language infused with the Gaelic poetic tradition; and so on.

But in the novel there was no easy answer. What kind of English was available for narration that not sound like foreign standard imported from abroad? What tone could be struck that would sound both unmarked and Irish at the same time? The English of the regime of the novel – the "high" bourgeois standard – had and still has no comfortably native-feeling version in Ireland. Middle-class English has always felt to some extent artificial and inauthentic in Ireland, not a tool fit for artistic purposes. During the apogee of modernism, novelists in other places, such as Woolf, or Proust, created singular, signature prose styles *within* the standard language. No major Irish writer (with the possible exception of Elizabeth Bowen) has felt able to do the same with standard English, because to write the standard, even if it does not sound like an imitation of England, risks sounding contrived or stuffy, a language of bureaucracy and journalism rather than fiction.

What was distinctive about Irish modernist prose in English was not the forging of new styles but rather the development of a relationship to style and idiom as things to be manipulated and deployed at will. This is perceptible even in a writer as early and as apparently disconnected from Ireland as Oscar Wilde. Unlike Yeats, Wilde never cultivated agrand style of his own; instead, he developed a method of staging style itself. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, while the scandalous paradoxes of the dialogue sparkle and seduce, and while the outrageously allegorical plot certainly engages the reader, the narrative voice which recounts the story is curiously blank and colorless, sounding at times almost embarrassed at the banality of its job. Wilde's understanding of the literary possibilities of style takes a leap forward in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), in which the characters and the plot do not produce style

but are produced by it.

Although Joyce had a vexed and still debated attitude to the Gaelic revival, all of his work was thoroughly affected, right from his earliest essays through to the final experiments of *Finnegans Wake*, by the ideology of the language movement. The oft-quoted postcolonial predicament in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) in which Stephen Dedalus reflects during a conversation with an English priest that "the language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine" has a closely related socio-economic component too, in the sense that English in its standard written form feels to an Irish writer like something acquired, borrowed, pretentious, even imposed – even for writers who do not know the Irish language at all.

This is part of the background to Joyce's adoption and realization of the possibilities of free indirect style, whereby an apparently objective narrative voice is shaped and coloured by the world-view and diction of the character being talked about (the example often given is the first line of 'The Dead': 'Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet,' where 'literally' is something Lily herself would say, even though she is not actually speaking). For Joyce, free indirect style was not just a technique. It was the key to part of what he wanted to achieve in *Dubliners*, because it shows enacts the fact that language and material reality are inseparable. There is no external reality or register available within the stories for Joyce's Dubliners to elevate themselves into, no bird's eye view available outside from which to survey their own circumstances. Their economic, cultural, and political environment is woven into the very fabric of thought and language, into the possibility of narrating it at all.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, similarly, although it is a novel of change and development, does not have a single style or voice, but rather several different ones, according to the age and circumstances of the protagonist. This method is developed to its extreme logic in *Ulysses*, a work without a style, but which rather works as a machine which internalizes and then showcases a dizzying gallery of linguistic manners, registers, idioms, and rhetorical cloaks in order to generate its meaning and situate Ireland in the broader world.

Even in their most straightforward narrative moments, both *Ulysses* and *Portrait* are predicated upon the impossibility of an Irish novel having a single "native" idiom which a writer might adapt and stretch for all of his purposes, as Yeats did in his poetry, or as Proust or Woolf did in their novels. There is no natural or native idiom in *Ulysses* from which the pastiche departs; as in *Portrait*, the style is the content.

Stephen Dedalus smashes a lamp while imagining his mother's ghost in *Ulysses*

This linguistic uncertainty that stalks – and enlivens – Irish fiction in English is in great measure what is really being referred to in the commonplace that all Irish novelists write in the shadow of Joyce. It might even be more accurate to think less of a shadow cast by Joyce himself and more of the original, decolonizing "language question", having being refracted and amplified by Joyce's work, continuing to exert its troubling influence and productive

constraints.

The linguistic strategies of some of the best-known Irish novels in English from the past thirty years offer ample evidence for this: first-person narratives in spoken, more or less dialectal idioms (Patrick McCabe's *The Butcher Boy*, or his recent novel-in-verse, *Poguemehone*; Roddy Doyle's use of Dublin dialogue to carry the narration; Kevin Barry's wry, at times Beckettian tone). These represent forms of the novel which are at their heart dramatic monologues and in some respects have more in common with the theatre of Synge or Friel or O Casey than with the novels of Zola or Dickens. In circumstances where a non-standard, working-class or rural dialect cannot plausibly work for the narrative voice, novelists routinely avoid the standard by taking recourse to artificially distorted forms of English. The many examples of this strategy include Emer McBride's *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* or Mike McCormack's *Solar Bones*. Perhaps the most remarkable and inventive example of this in the twenty-first century is Anna Burns' *Milkman*, in which the narrative, including dialogue from Belfast in the 1970s, is given to us in a weird, schoolroomy language that no-one ever spoke. Burns' novel leaves the reader with an uncanny feeling of reading a work in translation, something which heightens the sense of an unbridgeable gap with the world being narrated, a traumatic reality accessible only indirectly, part of the subject matter of the novel itself.

There is still no sense of ownership amongst Irish writers of the high register of written English. What writers and readers expect from Irish prose in English is linguistic fireworks. This is not true elsewhere. We have seen the example of Ferrante, where dialect, though mentioned constantly, is never transcribed in the text itself. In France, the novels of Édouard Louis and Annie Ernaux, which similarly narrate stories of social ascent from the provincial French proletariat to the high bourgeois circles of Paris intellectuals, refer to the fact that *patois* was spoken around the protagonists in their childhood, but it is wholly absent from the narrative voice.

This Joyce-effect can also be detected operating in reverse in another, equally successful strain of contemporary Irish writing, in novelists, who, whether consciously or otherwise, wish to free their work from the Irish expectation of style as meaning, and go to great lengths to avoid style at all, carefully avoiding any hint of linguistic spectacle, vernacular enchantment, or stylistic trickery, almost as though these things were a dangerously prolific species, which, once let in, would over-run the work entirely. This carefully wrought style-lessness is an art in itself, the flip-side of Burns or McCabe or McBride. The novels of Sally Rooney, for example, are rooted in classic novelistic questions of class conflict and aspiration, but in Rooney's work, these issues are not registered through stylistic strategies. Instead, they are outsourced, as it were, into explicit, themed conversations and debates amongst the characters themselves. The spoken idioms of the novels' social and geographical hinterlands (Sligo, Dublin etc.) are barely present; the class differences on which the plots hinge are not registered at the level of language. The style of both narration and dialogue is homogenous and neutral, and include long passages of sober epistolary exchange in which linguistic flourish would not be expected to appear. Nor does Rooney attempt, however, to forge a signature style in high, standard English. Her artistry is instead in montage, in the way one scene cuts to another, temporal and

locational jumps; it is as though there is a suspicion that style itself is an easy, falsifying trick, a preoccupation evidenced by its scrupulous absence. In this way, surprising though it may seem, Rooney, too, is still, in her way, writing not-Irish.

Irish novelists do continue to write under the sign of Joyce, but only indirectly. For contemporary Irish novelists, Joyce himself is not, it seems to me, either a model who is being slavishly followed nor an overbearing parent who must be slain. Rather, what looks like an inescapable entanglement with Joyce on the part of Irish writers, is really the long, lingering after-effects of the language question itself. The Irish language, pushed in its native form ever further to the margins of Irish society, increasingly confined to classrooms and hobbyists, barely known or consciously regarded by the great majority of Irish writers, nonetheless remains a sort of dark matter invisibly shaping the Irish novel in English, a silent source of energy which gives it much of its otherwise inexplicable power in the world.

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[1] In *Promhadh Pinn* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1978).

[2] *Culture and Society in Ireland Since 1752: Essays in honour of Gearóid O Tuathaigh* (Dublin: Lilliput, 2015)

[3] *Languages of the Night: Minor Languages and the Literary Imagination in 20th-century Ireland and Europe* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2015)

[4] In the twenty-first century, Irish-language fiction has continued to expand in quantity and range, and could in some respects be considered to be flourishing; nonetheless, the fact that a conference in Dublin in 2015 set out deliberately to establish a “canon” of Irish-language novels suggests in itself that it was hard to feel an instinctive sense of a coherent, interactive tradition.

“You’ll Come with Me”: Humans and Animals in Times of War

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Many are the phenomena that can light the path towards the emancipation of oppressed beings. Among them, there are sometimes processes that society spontaneously generates, and that can develop in unexpected circumstances. Something of this kind is happening now. The circumstance is war, and the oppressed beings are nonhuman animals.

Pen Farthing and the Flight from Kabul

Paul “Pen” Farthing is a British former Royal Marine sergeant, who was deployed to Afghanistan in 2006.[1]

During that period, Farthing broke up an organized fight between two dogs in the town of Nowzad. One of the dogs, with no ears and no tail, started following him, creeping into the compound and into his life. After the end of his deployment, Farthing planned to and succeeded in bringing him to UK, after naming him Nowzad because he was battered and scarred just like the town.[2]

This experience inspired Farthing to create a charity called Nowzad Dogs, with the aim of reuniting servicemen after their return home with the dogs and cats who had befriended them.[3] The charity, besides advocating animal welfare in Afghanistan, built the first shelter in the country, which also hosted donkeys, horses and goats and, in addition to reuniting ex-soldiers with dogs and cats, rescued nonhumans to be adopted by members of the general public in the UK. The group’s centre in Kabul, run by Afghan nationals, among them veterinarians, sterilized and vaccinated street animals, and created a web of local caring homes. Over the years, Nowzad saved and rehomed more than 1,700 animals, while Pen Farthing travelled back and forth between the UK and Afghanistan.

Early in 2020, when the pandemic hit, Farthing was trapped in the central Asian country. Then, in August 2021, came the fall of Kabul. “It’s all over,” Farthing commented, “everything we’d achieved over 15 years is up in smoke… People [had] started having dogs as pets, and they had places to take them for vet care. Now that’s been wiped out.”[4] Amid what appeared as the “complete disorganised mess of the evacuation,” he asked the British government for help, but clashed with Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who stated that he was not going to “prioritise pets over people”.[5] Thus, Farthing realised he needed to get his animals and his staff out on his own, and launched Operation Ark, a fundraising campaign to hire a plane to transfer them to the UK.

After procuring private funds for the flight, Farthing finally set off for the Hamid Karzai airport with his staff and 94 dogs and 68 cats. They were stopped as many as four times by the Taliban, and went “through hell” to get inside the airport – but only to be told that they could not board without visas. And while Wallace insisted that if he did not have his animals with him, he and his staff could board an RAF flight, Farthing, reaffirming that he wouldn’t abandon the nonhuman beings under his protection, burst out and threatened a defence aide over his requests with the famous: ‘I will fucking destroy you”.[6]

When the Taliban put a Kalashnikov in his face and told him “they were staying,” however, it was clear that he couldn’t take the members of his staff,[7] so that his assistants themselves asked him to leave with as many dogs and cats as he could. The next day, Farthing returned to the airport with the animals alone – “I don’t know how many different Taliban commanders I had to sit and speak to,” he later remarked. And, this time, he successfully made it out. The privately funded plane took off with all his animals – among whom his adopted dogs Ragnar, Coraand Ewok – getting them triumphantly to safety.[8]

Behind this victory there was the powerful campaign Farthing had embarked upon, which won a wide support from the English public and which apparently even motivated an intervention by the British Prime Minister.[9] And while the UK Defence staff kept complaining that Operation Ark had come at the expense of Afghans left behind,[10]Farthing reasserted its full self-sufficiency, clarifying that not one single British soldier was used to get him and the Nowzad dogs and cats into Kabul airport.[11] Moreover, since arriving back in England, he worked to help evacuate from Afghanistan Nowzad staff, some of whom had been arrested during a Taliban raid in the shelter’s offices. In September, the personnel and their family members, thanks to a hired private security company, crossed the border to Pakistan, pending their final transfer to Britain.

War Refugees and the Flight from Ukraine

On February 24, 2022, Russian troops crossed the borders of Ukraine, invading an independent state with an army of more than 150.000 soldiers. Since then thousands of civilians have been murdered, and entire cities have been burnt down. Massacres have been discovered, but the worst is probably to come. While the nation organized resistance, millions of Ukrainians fleeing from bombs and shelling became internally displaced, and more than four million refugees fled Ukraine to other countries.[12] For days and days, one could see images of resilient citizens dragging, amid sirens and shootings and rubble, what they could of their belongings. Since most men, together with many young women, were recruited in the army or involved in volunteer groups, the fugitives were mainly mothers with children often in their arms and with elderly people often using canes or wheelchairs, making up the most improbable and vulnerable troop moving in flat landscapes covered with snow under the risk of Russian fire. And yet, together with them, one could see dogs and cats. Dogs walking alongside the group,

dogs and cats wrapped in blankets, cats in transporters and dogs on the shoulders, and even rabbits and fishes in tanks.[13] Certainly not a way to make the escape easier or safer, but they did it – and people all over the world watched them on their computer or television screen.

We know that in Ukraine, as in any other industrialized country, there are factory farms where nonhumans are subjected to ruthless exploitation only to be finally sent to the slaughterhouse, and that, tragically, many animals doomed to this fate, powerless to attempt at escaping even in the wartime havoc due to their constricting conditions, have died in the destruction or at the hands of the occupiers. And no remedy was, or could be, offered to them.

But we also know that, when the war imposed suffering and risk of death to the animals left behind or lost in the confusion and to the inmates of shelters and zoos, many of them were saved by the untiring work of rescue groups whose activists spared no effort, even at the cost of their lives.[14] Bu if this is testimony to the courage of Ukrainian citizens already committed to the defence of animals, what is more striking is the case of the animals who were brought to safety by the human fugitives. For with this gesture normal people, with no prior involvement in the animal cause, did convey one simple thing: they would not betray their companion animals. Here are only a few among the countless testimonies. After a journey of hundred miles fleeing the bombing of Kyiv, a teenager arrived in Poland with her cat Zaika.[15] A family travelled to Lviv in search of safety with their two guinea pigs Apelsynka and Lymonadka.[16] A student refused to leave Ukraine until he succeeded in finding an evacuation flight which accepted his dog Maliboo.[17] A woman crossed the Polish frontier on foot with her old mother and her cat Timon in a carrier, and found seats for all of them in a bus heading to Italy[18]. And, epitomizing all this, young Nastya Tikhaya defiantly challenged the tyranny of war in a photo which portrays her fleeing Irpin with a troop of disabled dogs including many amputees in wheelchairs.[19]

Evidence of a similar attitude comes from less audacious people. “I can’t depart from a member of the family who loved me for over ten years, and the journey is a loss of life knell for her” stated a woman about her cat. And another: ‘I will not leave the city because I have a dog – if they do not let me go to the shelter with my pet, I will not go.’ And yet another explained that she had decided to remain at home because she was concerned about abandoning her companion animals.[20]

Such a general stance in war-torn Ukraine is well synthetized by Belarusian soldiers volunteering in the country who, after rescuing lost dog Nessie in the atrocious context of Bucha, and after finding her human caretaker, arranged a moving reunion, commenting: “We are fighting for the lives of not only humans but every animal!”.[21]And how this attitude has impressed the public worldwide is shown by the fact that at the Medyka border crossing into Poland an animal service station was set up to help traumatized refugee animals,[22] and that an unprecedented program, “Vets for Ukrainian Pets,” has been launched by the Humane Society International to cover the treatment costs of acute care and medications for dogs, cats, horses

and other animals.[23]

Between moral individualism and non-betrayal

'What did you think? I'd leave you in Afghanistan? No chance.'

Pen Farthing[24]

'We couldn't leave her behind. Pulya is family so Pulya comes too".

Alisa Teptiuk[25]

In a recent article on the war in Ukraine, Kendra Coulter observes that the dedication residents and refugees have shown to animals reveals that even in the most dangerous times, the human capacity for cruelty "is rivalled only by our ability to be courageous and compassionate."[26] This is certainly true. But from the sagas of Farthing's animals and Ukraine nonhuman refugees something more definite emerges, that exposes a crucial phenomenon: in extreme situations, intersubjective relations with dependent nonhuman beings that in normal conditions are experienced as aproblematic may disclose their true, deep nature, dissolving barriers between species and giving way to that innate, powerful sense of responsibility in the form of loyalty which, challenging human-supremacist ideology, can express itself in the choice of giving them precedence over anyone else, or of risking one's life for them.

What can one say of all this? Both the question of species and the question of responsibility are ethically decisive, but differently so. The repudiation of the moral relevance of species – it does not matter that companion animals are not human, they are full-fledged friends or members of the family – concerns fundamental moral status and basicindividual protection**,** and points in the direction of a universalist ethical framework within which group membership is ruled out as a ground for discrimination – just as race or sex cannot licence differential treatment, neither can species. This is what has been defined as "moral individualism," a requirement imposed by rationality which prescribes that what must be considered in the treatment of beings are their own attributes, and not the classes to which they are ascribed.[27] It is clear that what ethical reflection has so articulated was naturally and immediately grasped within the mentioned bonds with companion animals. Amid the chaos and desperation of the bomb blasts at the Kabul airport, and during the trying and dangerous escape from Russian occupation, the lives cats and dogs from Nowzad and of the companion animals from Kyiv or Irpin mattered as the lives of any other fleeing individual.

Indeed, to Pen Farthing and to the Ukrainian fugitives, they mattered more. And here comes the question of responsibility as loyalty. With it, having been introduced on an equal basis into the sphere of basic protection, companion animals are admitted to the realm of special relations – a realm where the pursuit of specific conceptions of the good may leave room for preferential treatment. Recently promoted by feminist authors, the ethics of relations is somewhat tied to the historical tradition of virtue ethics.[28] And virtue ethics, that is not addressed to the question "What should we do?" but to the question "How shall we live?"[29] is

older than rule-based ethics, and has to do with older predispositions, so that in its domain one can find references to ethology, or the study of human and animal natural behavior. Evidently, among those of our natural attitudes which are traditionally seen as virtues, some are not characterized by impartiality. These is obviously the case with relational virtues, among which responsibility as loyalty. However, as Mary Midgley reminded us, a certain narrowness in intersubjective connections is only to be expected, as in evolution they have originally served the essential function of making possible devoted provision for the young.[30] From this original source arose the more general predisposition to responsibility for vulnerable beings in need of one's protection. And the more ancient the predisposition, the stronger its hold.

In our case, responsibility as loyalty can be translated into non-betrayal. Non-betrayal can refer to many things, but, since the word betrayal comes from the Latin verb *tradere*, meaning "to hand over," it is clear that the exemplary form of betrayal has to do with abandonment. And from the inheritance of our natural history it follows that the worst form of abandonment concerns trustful and dependent beings. This is what Joseph Conrad had in mind when he wrote that the young Jim, first mate on a ship carrying pilgrims, after jumping into a lifeboat before an approaching storm, abandoning his poor human cargo to what seemed certain death, "tumbled from a height he could never scale again."[31]

Pen Farthing and the Ukraine refugees did not abjure their responsibility. "I am loyal to my dogs"[32] Farthing claimed when, refusing to board the RAF flight bringing only Nowzad's human inmates, he arranged to rescue the animals first. "Nobody will take care of Maliboo if I leave him.. I have taken his responsibility, I will take care of him no matter what happens," Rishabh Kaushik said when he took the risk of staying in war-torn Kharkiv while his family was leaving the country.[33] What these attitudes express, and what Jim did renounce, is indeed nothing but the late fruit of a selected primordial virtue, so that, as Stephen Asma put it, the sort of care involved in loyalty "is not a concept, but a natural biological event."[34]

What This Can Mean

While women are anew segregated under Sharia law in Afghanistan, and citizens keep being besieged, murdered and tortured in Ukraine, what has been defined as "the war against animals"[35] continues all over the world. And whereas courageous social movements and dedicated organizations strenuously try to curb intra-human violence, the international animal liberation movement works culturally and politically for the enfranchisement of nonhuman beings.

What can the events just considered tell us with respect to this scenario? As for the human condition, their only implication seems to be that, as Coulter points out, even in the face of lethal danger "compassionate" individuals do exist amongst us, thus showing that improvement is not a totally lost cause. As for the situation of nonhumans, on the other hand, they do something different: they mark a qualitative leap, providing an actual opportunity for reform. For if this new appraisal of companion animals spontaneously arising from reality could lead to that overdue abolition of their status as property,[36] such an institutionalized change might

pave the way for something broader. It might, in fact, start bridging the "abyssal gap"[37] we have arbitrarily created between ourselves and all the other animals.

Notes

I thank Franco Salanga and Harlan B. Miller for their constructive comments.

Paola Cavalieri is a philosopher and animal rights activist. Her most recent book is Philosophy and the Politics of Animal Liberation.

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[1] Pen Farthing | Military Wiki | Fandom

[2] As rescued dog Nowzad ran towards me, I said: Did you think I would leave you to die in Afghanistan? No chance | Daily Mail Online

[3] Reuniting soldiers with dogs they left behind – CNN

[4] Pen Farthing's animals: How many cats and dogs Nowzad founder is trying to rescue from Kabul, and latest news (inews.co.uk)

[5] Ben Wallace blasts animal lover Pen Farthing in explosive GMB row saying we have to 'prioritise people not pets' (thesun.co.uk)

[6] Pen Farthing went on foul-mouthed tirade at MoD official demanding flight be allowed into Kabul | Daily Mail Online; Ben Wallace blasts 'bullying' Pen Farthing supporters in furious row over Afghan dogs – Mirror Online

[7] Pen Farthing: 'I was called disgusting over Kabul animal rescue' – BBC News

[8] Afghanistan: Pen Farthing through Kabul airport security with animals – BBC News; Pen Farthing and animals 'safe' after landing at Heathrow | The Independent

[9] Did Carrie intervene to rescue animals stranded in Kabul? | Daily Mail Online.

[10] Afghanistan: Pen Farthing's animals saved from Kabul in 'direct trade-off' with refugees, whistleblower claims (inews.co.uk)

[11] Pen Farthing: 'Animals in a cargo hold never got in the way of people getting on a flight' | Afghanistan | The Guardian

[12] Over 4.2 million refugees have fled Ukraine since Russian invasion began (axios.com)

[13] A Ukrainian man carries a fish and a cat he saved from the residential building hit by the

Russian missiles earlier today in Kyiv. Humanity always prevails : ukraine (reddit.com)

[14] Ukraine latest: Volunteer, 26, shot dead as she delivered supplies to a dog shelter near Kyiv (inews.co.uk)

[15] Ukrainian teen refugee credits her cat for keeping her safe (nbcnews.com)

[16] Abandoned animals join Ukraine's war exodus (france24.com)

[17] Ukraine Student Refuses To Leave War-Torn Country Without Beloved Pet Dog (newsweek.com)

[18] La storia del gatto Timon, in salvo dall'Ucraina all'Italia con la sua famiglia umana – La Stampa

[19] dogs: This image of woman rescuing disabled dogs in Ukraine is both poignant and hopeful – The Economic Times (indiatimes.com); Meet Nastya Tikhaya — the Hero Saving Disabled Dogs in Ukraine · The Wildest

[20] Heartbreaking bark as canine misplaced in Ukraine battle reunites together with her proprietor 'A little bit constructive' – Magmint – Magmint

[21] Ukraine: Heartbreaking bark as dog lost in Ukraine war reunites with her owner | Nature | News | Express.co.uk

[22] Ukraine refugees and their pets receive emergency help in Poland (ifaw.org). Over 100,000 animals have been evacuated by trains since the beginning of full-scale war, according to the press service of Ukrzaliznytsia, the Ukrainian Railways, which has added: "Ukrainians do not leave those they love." See Domestic foxes, iguanas, boas and seals: Ukrainians evacuated over 100,000 animals by Ukrzaliznytsia trains during the war – BlogH1.com

[23] Free Veterinary Care for Pets of Ukrainian Refugees Launched Across 38 European Countries – One Green Planet.

[24] As rescued dog Nowzad ran towards me, I said: Did you think I would leave you to die in Afghanistan? No chance | Daily Mail Online cit.

[25] War dog Pulya carried to safety by love of her family as they fled Ukraine – Belfast Live cit.

[26] The war in Ukraine is powerfully magnifying our love for animals (theconversation.com)

[27] See James Rachels, *Created from Animals. The Moral Implications of Darwinism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 174 ff. It goes without saying that, in such contexts, no weight is given either to other aspects usually invoked to exclude nonhumans from equal treatment, such as cognitive level or even difference in "essences."

[28] We are here interpreting relational ethics as covering morality in the broad sense – that is, the domain of what it might be good, but is not universally obligatory, to do or not to do – and as a "reformulation of what constitutes a virtuous life for a human being." See Daniel Putnam, "Relational ethics and virtue theory", *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 22, No. 3, July 1991, pp. 231-238. On the other hand, some feminist scholars insist that relational ethics, or the ethics of care, is a distinct moral theory and not a concern to be added to other approaches, and that the focus on relationships is different from the focus on individual dispositions; see e.g. Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political and Global*, New York: Oxford University Press 2006, p. 3.

[29] See Harlan B. Miller, "Science, Ethics and Moral Status," *Between the Species* vol. 10, n. 1 p. 10.

[30] Mary Midgley, "The Origin of Ethics," in Peter Singer, ed., *A Companion to Ethics*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1993, p. 11.

[31] Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim: A tale*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002, p. 82.

[32] Pen Farthing: 'I'm loyal to my dogs – so my country has abandoned me to the Taliban in Afghanistan' (inews.co.uk)

[33] Ukraine Student Refuses To Leave War-Torn Country Without Beloved Pet Dog (newsweek.com)

[34] Stephen T. Asma, "The Myth of Universal Love," January 5, 2013, at The Myth of Universal Love — opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com — Readability (uutampa.org)

[35] See Dinesh J. Wadiwel, *The War against Animals*, Leiden/Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2015. See also D. Wadiwel, "Counter-Conduct and Truce," in Paola Cavalieri, ed., *Philosophy and the Politics of Animal Liberation*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2016, pp. 187-237.

[36] Actually, in many countries companion animals already start being variously protected and are sometimes even considered in courts as family members, and vast is the philosophical and legal literature that challenges their condition as property. See e.g. Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka "Citizen Canine: Agency for Domesticated Animals" (paper presented at "Domesticity and Beyond: Living and Working with Animals," Queen's University, Sept. 29-30, 2012).

[37] An "abyssal gap" that even Jacques Derrida, notoriously interested in the plight of animals, staunchly defends, going so far as to add his conviction that there is "a radical discontinuity between what one calls animals…and man [sic]". See Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow… A Dialogue*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 66, 72– 3.

The Two Faces of East German Socialism

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

Anniversaries have a way of focusing historical memory. One such anniversary is upon us in 2022 and another came and passed in 2021. Forty years ago, in 1982, East Germany's most famous dissident, the internationally acclaimed scientist and critical Marxist Robert Havemann, died. Imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Nazis for his activities as an underground resistance fighter, Havemann managed to survive World War II against the odds to become one of East Germany's celebrities: an anti-Fascist hero, a faithful Communist, a world-renown Chemist, university professor and administrator, as well as a prominent member of East Germany's parliament. Yet, in the aftermath of Nikita Khrushchev's disclosures of some of Stalin's crimes at the 20th Party Congress in Moscow in 1956, Havemann morphed from an orthodox believer into a critical Marxist who called East Germany's ruling SED party to task for having established a paternalistic dictatorship, albeit with considerable welfare benefits, under the guise of a free and socialist society. This transformation cost Havemann his career and his freedom. While the SED did not dare to imprison him, they nevertheless put Havemann and his family under house arrest for the remainder of his life.

Art by Laura Fair-Schulz

While Robert Havemann embodied the vision of an East German socialism as a genuinely emancipatory project linking social justice with political freedom, cultural and intellectual creativity, and ultimately the development of innate human potential, another East German, close to Havemann in age and some key life experiences, embodied the less inspiring realities of East Germany: Erich Honecker. On August 13th, 2021, sixty years had passed since the building of the Berlin Wall. No other East German politician is as closely associated with this border structure as Erich Honecker, both at its construction and dismantling. He was the Politburo member in charge of organizing and overseeing the logistics of fortifying the border between East and West Berlin, as well as East and West Germany, on August 13th, 1961. Honecker, of course, did not order the erection of the Wall on his own nor did he operate in a political and socio-economic vacuum. While being a rising star in the GDR's inner circle of power brokers, Honecker still needed not only the support of the other Politburo members but also the green light from GDR state and party leader Walter Ulbricht, as well as – and most importantly the Soviet leadership in Moscow. Fast forward twenty-eight years, and we encounter a much older Honecker, who outmaneuvered and replaced his former mentor Ulbricht in 1971, becoming the leader of the state and party of eighteen years. On the 19th of January in 1989, Honecker stated defiantly that the Wall would remain "for another 50 years, another 100 years," — unless the reasons that led to its construction were not removed and resolved. As it turned out, events played out rather quickly and differently than Honecker had

hoped. Honecker was ousted by his own Politburo comrades in October 1989, only a few days after East Germany celebrated its 40th anniversary. And on November 9th, 1989, the new government under Egon Krenz opened the Wall and with that act the floodgates that washed the East German state from the stage of history, albeit without fully realizing what they were doing at the time.

Honecker's legacy is now forever bound with "The Wall." Literally from one day to the next, a fortified border wall made West Berlin inaccessible to most citizens of the East-German state until they reached their retirement age. In addition to surrounding West Berlin, located in the middle of East Germany, for the next twenty-eight years, the Wall also buttressed the international border between the German Democratic Republic (GDR/DDR) and the Federal Republic (FRG). This border, arguably the most well-guarded in the world during the Cold War, divided not only the two German states from one another but also functioned as the demarcation line between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Both military alliances had enough nuclear weapons to annihilate each other, as well as all life on our planet, many times over. It was understood by both sides that even a relatively small conflict could easily get out of control, and thus extraordinary caution and vigilance were indispensable.

While nuclear war between the so-called superpowers was ultimately avoided, at least 140 people had been killed at the Wall by East-German border guards between August 13th, 1961 and November 9th, 1989, by the time it finally came down. Every single death by violent means is always a tragedy, as it extinguishes an irreplaceable human life. Yet, while public museums and politicians in today's united Germany officially commemorate the victims of the Berlin Wall, one looks in vain for any official memorial sites honoring the documented violent deaths of 34,361 refugees and migrants whose lives were ended by "the restrictive policies of Fortress Europe," between 1993 and 2018. Pointing out the obvious selectivity in how tragedies and crimes are presented in official memory culture is not to excuse the very real shortcomings and misdeeds of the old Eastern bloc. It does, however, provide some needed perspective and a sense of proportion. 101 out of the 140 people who were killed at the Berlin Wall were East Germans trying to leave their country for the West. They were shot by East-German border guards and thus died thus as a direct consequence of political and socio-economic decision-making. The 34,361 migrants and refugees who died, while trying to get into the European Union, did so by drowning or being shot or choked to death — by European border guards.[1] It is the cruelest of ironies that these refugees also fled political and economic devastation in their home countries and died due to the political and socio-economic choices made by Europe's rich and powerful.

Yet, while Honecker has been in many ways the official face of East Germany for many decades and thus symbolized what East-German socialism was, Havemann stands for what it could have been. Havemann belonged to the same generation as Honecker, joined the German Communist party roughly at the same time, and, like Honecker, fought the Nazi regime in the anti-fascist underground. Both Honecker and Havemann were eventually captured and sentenced to long years in prison by the Nazi regime – incarcerated at the same place in the city of Brandenburg. After the liberation by the Red Army, both Honecker and Havemann settled into

promising political and professional careers in what became the German Democratic Republic or GDR. But the similarities ended by the 1960s, as Honecker climbed to the highest levels of power in the GDR and Havemann, by then a respected physicist and university professor and, in addition, having several political and administrative positions, turned into one of the Eastern Bloc's most well-known Communist dissidents.

Honecker, in his long career as a Communist functionary, and later party as well as state leader, was notorious for his frequent and lengthy speeches. His declamations were memorable not for their eloquence or rhetorical intensity but for his eccentric intonations and peculiar pronunciations of particular words. Almost endearingly, Honecker never succeeded in annunciating the word "socialist" properly, despite deploying it with excessive regularity in his addresses. Yet, while having been a hapless public speaker, Honecker left a different impression in more personal settings. Politicians who met and interacted with him one-on-one or in smaller groups, from both sides of the Cold War divide, and across the ideological spectrum, commented on his professionalism and competence.

Honecker was not an intellectual and kept his distance from the theoretical debates and controversies that unfolded within the German, Soviet, and international Communist movements throughout his long life. He penned no comments or interpretations on existing Marxist concepts, nor did he deepen or develop any new Marxist analytical categories. Honecker's approach was conditioned by practical considerations. Thus, it was not with any encounter of classic Marxist texts, such as *The Communist Manifesto* or *Capital*, that he credited his conversion to the Communist movement but rather personal relationships and meetings with charismatic individuals. Foremost among them were his own father and Communist Party leader Ernst Thälmann. Honecker was drawn to what he perceived as their proletarian authenticity. And indeed, Honecker's father, Wilhelm, as well as Thälmann were manual workers by training. It was only natural for Honecker to follow in his father's working-class footsteps although not in the same profession. The Honeckers, like many of their compatriots in the Saarland, were coalminers for many generations. Yet given the increasingly unstable and highly dangerous nature of working in the coal pits, young Erich apprenticed as a roofer instead. However, he discontinued his required training after two years, being sent to Moscow by the German Communist Party Youth League. Honecker studied at the International Lenin School between the Summer of 1930 and the Summer of 1931. Doing so transformed him into a life-long party bureaucrat, who worked his way through the ranks of the Communist Youth League, the German Communist Party (KPD), and eventually East Germany's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED).

Erich Honecker was in many ways the quintessential Eastern-Bloc bureaucratic party official. Distinguished by a certain indistinguishability that oozed from his framed picture that hung in virtually every office during Honecker's 18 years as leader of the GDR. His expressionless gaze conveyed neither individual charisma nor piercing intellect but a paternalistic power on behalf of the party apparatus. In his demeanor and overall appearance, Honecker looked more like a 1970's-type small-town branch director of an insurance company than a proletarian leader. Dressed in his customarily proper but decidedly unpretentious suit,

with his old-fashioned plastic standard-model glasses, Honecker epitomized not as much the cliché of the power-hungry Stalinist dictator but the pedestrian and routinized status quo. To him, socialism was not a grand vision of human emancipation from alienation or the healing of the ever-widening metabolic rift between human society and nature brought on by capitalist industrialization but something much less ambitious and more concrete. Fellow Politburo member Hermann Axen recalled in 1991: "[w]hat mattered to Erich was to have a roof over your head, enough to eat, warm clothing, sufficient money for a ticket to the movies on Saturday, and a condom." Incidentally, this last item expresses a self-determined contraceptive freedom, enviable in this current age of American insecurity around a lack of privacy and autonomy.

The experience of mass unemployment, starvation, homelessness, and overall destitution, which accompanied the global collapse of capitalism during the Great Depression, left an unerasable memory not just on Honecker but his entire generation of working-class organizers and veteran communists. The historian Martin Sabrow, who has devoted a recent, massive. and carefully documented study to Honecker's early years, concludes that the future East-German leader internalized the sensibilities, values, and political strategies from that time period even more deeply than his generational comrades.

Hermann Axen, despite being of the same generation as Honecker, was amazed at how deeply the latter remained shaped by the values and ideals from the early decades of the 20th century. A case in point was Honecker's meeting with a group of young East Germans in their new state-built apartments in the 1980s. Axen was flabbergasted when Honecker said to them proudly "[w]ould you have thought it possible in 1945 that one day we can have apartments like this?"[2] Axen understood the generational divide, while Honecker seemingly forgot that those young people could not have been alive back then.

One key reason why the traumatic experiences of the late 1920s and 1930s structured Honecker's political horizon with such gravity may be found in the fact that he had the spent some of his most formative years as a young man in the forementioned Nazi prison. Arrested by the Fascist regime at the age of twenty- four, Honecker got out only when he reached thirty-three. Sabrow speculates that certain anachronistic aspects in Honecker's thinking might be explained by having been cut off from the outside world at such a relatively young age and for almost an entire decade. As a political prisoner, Honecker had to spend much of his sentence in solidarity confinement. This prolonged isolation interfered and disrupted what otherwise would have been a natural political and ideological maturation process. In short, Honecker survived the horrors of imprisonment on the part of the Nazi regime by retreating into his own mental world and erecting a sort of time capsule around his political and ideological convictions that could not easily be touched by the world around him.

The tragedy of Honecker consists of how his genuine revolutionary idealism and hopes, for a world beyond capitalist exploitation, was fused with his identity as a rising star of the party apparatus. The institutional outlook, the habits of thought, and the patterns of behavior increasingly limited his connection with the actual and evolving interests and wishes of East-

Germany's working class. Honecker's "Marxism-Leninism" devolved further and further into sterile and anachronistic phraseology. To Honecker, all of the big questions of socialist analysis and strategy had already been sufficiently solved by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. The Communist Party was the unquestionable repository, arbiter, and instrument of truth and justice in the world. In the words of an East German communist hymn, coined by the poet Louis Fürnberg: "The Party, the Party is Always Right And This Much Remains To Be True. The Party, the Party is Always Right for it Fights for Justice and Truth." Over the decades, careerism and cynicism spread inside the party and in society at large. This was due to many factors, including the privileges and perks – both real and assumed – that the leaders of the state and party hierarchy enjoyed. The GDR was, after all, supposed to be a state of the workers and farmers, not yet another system by and for the rich. After Honecker was forced to resign as East-Germany's head of state and party in October 1989, sensationalized news stories began to circulate about his and his fellow politburo member's supposedly extravagant lifestyle in their secretive Wandlitz compound outside Berlin. While members of the SED politburo indeed enjoyed some perks, such as privileged access to Western consumer goods, their overall living standard was considerably below what the CEO's of even minor capitalist companies would have deemed themselves entitled to. Hence some of them eagerly tried to join the capitalist side, when the SED system started collapsing in the Fall of 1989. Prominent politburo members, such as the main architect of the GDR's top-down command economy Günter Mittag, as well as the long-time editor of the main party newspaper Günter Schabowski, and the leader of the Federation of Union Workers Harry Tisch, not only denounced Socialism as a failed historical project but also proclaimed that there could not be any meaningful alternative to market capitalism and liberal democracy. They also realized, of course, that publicly swearing allegiance to their new overlords would considerably reduce the lengths of the prison sentences that were handed out by a vengeful West-German judiciary. Honecker, however, remained defiantly anti-Capitalist. He defended the GDR and warned that behind the happy façade of Western shopping malls lurked exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, and oppression. Drawing on his personal experiences of persecution and imprisonment as a Communist and anti-Fascist during the Nazi regime, he sardonically noted that the West-German elites, who now ruled over their vanquished former East-German nemesis, – put him into the very same jail as the Nazis did in the 1930s. In contrast to the Nazis, however, the authorities eventually released him from jail on humanitarian grounds, as he was now a frail man of over 80 and dying from incurable cancer. Whatever one may say of Honecker, he was a true believer in his version of socialism and was willing to suffer as well as spend decades in jail for it. At the end of his life, he had every reason to assume that he would die in prison, but he still refused to surrender his ideals and negotiate for clemency.

Robert Havemann was also man of deep convictions. Despite his impressive personal courage, however, he was not a saint, nor did he strive to be one. He loved life and partook in its pleasures. Not everyone who encountered Havemann remembered him with equal fondness as he was a complex human being and not free from human vices. His political trajectory began as a loyal Party member, fueled by anti-Fascist commitments that almost cost him his life. He became a Marxist intellectual and eventually a Marxist dissident who could no longer reconcile being a party loyalist with what mattered most to him, namely the necessity to conceptualize

socialism as social justice, environmental sustainability, and substantive democracy.

Having defied both Fascism and Stalinism, Havemann remained committed to a socialist alternative to capitalism. To him, tinkering with and tweaking capitalism would never be enough. He saw it as a socio-economic system that in the long run would undermine even the limited forms of democracy that had developed in some capitalist states. Capitalism, as a system ultimately geared towards private profit, could not fulfill genuine human needs. Thus, capitalist societies generate deepening inequality and massive socio-economic inequality is corrosive to what becomes increasingly formal political equality.

In addition, Havemann recognized that the for-profit system would not be able to make the necessary ecological changes to stop and reverse catastrophic climate change. He developed an early eco-socialist critique of capitalism and the nominally "socialist" Soviet Bloc states alike, condemning both for pursuing economic models that are/were ultimately unsustainable.

In the liberal and conservative mainstream, Havemann is chiefly commemorated as a human-rights activist and opponent of "Communist totalitarianism," whose Marxism is at best be remembered as a historical curiosity. At the other end of the spectrum, those who are nostalgic about the East-German state often frame him as a traitor and opportunist. Needless to say, both approaches reveal considerably more about their adherents than about Havemann himself.

To Havemann, Marxism needed to free itself from any futile quest for "eternal truths," be open to challenges, and continue to develop as the world around us evolves. Havemann, a professor of physical chemistry at Humboldt University in East Berlin during the 1950s and early 60s, ventured far outside his actual field of expertise by offering a series of public lectures on philosophy, which ultimately led the ruling SED regime to deprive Havemann not only of his professorship but to expel him from the party and eventually put him under house arrest until his death in 1982. His alleged crime was that he challenged the authority of the party to have the last word on philosophical issues, thus questioning the party's self-understanding as the "central administration of eternal truth."

In the early 1980s, Havemann became the key link between the older generations of dissident Marxists (like Ernst Bloch and Wolfgang Harich) and the much younger cohort of peace and environmental activists who found their niche under the umbrella of the mainstream Lutheran Church. His long friendship with the rebellious as well as up-and-coming song writer Wolf Biermann, in whose apartment Havemann also first met his future wife Katja, already exposed him to regular contact with newer generations. It was there that Havemann befriended the self-styled "Blues Vicar" Rainer Eppelmann, with whom he collaborated closely until the end of his life. Neither a saint nor a sage, Havemann was at the end of his life more certain of what he rejected than how a functioning democratic and sustainable socialist society could actually be built, given the reality of the Cold War and the hostility of those in power towards it on all sides. His experiences as a Marxist in the 20thcentury made him realize that both authoritarian-state "socialism," of the sort that developed in the USSR since the late 1920s, as well as Social-

Democratic welfare state capitalism were ultimately dead ends. Aware of the inherent instability and unsustainability of capitalism, Havemann continued to hope for an emancipatory socialism, based on a deepening of democracy and the expansion of social justice far beyond what was archived on either side of the so-called Iron Curtain. He was arguably East Germany's most well-known and most influential Marxist critic of the SED dictatorship during the 1960s and 1970s. And he was ahead of his time by emphasizing that socialism must be both genuinely democratic and ecological or else risk merely reproducing the pathologies of capitalism in an altered form.

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[1] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/20/drowned-restrained-shot-life-stories-migrants-case-studies

[2] Hermann Axen, quoted in Martin Sabrow, *Erich Honecker: Das Leben davor 1912-1945*, (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2016), 501.

Poetry Review Column

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

Bill Nevins

We're back with a few more poetry book reviews and recommendations. Despite–perhaps in defiance of—the pandemic, so many fine books of poetry have been published since we last reviewed here. It's tough to choose among them. Here goes:

The Hurting Kind

Ada Limón

Milkweed Editions 2022

This is the sixth volume of poetry by the recently-appointed U.S. Poet Laureate. Ada Limón is a singer of life's ironic joys, which she finds even in the guilty pleasure of catching a fish and remembering a funeral: "… I killed a thing because/I was told to, the year I met my twin and buried/him without weeping so I could be called brave." ("The First Fish") She is a poet of nature, and of the natural world of the human heart. And in this book, Limón gives us delightfully candid poetry of celebration and of celebrated regret. In her poem, "Calling Things As They Are", she admits, "it wasn't even love that I was/ interested in, but my own suffering./ I thought suffering kept things/ interesting. How funny that I called it/ love and the whole time it was pain." Generous poetry to be savored, and treasured.

Highly recommended.

How A Civilization Begins

Richard Vargas

Mouthfeel Press 2022

When, in his poem, "What Would Buk Do?", the narrator watches a lover leave abruptly, both a sadly sympathetic glance from the departed one's dog and the cool morning air provide comfort. It's such juxtaposition of mundane pleasure with deep distress that recurs in Richard Vargas's fascinating, courageously self-revelatory collection of narrative free verse and

prose. In the poem “a rejection from Death”, the bittersweet realization that one’s suicide attempt—imagined as death’s denied kiss– has failed is set in counter-point to remembered life-affirming enjoyment of even bad Denny’s coffee: “the dead probably/don’t have to piss/first thing in the/ morning”.

Elsewhere in this intriguing volume, Vargas addresses the fall-out from a beloved parent’s lethal drug addiction and the ironies of America’s violent past and present—from the JFK assassination to the current atrocious treatment of refugees. Vargas is socially aware and intensely engaged, fully aware of the futilities inherent in political struggle, yet also bravely optimistic and even encouraging, as in these lines from his poem, “a note to the young artists living in these dark days”: “ get/ arrested for carving your visions/into the walls of public restrooms/ . . . close your eyes and/jump off the cliff/art will catch you/it always does”.

Highly recommended.

American Wake

Kerrin McCadden

Black Sparrow Press, 2021

Amazing, bold poetry of grief, learning and, at the end, perhaps hard-won love! Vermont-based educator Kerrin McCadden dives deep into Irish epic myth to bring us “Cuchulain”, in which fear is manifested as the ancient macho- warrior’s uncontrolled raging “warp-spasm” presents a contemporary horror to be dodged if in any way it *can* be dodged: “and you there, trying to be lost sight of as the night/wears on, *thinking yes, be a rock wall—yes, be gone*”. This is a volume of poems exploring emigration within and without the body and the mind, at many levels, some truly mysterious. From her poem “How the Heart Works”: “things I can’t know, no matter how times/the aorta of it is repeated, no matter which/carotid phone call ends in semi-lunar/valves, there are always left and right atria,/greenhouses of the heart . . . “. I admit I don’t understand it all, but I enjoyed this book immensely–poems to be read again and again.

Highly recommended.

Continuous Creation, Last Poems

Les Murray

Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2022

The final volume by the late, beloved Australian poet Les Murray compresses tragic loss, joyful discovery and the enduring value of life into magnificent lyrics. Painful forced emigration—from war-ravaged Europe to, of course, Australia– become joyful memories for an old woman in “Exile”. Here in “Trimming Plumbago” is an alliterative beauty of an example of his verse: “With musical gasps/the cane knife comes/shaving the swollen/ skirts of the hedgerow . . . the old-shaped/ blade acquires a white edge/fresh and narrow as cotton/retouched with the stone“. Wildly -singing poetry of the pleasure of it all, despite the sadness of it all.

Highly recommended.

Howdie-Skelp: Poems

Paul Muldoon

Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 2021

The title poem refers to the wake-up slap delivered to a newborn infant to prod it to breathe. Indeed, this fourteenth collection of poems from Irish-born New York poet Paul Muldoon is a cold dash of refreshment! Brilliant verse that weaves the personal, the political and the joyfully lyrical. The highlight of this book is Muldoon’s long poem “American Standard”, a masterpiece which both skewers and celebrates our strangely twisted late-imperial societal maelstrom. The poem begins with a nightmarish, shared mounted gallop: “the boy had shimmied up behind me on the saddle./ His pint-sized heart/fluttering at my back./ My uncle still spoke of Freedom Summer/when so much else/ along his life-road/had been lost to Alzheimer’s./A razor-mouth at my ear./ The blood-plastered/heads of Schwerner, Goodman, and Chaney./ The smash and smear/of their pulverized/child-faces” From there, this visionary trip gets even stranger. Muldoon’s challenging yet musical poetry is no easy-going picnic of a read, but it is well worth the journey.

Highly recommended.

Ride Easy! Selected Poems

Kell Robertson

Edited by G.L. Brower

Lumox Press, 2021

Kell Robertson (1930-2011)—the quintessential “outlaw poet”– is a legend in song, verse and the lore of the American West. Born in Kansas, he wandered the West for decades doing cowboy and bartender jobs, as well as literary and musical gigs, eventually becoming a fixture in San Francisco’s bohemian North Beach and, later, for many years a New Mexico resident. His often-rowdy performances in college classrooms, theaters and, especially, in dive bars are treasured memories among those who knew him. He recorded three albums of songs, including “Cool and Dark Inside” and published in many small presses. A rich selection of his poetry is compiled in this magnificent volume, well-chosen and ably introduced by Prof. Gary L. Brower. For some eighty wild years, Kell held the reins of a fierce black-maned “Horse Called Desperation”, and yet learned to “Ride Easy”. His influences ranged from Hank Williams to W.B. Yeats. You won’t find a colder eye looking upon this troubled world in all its tragic, ironic beauty.

“I ride a horse called desperation/a bony nag, half-blind/fast only because he has to be/he runs in startled leaps/and cannot see where he is going . . . this horse/is the only horse/that will take me where I have to go . . . ” from “A Horse Called Desperation”

Highly recommended.

Psalms at the Present Time

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington

Flowstone Press

Darryl Lorenzo Wellington is the current Poet Laureate of Santa Fe and an active journalist and educator. Originally from the US Deep South, he has made Santa Fe, New Mexico his home for at least a decade. He has brought a valuable sophistication and social awareness to the high desert literary scene. A sample:

“we proceed like marionettes

carried along on one string

crowds of selfsame mouths

our tongues chant now in unison

the pitch like a cracked accordion

then canticle is cant and cry.”

—from “Days of Protest”

Recommended.

Beyond Belief

John Koethe

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2022

Professional philosopher John Koethe brings his sharp analytical mind to bear in this collection of intellectually-stimulating if emotionally sparse poems. In “Sheltering At Home”, this poet hones in on our shared recent collective isolation during the quarantine time of the current multi-pronged pandemic: “ . . . home/Was always a place to depart from/Or come back to, not a state of being in itself.” The title poem offers up an apparently contradictory prayer: “Teach me to care and not to care, teach me when to turn around,/When to speak and when to shut up. Teach me to sit still.” If Koethe’s poems lack specific personalized experiential references, they do provide stimulating and perhaps universal fodder for contemplation.

Recommended.

REVIEW ESSAY: On Friendship and Social Movements: AIDS activism and struggles against fascism, global AIDS and harm reduction

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

Books reviewed:

The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris by Anne-christine d'Adesky, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2017)

No Fascist USA! The John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Lessons for Today's Movements by Hilary Moore and James Tracy (San Francisco: City Lights Press, 2020)

Undoing Drugs: The Untold Story of Harm Reduction and Future of Addiction by Maia Szalavitz (New York: Hatchette Books, 2021)

To End a Plague: America's Fight to Defeat AIDS in Africa, by Emily Bass (New York: Public Affairs, 2021)

Let the Record Show: A Political History of ACT UP New York, 1987-1993 by Sarah Schulman (New York: MacMillan, 2022)

Throughout *Sentimental Education*, Gustave Flaubert sketches an image of revolution extending in multiple directions, between exuberance and futility, possibilities and failures, steps forward and inevitably backward. Like a splash of cold water on New Year's Day, for a second there, Frederic, our protagonist, was a part of it all, completely exuberant:

"Great clouds of smoke were pouring out of the chimneys of the palace… The sound of bells in the distance…. Everywhere, to right and left, the victors were letting off their firearms. Frederic, for all that he was no fighting man, felt his Gallic blood stirring. The ardor of the crowds had infected him. He greedily breathed in the stormy air, full of the smell of gunpowder; and at the same time he trembled with the consciousness of a vast love, a sublime, all embracing tenderness, as if the heart of fall mankind were beating in his breast…."

Play is never far behind in the "vast love" Frederic found in the revolution of 1848:

"After coffee they went to the Hotel de Ville in search of news, and by that time his playful

nature had reasserted itself. He climbed the barricades like a chamois, and answered the centuries challenges with the patriotic quips."

The city of Paris is almost a character in the novel.

And certainly Flaubert is not the only writer to trace the links between friendship and friction, eros and Thanatos, fighting and revolution, particularly in Paris.

Anne-christine d'Adesky's *The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris* builds on this trajectory, tracing a story of epidemics and pleasure activism, the AIDS carnage and global cities, New York and Paris.

On the first page of the preface, d'Adesky writes:

"A tsunami comes and threatens to sweep you away, drown you without hope of a breath. You make an instant decision to hold on, to try to hold fast to your loved ones. Or at some point you may let go out of sheer exhaustion, or you're forcibly taken by the current and seek another anchor point, a refuge. You worry about everyone else and vow to never stop searching or remembering the missing or the dead. Every day in the 1990's, such waves hit the shores of New York City and Paris, where I spent much of the era working as a journalist chronicling the AIDS epidemic, while getting sucked further into the currents of activism… I was not neutral – not about AIDS…. There were nightly meetings, constant processing, and a million arguments about strategy. Humor helped us survive the 1990's. So did dancing. Madonna provided the soundtrack for our generation; so did the Pet Shop boys…. Amid our fun it was always about taking action…." (xi-xii).

In between, grief is omnipresent. So is the Seine and its sinews, stretching throughout the city, between bridges, paths, and secret places where d'Adesky naps and dreams, her mind wandering back to those still in New York.

"Death is pumping inside my chest, stealing away my earlier happy mood. I want to push it away with my hands, part the Red Sea with mine, push death back through it to the other side, stay away, I say, Give it a rest," (P.16).

Action=vie, activism offered a counterbalance to thanatos. It's a distinct Paris experience.

"Before any ACT UP action, the group meets at a cafe to plan strategy and finesse details; afterward, they retire to another cafe to discuss how it went. I like the French method of protest. *Caffeinated direct action.* But nothing too rushed," (p. 47).

In *Beats per Minute*, the 2017 film about ACT UP Paris, MDMA pumps through the bodies of members of the ACT UP Paris, upping the volume, transforming a demo into a dancefloor, a synthesized high buzzing, ebbing through the crowd, in what might have been a dream. In New York, it was usually caffeine, not that certain pleasure activists did not add cocaine or heroin to the mix, harm reduction mixing with public health. RIP Keith. Keith Cylar keep up the

struggle!

Love was in the air. It's Paris. It's a cafe. It's history, lots of it. d'Adesky is taking notes.

"That's something that people who are not in groups like ACT UP may not appreciate about activism: despite the serious subject and critical life steaks; it can be so fun, and the people who are drawn to protest and social change, so interesting. I'm finding the same thing here in Paris… its one of the perks of joining ACT UP that i never would have anticipated. I've made so many friends and had my share of sexy fun. It keeps us going. There's just a lot of love in this movement," (p. 22)

In other moments doubt turned into a clusterfuck. HIV dovetailed with age-old systems of domination and overlapping issues. "We're too isolated," thought d'Adesky. "We don't really know enough of what's happening. I know they arrested some people last week behind the Gare du Nord. So where did all these people go? We have to connect AIDS to homelessness, to the housing problem. That should be a top priority, shouldn't it? Not everyone agrees.."

Of course, some do agree, pointing to the interwoven complications associated with HIV and gaps to healthcare access, pointing the movement toward an ever broadening arena of struggle. Harm Reduction activists would strive to reduce alienation and physical pain, connecting AIDS activism with structural efforts to find homes and battle the drug war while contending with the harms of anomie and alienation, among other maladies of modern living. This is the story of Maia Szalavitz' majestic new work, *Undoing Drugs: The Untold Story of Harm Reduction and Future of Addiction.*

Other AIDS activists would struggle to make sure AIDS drugs were available around the globe, not just in developing nations, especially once highly active antiretroviral medications became available in 1996. This is the story told by Emily Bass, who worked with d'Adesky at *Outweek*, in her dynamic new work *To End a Plague: America's Fight to Defeat AIDS in Africa.* Bass takes up the AIDS story a few years after Sarah Schulman leaves off in his luminous *Let the the Record Show: A Political History of ACT UP, 1987-1993*. This was my New York AIDS activist moment, zapping politicians and drug companies with Mark Milano, getting arrested at the 1998 Matthew Shepard political funeral turned police riot with Keith Cylar and Charles, Leslie Feinberg and Sylvia Rivera, picketing Al Gore fundraisers with Eric Sawyer and Sharonann Lynch, fighting with housing for people with AIDS with Jennifer Flynn, going to Sylvia Rivera's funeral with Keith Cylar and toasting to it all, before it became too much. By 2004, Keith followed Sylvia into the beyond. Spacial limitations preclude a fuller consideration of these important works. Suffice it to say, Bass has highlighted a story of AIDS activism that needs telling, the battling to get drugs into bodies across the globe, internationally. Five years after the heyday of AIDS activism, a group of ACT UP newbies and veterans helped bridge a gap between local and global AIDS activism. Doing so, they took on systems of medical apartheid, pharmaceutical company greed, and a global trade system that favored drug patents over lives, profits over people. This was the system that activists targeted in Seattle in December

1999. And helped propel AIDS activism into a space between Anti Apartheid activism and the Global Justice Movements, bridging gaps in care, moving drugs into bodies around the globe.

It was the system that ACT UP took on in fighting the right, zapping St Patrick's Cathedral in New York, taking on Le Penn and the National Front in Paris.

A subtext of much of this work, of course, is looming fascism. This rightward political tilt means some bodies, married bodies, heterosexual, white bodies, those with papers, those not injecting drugs are favored and prioritized, while queer and immigrant, trans, brown and black bodies are thought to be disposable, best disgarded, incarcerated, neglected, left to languish, in detention centers or jails or the streets, living in shanties.

What is to be done, wonder activists?

Hillary Moore and James Tracy trace the story of *The John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Lessons for Today's Movements* in their work, *No Fascist USA*. Part memoir/ political manifesto, one can practically feel the partisans sing Bella Ciao, picking up this City Lights press book. James Tracey brings a journalist's eye and a punk rock poet's ear to the project. Shortly before San Francisco poet laureate Jack Hirshman shuffled off, he exchanged copies of poetry books for *No Fascist USA* with Tracy.

In their own ways, both the *Pox Lover* and *No Fascist USA* consider the ways friends bring us into movements and the anguish we feel when they depart, both movements or this world. Moore and Tracy eye the challenges of building coalitions and alliances, while D'Adesky considers the ways coalitions and movements come together and fall apart, through friendships, social eros and ideas, crossing continents, through connection and dislocation, sex and grief.

In *No Fascist USA*, Hilary Moore recalls the friendships that got her involved:

"I grew up drinking root beer and practicing kick-flips on skateboards with my friends on the same Capitol grounds where the white supremacists staged their rally, an event that represented the exact opposite of all I held dear. And yet, my decision to go to the rally wasn't clear cut. I felt critical of how much attention went to street confrontations with white supremacists, and how little went to those who are doing the long-haul work of organizing to create a world where everyone has safety, dignity, and belonging. Slogans like "Nazis get out!" felt insufficient, and at times just as misguided as incitement to "punch a Nazi." Yet I also felt frustrated that, in my five years as an anti-racist political education trainer with commitments to build broad anti-racist movements that can win, we had very few strategies ready to confront white supremacy in the flesh. Ignoring the rally seemed like the worst option. Conflicted as I was, I chose to go because I had a group of reliable friends who were committed

to keeping people safe and unwilling to concede public space to those seeking to advance a white supremacist agenda," (p. 22).

Nothing goes as planned says Moore:

"Witnessing the violence filled my body with visceral, hot rage. But when a knife-wielding white supremacist stood at attention for chants of 'Sieg Heil,' I froze. A large group of counter-protesters quickly surrounded the man and began to beat him. Horse-mounted police intervened, ushering the white supremacists into the shelter of the Capitol building, a protective maneuver that had not been offered to victims, just moments before, when the white supremacists stabbed five people… Later that night, reflecting on all that had happened, I realized we had to do better. The next day I began contacting people who had confronted the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s and 1980s. I needed to know what they had learned while opposing organized racism and supporting social movements that were fighting for self-determination. I reached out to my dear friend James Tracy and asked him to help make sense of this history. What lessons did they learn, and how might we apply those insights and strategies today? Asking and answering those questions together led us to write this book. (P.22-3).

James Tracy follows a similar trajectory:

"I first met members of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee in the spring of 1989, when I was a teenager in Vallejo, California. At the time, several white supremacist organizations announced that they would stage an "Aryan Woodstock" white power concert in the unincorporated land between blue-collar Vallejo and Napa's wine country. In the lead-up to the concert, I talked to a woman from the Committee who was distributing copies of the group's newspaper, No KKK!, No Fascist USA!. I asked her what it was all about, and in the next five minutes she effortlessly connected a critique of U.S. imperialism, advocacy for the Black Liberation struggle, and an invitation for me to join others protesting the concert. None of these subjects was a hard sell for me. The crop of racist skinheads that had long been a part of the area were a source of annoyance at the Punk and New Wave shows my friends and I would attend. My father, a Vietnam Veteran, had unintentionally turned me into an anti-imperialist once he was able to tell me what he had witnessed in the Army. Black Liberation? I was down for that. I had worked as a janitor at an art gallery in town with a former member of the Black Panther Party who introduced me to the Panthers' Ten-Point Program and shared back-in-the day stories with me as we mopped floors. To most of my friends, adherents of the Gospel According to the Dead Kennedys, white supremacy never made any sense," (p. 23-24).

The friendships helped make the connections real, pointing us in new directions, toward ways of seeing, imaging, navigating it all. These are the stories that James Tracy finds, that Anne-christine d'Adesky shares. An investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker who reported on the global AIDS epidemic for *The Village Voice*, she was an early member of ACT UP and cofounder of the Lesbian Avengers. d'Adesky pens stories of sleeping on the Seine in Paris, dreaming about lovers in New York, movements from here to there, stories about slumming it in New Orleans and dancing with the sexy girls in Amsterdam, across continents,

unpacking what it means to do activism, how it feels, why we do it, where it takes us, where we come from. From Haiti to Paris to New Orleans, Anne-christine d'Adesky has lived; in *the Pox Lover*, she takes measure, tracking the rise of populism and extreme nationalism that jettisoned Britain from Europe, sent Lula to Jail in Brazil, and Trump to office in the USA. The book explores the author's 90s work and advocacy, tracking the rise of far-right populism – a harbinger of today's headlines. Meandering through indelible moments in time, d'Adesky takes us on a tour of Manhattan's once-funky and now-gentrified East Village: through squatter protests and civil disobedience clashes with police to all-night drag and art-dance parties. The author relives the fun-loving anarchy of the Lesbian Avengers and their dyke marches, and the iconic public funerals staged by ACT UP. She unsparingly charts her personal losses of friends and comrades to the plague.

Traveling as a journalist to Paris, an insomniac d'Adesky trolls the Seine, encountering waves of exiles fleeing violence in the Balkans, Haiti, and Rwanda. As the last of the French Nazis stand trial and the new National Front rises in the polls, d'Adesky examines the rise of the new right-wing in the popularity of Holocaust denier Jean-Marie Le Pen of the National Front, and his successor, daughter Marine Le Pen, a frontline 2017 presidential candidate. The author implicates her own bloodline in this history, digging into her aristocratic family's roots in Vichy France and colonial Haiti. In the preface, the author instructs readers, "All I ask here, at the start, is what was asked of me: that you keep an open mind. That's the best compass of all, I've found. I ask that and your willingness to take a trip, to dig in, and risk getting your hands a little dirty. To have some fun. C'est tout." *The Pox Lover* is a memoir, a manifesto, a coming-to-terms, a testament of a life lived both unwisely and too well, offering an enduring message: grab at life and love, connect with others, fight for justice, keep despair at bay, and remember. The author's journey captures the evolving cultural changes shared by lesbian peers and the surviving 90s generation.

In an April 15, 2003 interview with the ACT UP Oral History Project, d'Adesky links the workings of friendship within ACT UP's efforts to slow the carnage of the AIDS crisis. Unpacking the source material for majestic *Let the Record Show*, interviewer Sarah Schulman notes:

"Okay. Now, a lot of people, for a lot of people, ACT UP was a place for – where they made friends, where they found lovers. There was a lot of social life. And certainly, you had quite a few girlfriends in ACT UP over time. How would that – if you were willing to say, who were some of the people you went out with and how did that impact on what subjects you got involved with?

AD: Well, I don't think it's appropriate to name them without having checked with them first. Some of them, I don't know that they're identified as lesbians.

SS: Well, then let's call them Madame X or whatever – but, how did your sexual relationships with other women in ACT UP lead you to certain areas of interest?

AD: One of my great loves was a woman I met at an ACT UP conference. And, it was, very much, in and around ACT UP activities. I form very deep friendships. So, I think, in that way, definitely ACT UP was a place for people who I found interesting. They definitely came together there and I made friends with him there. I think that for the women who came into ACT UP, it's interesting to me that I think I was primarily involved with women who have ended up being with men. I'm not sure what that really means. But, I think it means that a number of women were drawn to ACT UP because they were really drawn to the kind of energy that gay men brought to organizing and the sexuality that gay men have. I think that they felt very comfortable in …that's a lot of young lesbians that I was around. It was certainly true for me.

SS: So, you're one of the five founders of the Lesbian Avengers and that was 1993. What was it about ACT UP that made you decide to start the Lesbian Avengers?

AD: Well, I think that – first of all, it was some of the experiences of friendships within ACT UP, and the watching the style of activism. Getting to know people like Maxine [Wolfe] and you – and feeling, I think that, at that point in the epidemic, that lesbians had been so actively involved and what was happening in the city at the time was that – I think – there just was very little visibility that was being given to lesbian issues on a national level, on a city level. And, I think it had to do with that generational shift that I was talking about, where you had women coming in who sort of had energy and brains and felt really strongly about the need for more visibility and attention to lesbian issues. And, there was also, I think, the sense of play that had emerged that has to do with the social aspect, also, of activism. And, I think it made activism more appealing to people. And, so I think that all the ingredients were there for women to say, we really want to hang out together, we want to do something, and we really need to speak out more. I think that time, also, was driven partly – it was partly in reaction to a climate of sort of, really right wing activity on the part of the Christian right. And so much attention had gone to AIDS issues that I think that less of it was going to gay and lesbians specifically. And again, when it was being addressed, it was being addressed to the way it related to gay men, and not to lesbians. And, so I think it was very natural for the Avengers to find that they had an issue around which they could speak that wasn't just broad, lesbian visibility that allowed some organizing to happen…"

Schulman is our generation's Hannah Arendt,with a mix of Studs Terkel.

d'Adesky builds on these themes in *the Pox Lover*.

Moore and Tracey highlight a few of the connections between, reminding readers of the links between those in the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee who experienced incarceration and the AIDS activists, whose stories d'Adesky traces, "confronting the politics of the carceral state." This experience, "lead many to address the emerging AIDS related health crisis by organizing for better HIV treatments for incarcerated people and supporting the non-violent direct action group, ACT UP," say the authors (p. 190).

The lessons of the *No Fascist USA* extend in countless directions. A few of these include the importance of solidarity, disrupting fascist messaging, building alliances, cultural work and perhaps most importantly, checking egos, and biases, while remaining open to new approaches. “Self righteousness was a glaring weakness of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee,” say Moore and Tracey. “In the early years, the Committee often turned differences between progressive groups into points of antagonism and competition. ‘We tended to out left each other,’ said Laura Whitehorn ” (p. 218-9). We are all human. Everyone has flaws. We all do. Within this, it is useful to recognize rigid, righteousness is dangerous, eroding movements and opportunities, undermining friendship, solidarity and ultimately the power of movements themselves.

By the end of the 1990’s, d’Adesky looks to the conflicts that lead neighbors to turn on neighbors, from the Balkans to Rwanda. “Our contemporary genocides,” says d’Adesky. “Armenia, Cambodia. How can such events take place, in this day and age, knowing all we do about the Holocaust? Our love of purity is instilled early on and constantly nurtured. We ask ourselves why people are drawn to a Hitler or a Le Pen or Pol Pot. Because they touch us where we are vulnerable, where we have some longing for order, for control, for purity. Someone to blame for chaos and insecurity in our lives. The other… It makes me think of how much we we have in common with our perceived enemies. Its so much easier to hate them, isn’t it? To distance ourselves from them on the basis of perceived differences. But what is it I have in common with a Hitler or a Karadzic that I’m compelled to think about – not how I’m different,” wonders d’Adesky (p. 254).

d’Adesky beseech us to ask the hard questions about ourselves and our movements.

Moore and Tracey remind us that friendships matter as organizing is an art.

The throughlines between movement narratives are many. From ACT UP to the Black Panthers, John Brown Anti Klan Committee to Healthgap, movements ebb in countless directions. I feel them after being arrested, processed in central booking in New York, looking at the old ACT UP, Reclaim the Streets, stickers, overlapping with newer Extinction Rebellion stickers that have found themselves onto the holding cells, remembering the arrests, the actions, the stories we shared inside, the long conversations with my graduate school advisors, and comrades, union members and fellow anarchists, waiting to get out, eating bologna sandwiches with my comrades, gossiping with Bob Kohler about Sylvia and Jim Eigo, thinking about who we’ve been here with in my dozens of visits inside over the years, recalling friends. I see them in *No Fascist USA* and *The Pox Lover* and their overlapping narratives of friendship and struggles for autonomy, health and freedom of bodies, minds and ideas through time.

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Review Essay: Thomas de Zengotita's Postmodern Theory and Progressive Politics: Toward a New Humanism (New York: Palgrave, 2019)

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

Derrida, Kristeva and Foucault. Whatever you might think about these legends of French Theory and American academic culture, reading Thomas de Zengotita's *Postmodern Theory and Progressive Politics* will have you wondering who is having the thoughts: Is it the Cartesian subject, skeptical and analytical; a French postmodern not-a-subject, intertwined with an infinite cascade of texts; or, perhaps, an American postmodern performative identity? That one could feel compelled to entertain such a question speaks to a monumental shift in the world, an erosion so profound that it is hard to talk about without lapsing into either oversimplification or poetry. De Zengotita does neither in *Postmodern Theory*, approaching the intellectual record the way a fabled detective might examine clues in a cold case. No preconceptions. Put yourself into the shoes of the cast of characters. Generate the spark of an idea to give the case new life.

De Zengotita's tale of the subject commences in the 17th Century with Renée Descartes' method of doubt and the rise of dominant self/mind/subject from his *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). The Cartesian "dualist metaphysics" dividing "all things mental and all things physical" emerged against the backdrop of unprecedented technological revolution. As the authority of tradition and received opinion faded, science expanded human hegemony over the world. The Protestant Reformation reflected that progression on a religious plane, and Descartes' own view of "a mind apart, observing and shaping an external physical world," articulated it more broadly. The new sheriff in town was the modern subject, distinct, in-charge, bending objects and world to its will, in large measure through the power of skepticism. Wielding this tool, one could get closer to truth, though admittedly, the field of accessible truth was less expansive. That one's own thoughts were now the main loci of truth in the universe comported nicely with the overall trend of the day. In Descartes' calculus the subject had become more than in charge, it was the only thing you could know was categorically there. Now *that* was individualism.

While Descartes' ideas were pointing in a certain direction (from a traditional Catholic perspective, down), Descartes remained devoutly religious throughout his life, underscoring an important difference between early and later modern thinkers. Events such as the Copernican Revolution and discovery of the New World had confronted Descartes and his world with the

shock of the new, but the ultimate destination charted by Descartes' ideas would be reached gradually over several hundred years, as de Zengotita's biographically orientated survey of modern theorists reveals. Early thinkers who worked on the problem posed by radical change in the world could still enjoy the remaining momentum of that which was being lost, even if they were in the process of laying the groundwork for its intellectual repudiation. Later writers looking into the void wouldn't be so lucky, even if they did, like French philosopher Louis Althusser, maintain a literal faith. The philosophical arc delineated by de Zengotita shows how, similar to the Road Runner running off a cliff and managing to stay in the air because he doesn't know the trouble he's in, early modern philosophers enjoyed the fruits of skepticism without fully feeling the consequences.

Nietzsche was ultimately there to remind us all what Descartes' revelations really meant—as if to say, "*Do* look down"—but first came a string of theorists whose project was to generate a moral framework compatible with the Cartesian scheme. Several of these thinkers' work is explored by de Zengotita in *Postmodern Theory*, including that of Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Compte, and perhaps most relevant in the political context, John Locke, whose concept of property rights reflected the rising status of the individual, and would later form the cornerstone of Marxist theory. For Locke, ownership was established via labor—not via God or some external force, but by the subject binding objects to itself through work.

While Locke and Kant privileged the place of the individual without really contending with the paradoxes of self-generated meaning, de Zengotita argues that by the nineteenth century some awareness of those paradoxes was clearly looming, making "anxiety…the dominant influence on 19th century European minds." What else could explain modernity's "implacable determination to *define*," to control by placing ideas into system, other than some deep fear over a lurking agent of chaos? Durkheim and Levi Strauss' focus on "the chart, the diagram, sometimes even formulas," were all part of a "veritable fetish in the modernist academy," according to de Zengotita, tools in service of a "desperate labor of containment." What was everyone so scared of?

Nietzsche furnished the answer to that question, arriving on the scene radically critiquing Cartesian thought, rejecting God and immortality, and delegitimating the subject. *Postmodern Theory* relates how Nietzsche denied the possibility of objectivity, claiming the "Cartesian ego" was an artifact of a grammar that insisted on a 'subject' for what was actually a flow." Bringing "his hammer down on the illusion of representational adequacy," argues de Zengotita, Nietzsche "exposed the self and all its concepts as '…Lies in a Nonmoral sense,' generalizations imposed on an irreducibly particular and ever-changing reality in the service of survival and convenience." Revealing many of the hollow illusions that propped up the Cartesian philosophical world of the day, Nietszche set the table nicely for his postmodern descendants, performing the role of harbinger for 20th century philosophers such as Michel Foucault.

Postmodern Theory illustrates that it took many philosophers to fill out that table, each making

their incremental contribution. Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, argued that meaning came not only out of the subject's imagination or will, but also from context. This played out at the level of language, where a sentence could be understood in terms of subjects, verbs, and objects, or be viewed more holistically by taking into account the context in which the sentence was uttered, the nature of the relationship between the utterer and the listener, the place of utterance, and so on. Then Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan took that observation further, transforming "the subject from an existential Cartesian/Kantian/bourgeois agent into an abjectly over-determined object of 'interpellation'…the subject *Subjected*." No longer was the subject the source of all meaning, but simply a vessel, dependent on myriad forces.

Viewing the subject as a passive recipient of meaning as opposed to its originator put some early postmodernists in a bind. Like their philosophical predecessors who had tacked "And God" onto theories that seemed to lend themselves better to atheism, postmodernists had their own Marxist loyalties to contend with. One of de Zengotita's keenest insights is that obfuscation in French postmodern writing was a way to conceal that "And Marx" was really in contradiction with postmodern philosophy. Marxism was predicated on Locke's theory of property rights, which was predicated on the idea that the subject's labor is what creates ownership. Without the subject you could not incorporate Marxism without a lot of contortion and doublespeak.

Though de Zengotita tries to be as clear as possible, *Postmodern Theory* is not meant for as broad an audience as *Mediated: How the Media Shapes Your World and the Way You Live in It*, de Zengotita's earlier groundbreaking phenomenological exploration of what it feels like to live in the wake of the fastest technological growth period in history. As a result, not all the ideas explored by *Postmodern Theory* are made accessible to the layperson. Any other outcome would surely have been an insult to writers like Derrida, who were straining to grasp the ungraspable, and for whom meaning was *supposed* to be a moving target.

It is common to view Derrida as a Nietzschean force intent on tearing meaning down—certainly that's the rap postmodernism generally receives when it comes to post-truth politics—but de Zengotita's choice to focus on the concept of "différance" instead of deconstruction emphasizes a more positive side of the theorist. Différance (in French the word différer means both "to defer" and "to differ") established that in the tapestry of signs that make up meaning, each sign is deferential to the others. Since no one sign contains or owns meaning in the way that the Cartesian subject may be understood to possess his thoughts, each sign is dependent on the others and part of a constantly shifting constellation. Derrida's analysis is not, then, ultimately nihilistic. Although in de Zengotita's calculus Derrida believed there were no "pure foundations, no pure starting points of the kind modernists were obsessed with discovering or defining," the fact that the Cartesian system doesn't accurately describe the nature of meaning doesn't mean there isn't any meaning. Rather, Derrida believed that meaning is a fluid thing arising out of a succession of associations; the subject, an illusion people had been using to create a false sense of mastery over this chaotic flow.

De Zengotita doesn't spend much time assessing whether some of Derrida's views were "not

even false" (as some refer to ideas that are so incoherent as to be empty). But he does acknowledge that Derrida's eradication of the subject made awkward phrasing and terminology almost inevitable. From the perspective of analytic philosophy, that may be too forgiving an evaluation. But it is consistent with his overall focus on extracting what is valuable from postmodern thought rather than highlighting its obscurities.

De Zengotita empathizes with Julia Kristeva and others for the corner they painted themselves into, in which they were faced with the challenge of "how to recover history…without allowing the subject to return to center stage." And he admires Kristeva's ultimate pragmatic acceptance that even if the Cartesian scheme had overstated the centrality of the subject in the meaning creation-process, there was *something* like a subject that was at least a part of human consciousness. That something was language, which Kristeva elevated to a new position in the schema of subject, object and context. Minds became "texts" and the subject was partially back—as "a site for contending discourses and forces of all sorts," as "the patient, not the agent, of an unstoppable process of mental events." The work that the subject's will had been doing could now be accomplished by "intertextuality," a term coined by Kristeva referring to how one text relates to another. Kristeva described intertextuality as a "gadget"; it's function, to locate agency without having to fully resurrect the subject.

Foucault shared Kristeva's willingness to change views in the face of new evidence, altering his perspective about the subject multiple times over the course of his life. De Zengotita highlights this fact, it seems, to counter the narrative that postmodern thinkers were engaged exclusively in intellectual mischief or indefensible abstraction. Indeed, whereas Derrida's theorizing was in fact quite abstract, Foucault's big idea was at its core an empirical observation. Derrida had established that overarching master narratives were oversimplifications of a much more complex reality; Foucault noted that those oversimplifications tended to support societal power structures. It was the natural weaponization of the concept of deconstruction, the re-insertion of the political into the post-Lockean scheme. Ascribing to Foucault's views, you could look yourself in the mirror again without shame and call yourself a Marxist and a postmodernist, without re-embracing the subject.

Still, without that embrace deconstruction could only go so far. Kristeva's gadget had made it once again possible to coherently talk about people, but fully politicizing the concept of the fluidity of meaning remained problematic. Kristeva's response, along with the staff of the French avant-garde literary magazine *Tel Quel*, was to go apolitical, and as a result she became according to de Zengotita something of "a political disappointment to her Anglophone admirers." As he explains, the American academy yearned for a system of thought that would deconstruct the power hierarchy's false narratives, but still leave identity with a leg to stand on. They wanted both Foucault *and* the subject.

De Zengotita illustrates how Judith Butler's ideas allowed for that combination, effectively bridging pure French postmodernism and the thing that postmodernism ultimately became in America. Her insight was to characterize gender, and identity more generally, as performativity. She is careful not to use performance, because it presupposes the existence of a

subject, but Butler's formulation places identity somewhere between the fixedness of the Cartesian system and the unmoored signifier of the Derridean. It allows for something like a self but admits that there is no fixed truth about it. Though Butler clung to the notion of "subjectless performativity," provoking "intense opposition from feminist, gay and transgender activists who saw themselves as struggling for recognition *as* subjects," it would only take a little push for her ideas to be co-opted by those very activists. Identity became a performance *possessed* once more by the individual. The subject may have been a dude in Descartes' day, but now it was whatever you wanted it to be. And identity politics was born.

Though de Zengotita avoids giving us an overarching theory, by exploring the evolution of modern thought in such detail he invites the reader to combine the distinct pieces. That consolidation might look something like this: the world changed enormously, and change brought with it a desire to understand, on the basest of levels, the new hierarchy of elements of human consciousness (subject, object, context). Initially, such efforts felt relatively successful, and Enlightenment Humanism—the Cartesian theory of mind wrought into a moral ethos—thrived. But one of the things that was changing was the collective receptiveness to taking for granted *any* ethos, even one that respected the value of each individual mind. Within the Trojan Horse of skepticism lay the destabilizing Nietzschean (and later Derridean) truth that without the ability to take worldviews for granted, it is difficult for the world to feel fully formed or fixed. But worldviews at the deepest level are exceedingly sticky, moving and melting glacially over time. Even as new credos rise, waning perspectives still maintain some influence. Hence, it took a long time after the birth of skepticism for the sense of solidity in the world to erode and for us to experience the full postmodern condition.

In de Zengotita's telling, Derrida and others challenged the subject to reconceive meaning as a flow, not to destroy meaning. Any effort to move "Toward a New Humanism" will have to contend with that conception, and some attendant headwinds. As sticky as worldviews are on the way down, to properly take hold on the way up they must be accreted over generations. Considering that "more changes have been wrought on the face of the planet in the last four hundred years than in the fifty thousand years preceding," it is questionable as to whether human consciousness could stabilize long enough to reform the "worldhood of the world." Human skepticism is likely to be unreceptive to another grand narrative, the irony of a credo that doubts all credos. Given the obstacles, de Zengotita is cautious in claiming that a resolution is possible. But his work makes it probable that if one is out there, its building blocks will be found in the work of the great modern and postmodern thinkers who have already wrestled with the problem.

Postmodern Theory implies a further tantalizing prospect. As thinkers attempt to better conceive of the subject's place in the universe, they often attempt to insert the "And" of a moral structure into the picture. It's a natural instinct to want a moral paradigm and want that paradigm to reflect one's view of the relationship of subject, object and context. Consequently, moral systems that catch on tend to intuitively mesh with the then-dominant theory of mind. *Postmodern Theory*'s biographical approach reveals that extending a theory of mind into a moral system is not straightforward. The tone and the particulars of a moral system partly

flow from the personality of the thinker making the articulation. True, philosophy mostly describes rather than influences. But along the margins, perhaps more is possible. *Postmodern Theory*invites us to find out.

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Review: Fintan O'Toole, We Don't Know Ourselves: A Personal History of Modern Ireland (Liveright /W.W. Norton, 2022)

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

"Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour's got me on the rails
It never seemed to make no sense, I couldn't tell the difference
Stay married, hate her guts, no no no divorce
Little girls all end up pregnant, hypocrites in every convent–

Gotta get out of the land of DeValera!"

–song by Larry Kirwan & Black 47 band, "Land of DeValera", 1989

"Where the people are weak, and the people are spent,
From running in circles 'til their legs they are bent,
Lamenting the price of the petrol and the rent,
Ah we're slow to learn in ould Éireann.
And the green rag that's tied round our ears and our eyes,
Well it stops us from telling the truth from the lies,
For competitional patience we'd win the first prize,
For we're too easy going in Éireann."

–song by the Lankum band,"Déanta in Éireann", 2020

Fintan O'Toole's charmingly personalized history of modern Ireland could be titled, "How the Irish escaped from the Land of DeValera". It's a fascinating account of how The Republic of Ireland (aka *Eire*) evolved from a semi-fascist, deeply misogynistic, theocratic country ruled by religiously-anointed sexual perverts and their corrupt, lackey political hacks into the progressive, modern, secular state that it is today.

As O'Toole reminds us, contemporary Ireland is not the island-wide thirty-two county egalitarian Socialist Republic envisioned by 1916 revolutionary martyr James Connolly and his acolytes. The northeastern six-county section of the island (Northern Ireland) remains a contested and sometimes-turbulent part of the United Kingdom. Recent Irish economic history—with massive bank scandals, real estate bubbles, endemic homelessness, plagues of narcotics and suicides and widespread financial frustration– hardly reads as utopian. The

once-vaunted “roaring” Celtic Tiger has become at best a softly-purring kitten. Yet, for all its limitations, *Eire* is a respected member of the European Economic Community (EEC) and a fairly smoothly- functioning parliamentary democracy with decidedly liberal social laws and mores. Organized political violence has been reduced to minor sporadic and localized flare-ups, in sharp contrast to the near- civil war which raged in parts of the island from 1970 until 1998.

O’Toole himself shows little sympathy for the Irish Republican tradition of romanticizing political violence. He exposes the supposedly heroic martyr-subject of the well- known rebel ballad “Sean South” as an anti-semitic, reactionary bigot who died in a pathetically- bungled 1950s border attack on a British police station. More contemporary Irish Republican figures such as Bobby Sands, Gerry Adams and Bernadette Devlin McAliskey get less harsh assessments, but O’Toole feels closer in his views to John Hume and the Social Democratic and Labour Party than to the IRA and its affiliates. His memories of “the Troubles” focus more on paramilitary atrocities perpetrated upon civilians in Ireland and the UK than on any celebrations of “revolutionary” nationalist or loyalist martial glory. His attitude towards contemporary *Sinn Fein* appears to be “wait and see”, although he clearly sees a Euro-integrated Ireland as of more importance than the long-sought “thirty-two county united Ireland”. O’Toole quips, “Being European was the ultimate way of not being British.”

An internationally-published journalist who came from near-poverty and who often writes on economic and political matters, O’Toole understandably focuses on observations of Ireland’s changing GDP over the decades since his birth in 1958. The change, he notes, has been striking. Between 1960 and 1980, Ireland “had gone from being an agrarian economy where cattle was king to one that could be understood as part of the international industrial order”. This economic growth followed upon a 1958 Irish government plan for “Economic Development” which did, in fact, set forth modernization of the economy. Social modernization of “southern” Ireland took longer in what long had been a deeply-conservative country dominated by the powerful Catholic church hierarchy and which bordered on the equally socially-conservative Protestant/Presbyterian dominated British province of Northern Ireland (NI) to the north. Ireland did not get its own television station until 1961, and then a large portion of its programming was American-made.

O’Toole is well aware of the pervasive and puzzling Irish tendency to hold contradictory ideas simultaneously: it would seem that in Ireland no fact can be fully pinned down as “true” or “false”. The innate corruption of many Irish politicians such as “Boss” Charles Haughey seems less hypocrisy than a manifestation of a form of double-think. As the Boss, he saw himself above both the law and social constraints, and he flaunted his “special status”. Haughey’s “mastery of hyprocrisy”, O’Toole writes, “was mesmerising, exquisite, magisterial”. Perhaps similarly, successful Sinn Fein politician Gerry Adams can deny membership in the IRA and yet bask in the public’s common knowledge of his service record as an IRA commander. About one particular national governmental scandal, O’Toole wryly comments, “The truth itself lacked credibility.”

Although the Irish economy improved in the late 20th Century, the religious and sexual

repression ingrained in Irish society under DeValera's rule persisted. It was not until very recent 21st century decades that contraception, abortion, divorce and gay rights were legalized in Ireland and the acknowledgement and investigation of the horrid history of the abuse (and murder) of women and children in Ireland is only now ongoing. Ironically, progress on social mores in the "British-held" six counties of N.I. was often more rapid than in the "free" southern twenty-six counties.

O'Toole points to the odd relationship of Ireland to the USA as disturbing. At the same time that interest was being revived in Irish traditional music, Nashville-style country-western dominated Irish popular taste. More significantly, American corporations have been given exceptional favorable treatment in Ireland, and American politicians such as JFK have been all but sanctified. Irish economic development relied exclusively on foreign, often American, investment. "In 2017", O'Toole states, "US direct investment stock in Ireland totaled $457bn, a greater investment stake than in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden combined". In 2015, Irish GDP rose by 26% but, it was, as O'Toole writes, "a miracle that was mostly a mirage", based on unreliable statistics and foreign financial input, not on real Irish economic growth.

For all his reservations, O'Toole holds tentative hope for better days to come in Ireland, as the border conflict and bombastic nationalism recede and a more reasoned Irish sense of world-citizenship increases. He writes about our present moment: "The old was imploding but the new was not fully born." He also sums up the story personal and societal story of his book in these succinct words: "The transformation of Ireland over the last 60 years has sometimes felt as if a new world had landed from outer space on top of an old one."

We Don't Know Ourselves is a skillfully-written, intellectually- fascinating and most important read. Highly recommended.

Review: Aaron J. Leonard, The Folk Singers and the Bureau (London: Repeater Books, 2020)

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

The heroes and heroines of my late teens were a remarkably and unapologetically rowdy bunch. Almost all were tagged Communists, or whatever was worse, and all were part of what was known as “the Great Folk Music Revival” led by Pete Seeger and a ragtag band of fellow singer/songwriters, chief among them the now iconic, though formerly firmly forgotten and vilified, Woody Guthrie – with “This machine kills fascists” emblazoned on his prematurely anti-fascist guitars.

If you were tracking this wild nascent movement in the 1950s you came across the same series of usual scruffy suspects with absolute regularity: Burl Ives, Guthrie and his frequent partner Cisco Houston, Millard Lampell, Izzy Young, Bess and Alan Lomax, John Hammond Sr., Oscar Brand, Lee Hayes, Josh White, and Earl Robinson, to name just a few luminaries. The omnivorous if not quite omniscient, surveillance agency meddling in all of these artists’ lives was the FBI, which not only waged war with Communist parties throughout the world but with anyone they imagined in their straight little heads was tangentially associated with communism. John Hammond was of interest to the Bureau, but as he hailed from an impeccable social and financial background he was deemed a decidedly moderate threat by an agency bent on hooking bigger and easier fish.

Most the other seditious folkies mentioned above had had loose contacts, if not full memberships, in the Communist Party USA. For some it was to prove a career-killing and sometimes even fatal association. Aaron Leonard has taken on the formidable task in this book of retrieving and retelling carefully forgotten histories of those woebegone talents who had their careers and lives upended, and in some cases obliterated, by a Federal Agency intent on the erasure of the “Bolshevik menace” even from supposedly subliminal music lyrics.

Leonard charts a long, hard and often dirty repressive saga highlighted, if that is the word, by the ultimate dire fate of the Black Panther Party, targeted by the Bureau in the 1960s and decimated in the process – much like the American Communist Party that preceded it. Leonard pays what some observers may consider insufficient attention to infamous Communist poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht who was summoned to testify before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, double-talked them for hours, and wisely fled the US the next day, joking later that at least “the Nazi’s would never have let me smoke my cigar.” Seeger too got hauled in, was questioned harshly and then was attacked in the press, ever ready to do its Cold War

duty in outing and then shouting down anyone deemed “Red,” which Seeger at least actually had been. How he endangered the Republic with his banjo strumming remained top secret.

In the1940s during the Second World War an uneasy pragmatic alliance existed between the US and the Soviet Union but all that was to go South nearly as soon as the War ended. It became apparent that Stalin and the US were on a collision course that would generate radical aberrations in both the US and the USSR social systems. Both systems were determined to punish anyone deviating one iota from the State’s conception of itself. In the US this attitude ushered in the McCarthy periods, and in the USSR in came the Trotskyite/anti Wrecker trials. The subsequent executions and Gulag sentences extended well into the 1950s with horrors inflicted on millions. Both systems, Leonard notes, proved excessively adept at finding, isolating and destroying those they deemed “subversives.” Seeger’s career was derailed in the 1950s and he was never again allowed a popular media platform, instead settling for college tours and occasional PBS-style appearances. Guthrie enjoyed serious commercial success on radio in the 1930s, but as his irrepressible radical political edge sharpened he was deemed less and less media-acceptable and no longer corporately welcome.

The Taft-Hartley Act intended to neuter Communist influence in the Unions and, in tandem with less decorous measures, was very successful, though careers like Seeger’s, Guthrie’s, and the Almanac Singers largely played out performing in marginal arenas in support of American labor. Seeger in the 1960s was effective at cultivating a significant college audience for folk music, and his recordings for the non-commercial but effective Folkways Records overseen by the formidable Moe Asch became a serious influence on American music despite the institutional opposition he faced.

Hoover took a deep if hostile interest in the careers of the folkies, Seeger chief among them. According to Clancy Sigal there were well-known channels available to show biz folk which could, for a price, get them off the black lists laboriously and often erroneously compiled by the FBI and its motley crews of paid informants. Leonard demonstrates that repression of the sort the Bureau wielded is as American as apple pie, and if we factor in Reagan’s FBI informer career we can see that Trumpian trends have a history that long precedes the sociopathic excesses of the “Liar in Chief.”

Leonard devotes a chapter to Roosevelt confidante and Vice President Henry Wallace, who saw his career mauled and mutilated by the Wall Street wing of the Democratic Party which, prompted by the Cold War hysteria of 1947/48, removed Wallace from the ticket and used its power to make sure Wallace never returned to public life. Seeger played a significant role in Wallace’s 1948 campaign and his defense of a man deemed pro-communist was to incense the Press and FBI.

Leonard make it clear that the assault on the folk movement and its major figures was tightly orchestrated, funded, plotted, and carried out, although we do not know to this day all the relevant details of who betrayed whom and how. FBI files, Leonard notes, have a way of just disappearing. There are gaps and anomalies galore in the Bureau’s recordkeeping and what

the Bureau will admit to or make public can only be described as “dicey at best.” Leonard does us a great service in reexamining the tremendous significance of culture, of song, story, and performer in shaping the world Gestalt. That all of these cultural performers were subject to external influence may come as no surprise to those who live in a surveillance force field composed of the FBI, CIA, NSA, ASA, and related agencies. Julian Assange’s dangerous predicament and Mr. Snowden’s plight are a reminder that the long arm of the Intelligence Agencies (who have no real track record of telling the truth about anything except by accident or leak) is now an indispensible part of the State apparatus.

Many figures chronicled in Leonard’s book – Seeger, Guthrie, the Lomaxs, Ives, Brand, and others – managed somehow to live long lives and were eventually honored for their impressive bodies of work anyway. It’s an historical irony Hoover would not have approved. As we step away (if we indeed do) from the Trump debacle and the subversion of an already badly maimed democracy, the lessons Leonard addresses demand the closest attention. The malign forces at work will long outlive us, and the lessons they teach are ones we require if we are not to repeat what we have experienced during the dark Trump years we endured.

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Review: John McWhorter, Woke Racism: How a New Religion has Betrayed Black America (New York: Forum, 2021)

By | 2022: Vol. 21, No. 1

The word “woke” has been used in connection with racial awareness for at least a century. In tracing the history of this word, Aja Romano (2020) notes that its earlier use, as a call for African Americans to be wary of mistreatment, changed in more recent times to designate a critical perspective on political racial dynamics—first gradually among Blacks, then dramatically among both Blacks and Whites after the Ferguson protests of 2014. Since political vocabularies rarely remain stable, both the word and the idea of “wokeness” were quickly co-opted by a variety of individuals pushing various kinds of radical change, particularly naïve anti-racists who saw their own wokeness as a tool for shaming the less enlightened into displaying proper racial attitudes and behaviors. The term “wokeness” thus became a vehicle by which genuine racial critique was conflated with social intimidation. This was a useful development for defenders of the existing order, who now had only to point to the fervor and excesses of the “woke” in order to discredit racial critique and to justify current arrangements. John McWhorter’s latest book, *Woke Racism*, needs to be understood within this context.

We do need a good critique of “wokeness,” especially as it is used to demonize those whose only offense is to display a less than perfect sensitivity to race in situations where such sensitivity would not ordinarily be expected. McWhorter deserves credit for focusing on this problem, particularly in the current political environment where, as he himself notes, doing so will make him a target for claims that he is not “black enough” to take on this issue (pp. 167-68). But—again—what we need is a good critique, and this book falls short of that.

Cultural phenomena like excessive wokeness arise in a larger landscape defined by a number of social forces that clash with and reinforce each other. Adequately critiquing such a phenomenon, therefore, requires looking at this larger picture and identifying where and how something like wokeness becomes excessive. Such a critique should consider, among other things, the rising tide of anger in the U.S., the role of political polarization, and the amplifying influence of social media. Unfortunately, McWhorter neglects all of these factors, and resorts, instead, to simple counter-demonization.

The problem stems, in part, from McWhorter’s central claim that wokeness is a religion. To be clear, he is not simply saying that wokeness resembles a religion, or that it exhibits features of a religion. Comparisons like these might provide some insight, since wokeness does sometimes

draw from spiritual sources, and extreme wokeness can resemble religious fervor. But for McWhorter, wokeness "actually is" a religion (p. 23). He is emphatic on this point, repeats it throughout the book, and expends much energy trying to cram every aspect of wokeness into the mold of a full-fledged religion. Hence, its leaders are its "priests" (p. 30), slavery is its "creation myth" (p. 57), Whiteness is its "original sin" (p. 33), and its adherents are "the Elect" (p. 19). Not only does this trivialize real religion (which McWhorter seems to equate with mere irrationality), but it also leads to sweeping stereotypes of the so-called woke "Elect," who, according to McWhorter, are all irredeemably "intransigent" (p. 159) and "unreachable" (p. 152). In McWhorter's mind, the woke "Elect" are "sharks" (p. 179), who think like "ten-year-olds" (p. 139), who expect you "to bow down" (p. 17) to their "mendacities" (p. 13), and, who, if you disagree, call you a "moral pervert" (p. 174) and a "racist" (p. 173), "no matter what you do" (p. 173). They are "smug" (p. 35) and "gruesomely close" to Hitler (p. 15), and if you question them, they "howl" (p. 59) with "white hot fury" (p. 89) and intimidate you with "menacing phrases" (p. 73) and "word-salad" answers (p. 113). If they are White, they "pump fists" and hold up anti-racist books (p. 33), and if they are Black, they "exaggerate their victimhood" in a quest for a "sense of significance" (p. 167). At one point, McWhorter attempts to soften this cartoonish image by conceding that not all of the "Elect" are actually quite this bad (p. 21)—but later in the book he renders this caveat hollow by insisting that all the "Elect" really do share exactly the same attitudes because (according to McWhorter) if any woke person differs on any one point, they will be attacked by the others—so they will inevitably surrender, willy-nilly, to the entire wokeness "gospel" (p. 137)

Besides producing this rigid caricature, McWhorter's demonization and his unflagging identification of wokeness with religion "pure and simple" (p. 175), robs his analyses of substance. In some places, McWhorter starts to make a potentially illuminating point—for example, that individuals can be "coached" into internalizing feelings of hurt and resentment they might otherwise never have felt (pp. 163-64), or that turning such emotions onto unsuspecting people can evoke social anxiety bordering on genuine terror (p. 183). But these insights are quickly dropped when he moves back to more accusations and more invocations of the "religion" trope. Similarly, McWhorter does describe genuine cases of wokeness run amok, in which extreme rage has been destructively vented onto unsuspecting people. But many other cases that are lumped in with these turn out, when their details are known, to be more questionable and ambiguous than McWhorter indicates. The details of such cases are crucial in evaluating them, and I will give some examples of this below; but obtaining these details can be difficult and time-consuming, especially since few of McWhorter's examples include his sources.

McWhorter's strongest cases include those in which a relatively or completely innocent person was fired from a job due to a minor or non-existent racial transgression. The alleged offender may be someone who displayed some degree of cluelessness, such as the attendee of a party who wore blackface to satirize a comment by Megyn Kelly (p. 71), or someone who simply made a public comment with no reasonable expectation of giving offence, like the researcher who reported data indicating that violent demonstrations tend to alienate potential supporters (p. 4). Both of these cases illustrate the kind of extreme retaliation that McWhorter wishes to

highlight, and both of them support his claim that there is a contagion of individuals who create widespread fear and intimidation about giving even the slightest racial offense, no matter how innocently. But a greater number of McWhorter's cases are not so clear and are worth looking at in more depth.

To begin with, it should be noted that nearly all of McWhorter's examples involve, in one way or another, the protests following the death of George Floyd during a period when outrage about racial abuse was exceptionally high. These cases may constitute a skewed sample, therefore, and many involve events that flamed into and then faded out of public attention as part of a larger media war about Black Lives Matter (BLM). McWhorter invariably adopts an "anti-woke" bias in describing each event, often misrepresenting or omitting significant aspects of what actually happened. For example, in addition to the firings described above, McWhorter describes two other firings, both of which occurred in contexts that were not so clear-cut. One firing resulted from what McWhorter describes as a "gentle homily" (p. 51) by MIT chaplain Daniel Patrick Moloney, who wrote an email calling for understanding of police who kill. McWhorter fails to include Moloney's full statement, which emphasized George Floyd's criminal history, seemed sympathetic to police overreaction, and appeared to suggest that racism is not a significant problem among police (see NewBostonPost, 2020).

The other firing involved Leslie Neal-Boylan, Dean of Nursing at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, who upset BLM protestors by saying "everyone's life matters" (pp. 2-3). In this case, McWhorter omits the fact that Campus Reform, a conservative group, discovered two letters written by Neal-Boylan shortly after the firing asserting that her controversial statement was only a "rationale" and "an excuse" for a firing that actually concerned disagreements she had had with the Dean of the College over administrative matters (Lowell Sun, 2020). Similarly, some of McWhorter's descriptions of people forced to resign for reasons of "political correctness" ignore the fact that those resignations represented culminations of long histories of previous anger within the organizations over management, funding and compensation decisions (e.g., the Curator of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, p. 72, and the Chairman and Board of the Poetry Foundation, p. 71) (see Lefebvre, 2020, and Schuessler, 2020); and others who resigned "in persecution" (p. 45) include conservative writers like Bari Weiss and Andrew Sullivan with reputations for bending facts and creating their own crises (see Shephard, 2020 and Ames, 2018).

One-sided accounts can additionally be found in McWhorter's praise for Harding University's refusal to rename a building currently honoring a former president (p. 184) without mentioning that this president had fought the school's decision to desegregate by arguing that Blacks bore the "curse of Ham" and would bring an upsurge in pregnancies and sexual diseases to the school (Key, 2009, p. 290; Dailey, 2016), and in McWhorter's implication (pp. 185-86) that the censorship of artist Philip Guston was a result of wokeness, when, in fact, that censorship came from the museum's fear of controversy about Guston's anti-racist work—in other words, was not a case of woke individuals cancelling moderates, but vice versa (see Luke, 2020). Some of McWhorter's examples are trivial, referring to snide or silly comments by anonymous tweeters (pp. 47, 55, 56), and others seem devoid of any factual basis at all, such as McWhorter's claim

that conservative writer Randall Kennedy was “broken” at Harvard (p. 64) (as near as I can tell, this last claim is supported by nothing more than some speculation about Kennedy in a recent New York Times article by McWhorter himself (McWhorter, 2021)).

McWhorter’s portrayal of social scientific research is also selective and inaccurate. For example, he states that “it is universally agreed” that anti-poverty programs had little effect (p. 146), a claim that is contradicted by a number of authoritative sources (e.g., Lanahan et al., 1985; Jencks, 2015; Council of Economic Advisers, 2014), and he uses correlational data to make invalid causal inferences about the effects of college attendance on politics (pp. 90, 91). McWhorter also cites literature seeming to imply that differences in rates of school discipline and incarceration between Blacks and Whites are due solely to greater misbehavior by Blacks (pp. 98-101)—but, in doing so he ignores numerous studies finding that when the nature and severity of offenses are controlled for, Blacks receive disproportionately greater punishments than Whites (Skiba, 2002; Kansal & Mauer, 2005; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Edwards et al, 2013; Bishop et al., 2020). Regarding this last point, one of McWhorter’s rare citations indicates that his main source about Black misbehavior is Christopher Paslay, a wokeness critic and founder of a Teachers for Trump group, who, in turn, draws heavily from a survey of teachers by the Fordham Institute, a conservative think tank (not to be confused with Fordham University) that has been criticized for doing poor and misleading research (Burris, 2021). It is not surprising, therefore, that the study McWhorter and Paslay cite (Griffith and Tyner, 2019) lacks the usual quantitative and operational controls of survey research, relying instead on global impressions of the teachers and subjective interpretations of the authors. So, for example, while a small proportion of the surveyed teachers felt that serious misbehaviors by students were frequently underreported and more than twice as many felt they were not, the authors conclude that underreporting is “rampant” (Griffith and Tyner, pp. 31, 29), a word which McWhorter then quotes and attributes, incorrectly, to the teachers (p. 101). McWhorter is similarly inaccurate in quoting or paraphrasing other sources like Eric Hoffer (p. 60), Ta-Nehisi Coates (p. 107), and Jamil Smith (p. 116) (see, respectively, Hoffer, 2010, p. 91, Coates, 2015, p. 87, and Smith, 2017).

McWhorter may have a valid point that social encouragement and reinforcement drive hurt and outrage about racial slights in some (or even many) cases. But he seems to take this as license to dismiss nearly all anger about racial injustice, which he repeatedly describes as “performance art” (p. 6), “kabuki” (p. 75), “pretend” (p. 22), ”ridiculous” (p. 167), etc. Likewise, he interprets virtually all expressions of concern or regret by Whites about America’s racial history as pathological self-mortification. The result is an air of contempt that permeates the book, and a striking tendency by McWhorter to assume that he knows what others feel better than they do themselves. Yet he is also particularly incensed by those who use phrases like “institutional racism,” and “systemic racism” because such terms imply intent (pp. 77-78, 163). Again, this is a potentially valid point, since woke critiques often expand the term “racism” in ways that can be legitimately questioned, and the whole topic of racism-as-disparate-impact versus racism-as-conscious-intent deserves serious discussion. Characteristically, however, McWhorter jumps to sweeping conclusions, such as when he calls a statement by Princeton faculty members about institutional racism a

"transparent lie" (p. 165). The problem for McWhorter in such preemptive dismissals is that they might equally be applied to his own argument that wokeness itself is a form of anti-Black racism (pp. 98, 147-48). One might reasonably argue that if an individual or collective action disproportionately burdens the members of a race, whether intentionally or unintentionally, that action is "racist"; or one could legitimately argue the opposite: that the word "racism" is so widely associated with conscious intent, it should not be used in such a context. McWhorter is entitled to take either side in this debate, but not to take both sides and apply them selectively and inconsistently for whatever suits his immediate purposes.

Woke Racism will supply many angry conservatives with a great deal of material, carefully chosen and presented, to reinforce their rage. But as an attempt to reduce hate and polarization by supplying badly needed skepticism and clear thinking, it is a failure—and one more likely to increase rather than decrease the problem.

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Review: Benjamin Heim Shepard's Sustainable Urbanism and Direct Action: Case Studies in Dialectical Activism (Rowman & Littlefield: 2021)

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Benjamin Heim Shepard's *Sustainable Urbanism and Direct Action* opens with a tribute to German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin, but it is Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga whose *ludic* spirit pervades this carnivalesque chronicle of creative civic activism in the belly of the beast that is New York City. Shepard's method and mode are less dialectical than unabashedly ludic – joyful, playful, spontaneous, improvisatory and erotic. Though he can adeptly speak the professional languages of sociology, labor history, and political science, he is more like Elvis impersonator-meets-Holy Roller Reverend Billy Talen or gonzo cycling activist Mellow Yellow or theatrical provocateur Judith Malina or a score of other fellow activists in these pages, a Whitmanesque flaneur seeking contact with the throbbing, fragile, gossamer heart of the monster city. Shepard is an urban thigmotrope seeking intimate and fraternal contact with his fellow lovers of public space, of freedom, of democracy. An acute listener, he catches the cadence of a colorful cohort of civic storytellers whose tales make for an inspiring micro-history of the moment stretching from the Tompkins Square Riot of 1988 to 2020's Plague Year.

"More ass, less gas!" "More nude, less rude!" chant the bicyclists of the World Naked Bike Ride, just one of dozens of fantastic episodes of civic street theater chronicled in *Sustainable Urbanism*. The metamorphic coalition of community gardeners, anarchists, queer rights champions, social workers and utopian dreamers are united in their intuitive fidelity to mutual aid and an ethos of creative DIY. Within this recent history of sustainable urbanism there is an even more poignant and palpable history of conversation, of street talk leading to concerted action to make NYC more humane, a graceful place of love and hope instead of a cynical mega-machine of exploitation. There is almost a formula embedded in these pages, which catch the alchemy of conversation, action, and strategy simply by paying close attention to the qualities of people brave enough to act against all odds.

Long confined to Arcadia, Eros turns out to be an effective and potent muse and idol in America's largest city. Poetry, pranks and play draw upon her powers to enliven and enlighten every dark and contested corner of the city and its embattled souls. Shepard gives us an erotic urban tool kit of seed bombs and paper airplanes and satirical costumed pantomime and

bicycles – always bicycles! This participant observer's deft ethnography weaves through recent battles over Gotham's commons like a bike messenger flying down 7th Avenue at rush hour. The book shares the spirit of the sound bikes and chants and dances in the pageant of mostly ephemeral coalitions – the Library Lovers League; Occupy Wall Street; Bike Bloc; Critical Mass; Times Up!; Flood Wall Street; ACT UP; the Billionnaires; Common Ground Collective – that it describes, inviting bystanding spectators – and readers – to joyfully join the fray and become full-blown civic actors.

Shepard's fleeting but poignant glimpse of his own biography as a grade school Ritalin addict goes a long way to compassionately and compellingly universalizing this tender manifesto's call to Eros over Thanatos. Against the anti-pleasure ideology embedded in NYC's institutions of power and control, he offers a sexy siren call to the living theater of truly engaged urban life. "We are not on drugs, we are the drugs!" shouts a member of one pleasure-making mob summoning itself against the city's desert of the real. *Sustainable Urbanism*'s embodied model of urbanism is a testament to the redemptive power of love and friendship, a wild and inviting masquerade in a time of suffocating masks.

Review: Benjamin Shepard, Sustainable Urbanism and Direct Action: Case Studies in Dialectical Activism (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021)

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In *Sustainable Urbanism and Direct Action: Case Studies in Dialectical Activism*, Benjamin Heim Shepard takes readers on a wide-ranging tour of urban activism, mainly in New York City. He defines sustainability broadly, integrating work for climate justice, community gardens and bicycling with organizing around sex work, libraries, harm reduction, and housing. Sustainability, here, means cities that work for all of the different people that make up the majority of their populations, not for the minority that governs and profits. Fun, pleasure, play, and love are all essential in this vision of the city. In this book, as in the real world, the ecology of the city integrates people, the built environment, and the natural environment.

Shepard, an indefatigable longtime activist and a professor of human services at New York City College of Technology, was and is a participant in many of the movements he analyzes. This book feels personal. At times it feels like a journal. It is also animated by others' first-person accounts and analyses, shared through long excerpts of his interviews with activist-thinkers like L.A. Kauffman, Bill Weinberg, and Jerry "The Peddler" Wade, as well as excepts from the ACT UP Oral History Project. This book is about dialectical activism; it is also deeply dialogical, full of conversations, debates, and stories. A section on the 2015 Paris World Climate Change Conference is built around day by day accounts, and includes extended transcripts of conversations and debates among activists alongside high tension blow-by-blow action stories. When this book is critical of the movements and people described, it is lovingly so. By using dialecticism as a theoretical framework, Shepard creates space for contradictions that do not need to be neatly resolved. He tells the story of Adam Purple and his famous garden, painting Purple both as a heroic artist and as a sexual abuser who created solo works of genius but failed to build community or organize others, and caused deep and extensive harm.

While he does deploy an overarching theoretical framework, it is not a rigid one, and the book and the stories sprawl beyond the confines of any imposed structure. It feels kaleidoscopic. It feels like a collage. As one reads through it, people reappear and bits of narrative and ideas and case studies repeat from one chapter to the next, in part probably because many of these chapters were written originally as standalone articles, but also because in real life these issues are inextricably intertwined. Shepard argues that a dialectical framing allows us to move

beyond false either/or choices: gardens vs. housing; reform vs revolution. In the structure of this book, he shows us how activists are actually integrating these supposed binaries already – bringing knowledge from ACT UP and Earth First! and Reclaim the Streets to community garden activism, building a movement for sustainable and fun transportation over generations. Dialectical theory weaves these stories together, but bikes do it perhaps even more effectively: so many of these stories begin or end with bike rides, cyclists stitching the city together, crossing bridges and building bridges, riding at night and in the day, naked and reading poetry, illicitly and with massive police escorts.

The activism described in this book is often an "activism of everyday life." Shepard argues that "through such low-threshold endeavors, everybody can take part in shaping their city as a livable work of art"(40). However, DIY activism is not presented in opposition to activism that aims to change policy, but as part of it – we also see over a thousand miles of bike lanes being built, hundreds of community gardens being preserved, a beloved library saved. Shepard shows how these wins are grounded in decades of movement building and creativity. And in a final chapter written after the summer of 2020, during the Covid pandemic, we see how all of this activist knowledge and history becomes redeployed in a new moment, as AIDS activists teach us how to navigate risk in a plague, bike activists deliver food around the city, and Black Lives Matter marches fill the streets with people and, of course, many, many bikes.

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