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Novel America

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Bibliography

The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War by Benn Steil [Simon & Schuster, 9781501102370]

The award-winning author of The Battle of Bretton Woods reveals the gripping history behind the Marshall Plan—told with verve, insight, and resonance for today.

In the wake of World War II, with Britain's empire collapsing and Stalin's on the rise, US officials under new secretary of state George C. Marshall set out to reconstruct western Europe as a bulwark against communist authoritarianism. Their massive, costly, and ambitious undertaking would confront Europeans and Americans alike with a vision at odds with their history and self-conceptions. In the process, they would drive the creation of NATO, the European Union, and a Western identity that continues to shape world events.

Focusing on the critical years 1947 to 1949, Benn Steil's thrilling account brings to life the seminal episodes marking the collapse of postwar US-Soviet relations—the Prague coup, the Berlin blockade, and the division of Germany. In each case, we see and understand like never before Stalin's determination to crush the Marshall Plan and undermine American power in Europe.

Given current echoes of the Cold War, as Putin's Russia rattles the world order, the tenuous balance of power and uncertain order of the late 1940s is as relevant as ever. The Marshall Plan provides critical context into understanding today's international landscape. Bringing to bear fascinating new material from American, Russian, German, and other European archives, Steil's account will forever change how we see the Marshall Plan and the birth of the Cold War. A polished and masterly work of historical narrative, this is an instant classic of Cold War literature.

Excerpt: Communism is gone from Europe, but geography has not changed. Russia is, as it has always been, too large and powerful to embed within Western institutions without fundamentally changing them, and too vulnerable to Western encroachment to acquiesce in its own exclusion. Advancing new means of positive engagement will, therefore, require a difficult, perhaps impossible, reimagining of Cold War legacy institutions.

In contrast with the early Cold War period, the post—Cold War period has been marked by the absence of an American Grand Strategy, a calibrated mapping of means to large ends. Over the course of 1946 and 1947, the United States developed a framework of Soviet containment to safeguard its interests without appeasement or war. It then devised the Marshall Plan as the most promising means, given Soviet conventional military superiority in Europe and a large American edge in economic power, to implement it. When France and Britain averred that economic integration made Marshall nations more dependent on each other and less able to defend themselves against hostile action by Russia or Germany, the United States responded with NATO. Together, the Marshall Plan and NATO provided the means to carry out containment.

Yet in the quarter century since the passing of the Soviet Union, Grand Strategy has been set aside in favor of improvisation to pacify competing interests. Democratization has been conflated with security objectives, serving neither. The result is an under-resourced NATO facing growing pressure from an increasingly embittered and authoritarian Russia. "We have signed up to protect a whole series of countries," observed Kennan in 1998, "even though we have neither the resources nor the intention to do so in any serious way." He Was right. In consequence, the expansion policy is failing.

The Marshall Plan is remembered as one of the great achievements of American foreign policy not merely because it was visionary but because it worked. It worked because the United States aligned its actions with its interests and capacities in Europe, accepting the reality of a Russian sphere of influence into which it could not penetrate without sacrificing credibility and public support. Great acts of statesmanship are grounded in realism no less than idealism. It is a lesson we need to relearn.

The Heroic Age: The Creation of Quantum Mechanics, 1925-1940 by Robert D. Purrington [Oxford University Press, 9780190655174]

Quantum theory is one of the great achievements of twentieth century physics. Born at the very beginning of the century, it attained a definitive form by 1932, yet continued to evolve throughout the century. Its applications remain fully a part of modern life. It should thus come as no surprise that literature on the history of quantum theory is vast, but author Robert D. Purrington approaches the story from a new angle, by examining the original physics papers and scientific studies from before the creation of quantum mechanics to how scientists think about and discuss the subject today.

The Heroic Age presents for the first time a detailed but compact and manageable history of

the creation of quantum theory and shows precisely where each important idea originated. Purrington provides the history of the crucial developmental years of quantum theory with an emphasis on the literature rather than an overview of this period focusing on personalities or personal stories of the scientists involved. This book instead focuses on how the theoretical discoveries came about, when and where they were published, and how they became accepted as part of the scientific canon.

Excerpt: As I write this, we have put the centenary of Bohr's theory of the hydrogen atom, perhaps the singular event in the history of quantum mechanics, behind us, and look forward to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of quantum theory less than a decade hence. Several Bohr symposia spent 2013 trying to define precisely what Bohr's legacy is. His place in this narrative is somewhat odd and in a sense limited, because by the time the "new quantum theory" appeared in 1925, marking the starting point of our study of its literature and history, Bohr had virtually stopped contributing to the formalism of quantum mechanics, as opposed to its ontology.' At the same time, his authority had hardly waned, and in what follows few pages are totally devoid of his influence.

Quantum mechanics stands unchallenged as the great monument of 20th-century physics. Born at the very beginning of the century, it attained something like a definitive form by 1932, yet continued to evolve throughout the century, and its applications are fully a part of the modern world. Quantum computing, now so fashionable, may very well revolutionize contemporary life. In any case, although we live in a classical world, our lives are continually enriched on a daily basis by the applications of quantum theory.

It should come as no surprise that literature on the history of quantum theory is vast. Just one example of this is the monumental six- (or eight-) volume work by Jagdish Mehra and Helmut Rechenberg, The Historical Development of Quantum Theory, written over two decades, and rivaled only by the 2000-page Twentieth Century Physics by Brown, Pais, and Pippard. Secondary works abound. But because the theory was essentially complete by the early 1930s, its basic history is actually manageable. The result is, that for the most part, the history of quantum mechanics has already been written, and many of the previous studies have benefited greatly from the fact that most of the founders survived into the 1950s and in a few cases, into the 1990s. One important consequence has been the oral history interviews of the Archive for the History of Quantum Physics project (AHQP), consisting of first-person recollections of the early days of quantum theory. Of course the usual caveat applies here, that such recollections are often faulty, but it is probably fair to say that before quantum mechanics, no revolution in physics could have been documented and fleshed out from the oral histories of the major participants in the way that happened in this case. Although the journal literature continues to expand, and many of these efforts will find their way into this narrative, for the most part my take on the events of 1925-1940 is based on my own reading of the primary sources.

So this is not a new story. It has been told in many places, superificially and exhaustively, successfully and otherwise. There are comprehensive, multivolume treatments like those of Mehra and Rechenberg, elegant, focused monographs such as that ofJohn Hendry, idiosyncratic, episodic works along the lines of Beller, and so on. Abraham Pais's Inward Bound stands out as a wonderfully detailed and personal account of subatomic physics in the 20th century but skips over most of the story told here. One might be tempted to write a better one-volume history of quantum physics than now exists, and I could be accused of trying to do just that, but my intent here is actually somewhat different. In short histories of ideas, the trade-off for brevity is often superficiality, a fate I have tried to avoid by showing in detail precisely where the important ideas on which quantum theory is based actually arose and usually where they first appeared in print. This information generally lies buried in papers by specialists focusing on narrow questions or in massive studies of the kind already mentioned. It will certainly not be found in the textbooks, and for the most part with good reason; the training of a physicist typically leaves very little time for contemplation and introspection. It is a cliché, but not less true because of that, that a major motivation for this work has been my inability to find a compact but comprehensive and detailed book on the subject.

Almost all of the sources used or cited in this work will be found at a good university library, and

virtually all of the journal references are available online, even though access may not always be easy. The present work is only one way of looking at the subject, of course, focusing on the written record at the expense of correspondence among the principals that was so crucial to progress, the symposia and other meetings, and the hallway conversations that ensued. Although I have drawn heavily on these resources, to weave them into the narrative would simply have expanded it well beyond any reasonable size. Quantum theory has a history that is important in its own right, and knowledge of that history not only enriches our understanding of the theory,6 but an appreciation of how a particular idea or result came about may, and indeed should, offer important insights into how theoretical (or experimental) ideas emerge, and what their range of applicability or validity might be.

Many of the papers relevant to this volume were originally published in German, of course, frequently in Annalen der Physik or Zeitschrift für Physik, and only a small fraction of the important early papers have been translated into English. This is largely a reflection of the fact that when they were published all physicists were expected to read, and even be able to lecture in, the German language. In some cases this has required me to personally translate papers into English, and where translations do exist I have relied on their accuracy. The assumption is that this will not introduce significant errors into this manuscript, but it remains at best an assumption. Frequently there will be no recourse but to cite the German original despite the lack of a translation. By the mid-1930s, as many Jewish scientists fled their homelands and as the Physical Review became increasingly important, supported by the continuing impact of British journals, the language of scientific discourse became English.

Without apology, this work takes as its starting point the current consensus and asks "how did we get here from there?" This is what historians (myself included) would call "whig" history, or "presentism;" even "triumphalist" history. That this is not the way history ordinarily ought to be written is obvious. It selects from the physics of the time only those discoveries that led to our present understanding, ignoring wrong turns or blind alleys. An analogy in the history of astronomy or cosmology would be to emphasize only Aristarchus's advocacy of the heliocentric theory and discard the geocentric theories of Aristotle, Hipparchos, Ptolemy, and everyone else. Nonetheless, and intentionally, few of the many blind alleys that necessarily were part of the development of quantum theory are pursued in this narrative. This turns out to be less of a defect than one might imagine, however, because the formalism of quantum mechanics matured so quickly, in not much over seven years, and was materially shaped by less than a few dozen physicists, so that there is a much thinner record of wrong turns and controversies than there might otherwise be. Finally, and although scientists—historians and historians of science often do not agree on this point, it is fair to argue that because science does inexorably progress, though not without setbacks and periodic rethinking and retrenching, it does move forward, and I make use of that fact without apology.

Yet we all know that published work, that is, journal papers or review articles, fail to fully capture the history of an idea or discovery; we can look to our own work for that insight. The final paper is the polished end product of a typically complex, halting, and messy process that is typically moved forward by hunches and speculations that often as not are totally missing from the published papers. The road to a discovery might be quite formal and logical, but more frequently it will be almost devoid of these characteristics. Much of the evolution of a theory or understanding of an experiment will have taken place in correspondence, at conferences, over coffee or tea, in a bar, on a climb or a ski slope. Today it might be technology: email, the Internet. But for a discovery to become "official" or canonical, and thus enter the secondary literature and become part of everyday practice, it will have had to meet the test of "peer review," or at least receive an editor's stamp of approval, and come into print. The peer-review process that we alternately deride and praise today was not nearly as well developed in the 1920s, but it is nonetheless true that what may have been discovered in a mountain cabin in Austria or in an office in Göttingen had to reach print before its import and validity could be judged and before it could become influential. Once on the page an idea becomes part of the literature, to be incorporated into textbooks for the

next generation, or perhaps even to be shown wrong.

With the notable exception of the introductory chapters, which serve to bring the reader up to date on the situation before the new quantum mechanics appears in 1925-1926, this work concentrates on the decade-and-a half ending in 1940. If the choice of this period seems arbitrary, I think it is not. One could argue that the period between the wars is the natural period to treat, and in a sense I have done that by devoting considerable space to setting the stage for 1925. And terminating this narrative in 1940 (or 1939 or 1941) is appropriate for two reasons. In the first place, the hiatus caused by the war represents something of a period of gestation, so that quantum physics was very different in 1947 from that in 1939, in part because of the fruits of war-related research. But this hiatus meant that relatively little of importance was published between 1939 and 1947. In the end, however, it is simply a matter of manageability Prior to WWII, the community of quantum scientists was small, but grew rapidly after the conflict, with enormous resources spent on rebuilding the affected nations, and with the rise of large-scale funding of science by governments, fueled in part by the Cold War. The literature began to grow rapidly, making it impossible to try to continue to survey it and still retain some scale. The reader will notice a certain lack of discipline in this regard, however, so that in a few cases, nuclear physics and astrophysics in particular, it seemed appropriate to follow the trail of writing on a subject to its denouement as late as 1948-1949. Perhaps the most egregious example of ignoring our self-imposed constraints comes in the discussion of the interpretation of quantum mechanics. But because this issue hangs like a cloud over the theory, I have felt obligated to give some flavor of developments in the last four decades, as issues that for the most part arose in the 1920s and 1930s have not only been elaborated, but actually subjected to experimental tests. As an aside, it is worth noting that the period on which we concentrate here is essentially the same as that covered in Mehra and Rechenberg's vol. 6 (1926-1941), in well over 1000 pages.

As will become apparent, the formalism of quantum theory was substantially in hand by 1932, so that one might ask, why 1940? It turns out that many important implications of the theory were discovered in those prewar years, especially in the application of quantum mechanics to atoms, nuclei, and solids. Without some acknowledgment of these developments, the story would be incomplete.

It may seem strange that the interpretation of quantum theory is still very much an open question. Yet in the 80 years since von Neumann first wrote about the paradoxes inherent in the quantum theory of measurement, there has never been a hint that disagreements about interpretation have any bearing on the explanatory power of the theory. This remarkable situation is perhaps without parallel in the history of science, but, in any case, because much of the writing on the interpretation of quantum mechanics is fairly recent, if the last half-century can be seen as "recent," we will only be able to scratch the surface, so to speak. Although these open issues of interpretation are very unlikely to threaten its validity as a program for calculating the results of experiments, they touch on, in very profound ways, the meaning of quantum mechanics. I provide some guide to this literature, but because it is very much an open topic, I cannot linger too long over its details. How the reader decides to deal with these issues—if at all—is a matter of taste or strategy.

Although the theory had matured well before the outbreak of WWII, so that most of the material discussed in a modern textbook from the 1980s or 1990s will have been developed in those prewar years, a few recent topics of special relevance that would not be found in books written in the immediate postwar era (or would have been given short shrift) are also touched on here, if briefly, when coherence or completeness seems to require it. I do not try to cover the literature of quantum-field theory or even quantum electrodynamics in detail, but again, I do not avoid it altogether. Relativistic quantum theory is almost as old as quantum theory itself, with Schrödinger trying a relativistic theory before his nonrelativistic wave mechanics. Dirac developed the relativistic theory of the electron ("Dirac equation") as early as 1928, and for all practical purposes founded quantum electrodynamics in those same years. But the great successes of quantum electrodynamics and quantum-field theory are mostly postwar.

There are, of course, many unanswered or open questions that qualify any consensus view of how

quantum mechanics evolved, some of which originate in newly discovered biographical details of one or another of the founders, occasionally in some newly discovered correspondence. Most of the open issues, however, concern not the history of quantum mechanics, or its formalism, but rather its meaning and interpretation, in the form of questions that still haunt the theory the better part of a century after its creation. The caveat that might be added is one that arises in thinking about how to reconcile quantum theory and the theory of gravity, which for the moment is general relativity. There is no way to know the direction this exploration will take, but it could have a fundamental impact on how quantum theory is formulated. But that is for the next generation.

With the exception of those observations that fostered the quantum revolution, and especially atomic line spectra, I touch on experimental results only when they are essential to the narrative, and then only briefly. To some degree that decision is merely a matter of economy, and it certainly does not represent a judgment on the relative value of theory and experiment in this story. Indeed, experimental results played an unusually direct role in the origins of quantum mechanics. But quantum theory is a theoretical construct, and for that reason the story has to be about how the theory evolved, however much that may have been driven by experiment.

There is naturally interest in what might be called the sociology of quantum mechanics, the cultural and philosophical milieu in which the theory was born and how that context affected the creation and even the nature of quantum theory. It is interesting, however, that Max Jammer, who wrote, what is perhaps, the definitive work on the philosophy of quantum mechanics, found little reason to address the question of how European philosophical movements, especially positivism, could be seen as laying the groundwork for the discoveries of Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Dirac, Pauli, and others. Nonetheless, we are not so naive as to believe that quantum mechanics was not influenced by its time and place in history.

Although this is not the place to survey the textbook literature on quantum mechanics in detail, there is arguably no other literature that shows so directly the evolution of the field; those ideas that have proven to be especially efficacious in advancing the understanding quantum systems quickly find their way there. There are many excellent texts on quantum mechanics for those who want to learn the theory and even some popular introductions that try to give some flavor of it." Indeed there may not be another area of physics that has spawned so many excellent texts. A few even treat the history of the subject with skill and subtlety. And yet times change, fads, or at least emphases, come and go, even in the textbooks. The situation is complicated by the fact that not too much over a decade after the initial papers on the new quantum mechanics appeared, the world was plunged into war again. This means two things: First, that some discoveries in quantum mechanics and its progeny, nuclear physics, were not published in the open literature until well after the conclusion of the WWII, and second, that for nearly a decade physicists were either occupied with war-related research

or were in areas where research and publication was impossible, from at least 1939 until 1945, or even later. If we add to that German anti-Semitism of the 1930s and the disruption in careers that resulted, we can see that the record, in both the primary and secondary literature, is spotty, with at least a semi-hiatus of over a decade. Thus the textbook literature is less revealing than might be otherwise. It is also true that after the new quantum mechanics reached a kind of maturity in the early 1930s, much of the subsequent effort was in applications to molecules, nuclei, and solids. I provide a guide to this literature of applied quantum mechanics.

We should not forget that the physicists who created quantum mechanics in 19251932, with a small number of exceptions, were all from the generation that was born in the first decade of the 20th century: Pauli, Heisenberg, Jordan, Dirac, von Neumann, Bethe, and Gamow were all born between 1900 and 1906. Only Einstein, Born, Bohr, and, most surprisingly, Schrödinger, were of the previous generation.

The reader will not find many equations in this book, and only a few detailed developments or discussions of a particular discovery or proof of some result. To have elaborated in this way would have defeated my purpose and would have expanded this work beyond reasonable and practical bounds. The original sources are

laboriously cited, as are, in many cases, secondary works that provide explication and context. The reader can pursue these developments at his or her leisure. The alternative would be a book many times the size of this one, and essentially a full-blown text on quantum mechanics, with historical asides. The principal exception to this is a brief discussion of Heisenberg's revolutionary paper that in many ways began the quantum revolution, in the Appendix.

A bibliographic essay had to be sacrificed to my prolixity in other areas, and it ought to be mentioned that the references to each chapter do not fully reflect the sources that went into the narrative; as is always the case, I have had to be judicious in the sources I have cited. Assume if you will, however, that your missing source has probably found its way into this work in some fashion.

Provisional Suppositions

A cynic might insist that this book should have been subtitled "The Creation of Quantum Theory," as opposed to "Quantum Mechanics," because of the heavy concentration on theory, which I think the reader understands was deliberate. This has, in fact, been unapologetically a book about the evolution of quantum theory, though perhaps this is the apology. As emphasized earlier, quantum theory was strongly motivated by experiment, and if much of that empirical evidence was accumulated in the later 19th century, the productive relationship between experiment and theory certainly did not stop there. We think particularly of the Franck-Hertz experiment, which confirmed the discrete nature of atomic levels, the Davisson-Germer experiment, which was a concrete manifestation of wave-particle duality, and the Stern-Gerlach experiment, which demonstrated space quantization, to merely scratch the surface. Nuclear physics has been an inescapably experiment-driven field from the very beginning, and Rutherford's long career was dominated by a lifelong skepticism about theory. Chapter 15 is full of recounts of experimental discoveries, by Rutherford, of course, but also by Aston, Bieler, Chadwick, Anderson, Neddermeyer, Lawrence, and many others. Nuclear and atomic physics have distinct histories, as we have already noted, because in the former, theory evolved right along with experiment, whereas in the case of atomic physics, many, if not most, of the challenging empirical results ("data") from experiments on atoms that quantum mechanics had to explain, came from before, or perhaps just after, 1900.' In any event, experiment has played a large role in this narrative even as the emphasis has been on theory. In acknowledgement of this fact, the particle theorist James Bjorken has written that

> It is my credo that technological advances drive the progress in experimental physics and that experimental physics in turn drive the theory. Without these ingredients, the most brilliant theoretical constructs languish worthlessly. There is in my opinion no greater calling for a theorist than to help advance the experiments. It is not an easy thing to do.

The growing distinction between theory and experiment, or theorists and experimentalists, which is so strong today, dated only from the last half of the 19th century, and some of the great theorists of that era, for example, Maxwell and Helmholtz, were definitely at home in the laboratory. Even Rutherford has been described as a "crypto-theorist." But in the period covered here, mostly 1925-1940, that kind of broad perspective was becoming rare. Indeed, after Enrico Fermi, one has to look very hard for examples, though a few, like Fred Reines, are hard to pigeonhole. This is not to deprecate in any way the tributes due many fine experimentalists, who in many cases had almost uncanny instincts for what were the important problems—much less the experimental program itself. It remains the case that no matter how beautiful a theory may be, even how internally consistent it is, in the end it is experiment or observation that will determine its survival. Disagreement with just one experiment, in most cases, means that the theoretical edifice comes crashing down. The imperatives of experimental tests of a theory are inescapable. Finally, it is no secret that although theory may often stimulate an experimental investigation, in many cases experimental discoveries have driven theoretical innovation. We have seen many examples of both of these ways of doing physics in previous chapters.

It is perhaps less remarkable that quantum theory largely arose in the 15-year period that has been emphasized here, leading up to WWII, than that it has survived mostly unchanged for the subsequent three-quarters of a century. The way physics is

done, on the other hand, has changed so much that it would be hardly recognizable to those who created quantum mechanics nearly a century ago. Physics, and especially quantum physics, was then a tiny community by today's standards. There was no "big science," no papers with several hundred authors, and only very modest external funding. And yet it was unquestionably a community that created quantum mechanics, despite much slower communications and much more difficult travel. And although European centers had dominated fundamental science (but not necessarily technology) for a century, this period, 1925-1940, was one in which American science rapidly gained ascendancy, in part because of the political insanity of post-Weimar Germany and its intellectual self-destruction after 1933.

Today nearly everyone carries a device in his or her pocket that contains direct applications of quantum mechanics. But despite the widespread applications of quantum mechanics in the real world, which include miniaturization of electronic circuity, the ubiquity of digital devices of all kinds, and the birth of quantum computing, one can hardly be appalled at the fact that perhaps the first important real-world application of quantum mechanics was to the nuclear bomb project during WWII. For that mankind has much to answer, but on the other side of the ledger, human lives have benefited enormously from innovations, essentially quantum mechanical or at least based on quantum mechanics. Of course, some of these, like superconductivity, could be exploited without being explained by quantum mechanics. But transistors and other solid-state devices are inherently quantum mechanical, as are, of course, lasers. Without lasers there would be no CDs, for example, and without solid-state electronics, there would have been no moon program. Imagine either the on-board computers or those on the ground being powered by vacuum tubes—as they were before the 1960s. Nanotechnology operates very close to the microscopic-macroscopic interface, by which I mean that macroscopic quantum effects might come into play. And in the not-too-distant future is the prospect of practical quantum computing.

To be sure, one message from the chapters that have come before is that, as in any vital field of science, theory and experiment or observation are intertwined, the one feeding the other. Quantum theory is the great scientific discovery of the 20th century, but it is thoroughly built on empirical foundations. But what else have we learned in the course of this narrative? We have, of course, traced the development of quantum mechanics from its beginnings to what became its canonical form in the years leading up to WWII. Further, we have learned that, for now, standard quantum theory as a vehicle for interpreting observations has no challengers. Of course, the same was the case with the Ptolemaic theory in the second century and for over a millennium thereafter. We also know that however successful quantum theory maybe, its foundations, if not exactly crumbling, at least are under attack. Whether those attacks will fail or simply succeed in deepening our understanding of the theory's foundations, we cannot know. There is, of course, the possibility that this quest will undermine the entire theoretical structure, showing that it is at best an approximation to a more fundamental theory. So be it.

It may not come as a complete surprise that the collection of results that filled a modern quantum-mechanics textbook from the early 1990s, and in particular the theoretical framework that would be found there, almost without exception dates from that fertile period, 1925-1940, to which this work is devoted. Applications are, of course, another matter entirely, and furthermore there are exceptions, but in any case this situation has changed significantly since the 1990s, for several reasons, some theoretical, some experimental. Thus the best of the most modern textbooks, and Weinberg's very recent one stands out above the others, consider many topics that would not have been included, and in some cases were not known, in the 1980s. Examples include path integrals, Berry phase, Landau levels, gauge invariance, the Bohm—Aharanov effect, quantum computing and quantum optics, an emphasis on internal symmetries, and so on. Issues of measurement and interpretation are no longer so easily overlooked and EPR and Bell's inequality will be found in almost all of them.

That said, and despite the fact that the formalism has been in a mature state for three-quarters of a century, the issues of interpretation, explored at length in the Chapter 14, remain largely unsolved. At the very least, anything like a consensus is

lacking. Despite our confidence in applying quantum mechanics on the atomic and subatomic scale, the discomfiture felt by many physicists in considering how the transition to the macroscopic, classical world takes place is such that they turn away, almost in despair. But quantum theory would be much less interesting, indeed, less exciting, if all of its subtleties were suddenly explained or explained away.

At the very beginning of this narrative, we took notice of the recent anniversary of the first quantum-mechanical calculation by Bohr in 1913, and so we have come full circle. For we have also just put behind us the centenary year of Rutherford's discovery of the nucleus in 1911, without which the Bohr theory and what followed would not have been possible. We are now duly celebrating, if that is the proper word, the 4 years of the "Great War," which to a considerable degree determined when the quantum revolution could take place. Not until 1918 or 1919 could real progress toward the theory described in this work resume in earnest. Thus it is, that in just under a decade we will fully honor the beginning of what we have called "the heroic age," as the first century of quantum mechanics comes to a close.

Conclusion

Thousands of words have been devoted to what happened between 1925 and 1940 in explanation of how quantum theory came to be. But with the exception of some mild speculation earlier, we have not tried to show "why?," which is one of the mandates of a historical account. In any scientific discipline, of course, there are well-known internal or intrinsic imperatives, the fact that the theory has, as it were, a life of its own that carries it forward. In some cases new experiments force investigators to find a theoretical explanation or description; in others it is the state of the theory itself, its incompleteness, its inelegance, the knowledge that the theoretical step that has been taken is only a start. Here we have again the old internalist versus externalist debate.

Context is all, some would say, and in the case of writing about culture and politics, that may very well be true. The upheavals that characterize literary and artistic expression between, say, 1870 and 1920 were undoubtedly driven by developments in politics, technology (including the automobile, the airplane, military weaponry ...) social mores, and eventually the conflict of WWI, whose conclusion we are on the verge of celebrating. That science, and physics in particular, should not be immune to such influences must be obvious to anyone. It is no accident that the data described in earlier chapters as leading to the quantum revolution really were not available until just before the' turn of the century, and indeed could not have accumulated earlier. Electrification, we should remember, began to be widespread only after the first power stations appeared in 1881-1882. So, in one sense, at least, quantum theory evolved out of the raw material made available by the technological developments of the last quarter of the old century. The effects of the war itself have already been examined.

But what of the character of quantum theory itself? Earlier the controversial "Forman thesis" was mentioned, which argues that the willingness of the founders of quantum theory to accept indeterminism and to challenge causality was in some sense a reflection of an irrationalist, intuitionist streak prevalent in the Weimar years, which had its origin in the thought of Schopenhauer, Schelling, and even Spengler.s That is, it was due to external rather than internal influences. Apart from the difficulty of showing how this philosophical milieu might have influenced Bohr, Heisenberg, or Pauli, there are good reasons to believe that these men and others actively rejected the "Weimar zeitgeist." Dirac, who as much as anyone constructed the edifice of quantum indeterminism, was notably unphilosophical, thoroughly unaffected by external events, and the German irrationalist thought got little traction in England. On the other hand, Marxism was growing in popularity, and its influence even found its way into the Cavendish laboratory despite Rutherford's strong hand. So we are left without answers, but perhaps with a healthy dose of skepticism about this thesis.

Finally, of course, there are the personal factors, the ambition and creativity that characterized the handfuls of individuals who created quantum theory. It is fair to say that no one achieves greatness without a hefty dose of ambition, intellectual or otherwise. Why do physicists with comparable skills diverge completely in their accomplishments? This is clearly a matter for psychologists, and there is much writing about genius, but when one looks at the diverse careers

of Bohr, Pauli, Dirac, and others, few patterns emerge, except that they were all driven. They had their differences, of course. Bohr was prolix and overbearing, Pauli intellectually aggressive, Dirac laconic and almost pathologically retiring. And so on. If there is a pattern there, it has escaped this observer. <>

High-Risers: Cabrini-Green and the Fate of American Public Housing by Ben Austen [Harper, 9780062235060]

Joining the ranks of Evicted, The Warmth of Other Suns, and classic works of literary non-fiction by Alex Kotlowitz and J. Anthony Lukas, High-Risers braids personal narratives, city politics, and national history to tell the timely and epic story of Chicago's Cabrini-Green, America's most iconic public housing project.

Built in the 1940s atop an infamous Italian slum, Cabrini-Green grew to twenty-three towers and a population of 20,000—all of it packed onto just seventy acres a few blocks from Chicago's ritzy Gold Coast. Cabrini-Green became synonymous with crime, squalor, and the failure of government. For the many who lived there, it was also a much-needed resource—it was home. By 2011, every high-rise had been razed, the island of black poverty engulfed by the white affluence around it, the families dispersed.

In this novelistic and eye-opening narrative, Ben Austen tells the story of America's public housing experiment and the changing fortunes of American cities. It is an account told movingly through the lives of residents who struggled to make a home for their families as powerful forces converged to accelerate the housing complex's demise. Beautifully written, rich in detail, and full of moving portraits, High-Risers is a sweeping exploration of race, class, popular culture, and politics in modern America that brilliantly considers what went wrong in our nation's effort to provide affordable housing to the poor—and what we can learn from those mistakes.

Excerpt: The Chicago Neighborhood of the Future

The little brick chapel, at the intersection of Clybourn and Larrabee, was built in 1901, an outpost of the American Protestant Episcopal Church in the industrial river community. In 1927, the Near North Side was mostly Italian, and Saint Philip Benizi, the parish church led by Father Luigi Giambastiani along Death Corner, bought the building and rededicated it the San Marcello Mission. Decades passed and Cabrini-Green's twenty-three towers rose up around the chapel, the public housing population soaring to eighteen thousand and the Italians long departed. In 1965, the Saint Benizi Parish church was demolished, but the San Marcello Mission, in the shadows of several white William Green high-rises, continued on, with only a few dozen parishioners and a sole Sunday mass. The mission tried to serve the residents of the high-rises, offering job training and drug treatment. In 1972, a priest asked William Walker, the Chicago muralist, to paint the plain building. Walker covered the outside entrance with figures of different races, their giant circular faces overlapping like a Venn diagram and their hands joining in embrace. Bordering what was painted to look like a huge stained-glass window, Walker included the words "Why were they crucified" and a list of those suffering: Jesus, Gandhi, Dr. King, Anne Frank, Emmett Till, Kent State. He titled the mural All of Mankind, Unity of the Human Race, and it reflected a hope for the close-quartered divisions of Cabrini-Green, Lincoln Park, Old Town, and the Gold Coast. The archdiocese of Chicago shut down the mission in 1974, and the building was taken over by the Northside Stanger's Home Missionary Baptist Church.

Four decades later, the neighborhood had transformed again. The Cabrini towers were no more, and the church sat in the backyard of the new multistory Target. The heavily trafficked streets were repaved and bike-laned. Up the block, an REI and a Crate and Barrel superstore had opened, an upscale movie theater and shopping center, an Apple Store and businesses for body sculpting. Where the Ogden Avenue Bridge had stood, there was now a skydiving facility, people paying $69.95 for a few minutes in a wind tunnel to experience the sensation of free fall. In 2015, Northside Stranger put its prime parcel of land on the market, asking $1.7 million for the 5,200-square-foot lot. In anticipation of a sale, the church was given a fresh coat of paint, the faded mural celebrating racial harmony whitewashed entirely.

For years, developers referred to Cabrini-Green as the "hole in the donut," the one area in the thriving city center where builders dared not go. No more. "Cabrini-Green is the Chicago neighborhood of the future," a realty company wrote. Circling the Cabrini land were new condos and luxury towers with outdoor pools and spas. Next to where Dantrell Davis had lived, on Oak Street, townhomes with floor-to-ceiling windows sold before completion. Boxy Parkside mid-rises now lined both sides of Division Street. Cabrini-Green tenants had filed a lawsuit with the city in 2013 to reopen the 440 shuttered rowhouses as public housing units. The suit was settled in 2015, nineteen years after the first redevelopment plan for Cabrini-Green was proposed. The rowhouses would almost certainly be demolished. But public housing residents would be mixed into whatever replaced the buildings, filling 40 percent of the units. There was a good deal of city-owned Cabrini property that had yet to be developed—empty fields and concrete tracts still sat where many of the high-rises stood. Public housing units would also be sprinkled into the dense array of residential properties that was sure to come on the rest of the seventy acres.

One Near North Side developer argued that the name Cabrini-Green no longer be uttered. "It's `North of Chicago Avenue,'" he insisted. "NoCA is what everyone should be calling it. The name is without the stigma of Cabrini-Green." Yet even Chicagoans drawn to a hot new housing market were loath to adopt a New York—style neologism. The Tribune editorial page appealed to its readers in 2015 to come up with a name for the former Cabrini-Green befitting local customs. Among the hundred-plus submissions were Cooley Park, Gautreaux Town, Gold Coast West, North Branch, Old Ogden, Severin, Newbrini, Montgomery, Brother Bill, and Seward Green. But by far the name suggested most was simply Cabrini. "And why not name the neighborhood after Mother Frances Cabrini?" the paper mused.

"When I go to church now, I can hardly recognize the neighborhood," Dolores Wilson said. "Condos, townhomes, wealth. It's not the same." Her church, Holy Family Lutheran, was still there but struggling amid the changes. Newcomers to the neighborhood flocked to places like Park Community, a multistory gospel-preaching nondenominational church built a couple of blocks away. Park Community was "committed to being in the city, for the city." But Dolores appreciated that Holy Family was there at all. "People didn't believe it would stand this long—being Lutheran and in Cabrini, too! But GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME," she wrote in a letter to the editors of several local newspapers on the church's fiftieth anniversary.

With the motto "Many Voices. One Near North," the Near North Unity Program was a new institution in the neighborhood that was also committed to the past. It was created at the start of the Plan for Transformation's second decade to join together the changing area's disparate populations—the remaining Cabrini-Green families, th newer homeowners and renters, the new businesses, and the old community groups. Abu Ansari came over from his Parkside apartment for a time and led the meetings. "To assuage my guilt," he said. Kelvin Cannon sometimes attended, standing in the back, and so did Carol Steele, one of Marion Stamps's daughters, and Brother Jim.

The group's success in drawing out the neighborhood's different "stakeholders" was evident in the ways their many voices often clashed. During one monthly meeting, white property owners peppered the area's police commander with questions about the open-air drug sales they'd witnessed on Larrabee Street, not far from their condo building. They couldn't believe that in the revived community, on the very same block as the new police headquarters, dealers could set up shop outside a corner store, with buyers loitering there at all hours of the day. A "Cabrini-Green problem" was being allowed to return, and they demanded that a cruiser be stationed at the intersection. Finally, a man who grew up in one of the Reds broke the protocol of raised hands and no interruptions. "It's loosies!" he shouted. "They're selling cigarettes on the corner, not drugs." It didn't make sense for someone buying drugs to linger. "You live in Cabrini-Green now," he said. "In the good end."

The Near North Unity Program led race and culture workshops for its members, and it evolved into one of the chief arbiters of the community's needs. The group set up a pen pal program among the fifth graders in the eight area schools, spread news of job openings and internships, organized hunger walks, and ran back-to-school fairs and

neighborhood cleanups. It inaugurated a series of summer jazz concerts in the redesigned Seward Park. Anything to create "positive loitering" and "a new vision on Division," its leaders said. It became such a presence that developers now sought the group's support on proposed condo towers and revised plans for the Cabrini rowhouses. Jesse White brought architects out to a monthly gathering to talk about the designs for his new Jesse White Community Center, the thirty-thousand-square-foot facility built at a cost of $13 million on Chicago Avenue.

The Near North Unity Program also joined the fight to save Manierre, the elementary school by the Evergreen Terrace apartments just north of Division Street. Like the other fifty-four schools that Mayor Emanuel's administration said would be closed in 2013, Manierre was underenrolled, and the minority students who did attend underperformed by most measures. Jenner, south of Division, once the most crowded school in all of Chicago, had been rebuilt as part of the Plan for Transformation, and the state-of-the-art building could seat as many as a thousand students. But with the towers knocked down, enrollment hovered around two hundred, and two-thirds of those students were former Cabrini families who no longer lived in the district and traveled long distances each day.

The city proposed a reallocation of resources, combining the students from both schools into the new Jenner. But the neighborhood objected, saying the Hatfield-McCoy conflict between the young people on either side of Division Street was real and endured. A group of Jenner girls responded to news of the possible merge by beating up a Manierre middle schooler. A Jenner boy posted a "hit list" on Facebook, implying that the nine Manierre students he'd identified would be shot. J. R. Fleming spoke at one of several public meetings to protest Manierre's closing, asking Mayor Emanuel if, in Israel, he would be willing to send his children to a Palestinian school. He distributed copies of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, indicating that the city council was a signatory. "I would rather kill the budget than kill a child," J. R. said. In May, the mayor's office relented: Manierre could stay open. It was one of only a handful of the condemned schools to win a reprieve.

In 2015, the Near North Unity Program turned its attention to Jenner and its ongoing underuse. The group suggested a merge not with another Cabrini-area school but with an elementary school less than a mile east, in one of the city's wealthiest districts. Ogden International suffered from the opposite problem as Jenner. The Gold Coast area surrounding Ogden had exploded with new residential development in recent years, causing drastic overloading at the school. If Jenner and Ogden were combined, kindergarten through fourth grades could be housed at one campus and fifth through eighth at another. Not a single white family who'd moved to the Cabrini neighborhood had enrolled a child in all-black Jenner. But for those with infants or children-to-be, the possibility that one of the best schools in the city would, in effect, come to them was a kind of inner-city dream. Ogden parents who showed up at meetings to support the consolidation said they'd read the literature on school integration, and it revealed that higher-performing, wealthier students didn't suffer academically in these mergers. They praised Jenner's new principal, Robert Croston, a young alum of Harvard University's School Leadership program. At Jenner, he'd initiated a campaign to improve daily attendance; he started a career day and family math nights. He was trying to reinforce a culture of success at the school by dubbing it the NEST, an acronym drawn from a school credo: "I am Neighborly. I stay Engaged. I am a Scholar. I use Teamwork." And a great many people from both schools talked also of the social justice aspect of the merge. Nearly a century earlier, Harvey Zorbaugh had written in The Gold Coast and the Slum of these polar opposite communities that were only blocks apart: "All the phenomena characteristic of the city are clearly segregated and appear in exaggerated form." Here, at last, was a chance to join together the extreme contrasts of the area, to level this imbalance. At a meeting to discuss a consolidation that would begin no sooner than September 2018, an Ogden parent said, "We've forgotten about taking care of other people's children."

There was, as to be expected, a group of Ogden parents who were vocal in their opposition to the proposal. They worried about practical hurdles, like transportation between the two campuses. But they also felt that the Cabrini-Green neighborhood had changed, just not enough. "As Ogden parents

we have been given virtually no chance to protect what we have planned for our kids' future here," a parent posted on an online forum. Someone else wrote, "I am all about the social development and upliftment of underprivileged kids and families, but it cannot come at the cost of compromising educational and behavioral and safety environment for all the other kids." Cabrini families expressed their own concerns. Tara Stamps, a daughter of Marion Stamps and a longtime Jenner teacher, showed up at one of the meetings with several of her colleagues, all of them wearing "Straight Outta da NEST" T-shirts. She worried that the consolidation would not be a union of equals but a way to push out poor and black people. The neighborhood had already lost a high school and three elementaries as part of Cabrini-Green's demolition. When the rest of the cleared site was finally developed, a third of the new units would be reserved for public housing families returning to their "native land." Would a school filled with Gold Coast students now be closed to them? "I really want you to understand with a sensitivity that Cabrini-Green didn't represent just buildings. Those were families. Those were communities," Stamps said. "The reason you have scores of our young people coming back in treacherous weather is because they are rooted to the land. They have a blood memory there. Their grandparents and their aunts and their cousins and their favorite memories were there."

Smoketown: The Untold Story of the Other Great Black Renaissance by Mark Whitaker [Simon & Schuster, 9781501122392]

The other great Renaissance of black culture, influence, and glamour burst forth joyfully in what may seem an unlikely place—Pittsburgh, PA—from the 1920s through the 1950s.

Today black Pittsburgh is known as the setting for August Wilson's famed plays about noble but doomed working-class strivers. But this community once had an impact on American history that rivaled the far larger black worlds of Harlem and Chicago. It published the most widely read black newspaper in the country, urging black voters to switch from the Republican to the Democratic Party and then rallying black support for World War II. It fielded two of the greatest baseball teams of the Negro Leagues and introduced Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers. Pittsburgh was the childhood home of jazz pioneers Billy Strayhorn, Billy Eckstine, Earl Hines, Mary Lou Williams, and Erroll Garner; Hall of Fame slugger Josh Gibson—and August Wilson himself. Some of the most glittering figures of the era were changed forever by the time they spent in the city, from Joe Louis and Satchel Paige to Duke Ellington and Lena Horne.

Mark Whitaker's Smoketown is a captivating portrait of this unsung community and a vital addition to the story of black America. It depicts how ambitious Southern migrants were drawn to a steel-making city on a strategic river junction; how they were shaped by its schools and a spirit of commerce with roots in the Gilded Age; and how their world was eventually destroyed by industrial decline and urban renewal. Whitaker takes readers on a rousing, revelatory journey—and offers a timely reminder that Black History is not all bleak.

Excerpt: In the early afternoon of April 29, 1932, a rare joyful date in that dark year of Depression on the Hill, thousands of locals gathered at the corner of Bedford Avenue and Junilla Street to attend Dedication Day at Greenlee Field. When the gate opened around four o'clock, they pulled out the quarters, dimes, and nickels they had saved up to be among the first to enter the stadium's brick walls. Inside, they took their places on new wooden bleachers supported by gleaming steel beams and braced by sturdy blocks of concrete. For the next hour and a half, they watched the visiting New York Black Yankees, then their hometown Pittsburgh Crawfords, take batting practice on a field as lush and manicured as any they had ever seen at a major league ballpark.

Shortly before six o'clock, the teams lined up behind a marching band and made their way to a flagpole in center field. As Old Glory was raised, the band struck up "The Star Spangled Banner." Robert L. Vann, the slender, abstemious publisher of the Courier, gave a short dedication speech, then he asked for a show of appreciation for the husky, high-rolling racketeer who had made the day possible by spending no less than $100,000. As the crowd of six thousand cheered and rose to their feet, a red Packard convertible made its way around the infield, with the man they called "Big Red" waving from the backseat, dressed in a white silk suit and smoking a Cuban cigar.

The first game in the house that Gus Greenlee built turned out to be a classic pitching duel. Satchel Paige, the mercurial ace whom Greenlee had lured to Pittsburgh, was on the mound for the Crawfords. At the top of his form at age twenty-six, Paige hurled one fastball after another—no spitballs, grease balls, or brush-back pitches. He had no need to resort to "smoke at the yoke," he liked to boast; he could get you all day with "peas at the knees." Going into the ninth inning, Paige had struck out ten, and allowed only three hits and no runs. But he had been matched inning for inning by the portly ace for the Black Yankees, Jesse Hubbard, who had given up only three hits and kept the Crawfords scoreless.

Stadium lights had yet to be installed and darkness was falling as the game entered the ninth inning. With one out and one on, Ted Page, the Yankees right fielder, hit a grounder and raced to first to beat a double play. Page promptly stole second, raced to third when the pickoff throw sailed past the second baseman, and scored when teammate Hawk Thomas hit a Texas Leaguer to right. With two out in the bottom of the ninth, Josh Gibson, the fearsome Crawford slugger, had a chance to even the game. All six thousand fans rose to their feet in hope that the man known as "the black Babe Ruth" might smack one of his mighty homers.

Gibson hit a drive to deep center, and for a second it looked like the ball might go out. But Hawk Thomas snagged it out of midair, and the game was over. The Black Yankees had won, 1-0. As the drained Crawford fans filed out into the night, they had to settle for the satisfaction of witnessing a game in their own ballpark, the first ever erected by a black man. Behind the dugouts, meanwhile, the players experienced another first. At Forbes Field, Yankee Stadium, and every other major league stadium where Negroes played, they weren't allowed to use the locker facilities. But tonight the men of the Crawfords and the Black Yankees didn't have to change at a boardinghouse or on a bus. Tonight, thanks to Gus Greenlee, they slipped out of their sweaty uniforms and muddy cleats in the dignity of their own locker room.

Like Robert Lee Vann, William Augustus Greenlee was born in North Carolina, in a mill town at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains called Marion. Unlike Vann, his parents had some means. Greenlee's father was a masonry contractor who made a tidy sum helping to rebuild Marion's courthouse, hotels, and other buildings after a horrendous fire destroyed most of the town. His mother, the mulatto daughter of a black slave and her white owner, put great store in education: two of her sons grew up to become doctors, and a third, a lawyer. But Gus was a restless and rebellious child who disliked school and made it through only one year of college before dropping out.

"On the dogs with father," as one of his brothers put it, Gus hoboed his way north at the age of nineteen with nothing but some patched-up clothes and a pair of canvas shoes, making for a nasty surprise when he stepped off the freight train into the snow and cold of Pittsburgh's winter. At six-foot-two, with a shock of red hair framing his wide, freckled face, Greenlee immediately cut a striking figure on the Hill, and he displayed drive to match. He shined shoes, worked in a steel mill, and chauffeured for a white undertaker until he had saved up enough money to buy his own taxicab.

When America entered World War I, Greenlee enlisted. He was assigned to the 367th Infantry at Fort Dix, New Jersey, one of the Negro regiments that were assembled to form the 92nd Division and given the title of Buffalo Soldiers, after the all-black units of the Union Army and the Spanish-American War. In June 1918, the Buffalos set sail from Hoboken, New Jersey, for a training facility in the French town of Bourbonnes-les-Bains, known for its hot spring spas. From there, they were dispatched to an area in the eastern Vosges Mountains, which hadn't seen much action and where the French generals under whose command they had been put thought it would be safe to park Negro servicemen for the rest of the war.

But as soon as they arrived, the sector named for the town of Saint-Dié came under intense German ground and air attack.

One morning in early September, the men of the 367th looked up from their positions, where Greenlee manned a machine gun, and saw German planes buzzing overhead. Round objects began to fall from the sky. At first the soldiers took them for gas shells. Instead, they were scrolls of paper with a message addressed "TO THE COLORED SOLDIERS OF THE AMERICAN ARMY" "Hello boys, what are you doing over here?" the

pamphlets read. "Fighting the Germans? Why? Have they ever done you any harm? ... Do you enjoy the same rights as the white people do in America, the land of Freedom and Democracy, or are you rather not treated over there as second-class citizens? ... Now, this is all different in Germany, where they do like colored people, where they treat them as gentlemen.... Come over and see for yourself.... Don't allow them to use you as cannon fodder. To carry a gun in this war is not an honor, but a shame. Throw it away and come over into the German lines."

Far from answering the call to desertion, the Buffalos fought bravely, repelling several German advances and suffering dozens of casualties and scores of injuries. Their white American officers pleaded with the French commanders to let them go on the attack, but instead the French replaced them with white soldiers. General John Pershing, who had commanded the Buffalos in previous wars and knew what they were capable of, arranged to have them assigned to him, to help in the Grand Offensive to push the crumbling German army out of France. Although the official order of battle in Pershing's advance through the Argonne forest region indicated that the men of the 367th were assigned to supply and field hospital duties, some must have found their way to the front as well, for machine gunner Gus Greenlee returned to America in the spring of 1919 with a shrapnel wound suffered in the Battle of Saint-Mihiel.

Greenlee's taxicab was waiting for him when he got back to Pittsburgh—and so was a new opportunity to use it. After "June thirsty-first," as they called the July 1, 1919 implementation of the Wartime Prohibition Act, the first step toward banning all liquor sales in America—Greenlee became a bootlegger. Four Italian brothers named Tito used him to make deliveries of the illegal beer and whiskey they manufactured in a brewery in the town of Latrobe, southeast of Pittsburgh. Soon Greenlee's cab was logging so many miles on his liquor runs that he acquired a new nickname: "Gasoline Gus."

Later there would be stories that Greenlee hijacked liquor trucks operated by the likes of Al Capone and Lucky Luciano. But there is more evidence that the gangster wars of the Prohibition Era had the opposite effect, of encouraging the shrewd, entrepreneurial redhead to pursue less perilous enterprises than rum-running. By 1922, Greenlee had opened his own speakeasy in the Hill District, the Paramount Inn on Wylie Avenue. Police promptly raided it and closed it down, charging, according to white newspaper accounts, that the club was the site of "drunken orgies" where "blacks and whites mingled freely and danced together frequently." Rather than give up, Greenlee took steps to make the Paramount more respectable, reopening the club with a full-time orchestra and forming a talent-booking agency that he ran out of an office upstairs.

Legend also had it that Gus Greenlee brought the numbers racket to Pittsburgh. Some even said that he was the man responsible for introducing numbers to the United States, after traveling to Cuba and watching the locals play "la bolita," a game where small balls inscribed with numbers were placed in a bag and gamblers bet on which ones would be pulled out. But more credible accounts suggest that the numbers first arrived in Pittsburgh from New York City, via railroad porters who took bets for Madame Stephanie St. Clair, the "Policy Queen of Harlem," and other Eastern numbers bankers who were already in operation by the early 1920s. By the time Greenlee got into the game, a doctor on Centre Avenue who tried to start his own numbers racket had gone bust. So Gus took the time to study the details of the enterprise, soaking up the wisdom of a visiting numbers king from Philadelphia. In 1926, he began to organize his own racket, working with a partner named William Harris. Known as "Woogie," Harris owned an ideal front for numbers running: the Crystal Barber Shop on Wylie Avenue, where scores of men came in each day to get a haircut and a shave and to swap tall tales under the French-paneled mirrors.

It was slow going at first. One of the first "numbers runners" that Greenlee and Harris deployed was Woogie's younger brother Charles, whom everyone called "Teenie." (Teenie was indeed short of stature, but he acquired the nickname because of his good looks; when he was a child, a visiting relative took to calling him "Teenie Little Lover.") Teenie was sent to collect bets in McKees Rocks, a mill town north of Pittsburgh, and some days he would return with less than $2 worth of betting slips. But gradually the business grew, and by the early 1930s Gus Greenlee and Woogie Harris were taking in as much as $25,000 a day in bets

and employing five hundred runners across the city. Working as "cut buddies," sharing financial gains and losses, they amassed enough money to buy side-by-side Tudor houses in the elegant Penn Hills neighborhood on the eastern outskirts of Pittsburgh.

Greenlee and Harris usually derived their numbers from the stock market, coming up with a three-digit figure every day based on the quantity of stocks that rose, fell, and stayed even. (Occasionally the number was also drawn from newspaper reports of commodity sales, or horse track results.) Between eight and ten o'clock each morning, their runners filled the streets of black Pittsburgh, in cars and on foot, collecting wagers that were recorded on slips of paper. While lookout men armed with guns under their topcoats stood guard outside, the runners delivered the slips to the Paramount Inn and the Crystal Barber Shop, where women in back rooms tallied the day's take on adding machines. The next day, a winning number was calculated from the morning stock market tables, and payouts were made to anyone who "hit the number."

For the gamblers, the bets bought a long shot at a dream, and a day's worth of hope during a deepening Depression. Greenlee and Harris set their odds in advance, usually at 600-to-1. A hod carrier could bet a penny for a chance to win $6; a steelworker, a dime to make sixty; a Loendi Club man, a dollar to score $600. It was a game rigged in favor of the house, given the number of people who played every day, and the fact that most wagers were under a dollar. But it also meant that a banker had to be good to his word when lucky winners hit the number, an occurrence that Greenlee and Harris turned to their advantage one Thursday in the summer of 1930.

Pittsburgh was in the middle of a brutal August heat wave. Weeks of 90-degree heat with no rain had baked the city streets and ravaged farmland for miles around. Water was being rationed, and the price of milk had shot up due to the drought. Too exhausted to come up with anything more creative, hundreds of Pittsburgh gamblers wrote the simplest number they could think of on their betting slips: the date, "805." Usually it was a sucker's wager, because betting the date was so obvious, but on that day the number hit. Suddenly racketeers across the city were faced with a huge payout. Most couldn't cover it. Some paid only a fraction of what they owed. Others skipped town, fleeing to hideouts in Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Chicago. One banker became the object of a bitter ditty: "805 was a burner. Where the hell is Jakie Lerner?"

As it happened, Woogie Harris was on vacation in Europe, and he had left his little brother Teenie in charge of the numbers operation. Woogie had warned Teenie to watch out for overplayed numbers and to lay them off on other racketeers. But Teenie didn't act quickly enough. When he reached his brother with the bad news, Woogie sent Teenie to a secret address downtown to collect $25,000 in cash to pay off the first wave of winners. In the following weeks, Woogie and Greenlee pawned many of their own possessions and took out new mortgages on their Penn Hills homes in order to pay off all of the "805" hits in full. Then, like Andrew Carnegie before them, they moved in and took over the territory of competitors who had gone under.

Having weathered the "805" crisis, Gus Greenlee had the means to make his most ambitious investment yet. He bought a block-long hotel called the Leader House on the corner of Wylie Avenue and Crawford Street and transformed it into a nightclub he called the Crawford Grill. On the first floor, be built a huge bar and a small, elevated stage with a mirrored piano. One floor up, there was a theater that stretched the length of the floor and had a revolving stage. On the third floor, Greenlee created a private "Crawford Club" where he entertained personal guests with his finest liquor and counted his gambling spoils. Overnight, the Grill became the hottest nightspot on the Hill, a place where black and white hipsters came to mingle over the club's famous daiquiris, and where all the top Negro entertainers who performed at the dance halls of the Hill or the Stanley Theatre downtown headed after their concerts were over.

To keep the authorities at bay, Greenlee plied police with free bets and fat envelopes of cash. On most days, a visitor to the Hill could see dozens of runners milling around the corner of Wylie Avenue and Crawford Street as patrolmen walked the beat, paying them no mind. But once in a while a raid would be staged, usually during election years. In the spring of 1934, a vice squad barged into the Crawford Grill and demanded that a locked storage room in the basement be opened. Inside were a half dozen slot machines gathering

dust, a discovery that allowed authorities to charge Greenlee with operating a "gaming house" and Gus to beat the rap by insisting that the machines hadn't been used in years. Several months later, police used axes and crowbars to bust through a partition at the Belmont Hotel, pulled a false bottom out of the bar, and found hundreds of numbers slips and accounting books. They arrested Teddy Horne, a Greenlee associate who ran the hotel, along with Gus's brother George, but both men were later released without serving any jail time.

If Greenlee and his lieutenants always seemed to beat the rap, it was no accident. Along with greasing palms, Greenlee courted the Republican politicians who ran Pittsburgh and surrounding Allegheny County by delivering Negro votes. He became the treasurer and enforcer of the Third Ward Voters League, the most powerful black political organization on the Upper Hill. At Christmastime, he invited the distressed citizens of the ward to the league's headquarters for hot meals and free turkeys. On Election Days, he used his network of numbers runners to remind them of his generosity and get them to the polls. Although the league had an official policy that a vote of the entire board of officers was required to ratify all decisions, Greenlee quietly passed the word to Pittsburgh's major, Charles F. Kline, and its powerful state senator, Jimmy Coyne, that to get whatever they wanted, they need only come see Gus.

(The deal kept everyone happy—until the 1932 election approached and it became clear that voters on the Hill were listening to Robert Vann's calls to turn Lincoln's picture to the wall. For years, Greenlee had used his political connections to arrange for tax relief for Hill residents who voted Republican. But in the summer of 1932, he was informed that he was under investigation for defrauding the state of tax revenue. After months of embarrassing headlines, he was cleared, but it left a sour taste. When Courier gossip columnist Julia Bumry Jones quoted Greenlee as saying that "a change of pasture is good for the cow" just weeks before Election Day, it wasn't an accident; between the lines was a signal that Gus wouldn't hold it against the voters of the Third Ward if they voted for Roosevelt.)

Throughout black America, the Depression gave racketeers a chance to play community hero, and nowhere was that more true than in Pittsburgh. As white-run banks stopped doing anything for Negroes except take their money, Greenlee became the top lender on the Hill, doling out loans to cover rents, prevent foreclosures, and pay doctor and funeral bills. Breadwinners laid off from factory jobs could count on temporary work in his numbers operation. Families in distress found bags of groceries and buckets of coal at their doorsteps. At the same time, Gus made sure everyone could see just how much cash he had to spread around. On any given day, he could be seen driving around the Hill in one of six different automobiles—a Lincoln, a Cadillac, a Chevy, a Buick, a Ford, and his flashy red Packard convertible. Gus held court at the Crawford Grill in silk double-breasted suits and sported an expensive bowler hat in a picture that appeared regularly in the Courier. In his back pocket, he carried a money clip stuffed with hundred-dollar bills that he flashed at every opportunity.

To help burnish his reputation as a modern-day Robin Hood (who in this case took from the poor to give to the poor), Greenlee hired a part-time publicist. Conveniently, John L. Clark also happened to be the author of "Wylie Avenue," the Courier's widely read column on the business and politics of the Hill. Clark had begun work on an exposé of racketeering in Pittsburgh when one day Greenlee summoned him to the Crawford Grill. Gus offered the columnist a syndication deal with the "West Penn News Service," an apparently fictitious front with offices in a building owned by Greenlee. The racketeering exposé never appeared, and from then on Clark's "Wylie Avenue" column became a regular source of attacks on Greenlee's enemies and tributes to his financial generosity and political clout.

Big Red became so well known for his largesse, in fact, that sometimes he had to go out of his way to demonstrate its limits. One of his closest white friends, and a regular at the Crawford Grill, was an Irish sandlot athlete who dabbled in ward politics on the North Side and was saving up to buy a semipro football team. Decades later, when that team became the Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers, Art Rooney would tell his biographer a story about a scene he witnessed at the Grill while huddling in a back booth with Gus Greenlee and Jimmy Coyne, the Republican Party boss.

A woman came over and whispered to Greenlee that she needed some money. He told her to get lost. "That's not how you talked last night," the woman purred. "That was last night," Gus growled. "When I'm hard, I'm soft. When I'm soft, I'm hard. Now beat it!" The three men went back to their political plotting until, moments later, an ashtray came flying through the air and barely missed connecting with Coyne's head. Greenlee laughed it off but Coyne was not amused, and from then on the state senator insisted that the three meet at a location that he controlled in the Oakland district.

Greenlee was kinder to a group of struggling sandlot baseball players who approached him for support around the same time. They called themselves the Pittsburgh Crawfords, and they had gotten their start thanks to Teenie Harris, the little brother of Greenlee's partner Woogie Harris. A talented athlete, Teenie had been the captain of the baseball team at Watts High on the Hill. After playing a hard-fought championship game against McKelvey High one year, Teenie and the McKelvey captain had decided to join forces and form a semipro sandlot team with the best black players from the two squads. They named the team the Crawfords after a bathhouse on the Hill that sponsored them for a few hundred dollars, and Teenie dropped out of school to play for them while continuing to moonlight as a bag man for Woogie.

By the early 1930s, the Crawfords had assembled a raw but imposing roster, including a teenage slugger named Josh Gibson. (They had become so good, in fact, that Teenie had quit to devote himself to his other athletic love, semipro basketball.) Yet for all their success on the field, the "Craws," as locals called them, were always on the brink of financial collapse, since the city wouldn't let them charge for attendance at the public park where they played. To stay afloat, the Crawfords passed a hat. Even then, they often saw little of the meager contributions they collected. During one Memorial Day weekend game in 1930, they raised $8 but had to pay out $6 to the umpire and the visiting team. Afterward, sportswriter Ches Washington wrote an impassioned column chastising the "cheap- sports" of the Hill who wouldn't even pay a nickel to watch a "young team with all the earmarks of future greatness." Washington called on local businessmen to save the Crawfords, and the white owner of a local sporting goods store responded by offering to buy the team for $1,000.

The players decided to approach Greenlee instead. At first Gus told them he wasn't interested. He would donate money for uniforms and travel, he said, not no more. Then a week later, he summoned the youngsters to the Crawford Grill to announce that he had changed his mind. He was ready to buy the team and put all the players on salary.

Greenlee didn't say what caused the reversal, but the question became a source of fascination on the Hill. Some said he was thinking about the upcoming election, when his ally Jimmy Coyne would be on the ballot. (Sure enough, the Crawfords were soon taking the field with "Coyne for Commissioner" stitched on their uniforms.) Others thought Greenlee was taking a page from his friend Alex Pompez, a New York numbers banker who owned a baseball team called the Cubans and used it to launder money. Still others assumed Gus was just doing a favor for the Crawfords because of their connection to Teenie Harris, his cut buddy's brother.

Yet given what happened next, it's likely that Gus Greenlee had a more competitive motive as well. He was already a big man in black Pittsburgh, but buying the Crawfords gave him a chance to go head-to-head with the heir to the biggest Negro dynasty in town: Cap Posey's son, Cumberland Posey Jr.

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The Defeat of Black Power: Civil Rights and the National Black Political Convention of 1972 by Leonard N. Moore [LSU Press, 9780807169032]

For three days in 1972 in Gary, Indiana, eight thousand American civil rights activists and Black Power leaders gathered at the National Black Political Convention, hoping to end a years-long feud that divided black America into two distinct camps: integrationists and separatists. While some form of this rift existed within black politics long before the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., his death—and the power vacuum it created—heightened tensions between the two groups, and convention leaders sought to merge these competing ideologies into a national, unified call to action. What followed, however, effectively crippled the Black Power movement and fundamentally altered the political strategy of civil rights proponents. An intense and revealing history, Leonard N. Moore's The Defeat of Black Power provides the first in-depth evaluation of this critical moment in American history.

During the brief but highly charged meeting in March 1972, attendees confronted central questions surrounding black people's involvement in the established political system: reject or accept integration and assimilation; determine the importance or futility of working within the broader white system; and assess the perceived benefits of running for public office. These issues illuminated key differences between integrationists and separatists, yet both sides understood the need to mobilize under a unified platform of black self-determination. At the end of the convention, determined to reach a consensus, officials produced "The National Black Political Agenda," which addressed the black constituency's priorities. While attendees and delegates agreed with nearly every provision, integrationists maintained their rejection of certain planks, namely the call for a U.S. constitutional convention and separatists' demands for reparations. As a result, black activists and legislators withdrew their support less than ten weeks after the convention, dashing the promise of the 1972 assembly and undermining the prerogatives of black nationalists.

In The Defeat of Black Power, Moore shows how the convention signaled a turning point for the Black Power movement, whose leaders did not hold elective office and were now effectively barred access to the levers of social and political power. Thereafter, their influence within black communities rapidly declined, leaving civil rights activists and elected officials holding the mantle of black political leadership in 1972 and beyond.

Excerpt: In March of 1972 black elected officials, civil rights activists, black integrationists, black nationalists, and Black Power apostles met for three days in Gary, Indiana, looking to end the intense four-year feud that had effectively divided black activists into two broadly defined camps: integrationists and black nationalists. While these tensions always existed within the black freedom struggle, things escalated in the aftermath of Martin Luther King's assassination on April 4, 1968. As the titular head of the movement, King commanded the respect of Black Power advocates, although they bitterly disagreed with his integrationist approach. King's death created a leadership void within black America, and civil rights movement veterans, along with black elected officials, fought for this space against those who called themselves black nationalists. Initially called by Amiri Baraka, but later co-opted by members of the newly formed Congressional Black Caucus, the National Black Political Convention (NBPC) would bring together approximately 8,000 people, who included 4,327 official delegates, hundreds of black elected officials, civil rights movement stalwarts, and black nationalists, as they attempted to chart a political strategy to mobilize black political power at the local, county, and state levels, as well as guide themselves through the 1972 election season. One observer noted that the crowd at Gary was evenly split between those who favored working within the system to bring about

change (integrationists), and those who preferred to work outside the system, or better yet, dismantle the system (black nationalists).

The Convention was an attempt to develop a national black agenda that would merge these competing ideologies under the theme "unity without uniformity." While there was a great deal of ideological disagreement between the two philosophies, both black nationalists and black moderates did find common ground on the issue of black political power. Prominent nationalists such as Stokely Carmichael, Maulana Karenga, and Amiri Baraka had no desire to integrate or assimilate, but they did agree that black political power was an important step along the road to black self-determination. Similarly, black moderates and black elected officials such as Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, Charles Diggs, Carl Stokes, and members of the Congressional Black Caucus believed strongly in integration and assimilation, and they saw the nascent potential in mobilizing black voters. The Convention dealt principally with four major ideas: (I) should black people pull out of the major political parties and form an all-black party; (2) should the black community embrace the concept of black nationalism and reject integration and assimilation; (3) to what extent should politically active black people work with the broader white system; and (4) that black people be encouraged to run for office at the local, state, regional, and federal levels. The significance of the Convention cannot be overstated. Historian Manning Marable calls the National Black Political Convention the "zenith" of the postwar black freedom struggle, and Peniel Joseph argues that the Gary Convention was arguably "the most important political, cultural, and intellectual gathering of the Black Power era."

This attempt at black political unification was the largest political gathering in the history of black America. It was the first time that, in one place and under one roof, almost every representation of the movement was present: integrationists, separatists, nationalists, black elected officials (BEOs), Democrats, Republicans, students, hustlers, capitalists, feminists, Marxists, pastors, NAACP'ers, Urban Leaguers, entertainers, athletes, negro women's councils, old-line politicians, gangsters, labor leaders, Black Panthers, community activists, professors, intellectuals, and members of the Congress of African People, the Republic of New Afrika, the Nation of Islam, and countless other organizational representatives. Prior to Gary, integrationists and separatists did not hesitate to criticize each other. Nationalists often referred to integrationists as "sellouts," "Uncle Toms," "handkerchief heads," and the ubiquitous "white man's nigger." Conversely, integrationists often considered their more radical counterparts to be "shit talkers" who were long on rhetoric, posturing, and fiery speeches, who had fanciful dreams of black liberation, yet who did not know how to bring pragmatic, material benefits to the black masses. Wearing natural hair and African clothing, and learning to love one's blackness, were indeed admirable, integrationists would say, but how did this help black folk meet their day-to-day needs? Black Power apostles would counter that even with the civil rights legislative victories of the 1950s and 1960s, black people still suffered from high unemployment, poor housing, limited educational opportunities, lack of access to health care, and other social ills. So, they argued, integration was not the solution. Why, they asked, would you want to integrate with your oppressor? The NBPC represented the first time that both sides would have an opportunity to put forward their case where it could be challenged, critiqued, or agreed upon.

The year 1972 was the perfect time to hold a political convention. First, it was a presidential election year and black people were eager to develop a strategy to get Nixon out of office. Second, it also represented the first presidential election year when black southerners could exercise the leverage of the black vote and take full advantage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Third, many of those in the movement realized that black activism needed to make the transition from protest to politics since mass demonstrations as a protest tool could no longer be relied upon to bring about change. Last, the split between black nationalists and integrationists had the potential to effectively stifle black political activism at the national level and stop black political progress at the local and state levels just when the black voting age population was rapidly expanding and black people were moving into elective office. For example, between 1964 and 1972, the number of eligible black voters increased from 10.3 million to 13.5 million, and the number of black elected officials nationally increased from approximately

100 in 1964 to 1,400 by the end of the decade. By 1974, the number of black elected officials would rise to 3,499, with much of this massive growth taking place in the South. Thus the National Black Political Convention was an opportunity for black activists to plot a political strategy for the 1970s and to give the community a compass for the 1972 election season.

Historians generally agree that the term "Black Power" came into popular political discourse during James Meredith's 1966 March Against Fear. Julius Lester argues that the term "Black Power" did more to generate black consciousness than anything else during the entire black freedom struggle. In an effort to capitalize on this rising consciousness, on September 3, 1966, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. hosted the Black Power Planning Conference in the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC. Organized by Powell's longtime aide and assistant Chuck Stone, the one-day affair attracted 169 delegates from 37 cities and i8 states, representing 64 organizations. In an effort to be inclusive, Powell invited the leaders of the nation's most prominent civil rights organizations: Roy Wilkins of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Martin Luther King Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and James Farmer of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). All three declined the invitation, although Roy Wilkins did send Powell a letter suggesting ten points for discussions during the event. They all publicly cited prior commitments that kept them from attending, but privately they did not want to associate themselves with the unpredictable, mercurial, egotistical, and controversial pastor and congressman. But Powell did not mind their absence because this was not a gathering of racial moderates or integrationists. This event was for the "Young Turks" of the Black Power movement who eschewed integration in favor of black unity and empowerment. The meeting was held in strict secrecy, as Capitol Police officers not only guarded the doors to the meeting rooms but also blocked off adjacent corridors as well. In Powell's words, the purpose of the planning session was "to set up guidelines which can operate within the framework of the concept of Black Power."

At a news conference held several days after the session, Powell told the press that Black Power was for young people, and specifically for young black people in the nation's urban areas who felt excluded from mainstream America. This gathering, according to Powell, was a way to get them "channeled in the right direction." Powell then spoke to the historic nature of the meeting: "Integrationists, political separatists and cultural nationalists, all were represented. The entire thrust of the conference was its emphasis on positive accomplishments. Thus, the conference was not anti-white but pro-black. It did not advocate violence but simply rejected unconditional nonviolence and strongly endorsed self-defense to achieve the full dignity of black people." When one journalist asked Powell where this new emphasis on Black Power left people like Wilkins, King, and Farmer, Powell responded simply, "In the process of praying. Praying for God to give them guidance." Due to the ambiguous nature of the term "Black Power," Powell was asked what the term meant to him. "Black people must develop power—political, economic, and cultural power in black communities before they seek any coalition with white people," he stated. Powell then told the press that he assembled a committee to plan a much larger and more robust Black Power conference the following year. On that committee was Maulana Karenga, Omar Ahmad, Jewell Mazique, and Dr. Nathan Wright.

Armed with a mandate from Congressman Powell, Dr. Nathan Wright of Newark, New Jersey, took the lead in planning the second Black Power conference in his hometown. Although Wright was a staunch Republican, he had radical credentials based upon his being an activist minister and scholar. That reputation grew when he refused to postpone the conference in the aftermath of the Newark riots, which occurred just four days before the scheduled start of the proceedings. The conference opened on July 26, 1967, and for four days over 1,000 delegates, from 26 states and 126 cities, representing 248 black organizations, debated the movement's most pressing question, reform vs. revolution. The secondary question for attendees was how to take the energy of the civil rights movement and mobilize it into "an actionable unity involving the black masses and then translate it into constructive programs of black empowerment." Engaging the black masses was critical because organizers realized that the typical black person "has never joined a civil rights

organization, never walked a picket line, and has failed to involve himself in the black man's freedom struggle."

The conference was principally organized around fourteen workshops with topics such as "The City and Black People," "Black Power Through Politics," `Black Power Through Economic Development," "Black Power in World Perspective," and "Black Professionals and Black Power." These sessions were facilitated by folks who became Black Power celebrities such as Maulana Karenga, Robert S. Browne, Nathan Hare, Ossie Davis, Hoyt Fuller, H. Rap Brown, and Floyd McKissick. The pattern of male leadership would continue throughout the period as women were all but excluded from positions of movement leadership. Although organizers and attendees did not expect immediate action items, at the end of the conference they were excited that the conference passed a number of resolutions in the arenas of economics, politics, education, international affairs, and foreign policy. There was also an air of optimism around the idea that virtually every ideology within the movement was represented and that attendees got a chance to hear "a broad spectrum of political thought." In what is perhaps the best eyewitness account of the conference, Chuck Stone called it the most "diversified ingathering of black people ever assembled. It was a black people's conference, conceived and organized by black people for black people to talk to black people on what black people must do to empower black communities." But not everyone shared Stone's sentiments. Author Robert Allen called the Newark conference a "bourgeois affair" since it was held at a downtown white-owned hotel, required a $25.00 registration fee to attend, and was financed by approximately fifty white-owned corporations.

The third and final Black Power Conference of any significance was held the following year in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with over 4,000 black attendees representing 600 organizations. The gathering was very similar to the Newark conference as the weekend centered around workshops and speeches by Black Power celebrities such as Karenga, Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, Max Stanford, and black moderates such as Jesse Jackson, Congressman John Conyers, and Whitney Young of the National Urban League. Although the conference was still under the leadership of Dr. Nathan Wright, Karenga was the event's "chief organizer and foremost theoretician." As a cultural nationalist, Karenga was often criticized for not having a practical program for black empowerment. However, as Komozi Woodard writes, the "public rhetoric" often offered by radicals such as Karenga differed from the "practical advice" they gave for organizing black communities. Thus, while Karenga emphasized the development of a distinct black culture, art, and aesthetic as the key to black liberation, he also understood the necessity of black political mobilization. It is precisely within this context that the delegates in Philadelphia voted unanimously in favor of black people forming an independent black political party.

Toward the end of 1968 the term "Black Power" became "all things to all people." Historian Manning Marable notes that the popularity of the term was partly rooted "in its ambiguity." Thus "Black Power" could mean whatever you wanted it to mean, and this ambiguity would divide the movement into two camps: "new-guard nationalists" and "old-guard integrationists" or "ideologically dogmatic nationalists" and "compromise-oriented pragmatists." Stokely Carmichael believed that Black Power meant "a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations, and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of society." The foundational underpinning of this power was group solidarity. "Black people must come together and do things themselves. Only they can help create in the community an aroused and continuing black consciousness." This call for black self-determination explicitly rejected integration in all forms since the concept of integration "is based on the assumption that there is nothing of value in the black community and that little of value could be created among black people." For Carmichael, integration was based on the faulty premise that in order for black folks to have a good life they must "move into a white neighborhood or send their children to a white school." This idea reinforced the popular thinking that "white is automatically better and black by definition is inferior."

The rejection of integration in favor of group solidarity was warmly embraced by the ideological descendants of Malcolm X, those who called themselves black nationalists. Nationalists looked at black America as a nation, separate and distinct from white America. Black nationalists during this period typically fell into three categories: (1) territorial black nationalists; (2) revolutionary black nationalists; and (3) cultural black nationalists. The territorial nationalists were best represented by the Nation of Islam and the Republic of New Afrika, both of whom believed that black people needed a geographical home to themselves within the existing United States. They demanded reparations in the form of the US government handing over the Black Belt states of the US South and placing them under black control. The Black Panther Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement espoused the tenets of revolutionary black nationalism by calling for a violent overthrow of the US capitalistic government and replacing it with a socialist state. Cultural nationalists like Maulana Karenga, however, saw the reclaiming of African values and culture as the key to black liberation. Karenga developed a black value system called the Nguza Saba, which stressed seven core ideas that if adopted would lead to a liberation of self: black unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, creativity, faith, and purpose. These principles were to be celebrated during the African American holiday that Karenga established, Kwanzaa. On a more day-to-day level, cultural nationalists embraced African-inspired clothing, hairstyles, language, jewelry, and trinkets. Despite the ideological differences among black nationalists they all rejected integration and assimilation. They were not seeking nor did they want access to the white man's system.

Integrationists defined Black Power differently. They did want access to the white man's system, and for them the term "Black Power" served as a rallying point for black people to control or get their fair share of political positions, jobs, housing, educational opportunities, and economic opportunities. Floyd McKissick of CORE argued that there were six components of Black Power: (1) the growth of black political power; (2) the building of black economic power; (3) the importance of black self-image; (4) the development of black leadership; (5) the attainment of federal law enforcement; and (6) the mobilization of black consumer power. For integrationists the most important of these was the mobilization of black political power. With the full implementation of the Voting Rights Act and continued white flight to the nation's suburban areas, racial moderates saw a unique opportunity to develop black political power at the local level and then to leverage that power in regional, state, and federal elections. In their eyes this was the easiest way to translate the energy of the Black Power movement into something practical, because the rules of the game were clear. But this was not easy work, they cautioned. Mobilizing the black political community required more than just slogans and rhetoric. It involved the tireless work of ringing doorbells, telephoning, caucusing, speechmaking, and fund-raising, all with no guaranteed victory. As evidence of something practical, moderates pointed to the mayoral elections of Carl Stokes in Cleveland and Richard Hatcher in Gary as proof of what was possible throughout urban America. Advocates of black political power talked about how black elected officials, particularly mayors, controlled the cities and city governments; held the power of appointive office such as "the taxing power, the power to disburse money"; had the power to control law enforcement, education, housing, and employment; could implement affirmative action mandates; and could articulate black interests and concerns."

Racial moderates and integrationists agreed that Black Power generated racial pride and group unity, but they were skeptical about its ability to do anything practical in terms of improving the quality of life for black America. Calling for an armed revolution, a geographical separation from white folks, or repeatedly for reparations were typical black nationalist examples of "talkin' loud and sayin' nothing," since these proposals were neither practical nor probable. But black nationalists did not take these critiques lightly. They countered by suggesting that electoral politics was nothing more than reformist politics and that it did not deal with the "fundamental issue of power." Further, once elected, black elected officials would be nothing more than "partners in an oppressive status-quo power structure." Black nationalists during this period had four main critiques of black elected officials: (1) they were pawns handpicked by white folks; (2) they had not worked hard on behalf of

racial legislation; (3) they were not responsive to the black community; and (4) black office-holding did not automatically translate into Black Power. These "competing strains of black politics," radicals vs. moderates, black nationalists vs. integrationists, reform vs. revolution, electoral politics vs. protest politics, working within the system vs. co-optation, insider vs. outsider, black Marxists vs. black capitalists, coalition politics vs. independent black politics, and the practical vs. the theoretical, had effectively divided the movement by 1968. Indeed there were Black Power spokespersons and ideologies that were much more complex and that overlapped the above-mentioned dichotomies, but in each case the black political community was largely split into one of the two camps. In a 1968 essay Nathan Hare suggested that Black Power advocates of all ideologies needed to realize that "unity involves a bringing together of diverse factions." He then gave an explicit charge to the black community that was long overdue. "There is a need for a kind of interdependence between honest moderates and radical factions. Rather than fighting one another, diverting our agency from the attack on the true or foremost enemy, black activists might well establish a grassroots or underground system of functional interdependence. Moderates could then present one face to the white world and another privately to blacks." Hare's admonition was all the more timely in the aftermath of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the presidential election of Richard M. Nixon later that year. The black community was indeed at a political and ideological fork in the road.

The NBPC was birthed in an effort to bridge this divide, and the official conveners of the Gary Convention were poet Amiri Baraka, who was by 1972 the most popular black nationalist in the country; Congressman Charles Diggs from Detroit; and Richard Hatcher, the youthful black mayor of Gary, Indiana, who along with Carl Stokes in 1967 became one of the first two black mayors of a major American city. This leadership represented the broader ideological divide. Baraka represented the black nationalists; Diggs represented civil rights activists and black elected officials (BEOs); and Hatcher represented a bridge between the two camps as a Black Power politician. As an elected official, Hatcher governed a majority-black city, and he used the power of his office to address black frustration. Black Power advocates were excited about the possibilities in Gary because they realized that their own strategy rendered them useless in improving the quality of black lives. They needed the infrastructure, credibility, and power of elective office to bring about real change, so they desperately needed to work in a coalition with those who preferred to work within the system. Conversely, civil rights activists and BEOs were not really comfortable with the event. In many ways they believed they had nothing to gain by partnering with their black nationalist counterparts. Both Baraka and Hatcher believed that black elected officials were drawn into the NBPC, and that there were several attempts to keep black nationalists completely away from an event that was their idea in the first place. So co-opting the event served as a way to control the goings-on at the Convention.

As the planning for the NBPC took place, it became clear that the most important people within black America would be involved in some way with the black strategy meetings leading up to the Convention. Some of those involved were: Jesse Jackson, Coretta Scott King, Julian Bond, Shirley Chisholm, Carl Stokes, Barbara Jordan, Percy Sutton, Carl Holman, Mervyn Dymally, C. Delores Tucker, Dick Gregory, Vernon Jordan, Dorothy Height, Coleman Young, Harry Belafonte, Queen Mother Moore, Louis Farrakhan, Isaac Hayes, Bobby Seale, Roy Wilkins, Yvonne Brathwaite, Howard Fuller, Roy Innis, Frank Reeves, and John Cashin. Those in attendance at the NBPC came looking for answers, and they hoped to leave with a unified black political strategy that would guide black folks through 1972 and beyond. Many black politicos were tired of the integrationist/nationalist divide, and they wanted a unified black electorate as the election season approached. Over the course of three intense days, the Convention produced a 12-page tabloid-like document called "The National Black Political Agenda," which covered seven areas critical to black life: (1) political empowerment; (2) economic empowerment; (3) human development; (4) rural development; (5) foreign policy and black people; (6) environmental protection; and (7) communications. Researched and written by some of the leading scholars within black America, the Agenda represents one of the most comprehensive political documents of its kind. While attendees and

delegates agreed with nearly everything within the document, integrationists had fundamental issues with certain planks in the Agenda, such as the calling of a constitutional convention along with the nationalist demand for reparations. Many observers saw the Agenda as a black nationalist document, and as a result civil rights activists and black elected officials withdrew their support for the NBPC and the Agenda less than ten weeks after the Convention. Since nationalists did not hold elective office, have a broad constituency, or have access to levers of real power in pragmatic ways, their popularity within black communities rapidly declined, leaving civil rights activists and black elected officials holding the mantle of black political leadership in 1972 and beyond. This is the untold story of the 1972 National Black Political Convention.

The Rub of Time: Bellow, Nabokov, Hitchens, Travolta, Trump: Essays and Reportage, 1994-2017 by Martin Amis [Knopf, 9781400044535]

The definitive collection of essays and reportage written during the past thirty years from one of most provocative and widely read writers--with new commentary by the author.

For more than thirty years, Martin Amis has turned his keen intellect and unrivaled prose loose on an astonishing range of topics--politics, sports, celebrity, America, and, of course, literature. Now, at last, these incomparable essays have been gathered together. Here is Amis at the 2011 GOP Iowa Caucus, where, squeezed between "windbreakers and woolly hats," he pores over The Ron Paul Family Cookbook and laments the absence of "our Banquo," Herman Cain. He writes about finally confronting the effects of aging on his athletic prowess. He revisits, time and time again, the worlds of Bellow and Nabokov, his "twin peaks," masters who have obsessed and inspired him. Brilliant, incisive, and savagely funny, The Rub of Time is a vital addition to any Amis fan's bookshelf, and the perfect primer for readers discovering his fierce and tremendous journalistic talents for the first time.

Excerpt: The Natural Sin of Language

In the process of its composition, a lyric poem or a very short short story can reach the point where it ceases to be capable of improvement. Anything longer than a couple of pages—as John Updike will later remind us, in a phrase of T. S. Eliot's—will soon succumb to "the natural sin of language," and will demand much concentrated work. By the natural "sin" of language I take it that Eliot is referring (a) to its indocility (how it constantly and writhingly resists even the most practiced hands) and (b) to its promiscuity: in nearly all of its dealings language is as indiscriminate as currency, and gathers much incidental grit and lint and sweat.

Poets are familiar with the sudden surmise that their revisions had better be discontinued (and quickly, too), that their so-called improvements are starting to do real harm. Even the novelist shares this fear: you are nervously tampering with an inspiration that is going dead on you. Northrop Frye, a literary philosopher-king to whom I owe fealty, said that the begetter of a poem or a novel is more like a midwife than a mother: the aim is to get the child into the world with as little damage as possible—and if the creature is alive it will scream to be liberated from "the navel strings and feeding tubes of the ego."

Discursive prose, on the other hand (essays and reportage of the kind represented between these covers), cannot be cleansed of the ego, and is in any case limitlessly improvable. So I have done some cutting, quite a bit of adding (footnotes, postscripts), a lot of elaborating, and a great deal of polishing. Very often I am simply trying to make myself clearer, less ambiguous, and more precise—but not more prescient (I haven't massaged my political prophecies, which tend, as is usual with such things, to be instantly dismayed by events). There are some repetitions and duplications; I have let them stand, because I assume that most readers will pick and choose along the way in accordance with their own enthusiasms (only the reviewer, the proofreader, and of course the author will ever be obliged to read the whole thing straight through). Also, rather to my surprise, I have done some bowdlerizing, making war not against the "improper or offensive" so much as against the over-colloquial: those turns of phrase that seem shop-soiled almost as soon as they are committed to paper. The natural sin of language is cumulative and unavoidable; but we can at least expel the frailties of mere transience.

He's Leaving Home

Once upon a time, in a kingdom called England, literary fiction was an obscure and blameless pursuit. It was more respectable than angelology, true, and more esteemed than the study of phosphorescent mold; but it was without question a minority-interest pursuit.

In 1972, I submitted my first novel: I typed it out on a secondhand Olivetti and sent it in from the subeditorial office I shared at The Times Literary Supplement. The print run was one thousand (and the advance was £250). It was published, and reviewed, and that was that. There was no launch party and no book tour; there were no interviews, no profiles, no photo shoots, no signings, no readings, no panels, no onstage conversations, no Woodstocks of the Mind in Hay-on-Wye, in Toledo, in Mantova, in Parati, in Cartagena, in Jaipur, in Dubai; and there was no radio and no television. The same went for my second novel (1975) and my third (1978). By the time of my fourth novel (1981), nearly all the collateral activities were in place, and writers, in effect, had been transferred from vanity press to Vanity Fair.

What happened in the interim? We can safely say that as the 1970s became the 1980s there was no spontaneous flowering of enthusiasm for the psychological nuance, the artful simile, and the curlicued sentence. The phenomenon, as I now see it, was entirely media-borne. To put it crudely, the newspapers had been getting fatter and fatter (first the Sundays, then the Saturdays, then all the days in between), and what filled these extra pages was not additional news but additional features. And the featurists were running out of people to write about—running out of alcoholic actors, ne'er-do-well royals, depressive comedians, jailed rock stars, defecting ballet dancers, reclusive film directors, hysterical fashion models, indigent marquises, adulterous golfers, wife-beating footballers, and rapist boxers. The dragnet went on widening until journalists, often to their patent dismay, were writing about writers: literary writers.

This modest and perhaps temporary change in status involved a number of costs and benefits. A storyteller is nothing without a listener, and the novelists started getting what they can't help but covet:

> not more sales necessarily, but more readers. And it was gratifying to find that many people were indeed quite intrigued by the business of creating fiction: to prove the point, one need only adduce the fact that every last acre of the planet is now the scene of a boisterous literary festival. With its interplay of the conscious and the unconscious, the novel involves a process that no writers, and no critics, really understand. Nor can they quite see why it arouses such curiosity. ("Do you write in longhand?" "How hard do you press on the paper?") All the same, as J. G. Ballard once said, readers and listeners "are your supporters—urging on this one-man team." They release you from your habitual solitude, and they give you heart. So far, so good: these are the benefits. Now we come to the costs, which, I suppose, are the usual costs of conspicuousness.

Needless to say, the enlarging and emboldening of the mass-communications sector was not confined to the United Kingdom. And "visibility," as Americans call it, was no doubt granted to writers in all the advanced democracies—with variations determined by national character. In my home country, the situation is, as always, paradoxical. Despite the existence of a literary tradition of unparalleled magnificence (presided over by the world's only obvious authorial divinity), writers are regarded with a studied skepticism—not by the English public, but by the English commentariat. It sometimes seems that a curious circularity is at work. If it is true that writers owe their ascendancy to the media, then the media has promoted the very people that irritate them most: a crowd of pretentious—and by now quite prosperous—egomaniacs. When writers complain about this, or about anything else, they are accused of self-pity ("celebrity whinge"). But the unspoken gravamen is not self-pity. It is ingratitude.

Nor should we neglect a profound peculiarity of fiction and the column inches that attend it: a fortuitous consanguinity. The appraisal of an exhibition does not involve the use of an easel and a palette; the appraisal of a ballet does not involve the use of a pair of slippers and a tutu. And the same goes for all but one of the written arts: you don't review poetry by writing verse (unless you're a jerk), and you don't review plays by writing dialogue (unless you're a jerk); novels, though, come in the form of prose narrative—and

so does journalism. This odd affinity causes no great tension in other countries, but it sits less well, perhaps, with certain traits of the Albionic Fourth Estate—emulousness, a kind of cruising belligerence, and an instinctive proprietoriality.

Conspicuous persons, in my motherland, are most seriously advised to lead private lives denuded of all color and complication. They should also, if they are prudent, have as little as possible to do with America—seen as the world HQ of arrogance and glitz. When I and my wife, who is a New Yorker, entrained the epic project of moving house, from Camden Town in London to Cobble Hill in Brooklyn, I took every public opportunity to make it clear that our reasons for doing so were exclusively personal and familial, and had nothing to do with any supposed dissatisfaction with England or the English people (whom, as I truthfully stressed, I have always admired for their tolerance, generosity, and wit). Backed up by lavish misquotes together with satirical impersonations (sham interviews and the like), the impression given was that I was leaving because of a vicious hatred of my native land and because I could no longer endure the well-aimed barbs of patriotic journalists.

"I wish I weren't English": of all the fake tags affixed to my name, this is the one I greet with the deepest moan of inanition. I suggest that the remark—and its equivalent in any language or any alphabet—is unutterable by anyone whose IQ reaches double figures. "I wish I weren't North Korean" might make a bit of sense, assuming the existence of a North Korean sufficiently well informed and intrepid to give voice to it. Otherwise and elsewhere, the sentiment is inconceivably null. And for a writer to say it of England—the country of Dickens, George Eliot, Blake, Milton, and, yes, William Shakespeare—isn't even perverse. It is merely twee.

The term "American exceptionalism" was coined in 1929 by none other than Josef Stalin, who condemned it as a "heresy" (he meant that America, like everywhere else, was subject to the iron laws of Karl Marx). If that much-mocked notion still means anything, we should apply it to America's exceptionally hospitable attitude to outsiders (and America has certainly been exceptionally hospitable to me and my family). All friends of the Stars and Stripes are pained to see that this unique and noble tradition is now under threat, and from all sides; but America remains, definingly, an immigrant society, vast and formless; writers have always occupied an unresented place in it, because everyone subliminally understood that writers would play a part in construing its protean immensity. Remarkably, the "American Century" (to take another semi-wowserism) is due to last exactly that long—with China scheduled for prepotence in about 2045. The role of the writers, for the time being, is at least clear enough. They will be taking America's temperature, and tenderly checking its pulse, as the New World follows the old country down the long road of decline. The New Republic 2012. <>

Victorians Undone: Tales of the Flesh in the Age of Decorum by Kathryn Hughes [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421425702]

In Victorians Undone, renowned British historian Kathryn Hughes follows five iconic figures of the nineteenth century as they encounter the world not through their imaginations or intellects but through their bodies. Or rather, through their body parts. Using the vivid language of admiring glances, cruel sniggers, and implacably turned backs, Hughes crafts a narrative of cinematic quality by combining a series of truly eye-opening and deeply intelligent accounts of life in Victorian England.

Lady Flora Hastings is an unmarried lady-in-waiting at young Queen Victoria's court whose swollen stomach ignites a scandal that almost brings the new reign crashing down. Darwin's iconic beard provides important new clues to the roles that men and women play in the great dance of natural selection. George Eliot brags that her right hand is larger than her left, but her descendants are strangely desperate to keep the information secret. The poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti, meanwhile, takes his art and his personal life in a new direction thanks to the bee-stung lips of his secret mistress, Fanny Cornforth. Finally, we meet Fanny Adams, an eight-year-old working-class girl whose tragic evisceration tells us much about the currents of desire and violence at large in the mid-Victorian countryside.

While 'bio-graphy' parses as 'the writing of a life,' the genre itself has often seemed willfully indifferent to the vital signs of that life—to breath, movement, touch, and taste. Nowhere is this truer than when writing about the Victorians, who often

figure in their own life stories as curiously disembodied. In lively, accessible prose, Victorians Undone fills the space where the body ought to be, proposing new ways of thinking and writing about flesh in the nineteenth century.

Excerpt: Parts and Holes

In the last week of June 1824 Thomas Carlyle, on the cusp of a brilliant literary career, bounced up Highgate Hill to meet one of the country's reigning men of letters. You might assume that the twenty-eight-year-old had lots to talk about with the veteran poet and critic, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge was Britain's chief exponent of German Idealism, a tradition in which young Carlyle was himself fluent: his first book, published the following year, would be a biography of the philosopher Schiller. Yet far from a meeting of minds, this encounter between the literary generations might best be described as a repulsion of bodies. Carlyle was barely able to contain his shock at the ruin of the man who shuffled forward to greet him at 3, The Grove. Coleridge, he reported to his brother in an appalled post-mortem the next day, was a 'fat flabby incurvated personage, at once short, rotund and relaxed, with a watery mouth, a snuffy nose, a pair of strange brown timid yet earnest looking eyes'.

It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast between this damp, spongy apparition and his spare, springy visitor. Carlyle appeared to have been whittled out of the birches of his native Dumfriesshire. His eyes were light and burning, his nose and mouth as decided as granite, and he had doubtless fizzed up North London's steep incline in double-quick time, only to find this dollop of slop waiting for him at the top. Over the previous thirty years Coleridge had been addicted to opium, which not only slackened the connective tissues of his brilliant mind but turned his body turgid. The sagginess that so offended Carlyle was partly due to the older man's constipated and swollen gut, the humiliating legacy of his drug dependency. An ancillary snuff habit, meanwhile, had made rivers of his eyes, mouth and nose.

Sharp Oedipal elbows partly account for the savagery of Carlyle's attack on Coleridge's pitiable physique. Over the years the young Scot would frequently be mentioned as the natural successor to 'the Sage of Highgate', and the comparison made him furious: he would be his own man, thank you very much - entirely original, self-hewn. And indeed, this sally turned out to be only the first of several extraordinary verbal attacks on Coleridge's body by the young pretender. Just the following year Carlyle returned to the subject, refining the rhetoric of his disgust so that Coleridge now became 'a mass of richest spices, putrefied into a dunghill', which he longed to 'toss ... in a blanket. It was as if Carlyle hoped that by giving Coleridge a good shake he might redistribute his feculent stuffing into a more uniform shape. At the very least he would get him to sit up straight.

This disillusionment so early in his career did nothing to dent Carlyle's conviction that bodies mattered as much as minds when it came to making sense of what had gone before. Thirteen years after that Highgate encounter he was exhorting his readers to remember that 'the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men ... Not abstractions were they, not diagrams and theorems, but men, in buff or other coats and breeches, with colour in their cheeks, with passions in their stomach, and the idioms, features and vitalities of very men: It was precisely these `vitalities' that Carlyle worked so hard to bring to his own written accounts of the Past, a past which, according to his famous formulation, was best read by setting the biographies of Great Men end to end. Dante, Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell and Frederick the Great all crashed through Carlyle's books so vividly that it seemed as if at any moment they might bound out of the pages, take the reader by the hand and explain just what it felt like to write Hamlet or win the Battle of Naseby. `The figures of most historians seem like dolls stuffed with bran,' wrote the Victorian critic James Russell Lowell, 'but Carlyle's are so real in comparison, that, if you prick them, they bleed.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century British men and women had been piling into the cities from the countryside, exactly as Carlyle himself had done in 1809 when he left his native village of Ecclefechan to study at Edinburgh University. Strangers who would never previously have set eyes on one another increasingly found themselves in an involuntarily intimate embrace at the factory bench, the railway station, the lodging house, the beach or on the top deck of an omnibus. Other people's sneezes, bums, elbows, smells, snores, farts

and breathy whistles were, quite literally, in your face. Privacy, in the form of screens, locks, water closets, first-class carriages and single beds, was available only to a privileged few. For everyone else it was a question of raising thresholds of embarrassment and shame to protect against sensory overload. Of course, you could always turn to a physiognomy guide, or an etiquette book, or even the Bible, to tell you how to sort this untidy spill of corporeality into categories that made sense of it all - the clean and the dirty, the pure and the wicked, the rough and the genteel. But even here there were ambiguities, contradictions, collisions of meaning and sense.

So if our great-great-grandparents have a reputation for denying or concealing the body, it is only because they were obliged to live with it so intensely. And this reticence slipped naturally into the way that they wrote, or rather didn't, about their physical selves. For while Carlyle made a point of describing Frederick the Great's `negligent plenty' of fine auburn hair and Mirabeau's `seamed, carbuncled face', most biographers of the time behaved as if their subjects had taken leave of the body, or had never possessed such a thing in the first place. If flesh and blood registered in Victorian life stories at all, it was in the broadest, airiest generalities - a manly stride here, the sweetest smile there. Mostly, though, there was a hole in the biographical text where arms, legs, breasts and bellies should have been.

It was this jarring absence that Lytton Strachey seized upon in Eminent Victorians (1918), his iconoclastic takedown of three notable men and one woman of the nineteenth century. In scalpel prose the Bloomsbury Group stalwart revealed that his quartet of Victorian eminences were not only vain, petty and self-deceiving, they were physically faintly ridiculous too. Dr Thomas Arnold, the pious headmaster of Rugby, had legs that were too short for his body, while saintly Florence Nightingale had a `peevish' mouth and descended into a fat, cushiony old age. The bulging forehead of Cardinal Henry Manning reminded cowed colleagues of a swooping eagle, while General Gordon's 'brick-red complexion' was probably as much the result of brandy as it was of Khartoum's relentless noonday sun. And that's not forgetting Eminent Victorians' cast of supporting characters, including Lord Panmure, whose `bulky mass' reminded his friends of a bison, and Sidney Herbert, who was as sprightly as a stag.

Lytton Strachey's insistence on exposing the moral and psycholoical frailties of his Victorian subjects has carried bracingly over into our own times. Indeed, we are all Stracheyites now, alert for humbug and self-deception in the stories that people in the past liked to tell about themselves. Yet when it comes to the attention that Eminent Victorians paid to physical form, little trace remains. In fact, in today's biographies the body barely makes an appearance at all. It might be there, in its cradle, in Chapter 2 (Chapter 1 is for the forefathers and the Condition of England), at which point it gets a quick once-over and is assigned its father's brown eyes or its mother's long, loose limbs. From that point on we hear little about the biographical subject's physical passage through the world until the penultimate chapter, at which point he or she develops a nasty cough, or a niggling stomach pain, and someone calls the doctor. If the subject of the book is a woman there may be a bit of blood in the childbirth chapter, but there won't be any mention of menstruation, hiccups, a headache or any of those fluxy realities that we all know about from our own bodily lives. Finally, in the closing pages, the subject takes to their bed, mutters a few last words and is committed to the grave, whereupon they duly crumble into dust.

As a result even the most attentive reader may finish a biography of a Victorian, eminent or otherwise, feeling that they'd be hard-pressed to pick them out in an identity parade. (Biographies typically contain visual likenesses, to be sure, but those quarter-page black-and-white images don't show the body in motion, can't give you much idea of its habitual off-duty slouch, let alone its sound or smell.) So while a Life of Charlotte Brontë might supply chapter and verse on the novelist's rich childhood imagination, it won't prepare you for the fact that when she opens her mouth a Northern Irish accent comes out (you were expecting genteel Yorkshire). Likewise, having devoured a joint biography of the poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett, you may feel that you have experienced all the exhilaration of their elopement to Italy, not to mention the intricacies of the lyric form. Yet, what a shock on encountering the happy couple in person to realise that both are partly

African, with dark complexions, large mouths and, in the case of Barrett, a flat nose. What you're seeing is the physical trace of their shared Jamaican heritage, a heritage that includes a moment two generations previously when a plantation-owner glanced at one of his female slaves and felt a tickle of entitlement.

The next stop is the Lake District, where you find yourself discreetly circling Coleridge's erstwhile friend William Wordsworth, trying to work out why the shape of his body looks so different from the front than from the back. Is it some trick of the northern light? Finally, you bump into William Gladstone, the esteemed Liberal Prime Minister, and are taken aback to notice that his left forefinger is missing. He lost it in a shooting accident as a young man, but good manners mean that his contemporaries never mentioned it, portraitists ignored it, and even the caricaturists tactfully covered it up. You, however, can't stop staring at that flaccid black finger-stall where the missing digit used to be.

`You', of course, means `me: For I am the reader who feels chronically short-changed by the lack of physical detail in biography. What, I long to know, were people in the nineteenth century actually `like' - a word that has a long and distinguished heritage in the English language, one that tells of deep presence and profound affinity. Tell me about these people's books and their battles, their big love affairs and their little meannesses by all means - but how did it feel to catch sight of them across a crowded room, or to find yourself sitting next to them at dinner? Did they lean in close and whisper, or stand at a distance and shout? Did they smell (probably, most people did) - but of what exactly? Were they natty or slobbish, a lip-licker or a nose-picker?

Victorians Undone is an attempt to reverse the situation whereby biography, which parses as 'the writing of a life', has become indifferent to the vital signs of that life - to breath, movement, touch and taste. Dressed in its Sunday Best, the book might be described as participating in the `material turn' in the Humanities, part of the new wave of interest amongst historians and literary scholars in objects that they can feel and hold, rather than simply chase through text after text towards an ever-receding horizon. In its more workaday incarnation Victorians Undone is an experiment to see what new stories emerge when you use biography - which, after all, is embodied history - to put mouths, bellies and beards back into the nineteenth century. I have been careful to avoid both Carlyle's hectoring hagiography and Strachey's sniggering snideness when writing about physical form. Nonetheless, I hope to introduce a certain lumpiness to canonical life narratives that have previously been rendered as smooth, symmetrical, and as strangely unconvincing as a death mask. For it is in lopsidedness and open-endedness, in bulges, dips, hollows, oozes and itches, that we come closest to a sense of what it feels like to live in the solitude of a single body, both then and now.

What follows are five corporeal conundrums that have emerged over twenty-five years of reading and writing about the Victorians, tangles of flesh and bone that have snagged in my mind long after the Life is supposed to be over. Why did the young Queen Victoria become obsessed with other women's figures in the spring of 1839, and exactly what made Charles Darwin grow that iconic beard in 1862, a good five years after his contemporaries had all retired their razors? Why was the great philosophical novelist George Eliot so conscious that her right hand was larger than her left, and how did the poet-artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti manage to paint his mistress's lips so beautifully while simultaneously treating them as a dirty joke? Finally, how did a working-class child called Fanny Adams disintegrate into pieces in 1867 before being reassembled into a popular saying, one we still use today, but would stop, appalled, if we knew its origins?

I have chosen to use body parts as opposed to whole forms because they are biography's precision tool. While an entire body may pull in several different directions at once - the right ear has this story to tell, the big toe quite another - a single part offers something both finer and more penetrating. We can follow a thickened index finger or a deep baritone voice into the realms of social history, medical discourse, aesthetic practice and religious observance. In the process, a whole nexus of cultural power is laid bare. And while this is a power predicated on those old faceless monoliths of class, race and gender, it expresses itself not in tables and charts or theoretical jargon, but in beauty, gracefulness, symmetry and vulgarity, roughness and dirt. Its language is one of

admiring glances, cruel sniggers, an implacably turned back.

By locating these five body parts at the moment they created crises in individual lives, I hope to add something to our understanding of what it meant to be a human animal in the nineteenth century. What I can't do is say anything systematising about the `Victorian body'. At best, these case histories are panes of glass through which to catch a partial glimpse of a huge, teeming landscape of thought and feeling that may, in fact, never become fully comprehensible to us. That's because the body, no matter how we might like to imagine it as a safe haven from the messy contingency of history, is deeply implicated in it. Put simply, a broken wrist in 1866 does not mean, and may not even feel, the same as it would today. It's not just a question of whether the Victorians had codeine and splints to make things better, but the far less easily settled matter of how they regarded their wrists - as part of their essential core, or as a peripheral wing? And then what about the middle-aged woman who in 1857 sends a letter congratulating her niece on looking so `fat'? We gasp at Aunty's insult, and it takes a while to realise that what is being offered is actually a loving, relieved compliment, a celebration of blooming good health in an age where slenderness is death's calling card. Only if we come prepared to check our impulse to map our own bodily experiences directly on to the nineteenth century will we begin to understand what is really going on.

Yet although my starting point is the pastness of the past, a resistance to reading the Victorians as if they were just like us, except smaller and dressed in funny clothes, I can't ignore the striking continuities either. For although the Victorians inherited an Enlightenment ideal of the human form as coherent and transcendent, their experience of their actual physical selves was remarkably similar to ours, which is to say confused and mostly improvised. Cloning may not have been possible in the nineteenth century, nor organ transplant nor gender reassignment surgery, but there was still a blurring of the boundaries designed to keep one body (and, by extension one class, one sex and one race) distinct from another. The Great Exhibition of 1851 showcased technological advances in prosthetic legs and glass eyes, while wearing someone else's hair had become a universal salve for anyone who was unhappy with what Nature had provided. Meanwhile, industrial workers, from coalminers to glass-blowers, found that the raw materials of their trades slipped under the skin to lodge in their lungs and livers, so that they became effectively walking alloys. Karl Marx warned that these men and women were already well on their way to being replaced by the very machines they now operated. The robots were on their way.

Meanwhile, far away from the centres of technological innovation, even the most docile of Victorian bodies lived in a state of constant perturbation. Behaviours that started as learned gestures - the correct way to pour from a teapot or lift a seven-pound hammer - were repeated until they became part of a repertoire of automatic movements. Under the skin, yet-to-be-identified hormones and neurons fizzed away, producing moment-by-moment synaptic snaps that resulted, over time, in permanent changes to the body's architecture. Much physical activity, indeed, took place beneath the level of consciousness altogether - defensively crossed arms, a blush, a stammer. In short, the Victorian body was porous, plural, always in the process of making itself, and far harder to pin down than those butterfly corpses that mild country clergymen spent their evenings crucifying on cork.

Those anonymous clergymen are not the subject of this book, and nor are their Brimstones and Painted Ladies. Instead I have followed Carlyle's lead in writing about famous people. This is not because I agree with him that they matter more, but because they are the ones who tend to leave a paper trail of what historians call 'ego documents' - letters, diaries, memoirs - together with newspaper reports and, yes, biographies. It is hard to find sources for the sort of fleeting, fine-grained intimacies I'm after - a receding hairline, constipation, a poke in the eye, cold sores, menopausal flush, arms that refuse to squeeze themselves into newfangled leg o' mutton sleeves - and you really need to dig in the richest parts of the archive, where material has gathered in the deepest drifts.

And now, a final caveat. Strachey made up the bit about Arnold's legs being too short for his body: when challenged, the Bloomsburyite drawled that `If they weren't, they ought to have been.' Meanwhile, Carlyle's thundering instruction to

remember that men in the past came with rosy cheeks and definite taste in trousers was actually part of an encomium to Sir Walter Scott, a writer of historical imagination rather than documentary fact. Scott's men and women may indeed be three-dimensional, but what Carlyle fails to mention is that they are also made up. I, by contrast, have confined myself to the factual record: nothing that follows is imagined or guessed, faked or fudged. It is, rather, the result of a decade spent in archives (no amount of digitalisation has yet circumvented the need to haul one's body around the world and sit in silence with boxes of unsorted paper). And as for the criticism that the exceptional people I deal with here can hardly be accounted typical, the answer must be this: genius has good-hair days like everyone else, while royalty also worries about its paunch.

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Napa at Last Light: America's Eden in an Age of Calamity by James Conaway [Simon & Schuster, 9781501128455]

A New York Times bestselling author reveals how the beautiful, isolated Napa Valley wine region of California exploded into an extraordinary outsized version of the American dream and whose vineyards sparked an unbelievable power struggle between old family stewardship and multinational corporations.

Not so long ago, wine was an exclusively European product. Now it is thoroughly American; emblematic of Napa Valley, an area idealized as the epicenter of great wines and foods and a cultural tourist destination. But the romanticized accounts you find about it and its denizens is not what you'll encounter in James Conaway's candid book.

Napa at Last Light exposes the often-shadowy side of the latter days of Napa Valley—marked by complex personal relationships, immense profits, passionate beliefs, and sometimes desperate struggles to prevail. In the balance hang fortunes and personal relationships made through hard work and, in too many cases, manipulation of laws, people, and institutions.

Napans who grew up trusting in the beneficence of the "vintner" class now confront in the twenty-first century multinational corporations and their allies who have stealthily subsumed the old family landmarks and abandoned the once glorious conviction that agriculture is the highest and best use of the land. Inherent in that conviction is the sanctity of the place, threatened now by a relentless drive for profits at the expense of land, water, and even life.

Hailed as the definitive Napa writer, Conaway has spent decades covering the region. Napa at Last Light showcases the greed, enviable profits, legacy, and tradition that still collide in this compelling story. The area is still full of dreamers, but of opposing sorts: those longing for a harmonious society based upon the vine envisioned by Thomas Jefferson more than two hundred years ago, and self-styled overlords yearning for wealth and the special acclaim only fine wine can bring. Bets are still out on what the future holds.

A journalistic foray to California in the early 1980s led me into gorgeous mountains bracketing a narrow valley unlike any place I had ever known. I grew up in the faraway South, yet here on the far side of the same continent were distinct similarities to the place I had left behind. Like the South, many in the Napa Valley were related, they helped each other, shared and traded things as southerners might (equipment, knowledge, wine) and intermarried with a bit less alacrity than in rural Tennessee. But in Napa they raised children to take over what was an odd combination of farming, high craft, and an almost religious belief in the Godgiven rightness of "the cause"—not states' rights, but their ability to make wine as good as anyone's, anywhere.

The established families were agricultural, and a few of the scions rocketed into roles for which they weren't prepared, like Jett Rink in Edna Ferber's Giant, or stories out of William Faulkner's fiction, with sunstruck approximations of the Snopeses. Other accounts read like latter-day narratives from Genesis, such as the brothers Mondavi brawling in

the vineyard and the expulsion of Robert, that family's own prodigal son. There were actual southerners, too, including a vineyard owner from Tidewater Virginia who would be an ongoing player in Napa's rapidly unfolding, truly phenomenal success.

The valley I came to know in the 1980s is reflected in my book Napa: The Story of an American Eden, a social history comprised of the stories of latter-day founders of great wine estates and those working to perfect their own sometimes idiosyncratic visions. These harkened back to the vineyards of France, Germany, and Italy, and from extended families and the collective experiences of others emerged a critical and financial success of a sort never before seen in America.

As important was the idealism of newcomers whose energy and imagination made the new Napa possible, names like Forman, Winiarski, Heitz, Davies. Crucial to the management of so much success were growers, winemakers, and citizens whose names still ring in the clear, sunlaved air of Northern California: Pelissa, Erskine, Cronk, Eisele, Malan, all pushing for control of the mounting bonanza that now threatens to emulate California's traditional boom-and-bust past best symbolized by the Gold Rush.

The 1960s, '70s, and '80s were in retrospect years of great innocence and promise, the latter soon realized and the former rapidly diminishing. My book's sequel, The Far Side of Eden, dealt with the growing conflict between new wealth and individual freedom in the final years of the twentieth century, and many of the same people, older and sometimes wiser, appear in its pages, as do some of their children. Land-use issues loomed large, and still do; so does the phenomenon "lifestyle" vintner, inherent in the conflict between development and the agrarian ideal.

The latter is embodied in the agricultural preserve established in 1968 to prevent the valley from becoming another extended bedroom community and is still a matter of contention. Cautionary tales included that of a maverick whose ambitious vineyard development set off a gargantuan legal struggle with the Sierra Club and a homegrown environmental wunderkind, an epic battle that sharply divided the valley. But the real subject of that book—and of the one in hand—is the valley itself.

This last of the trilogy comes at the end of an era and combines narrative journalism with personal reflection. It is based on three decades of note-taking in a place I came to know and love, and in ways to mourn. Readers of the first two books will recognize many of these characters, but some, like the times, have changed, reemerging in new roles. Burnished by experience, they and the valley are drawn in the harsher light of a long year stretching from the conclusion of a severe drought in 2015 to the eve of the national election of 2016 that ushered in a new era for the nation and the valley.

This book is not about wine but about place and people. The reader doesn't need intimate familiarity with viticulture, or the exclusive world now representing it, to see this as a unique American story with great value in its own right, and a shared relevance. Wine isn't just another example of corporate commercialism, for the traditions it represents have always stood apart. They no longer do. Napa was so blessed that its land and communities should have withstood the excesses of the system, should have survived in their own right even as others passed by in America's ongoing maelstrom of development and greed. But it has not and best serves now as a microcosm of a country where opportunity and the ever-intensifying struggle for financial supremacy have trumped even the most sacrosanct ideas and institutions.

The story begins with a ruminative look at the mysterious subject itself, wine, and its influence beyond social cohesion, money, and sensory appeal. We then move through Napa's once-great wine estates, Brigadoon-like visions that became white elephants and had such influence on the desires of the inheritors. Collectively they and their imitators changed the valley: citizens, laws, vistas, the place itself. Avatars of our time, some positive, some decidedly not, these all reflect more ambition than vision in a place whose fate is unavoidably tied up in theirs.

Not so long ago Napa was thought of in Edenic terms, but today is as closely defined by conflict as by wine. Characters weave in and out of the narrative, for there is no other way to accurately and fairly portray the valley. Key players distinguish themselves by deeds, not properties,

and this will leave its own lasting impression on readers.

Two words—the valley—denote both the flats laid down through time by the Napa River, and the steep forested hills on either side that are the wellsprings of the valley's water. Here, real lives form a matrix of connections and sensibilities around this precious resource that will ultimately determine how their stories play out. A few characters have been assigned pseudonyms, or in some cases, no name at all, often at their own request.

Five of the seven sections are devoted to specific struggles similar to those all over the country but heightened by Napa's fame and outsized concentration of wealth and notoriety. Complete in themselves but interrelated, these stories are bound together by common fears and common foes, with overlapping casts and, in some cases, common dreams. And deep within them lurks the potential of their unraveling.

Much rides on the outcomes of our latter-day Gilded Age, the enemy personified by abject self-interest—individual and corporate—and by co-opted officials, judges, and representatives of the presumed civic order. Altered lives, captive dreams, the loss of virtue—all reflect like facets on the main character of the book, the valley itself: extraordinarily blessed with natural beauty, globally recognized, relegated now to the vagaries of human ambition.

The struggles are in their way all between profit-driven schemes and the preservation of places and resources. Unless the characters can agree on and effect sustainable development, the things that render life worth living here and elsewhere will disappear and this lovely corner of the earth will become unfit not just for vines but also for people.

The challenge is relevant to the arc of human history going back to the origins of wine itself and, as is true wherever wine is made, place is inseparable from the voices of the people living in it. Their stories, old and new, touch us, whether outlandish or all too human, comingling like lees at the bottom of an old bottle brought up at last into the light, now uncorked.

In the winter of 2016-17 more rain fell in California than in many years. The Sierra snowpack was formidable and slow to melt, the governor relaxed some restrictions on water usage, and the drought was widely heralded as a thing of the past. But much of that snowpack flowed to the sea. By summer wildfires again became a serious threat all over the state, in part because of all the new growth, and regulators worried about the ongoing availability of water to slake the Golden State's awesome, ever-growing thirst.

The fisheries biologist hired by opponents of development on Howell Mountain found rainbow trout in the upper reaches of Conn Creek, where they were not supposed to be. This small miracle meant that various development plans had to be reworked, or abandoned, and that for a brief moment a few pretty little fingerlings could outshine the brightest lights in the firmament of human endeavor.

Donald Trump was now president, and although Napans voted overwhelmingly for his opponent, many among the vintner and grower classes did not. They were happy with Trump's general opposition to regulation, but increasingly out of step with a county—and a state—desirous of environmental safeguards.

A serendipitous new ally of opponents to development in the valley was the thirty-mile extension of the fault line brought on by the earthquake of 2014 that now extended from the city of Napa to Calistoga, up the west side of Highway 29.

Farmer Andy Beckstoffer finally got a hearing by the county in his challenge to Raymond Vineyards' activities, including the Red Room. Meanwhile Jean-Charles Boisset had bought the winery next door. The supervisors voted three to two not to act on Andy's complaint, including Alfredo Pedroza, who intoned, "This is not Disneyland.... This is agriculture in the twenty-first century."

The appeal by backers of the Water, Forest and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative did not prevail in the state supreme court, but proponents vowed to gather signatures again and finally get the issue placed on the 2018 ballot. Few in the county doubted that they would find more signatories than before, or that such an initiative would finally be approved by voters.

Then something unexpected occurred: a spokesperson for the Napa Valley Vintners secretly approached the initiative's proponents and offered to join with them in the renewed effort to pass it. The issue remained so contentious among members of all of the so-called Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse that a confidentiality agreement had to be signed by the negotiators to prevent a revolt before a deal could be done.

By midsummer 2017, several meetings had taken place and a new spirit of trust seemed to prevail. New guidelines were agreed to by environmentalists and members of the Vintners' representatives. In general the terms included greater stream setbacks and woodlands protection, including replacing every oak tree felled for development with three others on the property whose long-term growth was assured, and by 2030 all cutting of oaks would be prohibited.

So, after much acrimony, despair, political maneuvering, spent time and money, and the loss of overall goodwill, the hillsides seemed destined for additional protection. But reaction to the agreement, when revealed to the Vintner's membership, was loudly condemnatory and at the organization withdrew from the agreement. There was simply too much demand for a piece of what was once Edenic, and too much wealth to be denied, though for a moment the possibility of meaningful change had hung in the balance.

Then came the terrible fires in the fall of 2017. Reading and watching the news, I was horrified by their intensity and speed. I had predicted something similar, though further out in time, and felt as if I had somehow helped summon up the disaster. A preamble had been provided two years before on Howell Mountain, and again the fires spared Dunn Vineyards.

But this time more than six hundred structures in the county were damaged, though the percentage of actual destruction of Napa wineries was minuscule, and all the over-all damage small, when compared to what happened in neighboring Sonoma Country. Originally thought to have been set, the fires were nevertheless of human origin, since PG&E lines going down in the winds were the apparent culprits. Those lines were installed to fuel not just the valley's wineries and vineyard operations but also households and three million-plus annual visitors and all the services of a touristic juggernaut.

Developers and professional growers immediately called for new vineyards that would bring the clearing of more forests, claiming that vineyards make good firebreaks. They also mean more water loss, more people, and more activities unrelated to agriculture - houses, roads, service buildings, power lines.

Everyone in the wine industry was making money, ramped-up tourism pushing the county's annual take into the billions. But county officials seemed increasingly uncomfortable with controversial projects. Even Deep Root sounded guardedly optimistic: "The county's climate action plan has been discredited and has to be rewritten.... Every millimeter of land will eventually be subject to new laws, which means hundreds of thousands of trees can be saved that might not have been. The system is crumbling from within, people are finally starting to pay attention."

American Literature in Transition: Books in the Series

American Literature in Transition, 1910-1920
edited by Mark W. Van Wienen [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107143302]

American Literature in Transition, 1910-1920 offers provocative new readings of authors whose innovations are recognized as inaugurating Modernism in US letters, including Robert Frost, Willa Cather, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, H. D., and Marianne Moore. Gathering the voices of both new and established scholars, the volume also reflects the diversity and contradictions of US literature of the 1910s. 'Literature' itself is construed variously, leading to explorations of jazz, the movies, and political writing as well as little magazines, lantern slides, and sports reportage. One section of thematic essays cuts across genre boundaries. Another section oriented to formats drills deeply into the workings of specific media, genres, or forms. Essays on institutions conclude the collection, although a critical mass of contributors throughout explore long-term literary

and cultural trends - where political repression, race prejudice, war, and counterrevolution are no less prominent than experimentation, progress, and egalitarianism. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1920-1930 edited by Ichiro Takayoshi [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108418518]

American Literature in Transition, 1920-1930 examines the dynamic interactions between social and literary fields during the so-called Jazz Age. It situates the era's place in the incremental evolution of American literature throughout the twentieth century. Essays from preeminent critics and historians analyze many overlapping aspects of American letters in the 1920s and re-evaluate an astonishingly diverse group of authors. Expansive in scope and daring in its mixture of eclectic methods, this book extends the most exciting advances made in the last several decades in the fields of modernist studies, ethnic literatures, African-American literature, gender studies, transnational studies, and the history of the book. It examines how the world of literature intersected with other arts, such as cinema, jazz, and theater, and explores the print culture in transition, with a focus on new publishing houses, trends in advertising, readership, and obscenity laws. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1930-1940 by Ichiro Takayoshi [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108429382]

American Literature in Transition: 1930 - 1940 gathers together in a single volume preeminent critics and historians to offer an authoritative, analytic, and theoretically advanced account of the Depression era's key literary events. Many topics of canonical importance, such as protest literature, Hollywood fiction, the culture industry, and populism, receive fresh treatment. The book also covers emerging areas of interest, such as radio drama, bestsellers, religious fiction, internationalism, and middlebrow domestic fiction. Traditionally, scholars have treated each one of these issues in isolation. This volume situates all the significant literary developments of the 1930s within a single and capacious vision that discloses their hidden structural relations -- their contradictions, similarities, and reciprocities. This is an excellent resource for undergraduate, graduate students, and scholars interested in American literary culture of the 1930s. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950 edited by Christopher Vials [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107143319]

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged as the dominant imperial power, and in US popular memory, the Second World War is remembered more vividly than the American Revolution. American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950 provides crucial contexts for interpreting the literature of this period. Essays from scholars in literature, history, art history, ethnic studies, and American studies show how writers intervened in the global struggles of the decade: the Second World War, the Cold War, and emerging movements over racial justice, gender and sexuality, labor, and de-colonization. One recurrent motif is the centrality of the political impulse in art and culture. Artists and writers participated widely in left and liberal social movements that fundamentally transformed the terms of social life in the twentieth century, not by advocating specific legislation, but by changing underlying cultural values. This book addresses all the political impulses fueling art and literature at the time, as well as the development of new forms and media, from modernism and noir to radio and the paperback. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 edited by Steven Belletto [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 978110841232]

American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 explores the under-recognized complexity and variety of 1950s American literature by focalizing discussions through a series of keywords and formats that encourage readers to draw fresh connections among literary form and concepts, institutions, cultures, and social phenomena important to the decade. The first section draws attention to the relationship between literature and cultural phenomena that were new to the 1950s. The second section demonstrates the range of subject positions important in the 1950s, but still not visible in many accounts of the era. The third section explores key literary schools or movements associated with the decade, and explains how and why they developed at this particular cultural

moment. The final section focuses on specific forms or genres that grew to special prominence during the 1950s. Taken together, the chapters in the four sections not only encourage us to rethink familiar texts and figures in new lights, but they also propose new archives for future study of the decade. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1960-1970 by David Wyatt [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107165397]

The decade of the 1960s has come to occupy a uniquely seductive place in both the popular and the historical imagination. While few might disagree that it was a transformative period, the United States remains divided on the question of whether the changes occurring were for the better or for the worse. Some see it as a decade when people became more free; others as a time when people became more lost. American Literature in Transition: 1960-1970 provides the latest scholarship on this time of fateful turning as seen through the eyes of writers as various as Toni Morrison, Gary Snyder, Michael Herr, Amiri Baraka, Joan Didion, Louis Chu, John Rechy, and Gwendolyn Brooks. This collection of essays by twenty-five scholars offers analysis and explication of the culture wars surrounding the period, and explores the enduring testimonies left behind by its Literature. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1970-1980 by Kirk Curnutt [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107150768]

American Literature in Transition, 1970-1980 examines the literary developments of the twentieth-century's gaudiest decade. For a quarter century, filmmakers, musicians, and historians have returned to the era to explore the legacy of Watergate, stagflation, and Saturday Night Fever, uncovering the unique confluence of political and economic phenomena that make the period such a baffling time. Literary historians have never shown much interest in the era, however - a remarkable omission considering writers as diverse as Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Marilyn French, Adrienne Rich, Gay Talese, Norman Mailer, Alice Walker, and Octavia E. Butler were active. Over the course of twenty-one essays, contributors explore a range of controversial themes these writers tackled, from 1960s' nostalgia to feminism and the redefinition of masculinity to sexual liberation and rock 'n' roll. Other essays address New Journalism, the rise of blockbuster culture, memoir and self-help, and crime fiction - all demonstrating that the Me Decade was nothing short of mesmerizing. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1980-1990 edited by D. Quentin Miller [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108415606]

History has not been kind to the 1980s. The decade is often associated with absurd fashion choices, neo-Conservatism in the Reagan/Bush years, the AIDS crisis, Wall Street ethics, and uninspired television, film, and music. Yet the literature of the 1980s is undeniably rich and lasting. American Literature in Transition, 1980-1990 seeks to frame some of the decade's greatest achievements such as Toni Morrison's monumental novel Beloved and to consider some of the trends that began in the 1980s and developed thereafter, including the origins of the graphic novel, prison literature, and the opening of multiculturalism vis-...-vis the 'canon wars'. This volume argues not only for the importance of 1980s American literature, but also for its centrality in understanding trends and trajectories in all contemporary literature against the broader background of culture. This volume serves as both an introduction and a deep consideration of the literary culture of our most maligned decade. See review

American Literature in Transition, 1990–2000 edited by Stephen J. Burn [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107136014]

Written in the shadow of the approaching millennium, American literature in the 1990s was beset by bleak announcements of the end of books, the end of postmodernism, and even the end of literature. Yet, as conservative critics marked the century's twilight hours by launching elegies for the conventional canon, American writers proved the continuing vitality of their literature by reinvigorating inherited forms, by adopting and adapting emerging technologies to narrative ends, and by finding new voices that had remained outside that canon for too long. By reading 1990s literature in a sequence of shifting contexts - from independent presses to the AIDS crisis, and from

angelology to virtual reality - American Literature in Transition, 1990-2000 provides the fullest map yet of the changing shape of a rich and diverse decade's literary production. It offers new perspectives on the period's well-known landmarks, Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace, but also overdue recognition to writers such as Ana Castillo, Evan Dara, Steve Erickson, and Carole Maso. See review

American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 edited by Rachel Greenwald Smith [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107149298]

American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 illuminates the dynamic transformations that occurred in American literary culture during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The volume is the first major critical collection to address the literature of the 2000s, a decade that saw dramatic changes in digital technology, economics, world affairs, and environmental awareness. Beginning with an introduction that takes stock of the period's major historical, cultural, and literary movements, the volume features accessible essays on a wide range of topics, including genre fiction, the treatment of social networking in literature, climate change fiction, the ascendency of Amazon and online booksellers, 9/11 literature, finance and literature, and the rise of prestige television. Mapping the literary culture of a decade of promise and threat, American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 provides an invaluable resource on twenty-first century American literature for general readers, students, and scholars alike. See review

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American Literature in Transition, 1910-1920 edited by Mark W. Van Wienen [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107143302]

American Literature in Transition, 1910-1920 offers provocative new readings of authors whose innovations are recognized as inaugurating Modernism in US letters, including Robert Frost, Willa Cather, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, H. D., and Marianne Moore. Gathering the voices of both new and established scholars, the volume also reflects the diversity and contradictions of US literature of the 1910s. 'Literature' itself is construed variously, leading to explorations of jazz, the movies, and political writing as well as little magazines, lantern slides, and sports reportage. One section of thematic essays cuts across genre boundaries. Another section oriented to formats drills deeply into the workings of specific media, genres, or forms. Essays on institutions conclude the collection, although a critical mass of contributors throughout explore long-term literary and cultural trends - where political repression, race prejudice, war, and counterrevolution are no less prominent than experimentation, progress, and egalitarianism.

Excerpt: Revolution, Progress, and Reaction in the First Decade of American Modernism by Mark W Van Wienen

The 1910s is a decade with a certain reputation in American literary history: a decade of radical breaks, beginnings, and historic departures in American literature and culture. Just note the period markers in the leading anthologies of American literature: ever since its first edition in 1979, the Norton Anthology has used 1914-45 to mark the parameters of its first twentieth-century literary period (Gottesman xvii). The Heath Anthology, now in its third decade of publication, has always rounded to the beginning of the decade, making 1910-45 its "Modern Period." Such is the canonical status of the 1910s as a moment of new beginnings in US literature. This present collection of chapters on the general theme of "Transitions" both affirms and explores the new directions taken by American literature in the 1910s. The collection also testifies, however, to the 1910s as a decade of surprising continuity with tradition and of reaction — literary, cultural, and political. Hence, taken collectively as well as individually, the chapters here explore the contradictory dynamics of literary and cultural revolution, reform, preservation, progress, and reaction. To do so, contributors to the volume analyze literary or other creative texts — with important admixtures of nonfiction prose and historical inquiry — organized according to either theme, format, or institution. Although sometimes a particular subject demands that a contributor explores some authors and works outside of the ten-year (or, actually, eleven-year) period in view, the years 1910—so consistently provide focalization. The result is a rich, deep portrait of a

decade that a wide consensus of critical opinion sees as launching American modernism, although — as you will soon see — the birth of modernism in US letters is by no means the only story that can or should be told about literary and cultural production in these years.

Revolution

The notion of a "revolution" in American literature beginning in the 1910s is by now practically a critical commonplace. Jerome Rothenberg's edited collection from 1974, Revolution of the Word: A New Gathering of Avant Garde Poetry, 1914-1945, both helped to establish the critical discourse and gestured to a well-established assumption about American letters, especially in poetry. The term is taken up and extended to philosophy and history as well as to an international scope in a 1997 collection — Patricia Waugh's Revolutions of the Word. A number of the contributors to this. volume follow suit, with no fewer than eight — one-third of the total number of contributors — using the terms "revolution" or "revolutionary" non-ironically to describe literary movements, social changes, technological advances, or political phenomena between 1910 and 1920.

Because a number of the historic firsts and inaugurations of the 1910s will be detailed in the following chapters, mention of just a few will suffice by way of introduction. One contributor who invokes revolution frequently is Jayne Marek in "Little Magazines," the first chapter in the "Institutions" section. And for good reason. Limited-circulation avant-garde magazines founded in the 1910s include the most venerable of all little magazines, Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, as well as less durable but no less influential literary journals — The Little Review and Others — and journals that provocatively mixed literature, cultural criticism, and artwork — The Siven Arts and The Masses. Poetry and several of the other journals focused especially upon innovations in poetry; "the new poetry" was a phrase in regular usage. Hence, two contributors who do not use the term revolutionary, but might as well, are among those who focus on poetry. John Timberman Newcomb's chapter on "The City," beginning the "Themes" section, and Robin Schulze's chapter on "Modernist Poetry," starting "Formats," describe a dramatic transformation in the genre between 1910 and 1920. The significance of these years is evident just from the lists they offer of the poets who published their first mature work in the decade, which is virtually a who's who of the most important American poets of the first half of the twentieth century, including Hilda Doolittle (H. D.), T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Alice Corbin Henderson, Vachel Lindsay, Amy Lowell, Mina Loy, Edgar Lee Masters, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marianne Moore, Carl Sandburg, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Wallace Stevens. We might add Claude McKay to the list (although not the other well-known "New Negro" Renaissance poets). If the signature groundbreaking fiction of American modernism did not appear until the 1920s, prominent writers of this movement including E Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis published their first important works toward the end of the decade, and the experience of World War I was foundational for the "lost generation" of the next decade, so much so that one leading scholar of William Faulkner, E Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway dubs them writers of "mobilization fiction". Not only did modernism blossom in American poetry in the 1910s, but the seeds of modernism were also planted in American fiction.

Revolutions in literature and the arts were paralleled by revolutions in society and politics. Whether the arts merely mirrored or commented upon social revolutions, or whether they predicted them or even facilitated them, are matters for various interpretation, a range of which are on display in this collection. For today's literary historiography, it is scarcely better than a truism to state that developments in literature were closely tied to political and social developments in the 1910s (or in any period in any national literature). Suffice it to say that many of the contributors' chart especially dynamic and intricate relationships between literary production and the larger culture. Some of the contributors in this collection go further, in fact, flouting entirely conventional distinctions between literary production, culture, and politics, as when both Catherine Schlund-Vials's chapter on "Americanism" and John Marsh's on "Labor" treat federal reports extensively, or when Sean McCann's "The Presidency" analyzes Woodrow Wilson as a writer of historical analysis who then happened to become president of the United States. But even for those literary artists who imagined their work lives to be relatively distinct from the political and social environment of their

time — and for the twenty-first-century literary historians who continue to assert the relative autonomy, or at least distinctiveness, of literary work (of which there are also a number in this collection) — the immediate historical circumstances of the decade required, and continue to require, notice.

As many as four years from the 1910s might well offer key, transformative pivots — moments of radical, sometimes literally revolutionary, historical change:

- 1912: The presidential election of 1912 was one of the pivotal campaigns in American political history. With the top two vote-getters, Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, both claiming the mantle of progressivism and socialist candidate Eugene Debs winning 6 percent of the popular vote, over 76 percent of the US electorate may be c0unted as casting their vote for progressive or radical change.
- 1914: The senseless, mass carnage that descended upon Europe at the onset of the Great War reverberated in the United States as well. The effects over here, however, were polymorphous, striking some with the conviction that the United States must intervene, impressing upon others the necessity of US neutrality.
- 1917: Having won election with the slogan "He kept us out of war," Woodrow Wilson cast American intervention as a kind of divine mission; this would be a "War for Democracy" and a "War to End War." Meanwhile, ongoing revolution in Russia augured the possibility of other dramatic outcomes.
- 1919: With consolidation of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the toppling of both the German kaiser and Austro-Hungarian emperor in 1918, revolution appeared to be on the march. Reactionary paranoia, rapid demobilization, and postwar labor unrest contributed to violence. Bombs of unknown origin were sent to Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and other government officials; in response, Palmer initiated deportations of radicals in late 1919. Meanwhile, racial unrest swept through American cities, some twenty-five of which saw race riots in the "red summer" of 1919.

Each of these years was a watershed moment where, in the turn of a single calendar, US citizens found themselves in a new, radically different historical space.

There were further historical transformations under way in other fields within national politics and culture, as well. The long campaign for women's voting rights, officially inaugurated in the United States at the Seneca Falls Convention back in 1848, arrived finally at a long-sought milestone in 1920 with the winning of national women's suffrage. In the field of race politics, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded in 1909, and the organization would grow into national prominence during the 1910s under the guidance of one of black America's leading literary and cultural lights, W. E. B. Du Bois (D. L. Lewis, Biography 507). In a parallel development among Native Americans, the Society of American Indians, the first pan-tribal organization of Native Nations in the Americas, was founded in 1911 (as described by Beth Piatote in "Indian Country"). There were important developments in labor relations as well. In 1912, establishment of the congressional Commission on Industrial Relations in response to the Lawrence textile strike helped to turn the tide of public opinion in support of labor; the commission's "Final Report" of 1916 recommended reforms that established a template for the New Deal, argues Marsh in "Labor." Taken together as well as individually, these events and others to be described in the pages that follow suggest a culture in a process of dramatic transformation in the 1910s. Literature gave expression to this process, sought to understand it, and sometimes tried to shape it as well.

Progress

That the beginnings of the careers of so many illustrious writers date from the 1910s is, certainly, a central theme in this volume. But the very compactness of the decade focus adopted by the "Transitions" series practically ensures that any literary history written covering a decade cannot be tidy, and the 1910s certainly provide a case in point. Few writers of any prominence have careers

that last only a decade, and it would be extraordinary, indeed, if a whole generation of writers left off with their active careers all within a decade, even while their successors arrived right on schedule. In poetry, perhaps, something like this generational rupture within the decade may be credible. The picture changes markedly when we shift our attention to developments in fiction, drama, and other kinds of writing.

Not only does the decade mark a final highly productive period in the career of Edith Wharton, but it falls squarely in the middle of the careers of several other major figures: Willa Cather, Theodore Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, and James Weldon Johnson. Such writers challenge the notion of the 1910s as a moment of revolutionary change throughout the arts, describing instead a time of genuine transition, which points equally to the innovations of later modernist fiction of the 1920s and to borrowings and retentions from earlier cultural moments. Hence, there is no real contradiction between the chapter on "Modernist Fiction" by Guy Reynolds and the one on "Realist Fiction" by Robin Peel, even when both authors approach some of the same writers — Cather, Wharton — from their contrastive viewpoints. Brenda Murphy's contribution on "Realist Drama" makes an argument for both major innovation and essential continuity with earlier literary lmovements, asserting that the leading experimental dramatists innovated precisely by introducing realist methods that had long been established in fiction but had, until then, not made a significant mark on US theater.

Here, the literary history of "transitions" looks less like revolution than incremental but definite progress. In spite of the revolutionary hopes — and fears — of many Americans in the decade, it should be noted that, after all, the 1910s saw no radical change in American government but rather the high-water mark of the Progressive Era. And apropos to the more gradual developments in fiction, which had for decades explored the urban scene as essential subject matter, it was during the decade of the 1910s that the United States crossed that demographic Rubicon when a majority of its citizens lived in cities as opposed to, as previously, in small towns and farms. As noted both by Newcomb, writing on "The City," and Janet Galligani Casey, discussing "The Country," this transformation was the consequence of a long-established and practically inevitable trend, neither unexpected nor calamitous even if it did mean a significant shift in the national gestalt.

"Progress" and "progressivism" are fraught terms. Recent scholarship on the Progressive Era has suggested that high-sounding ideals of municipal reform and social improvement were laced with elitist value-judgments and social control (see McBride; Ward). Sean McCann's chapter in this collection, on the expansion of state power during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, offers a further cautionary tale about the dangers of Progressive change being orchestrated by the great men of history.

Yet many chapters in this collection certainly do frame a winning case for the transformations that took place in the 1910s. The decade is progressive at least in the sense of technical development (for example, in film technology, in the emergence of radio, and in music recording), but contributors to this volume are practically as likely to see in their writers some kind of positive aesthetic development. Sometimes progress in politics and even in ethical character is suggested. "Little Magazines" helped to define a literary institution that is with us yet and, at their best, Marek suggests, combined artistic innovation with progressive politics. Equally enticing is the emergence of film as an art form. In a decade called the "Transitional Era" by Charlie Keil, "The Movies" were transformed from a still quite rudimentary, if popular, form of diversion to a major industry and an art form whose key technical innovations during the decade are still widely practiced to this day. The impression is enhanced by discussions of other, less canonical artistic genres in the "Formats" section. "Sports Writing," as Scott Emmert describes it, developed from mere reportage into a subgenre in its own right, with recognized celebrity writers, a series of basic themes, and a range of stylistic options. In "Roots and Popular Music," Tim A. Ryan observes that modern jazz and blues emerged from ragtime and Southern folk traditions and then, toward the close of the decade with advances in recording technology, became part of a durable aural archive.

Even as the contributors mentioned here see positive innovations, they do not imagine the

progress they describe as marking a sharp break from the past. All definitely allude to or reference the cultural precedents from which the new phenomena of the 1910s emerged. Ryan emphasizes the "roots" of modern jazz and blues. Keil references the cinematic technology and system of film distribution existing by 1910 upon which the innovations of the following decade depended. Even Laura Winkiel looks to the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 to describe the template for the manifestos of the 1910s. Progressive readings of culture in the 1910s, or of any period, reach back into the past as well as toward the future.

Conservation and Reaction

Other chapters in the collection assert the endurance of supposedly earlier cultural forms — not just their influence in defining precedents (whether positive or negative) but as vital cultural forces in the present. Robin Peel's chapter on "Realist Fiction" argues powerfully that the realism of Edith Wharton, in particular, carried forth unapologetically in the tradition of Twain (who died just in 1910) and of Howells (who would live until 1920). Indeed, Peel's assertion is that the modernists themselves did not repudiate presentation of the real as the end of art, but rather reaffirmed it. At least as wide ranging in its scope and claims is Mike Chasar's account of "Popular Poetry," which shows that newer modes of presentation — lantern slides, radio, cinema — enabled poetry from the mid-nineteenth century and earlier, including Alfred Lord Tennyson's Enoch Arden and Clement Clarke Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas," to continue to speak to 1910s audiences. Chasar's further examples stretching toward the mid-twentieth century show how futile it would be to imagine that the avant-garde trends of a single decade, or even of an era, would deprive readers of the traditional pleasures of regular rhythm, rhyme, and punning — or that commercial advertising would eschew these familiar poetic assets. Casey's thematic chapter on "The Country" shows, likewise, that however much the nation's population might fill up its cities, the impact of rurality upon the nation's imagination would hardly diminish in the 1910s — or at any time in the succeeding century, as the success of The Wizard of Oz on screen as well as page would attest, and of the western in all of its forms would, as well.

There is also a more menacing side to the cultures of the 1910s that compromises, even altogether contradicts, a narrative of positive historical development, whether accomplished by revolution or a more gradual progression. The difficulty is especially clear in a number of the contributions dedicated to particular "Themes." "The New Woman" — already several decades old by the 1910s, Francesca Sawaya notes — is better characterized by this time as consisting of a number of different types of new women, with the type most clearly on the verge of success in the suffrage movement being allied with notions of white racial superiority and capitalist triumphalism. Paradoxically, the more conservative types of new woman, which insisted in one way or another on the continuity of women across generations, were the ones allied with the liberation politics of working-class women and women of color. Meanwhile, as Jonathan Vincent shows, "Masculinity" emerged in forms that were all the more aggressive for losing the supposed testing ground of the western frontier, and all the more collectivist for being immersed in the improving schemes of the Progressive Era — helping to produce an excessively violent and, at the same time, highly complaisant version of manhood just in time to be mobilized for the world wars.

As the appalling example of Tarzan, cited by Vincent, demonstrates, notions of racial difference and white supremacy were woven through multiple cultural strands. In "The Color Line," Michael Nowlin focuses on the career of James Weldon Johnson to demonstrate how fundamentally race hampered the literary careers of the most talented African American men and women of the decade. A similar theme runs through "Indian Country," where Beth Piatote notes how Zitkala-ša, among other talented Native American writers, was hampered in the pursuit of a literary career simultaneously by racially biased expectations for Indians to write autobiography and ethnography but not poetry or fiction, and by the compelling need to use their talents to defend Native Americans' very right to exist. "Eugenics," Beth Capo reminds us, was both an astonishingly pervasive and a surprisingly flexible cultural medium, providing a framework for W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, to preach racial uplift to black Americans. It also provided a logic for the social control of individuals at the most fundamental levels — sexuality, reproduction —

and a quasi-scientific basis for racial distinctions and racism. Most troubling of all, Cathy Schlund-Vials's "Americanization" sees the 1910s as a transitional decade from the nearly open immigration of the nineteenth century to the racially and ethnically biased restrictions of the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act, with the 1907 Dillingham Commission and the 1911 treatise The Immigration Problem being key way points. History was not merely slipping down a retrograde trajectory but toward catastrophe, these racially charged texts suggest. As Schlund-Vials observes, US immigration policy as formulated in this period won the approval of a young, very disgruntled man with a similar plan, Adolf Hitler, in Mein Kampf.

Other chapters see possibilities for historical progress, seemingly abundant in the first half of the decade, as being suddenly arrested or altogether reversed by the entry of the United States into the world war. In "Bohemians," Joanna Levin sees in American prewar bohemianism, particularly in Greenwich Village, a robust mix of radical politics and artist avant gardism. Even as that formula was always unstable — liable to veer into artistic pretension and social slumming — it was brought to an abrupt halt by the wartime suppression of The Masses, the standard-bearer for this political-artistic fusion. Arguing from a still more radical perspective, Laura Hapke argues that "red" narratives of the 1910s were always-already "counter-narratives," having to fight against moderate and reformist impulses in the socialists' own ranks as well as the capitalist hegemony of the dominant culture. And ironically, when revolution came to Russia, it became the occasion for the most strident repression of revolutionary movements in the United States — regardless of whether the groups involved had sought to break the system or work within it. Even John Marsh's chapter on "Labor," which regards the 1912 Industrial Workers of the World-led strike in the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile industry as a milestone in public perceptions of the labor movement, observes that pro-labor momentum was arrested first by the world war, then by the conservative Republican interregnum of 1921-33.

Reaction and retrenchment, then, were as much features of American literature and culture in the 1910s as were revolution and reform. The conundrum of transition in the 1910s was that, at the same time, certain cultural forms might be oriented toward an evermore freely expressive, open, egalitarian, and creative society, even while others might push for a more harshly repressive, closed, hierarchical, and regimented society. A transition, in this view, does not flow in any particular predestined direction but is, rather, a continual cultural contest.

The contest is evident in many of the chapters may be viewed in its most vexing forms in the "Institutions" chapters that think through historical transition as a matter of institutional norms and struggles over institutional control. Accordingly, Cary Nelson's account of "The Academy" registers the 1910s as a moment in the development of the academic faculty in which intellectual freedom could be formulated as an inalienable right — as opposed to an earlier era, when faculty at the majority of institutions needed to subscribe to religious dogma. He further argues, with reference to later academic regimens of specialization, the 1910s offered opportunities for faculty at particular institutions to think and act as units rather than as specialists whose primary connections are to disciplinary colleagues at other institutions. Yet the 1910s was not only the decade in which the American Association of University Professors was chartered, but a decade in which the AAUP's principles could be utterly ignored in practice, and the academy would for decades to come remain largely closed to African Americans, belittling and marginalizing toward women scholars, and viciously biased against Jewish Americans. "The Movies" as described by Keil were surprisingly open toward the artistic leadership of women, but as the cultural footprint of the industry grew, the power of women whether as actors, directors, or producers diminished. And the foremost technical innovator and artistic leader of the era, D. W. Griffith, used the medium not only to glamorize the Southern "lost cause" but the Ku Klux Klan, which consequently reemerged as a national force during the decade.

Sean McCann's chapter on "The Presidency" shows how Woodrow Wilson helped to transform the presidency into a more centralized, more powerful, and at the same time more personal executive office, and thereby established the foundation not only for the genuine and most durable achievements of the Progressive Era but also for the repression of the world war mobilization and

the postwar red scare. It is not difficult, indeed, to draw a line from Woodrow Wilson's strong-armed presidency to the alienation of the 1920s "lost" generation, as McCann does, or to the highly personalized and xenophobic Republican presidential run of Donald Trump, a campaign that seemed a preposterous long shot at the time McCann submitted his chapter for this collection in the fall of 2015, but has since resulted in the Trump presidency. Concurring with McCann about the long-term impact of Wilson's actions in prosecuting the war, my own concluding chapter on "The War" explores the ways that conflicts within American society, simultaneously smothered and exacerbated during the war, rippled outward into the immediate postwar period and beyond. I further assert — contrary to the widespread assumption that the United States was a reluctant war participant — that America's industrial might, its eagerness to become an international power broker, and its increasing appetite for overseas possessions and territories — in short, imperial ambition — primed it for aggressive, no-holds-barred war intervention. And this, too, I suggest with examples, is a matter of literary testimony.

Transitions and the 1910s

The chapters that follow were conceived of as working in concert — "The City" playing off of "The Country," "Modernist Fiction" in counterpoint to "Realist Fiction," and so forth — but they were written as independent pieces, with the authors following out the separate logic of their topics as they saw it, guided by their own particular expertise as scholars. The variety of chapters consequently generated deserves some comment and observation. Readers should not expect to find in this volume an encyclopedia on 1910s literature and culture of the United States. Some contributors, to be sure, offered more of an overview of their topics than did others, and these chapters — the ones on "Little Magazines" and "The Movies" come to mind — offer a fairly comprehensive coverage. Other chapters are oriented more toward describing the most important current research on a given topic, while others concentrate on offering their own newest research. Accordingly, there are some gaps that would be all the more notable were this volume conceived on an encyclopedic model of "coverage." Although the 1910s were a formative period for literary criticism, there is no chapter specifically dedicated to that subject exclusively. Van Wyck Brooks, H. L. Mencken, T S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and other critics instead make appearances in several chapters, sometimes perhaps in unexpected places: Eliot figuring in the chapter on "Eugenics," Mencken emerging as an important correspondent of James Weldon Johnson in "The Color Line." No less surprising is the relatively modest space afforded to important modernist poets who began to publish in the 1910s: Wallace Stevens and William Carlos Williams as well as Pound and Eliot. But then one need look no further than the recently published Cambridge Companion to Modern American Poetry for extensive treatment of these canonical poets and many others. There are several chapters that focus on poetry, to be sure: not only the obvious "Modernist Poetry" and "Popular Verse" but also "The City," "Labor," and "The War" have much to say about poems. But their approach tends more toward an analysis of cultural trends and institutional practices rather than interpretations of the standard poets, and there are some formerly marginal poets that are treated with new depth and seriousness as well: Arturo Giovannitti, Mina Loy, and the W. W. Kellogg Company, to name a few.

Significantly, because in my editorial role I deliberately refrained not only from dictating a particular approach to the theme of "Transitions" but also from policing boundaries between topics, there are notable and, I think, productive overlaps in the analyses offered here: Edith Wharton treated as realist and modernist writer in back-to-back chapters, for example, along with being discussed as a writer of the "Country," "The New Woman," and "Eugenics." Any attempt to assign Wharton to one contributor, and not some other(s), might have produced a farcical scholarly squabble; it would certainly have resulted in a far less robust and multifaceted portrait of the writer. One by-product of the collection's focus on the 1910s should be a consolidation of Wharton's, Willa Cather's, and Gertrude Stein's reputations as major literary figures. The collection also evinces growing interest in Mina Loy as a leading light in the American literary scene and diminishing interest in T. S. Eliot, of all people. Institutionally speaking, The Masses is seen as a major cultural force in "Bohemians" and "Little Magazines," while the Industrial Workers of the World assumes its place as a driver of social transition from the political

Left, featured as the union is in two chapters, "Labor" and "Revolution."

The diversity of the chapters is attributable, I would suggest, to the challenge posed by the "Transitions" project itself. The United States of the early twentieth century, with its population of 100 million more or less, and literary production stimulated by mass markets and class diversity, plainly offers plenty of cultural material to describe and analyze over a ten-year period. In other words, had I insisted upon an absolutely strict definition of the decade (perhaps even to the point of dictating which ten years out of 1910-20 should comprise the decade!), there would have been sufficient material for the 24 chapters included here, and many others as well. But as already noted, very few writers of any prominence have careers that span less than eleven years, and the organic development of literary and cultural movements — effectively, the work of a number of individuals acting collectively, often for longer than a decade — likewise required that contributors consider w0rks falling outside the 1910-20 period. Does one rule out of bounds Gertrude Stein's Three Lives (1909), particularly when it can be read productively as the starting point for a major period in the author's work? Of course, one does not. Even for topics in which the 1910s were very clearly a key transitional period, as in the "Americanism" chapter by Cathy Schlund-Vials, it was often necessary to make reference to events outside the decade markers, for as Schlund-Vials shows, the movement to limit immigration found its political footing in the congressional Dillingham Commission that began in 1907, and culminated in the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924.

Another challenge came when a topic developed for this volume is simultaneously, and s0metimes even obviously, an important topic for some other period — sometimes, indeed, a topic covered in another volume in the Cambridge "Transitions" series. This is clearly true of several topics with organic connections with the 1920s: "Modernist Fiction," for which the careers of the most obvious American exemplars started mostly in the 1920s; "Sports Writing," for which the 1910s are on the doorstep of the "golden era" of the next decade; and "Roots and Popular Music," for which many key innovators and performers were at the height of their powers in the 1910s but, because of limitations in recording technology, did not have their work committed to the durable aural archive until the next decade. In each of these instances — and a number of others, too — the contributors used the challenge of the 1910s focalization in order to investigate in depth a set of authors, texts, and topics that are customarily overlooked or given shorter shrift within these fields. The resulting chapters offer insights that jibe perfectly with the concept of "transition," in ways that make the transitional moments of no less — and possibly more — critical interest than the later moments more commonly associated with a fully formed modernist fiction, sports writing, jazz, or blues.

Finally, for certain topics, authors found that the time frame of a single decade was absolutely insufficient. Sometimes the topic in question required substantial reference to the authors, texts, and ideas of quite another era in order to be explicated within the context of the 1910s: this is certainly the case for "The New Woman," "Realist Fiction," "Popular Verse," and "Manifestos." The chapters on "Institutions," especially, were difficult to confine to the decade. In order to bring into relief changes in the "Academy," Nelson compares that institution with its predecessor in the nineteenth century as well as the contemporary academy. So as to account for the changes that Woodrow Wilson spearheaded in "The Presidency" during his two terms in that office, McCann reaches back to Wilson's academic writings as a political scientist that began in 1885. Particularly in counterpoint with those chapters that are able to trace clear transitions within the compass of a single decade, the chapters that see literary and cultural transitions as unfolding more gradually suggest multiple sides to our understanding of historical transition itself, or perhaps better, our understanding of how different types of transitions unfold in different ways and at different paces.

If it seems at times that history drives ahead like an avalanche, it may be noted as well the layers of precipitation laid down one after another, gradually, on a slope of just such a pitch, are also involved in the process. And then again, extending the figure of speech, historical transition also grinds ahead as a glacier, all the more resistless and powerful for its immense bulk and practically imperceptible progress. But whether from the very narrow focalization upon the 1910s that some of

the contributors have been able to adopt, or the somewhat wider lens that others have found more productive, treating the decade more as an historical snapshot rather than a cultural period, the focus demanded by the task of writing the 1910s Transitions chapters has enabled contributors to think through the historical questions on a human scale. Indeed, by focusing not on a human lifetime but a portion of a lifetime — eleven years — we have been able to investigate a temporal framework that brings historical transition — understanding it, managing it, perhaps even guiding it — into a comprehensible framework.

Because of the diversity of topics canvassed here, we are striving for comprehension not along a single historical trajectory but multiple trajectories, so there will be no key to all mythologies provided here. But a focus on the 1910s, nevertheless, provides a fulcrum around which the challenges of creativity and imitation, mendacity and generosity, community and individuality, may be explored and debated. For this kind of exploration and debate — as you are about to see — the literary and cultural productions of American writers, artists, thinkers, and activists between 1910 and 1920 provide a rich trove of materials.

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American Literature in Transition, 1920-1930 edited by Ichiro Takayoshi [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108418218]

American Literature in Transition, 1920-1930 examines the dynamic interactions between social

and literary fields during the so-called Jazz Age. It situates the era's place in the incremental evolution of American literature throughout the twentieth century. Essays from preeminent critics and historians analyze many overlapping aspects of American letters in the 1920s and re-evaluate an astonishingly diverse group of authors. Expansive in scope and daring in its mixture of eclectic methods, this book extends the most exciting advances made in the last several decades in the fields of modernist studies, ethnic literatures, African-American literature, gender studies, transnational studies, and the history of the book. It examines how the world of literature intersected with other arts, such as cinema, jazz, and theater, and explores the print culture in transition, with a focus on new publishing houses, trends in

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Another Jazz Age? Probably never. I believe that the 1920s were the most dynamic period of all time, an anomaly in the whole history of American letters. You will surely think that such a decadal favoritism just exposes my ignorance of history and theory. By training, the interwar period is my home turf. I know its ins and outs. Admittedly I cannot say the same about other periods. If I do not know as much about, say, the 1850s, another apparently sui generis decade, how can I know that the 19205 were unique? Theory also tells you that such a comparison across time is an exercise in futility. Even if all the qualities I say were special to this decade did indeed apply, how can I ascertain that they were missing from other decades? How do I establish an objective ground for comparison? On top of all this, there is a popular resistance of a psychological nature. This sort of exceptionalism never fails to make people uneasy because it goes against the grains of their native assumption that literature innovates itself in a constant and continuous manner, decade in decade out, century after century. This assumption is probably rooted in their generational chauvinism, the psychological need to feel that some sorts of exciting changes are under way in contemporary literature. They actually live in a time no less interestingly dynamic than the 1850s or the 1920s, so they hope. A century or so from now, a misguided historian of the future might perhaps glamorize their own special era by editing a volume of essays like the present book. I am conscious of all these emotional, practical, and theoretical resistances to the idea that originally inspired me to undertake this project.

And yet, it is not entirely certain to me that they may not founder before the cumulative energy of all the diverse essays collected here.

Don't expect these essays to glamorize. The decade is already encrusted with myriad layers of legends. More projections of the ideal images of the wounded and insecure ego of the current age will serve no one's purposes, and all 0f our contributors know that. What we offer here instead is an intelligent blend of survey, digest, and instigation, each chapter focusing on one aspect of a multipartite phenomenon that was American literary culture of the 1920s. Some chapters single out a cohort of writers, distinguished by shared traits with regard to race, gender, profession, generational position, political ideology, or aesthetic credo. Most of the chapters in Part I fall into this category. Part II consists of chapters documenting major off-stage influences, such as currents of thought, cataclysmic events, and social institutions that shaped the lives and works of the writers discussed in Part I. Some chapters explore relatively short-term impacts of major historical happenings. Chapters 11 and 15 are representative of this kind. Other chapters take up historical and cultural currents that flowed through this decade and explain how they got transfigured en route. Chapter 14 typifies this group. Meanwhile, a cluster of chapters in Part III zeroes in on the interactions and interferences between literature and its sister arts: music, cinema, and theater. While, throughout, the main spotlight will be trained on artists and writers and creators, you must remember that their self-expression was facilitated by supporting actors in the publishing industry. Publishers and editors, to a great extent, determined the form and content of the era's literary productions. These figures as well as the institutions they built deservedly receive limelight in Part IV.

As my mind's eye surveys the contents of this volume, I am again bewildered by the sheer variety of enticing entryways it presents. I am not merely struck that so many separate fields of creative activity coexisted. No less impressive is the variousness of the ways of looking and the variety of analytic frameworks that the rambunctious temper of the era's literary culture calls for. All at once, you must think about a fast-paced evolution of literary conventions, a slow but steady change in morals and mores, a shift in the meaning of culture and civilization, the advent of new media technologies, the rise of modern cities, the maturation of democratic capitalism, new social policies, foreign affairs, aesthetic trends in Europe, and many more. Your understanding of other eras, of course, may benefit from the holistic approach that this volume has adopted, but in dealing with the 1920s, it seems all but indispensable. The elastic syncretism of this volume, then, is not just a post facto conceit of a later historian but also a likeness, a simulacrum of that era's structure.

If you think of literature as your equipment for living — that is, as an efficient machine to formalize, organize, and share a community's emotional reactions to the prevailing conditions of life — then you would agree that the faster and more drastically these conditions change, the faster and more drastically the makeup of this equipment changes.' Such a view is usually called "vulgar materialism" or "technological determinism." It is vulgar because it suggests that gross activities in the material world have the final say in the affairs of such refined things as morals and arts. Many would also say this view is "instrumentalist" or "cognitivist," in the sense that according to this view arts like literature are not concerned with what is true, beautiful, or morally edifying, but with what's cognitively convenient for men and women, both creators and audience. Works of art "work" well when they can offer some plausible, that is, soothing, explanation of the relationship between individuals and their social and natural surroundings, an explanation that these individuals use to minimize confusing and often painful contradictions in their heads as well as in their dealings with the outside world. I am not going to defend or attack this theory in this space. All I can do here is to say that we can find cases both for and against such a categorical way of looking at the relation between arts and history. And if you are interested in defending this sort of cognitivism, you would be hard-pressed to find a more favorable case than American literature in transition during the interwar decades.

As Ann Douglas tells us in Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s, this decade may well have been the first historical period that understood itself decadally. Before that time, Americans would divide their nation's history into

centuries or into antebellum and postbellum, but they did not talk of, say, the 1790s or the 1890s the same way today we routinely "interrogate" the 1960s or the 1980s. It was during the 1920s and in their writings on the nature of their special era that Americans accepted "decade" as the measure of time that most closely matched their sense of how things changed over time. The fact that they found such a small unit of time useful in making sense of their experience is a testament to the accelerated tempo of growth and fragmentation that bewildered proto-modernists (or late Victorians) such as Henry Adams. Adams's autobiography The Education of Henry Adams was first privately circulated in 1907 among his closest friends, but when it was posthumously published in 1918, much younger generations of writers were morbidly fascinated by its ironic prose and its unrelieved pessimism that was foreign to them. Adams discerned two defining tendencies of modernity. One was the tendency of any existing trend to accelerate, be it coal output or electrification of rural areas. The other was the tendency of any existing entities to split into new multiple entities, which in turn promptly imploded to smithereens. All forces, physical or cultural, grew more and more powerful, and all of these forces simultaneously diversified. The most troubling implication of this discovery for this child of the eighteenth century who was born in the nineteenth century, only to dodder into the twentieth century with "his historical neck broken by the sudden irruption of forces totally new" was that in modern times there was no longer such a thing as the education that equipped young men and women for their entire lives. In such a fast-moving, fast-diversifying world, yesterday's capacities turned into today's learned incapacities and yesterday's science turned into today's superstition. This realization, coming in his twilight years, forced the posture of sardonic ineffectuality on Adams, but the much younger writers of the 1920s were determined to turn what paralyzed their parents and grandparents into a motive for invention.

With some very important exceptions such as Adams (all discussed in Chapter 1), most major contributors to the literary culture of the 1920s were born between 1885 and 1900. Let me round these dates off and refer to these writers as "the generation of the 1890s." Two facts immediately emerge. First, in the 1920s, this generation was more or less in its biological twenties. Literature of the 1920s was literally young. Second, the time period when this generation spent their formative years coincided with the time of America's greatest economic growth. By "formative years" I mean some stretch of earlier years of one's life rather than later ones. I use them more or less interchangeably with childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood. By calling these years "formative" I am embedding in the phrase a key, and hopefully not so controversial, assumption: life is path-dependent. Different stages of a life affect the evolving character of that life differently, and experiences in earlier stages count more in this regard than those in later stages. In his 1927 essay on the concept of generation, Karl Mannheim put this point baldly: the "inventory of experience which is absorbed by infiltration from the environment in early youth often becomes the historically oldest stratum of consciousness, which tends to stabilize itself as the natural view of the world." For the generation of the 1890s, their first encounters, all those encounters that would go on to form the deepest stratum of their developing consciousness, were with instances of dynamic destabilization. Some of these instances are well known to us, and many illuminating efforts have been made to understand their infiltrations into modern American literature. The successive waves of immigration that began peaking around the turn of the century and the increasingly polyglot makeup of the population are one such instance (see Chapter 6). Another is the nation's entry into the Great War, which drafted tens of millions of young adult males out of the total population just shy of a hundred millions, subjected them to mental examination and physical training at bases far from their homes, and sent millions of them to the fronts in Europe (see Chapter it). The most destabilizing change, however, has attracted much less attention from literary historians because it is invisible in its overt ubiquity and also because its shaping influence on the sphere of cultural invention seems hard to isolate. This is the change that modernization brought to the nation destined to be the most modernized in the world around the time that the members of the generation of the 1890s were studying their way through their elementary schools, the change that did not result from some decisive battles or radical legislative acts, but was occurring inside homes, in schools, at factories, on

farms, and in the streets — everywhere and every day. This is where you find the hard core of the "formative" experience of the generation of the 1890s.

John P. Marquand is typical. Born in 1893, like Dorothy Parker, he attended Harvard, which counts among its alumni other prominent members of Marquand's generation, such as T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Conrad Aiken, Alain Locke, Robert Sherwood, Sydney Heyward, Thomas Wolfe, E. E. Cummings, John Dos Passos, Countee Cullen, Itzok Isaac Granich (enrolled as a special student for a short period of time), and many more. Marquand cut his teeth on the editorial board of a student magazine, in his case Lampoon (Robert Benchley was a few years ahead). He went to war while still in college and saw some of the bloodiest battles in France, as did Sherwood, John Dos Passos, Archibald McLeish, Harry Crosby, Laurence Stallings, William March, and many others. After discharge he went to New York, as did almost everyone else. He worked for a while as a reporter (like Stevens, Hemingway, Charles Reznikoff, Ben Hecht, and Benchley) and as a copy writer in the burgeoning advertising industry (like Fitzgerald, Hart Crane, Dashiell Hammett, Malcolm Cowley, S. N. Behrman), until his popular short stories and serials in The Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, and other slicks brought to him a measure of financial security and professional renown in the early years of the Jazz Age. Unlike his peers, though, his best work came relatively late in his career. The Late George Apley (1937) is a book about the parents of his generation. To them, this younger generation is an enigma. They have hopes and plans and ample advice for their sons and daughters, but these children never turn out the way they have anticipated. The title character, George Apley, is just one such perennially disappointed parent. In a letter he writes to his son John in 1928, on the occasion of his grandson's birth, Apley, a Boston Brahmin, speculates about what has created a gulf so wide and deep between his and his son's generations:

> Have you ever stopped to think how great this material revolution has been? You have probably not done so any more than I, because we accept the obvious so easily. When I was a boy I went to bed by candlelight. The old candlesticks are still on the shelf by the cellar stairs, and later there were jokes about country bumpkins blowing out the gas. I washed out of a pitcher and a basin. Later there was a single zinc tub for the entire family. I remember how it surprised me even five years ago when a salesman demonstrated to me that it was quite possible to arrange modern plumbing facilities in a place like Pequod Island [the Maine camp site where the family vacations every summer]. The human voice can now reach around the world. It is a simple afternoon's diversion to drive eighty or ninety miles. Our two heroes, Byrd and Lindbergh, — by far the most hopeful, indeed to my mind the only hopeful, human products arising from this chaotic change, — have spanned the Atlantic Ocean .... There is no use reciting any more of the obvious. I have given reason enough why you should all be changed. This material change has made you all materialists, and yet it has rendered your grasp on reality uncertain. It has made you rely on the material gratification of the senses. It has made you worship Mammon and in this new material world everything comes too easily. Heat comes too easily and cold. Money comes too easily. Don't forget that it will go as easily too. Romance comes too easily, and success. We have all grown soft from this ease. Position changes too easily. Values shift elusively. When everything is totaled up we have evolved a fine variety of flushing toilets but not a very good world, if you will excuse the coarseness of the simile.

On sundry issues the father, born in 1866, and the son, born in 1891, fail to see eye to eye. The son moves to New York City, as Marquand and his coevals all did, while the father stays in his mansion on Beacon Hill. The son does not bemoan but simply adapts to the decline of Boston and the rise of New York, while this change only sours and paralyzes the father. Their aesthetic tastes are at odds. The son enjoys new literary sensibilities; the father, while intrigued, cannot stomach them. He reads The Sun Also Rises (1926) and reports to his son: "I am not a prude but I do not like it." The father sees the most fundamental generational gap yawn over the problem of how one responds to change qua change, as opposed to individual instances of change. The generation of the 1860s and the generation of the 1890s both encounter a host of

modern inventions, mundane, "obvious," and yet transformative, that changed American life in their lifetimes. But they experience differently the new phase of modernization where inventions are soon followed by their better and more diversified versions, the age where change and rapid growth become the norm, the obvious. The father is born into the previous era when change and rapid growth were the exception, that is, something shocking and hence not so "obvious." George Apley sincerely believes that his generation is, in essence, no different from the first Apleys who arrived in New England in the early seventeenth century. For the last few generations, the social environment has remained more or less identical, decade in decade out, one tranquil century after another. Skeptics would point out that George Apley is projecting such unbroken continuity on the past, but there are plenty of reasons to be sympathetic to Apley. A man who was born a year after the Civil War's conclusion was able to recognize the life of a man who was born in 1800 as his own, but the generation of the 1890s who grew up with indoor plumbing, gas light (to be replaced by incandescent light in the 1920s), telephone, and automobile would find the world of their grandfathers dark, dirty, and dangerous beyond recognition. George Apley, a figure in whom the main protagonists of the following chapters should find some resemblance to their own parents, belongs to the generation, the only generation, that made the transition from the previous age of stability to the new age of perpetual revolution. And his children formed the first generation born into the era of which "chaotic change" is the defining characteristic.

A "chaotic change" or "incalculable change" of the magnitude that Apley reflects on does not come around so often. In fact, economic historians think that this particular age of change that came as American civilization took off in the late nineteenth century ended around the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, some of them even predict that a wholesale social transformation of that scale and disruptiveness will not be replicated for the foreseeable future. When such an exceptional era of change does come, though, that inculcates in the first generation to be born into it a unique propensity. Its uniqueness is a product of the uniqueness of the condition under which the transmission of cultural heritage occurs from the previous generation to the first generation of the new era.

The ideal case of transmission is the one that involves no loss of heritage. A good example is George Apley's relationship with his ancestors. He fancies that an unbroken chain of precedents and their confirmations connects him to the first Apleys who immigrated to the New World. Meanwhile, the worst that can happen in transmission is a total loss of heritage. Although this kind of cultural death rarely occurs (except when a cultural tribe perishes without a trace or comes under rule of a foreign tribe), some approximation of it happened when the generation of the 1890s entered, year after year, into the existing population. Their fathers first encountered and then lived through the new age of change. Their lives were thoroughly modernized as their sons', and since they retained a memory of what the world was like before, their lives were in fact more disorienting than their offspring's.

All the same, however, a whole body of norms, symbols, and customs that belonged to the preceding generations never abandoned George Apley and his generation. Already well into adulthood, they began to be bothered by evidence of the increasing disjunction between their belief system and the new world that was displacing the old during their lifetimes, but at that point, well past their formative years, it was too late for them to rebel and invent a new code of conduct, a new language of self-expression. And furthermore, it was this traditional belief system, whose obsolescence they were in denial about, that they attempted to pass down to their offspring, through formal education as well as much more effectively through informal means of habituation. The sons and daughters — that is, the generation of the 1890s — absorbed this residual mentality, to some extent. To some extent, because much of the transgenerational cultural transmission occurs unconsciously. Even in the 1920s, the era known for its iconoclasm, the generation of the 1890s kept around itself many taboos it did not know why it respected, many idols it did not know why it worshiped. However, by virtue of the fact that the younger generation was born into the new era and tended to take it to be a natural way of things, it perceived the whole set of established ways of doing and saying things to be unnatural. Thus

began their fresh quest for a fresh system of values and expressions.

What this quest consisted in is hard to generalize. It varied from writer to writer. For many "modernistic" and "bohemian" writers tightly bound up with the idea of the 1920s in our collective memory, this quest entailed formal experiments (the focus of Chapters 3 and 4). As Chapter 2 relates, on the other hand, the best-selling middlebrow authors such as Edna Ferber (born in 1885) found a rich depository of topical materials in the bewildering contradictions, between character and personality, between commercialism and spirituality, which necessitated this quest in the first place. Chapter 23 reminds us that for many risk-taking publishers, editors, and authors, the quest led to legal battles over what was printable. Did some abstract, deep, and sparse structure underlie all these variegated responses? Here is Jean Toomer's answer, formulated in 1929:

> From whatever angle one views modern society and the various forms of contemporary life, the records of flux and swift changes are everywhere evident. Even the attitude which holds that man's fundamental nature has not altered during the past ten thousand years must admit the changes of forms and of modes which have occurred perhaps without precedent and certainly with an ever increasing rapidity during the life period of the now living generations. If the world is viewed through one or more of the various formulated interpretations of this period, or if one's estimate rests upon the comparatively inarticulate records of day to day experience, the results have the common factor of change .... [T]he principles of cohesion and crystallization are being rapidly withdrawn from the materials of old forms, with a consequent break up of these forms, a setting free of these materials, with the possibility that the principles of cohesion and crystallization will recombine the stuff of life and make new forms.

We actually do not know much about what "change" is. Philosophers, from Lucretius to Hegel to Bergson to Gilles Deleuze, thought their most important task was to conceptualize this vexing phenomenon. One moment, one thing happens to be something. Sometime later, that thing has become something else. What happens when something becomes something else? Toomer here wants to understand change in the terms drawn from chemistry: cohesion, crystallization, and recombination. Toomer thinks that the world is made up of atomic entities. They combine, disintegrate, and recombine. In times of slow change, they assume various forms or they sediment in various modes. What you see and handle are these atomic entities as they are fixed in these "forms" and "modes." Think of water. In everyday life, you do not manipulate hydrogen and oxygen. You do not even handle water as an amalgam of so many molecules. You utilize water in its three recognizable and manageable forms: gaseous, liquid, and solid. In abnormal times, however, atomic entities, "materials," are set free from their accustomed forms and modes. These forms and modes that have functioned as vessels to contain sloshy and formless masses of atoms break down, while new vessels are not at hand yet. The age whose "common factor" is change is the age when men and women confront without the mediation of forms and modes raw materials. It is a time when you are dying of thirst in the desert and the world hands you vials of hydrogen and oxygen.

Because this chemical analogy is still an abstract way to think about change, and because life is not, after all, a chemistry experiment, we might do well to find more concrete examples. Take the human body, for instance. The body, unlike actual atoms, comes with recognizable outlines and features. You think you know how to see the body. You think you know what to do with it. Until you encounter a nude body. That is when you realize that, in complex modern society, the naked body is as useless, unmanageable, and even unrecognizable as vials of hydrogen and oxygen are to the traveler in the desert. The body must be formalized one way or another. Its organs, limbs, attires, gestures, postures, and voices must cohere, combine, and crystalize into some functional, recognizable, meaning-bearing shape.

It shows that the modern era raw materials spilt out older forms and modes, suspended temporarily in all-dissolving solution. Given the magnitude of change conveyed, it is hard to think that Millay's looks resulted from some modification to an array of rules of crystallization, cohesion, and combination that resulted in Wharton's self-presentation. Rather, as Toomer suggested in 1929,

what happened was as follows. During their formative years, Millay and her cohort witnessed the old form of the body of the authoress come apart. This first generation was left with miscellaneous and meaningless organs without the body. Millay's picture shows her trying a new form on for size and comfort, one of the many emerging forms into which she thought she could shoehorn all the miscellany of raw, shapeless body parts.

That she was still experimenting because she did not yet have the one dominant form of the female body at her disposal is evidenced in the following sonnet, taken from her trend-setting book, A Few Figs from Thistles (1920):

> I think I should have loved you presently,
> And given in earnest words I flung in jest;
> And lifted honest eyes for you to see,
> And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;
> And all my pretty follies flung aside
> That won you to me, and beneath your gaze,
> Naked of reticence and shorn of pride,
> Spread like a chart my little wicked ways.
> I, that had been to you, had you remained,
> But one more waking from a recurrent dream,
> Cherish no less the certain stakes I gained,
> And walk your memory's halls, austere, supreme,
> A ghost in marble of a girl you knew
> Who would have loved you in a day or two.

Let us be clear about the meaning of "love" here. Someone like Henry Miller (a Brooklyn native just a year senior of Millay) would have written without hesitation "I think I should have fucked you presently." "Love" in the sense of "have sex with" was, of course, a Victorian euphemism. It belonged to the kind of words Dreiser's nubile heroines from the countryside used in their furtive missives to their rapacious suitors. In this poem, though, one gathers that Millay was not trying to sugarcoat anything, either for her own benefit or her audience's. By "love," she transparently means "have sex," but she does not say it, not primarily because that would have made her poem unprintable (see Chapter 23) but because she wants to make most iconic female author of George Apley's generation. The second picture shows a Jazz Age idol, Edna St. Vincent Millay, born in 1892. This pairing visualizes the point I have made about the unprecedented speed of change in the new era into which the generation of the 1890s was born. Women today still dress like Millay, but no woman today dresses like Wharton. Things dramatically changed between Wharton and Millay, but things barely changed between Millay and us. The drastic contrast between the two pictures also usefully illuminates Toomer's point about how in the a statement: I am telling a lie that I know everyone knows is a lie. The Victorians taught Millay and her generation that polite words could cover up gross realities of life ("birth, and copulation, and death," in Eliot's brutal formulation), In the age of incalculable change, however, these verbal fig leaves were wearing thin quickly, and formless materials were showing through. At a historical juncture like this one, adhering to euphemisms gave Millay both a license to mock them openly and a perfect alibi.

The octave depicts what the body does when it engages in the act of love. Millay's depiction does not survey the body; in her daydream, its members and organs flicker through. Her words are flung in earnest. Her honest eyes are lifted. Her cheek and breast are exposed. Her wicked ways spread beneath your gaze. These body parts, like Toomer's materials freed up from forms, appear incongruent, asunder from one another. But you also see these raw materials, in Millay's hands, crystalize into a form. All these exposed body parts are contained in the eight-line long sentence, draped over so many enjambments. Perfectly grammatical, it scans almost too predictably. After the many debates over "free verse" in the 1910s, the connotation of the sonnet form in 1920 was fairly unequivocal. Like the euphemism of "love," the sonnet signified the bygone era, a throwback to the generation of the 1860s. Unlike in the case of "love," however, I do not detect any polemical intention on Millay's part to make a statement about her superiority to the dry husks of all the dead rules of prosody. On the contrary, Millay appears to revel in the sonnet's power to formalize the loquacious ("naked of reticence") and shameless ("shorn of pride") female body charged with the desire for sex. Also, these body parts, even when picked up individually, are not deformed and broken up beyond recognition. All of them are stamped with a proper mixture of coyness and provocation. The attitude common to all these

members is the one of eager and mischievous submission, and it is important to note that this is a rather incongruently traditional way to attitudinize the body of the so-called New Woman supposedly burning her candle at both ends. All things considered, the prosodic rules and the rather traditional diction combine to hold in check the body's tendency to dissolve into a meaningless mess of flesh, bones, sinews, and ligatures.

The sestet complicates Millay's (or her persona's) relationship to her body, held in abeyance between form and formlessness. In a sort of surprise move, she tells "you" that all along she was gambling. She wanted to have sex with "you," but she also wanted to derive satisfaction from dangling her body in front of you. Males do all sorts of comic things when led on with the promise of sex. As it turned out, she admits, she overplayed her hand, and her man, frustrated, walked away. She got her amusement out of teasing, but she lost the chance to offer her body in the way described in the octave. She did not lose her bet entirely, nevertheless. She had "the certain stakes" in this game. Note the definite article: she was going to wring a prize out of this battle of the sexes no matter what the outcome. For even if she could not achieve a carnal pleasure, she got the satisfaction of imagining that the jilted man will go on remembering her body, on which he could not lay his hands, as an austere and supreme ghost in marble of a girl he knew. The contrast between the body in the octave and the body in the sestet is striking. The first body almost comes unhinged, only to have its parts recrystalize by reference to the conventions of poetry writing. This suggestion of potential liquidation is entirely absent from the second body. Hewn out of marble, it is solid. Walking austere and supreme, it is whole. The sonnet begins with the poet's exploration of the new and barely recombined female body ready to "love" in a day or two, but after she fails to inhabit this body due to a combination of overconfidence and self-sabotage, she reverts to the older and more manageable form that means whiteness, wholeness, and wholesomeness. She is still shackled to the myth of sexual depletion, the idea that sex leaves women depleted because it is a one-way transaction where women give and men take, a fear Maxwell Bodenheim put at the center of his new-woman potboiler Replenishing Jessica (1925), At an abstract level, the level where Toomer thought about social change, then, the conceptual drama of Millay's sonnet can be said to arise out of the clash and compromise among the contradictory forces toward formlessness and crystallization. Look, again, at Millay's picture above. In that assemblage of an exposed neck, bobbed hair, rolled up cuffs, a raised left knee, a cigarette, and downcast eyes, you will notice the same drama of crosscutting forces, reaching equilibrium in that frozen instant.

Millay's sartorial and physiological recrystallization is worth analyzing at length because in its stark visibility it shows forth something much less discernible to our eye: all sorts of new linguistic equilibrium that the writers of the 1920s had to strike. As with "the English of England ... in the days of its great Elizabethan growth," the American English in Millay's days was "in the lustiest possible being." Henry L. Mencken, from whom, Jake Barnes of The Sun Also Rises (1926) complained, "so many men get their likes and dislikes," first drew this Elizabethan parallel in The American Language (1923; third edition). As Sarah Churchwell shows in her afterword, this was not just another Menckenian hyperbole." Daily, writers, loose-footed and direct, violated precious and pedantic rules, and the American people, with their democratic non-judgmentalism (any one's speech is as good as any others'), eagerly absorbed racy novelties. One important aspect of this "gipsy tendency" of the American language of the 1920s, you may want to take a cue from Millay's sartorial example and regard as casualization. The generation of the 1890s and its allies transfigured their national language as it was used for literary purposes, and the changes they effected were all so many differing solutions to one and the same problem: how to unlimber their national language from its ties to the bo0k English — precious, pedantic, oratorical, phlegmatic, and British. As a consequence of these changes, something firm softened, something knotted up slackened, something thick thinned, something heavy lightened, and something dense dispersed. When compared with the writings of the previous generations, the new composition of the new era seems to work very hard to talk casual.

It was Gertrude Stein, the elder shaman for the children born in the 1890s, who characteristically gave the most quotable formulation to this

qualitative change in writing, nearly undetectable in its pervasiveness:

> A young french boy he is a red-haired descendant of the niece of Madam Recamier went to America for two weeks most unexpectedly and I said to him what did you notice most over there. Well he said at first they are not as different from us frenchmen as I expected them to be and then I did see that they are that they were different. And what, said I, well he said, when a train was going by at a terrific pace and we waved a hat the engine driver could make a bell quite carelessly go ting ting ting, the way anybody playing at a thing could do, it was not if you know what I mean professional he said. Perhaps you do see the connection with that and my sentences that had no longer the balance of sentences because they were not the parts of a paragraph nor were they a paragraph but they had made in so far as they had come to be so long and with the balance of their own that they had they had become something that was a whole thing and in so being they had a balance which was the balance of a space completely not filled but created by something moving as moving is not as moving should be. As I said Henry James in his later writing had had a dim feeling that this was what he knew he should do.

The essay "Poetry and Grammar" (1935), from which this passage is taken, was written well after the roaring twenties had crashed and burned. It was delivered during her lecture tour in the United States that capitalized on the recent success of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas (1933). As I read it, though, Stein was there expanding on the notion of "the contemporary composition" that she broached ten years before in her talk at Oxford, entitled "Composition as Explanation" (1925). In this earlier talk, Stein retraced her creative journey of the last two decades. When she started out around the turn of the century, she wanted her writing to unfold in a "continuous present." Recall the flat, even, broken-Victrola rhythm of "Melanctha" (1905). Then, she got interested in "using everything" in her works. Picture the list-like organization of Tender Buttons (1914). In this phase, she was concerned with showing in her composition how everything was alike and simply different at the same time. The indifferent variety of all things perceptible was what she wanted to display in her composition. And then the Great War came. The war changed many things irrevocably for Americans as well as for the world at large. Chapter II in the present volume explains, among others, the imprint that mass mobilization left on the contours of postwar fiction. For Stein, the war's most important consequence was the removal of the time lag between the way people intuitively saw their lives and the sort of experimental composition she had written up to that point. Until the advent of the total war in August 1914, her writing was out there while people lived here. Her writing was ahead of its time. That meant it was annoying and irritating to people. But the war finally brought the world up-to-date, and people had come around. Now they saw beauty in her composition. Now that the modern composition of her kind had become a classic, something natural and familiar and perhaps even pleasing, Stein wanted to push the frontier of composition farther out so as to outdistance the natural world again. She wanted to write something so stimulating that people would want to outlaw it. Stein concluded her talk telling her audience that she found her new challenge in the handling of "the time-sense in the composition." Words and things and everything in between must be distributed or equilibrated properly. If she failed in this, her composition would "go dead" as soon as it was written, so thinking about the time-sense in her composition was now the most troublesome aspect of her creative life. Getting this right involved a lot of emotions: a fear, a doubt, a judgment, a conviction.

Stein did not elaborate on what she meant by "distribution" and "equilibration," until she returned to this topic a decade later in the above passage about the French boy's trip to the United States. Her term had changed to "balance," but the object of her preoccupation remained the same: "the time-sense in the composition." Her composition found a new equilibrium in the 1920s, and she appears to have been proud of it. This new compositional rhythm was first of all modern or contemporary, so much so that Henry James knew this was how he should write, but he could not, and he was dimly aware of his inadequacy! Secondly, it was distinctively American, another jab, though most likely unintended, at James, who had naturalized as British citizen during the Great War. Only an

American writer could make her bell, or her typewriter if you like, so carelessly go ting, ting, ting. And finally, this new balance in the most up-to-date kind of contemporary composition "was not if you know what I mean professional." Unprofessional, exactly the way Millay sits in that picture, one knee up, her neck exposed, with a cigarette between her lips.

Take any writers randomly from the chapters collected in this volume and compare them. Edna Ferber (Chapters 2 and 5) side-by-side with Ernest Hemingway (Chapter 4). John Doss Passos (Chapter11) side-by-side with Waldo Frank (Chapter 7). Heywood Broun (Chapter 10) side-by-side with Anzia Yezierska (Chapter 6). You are sure to be struck more by incongruity than by harmony. However, try, now, to identify passages that bear their hallmarks, those passages that seem to be stuck in the peculiar milieu of the 1920s. And try, furthermore, to listen to, or feel, the rhythms spelt into the texture of these passages. Then, you will hear the echoes of ting ting ting. The Jazz Age composition, lowbrow or highbrow, prose or verse, male authored or female authored, black or white, had a decidedly unprofessional cadence. "Unprofessional" here, following Stein's usage, does not mean incompetent or unskilled. To let your bell of composition go so carelessly ting ting ting takes a lot of confidence, which is hard to fake. Of course, an unprofessional piece of composition could result from that juvenile mixture of arrogance, laziness, and naughtiness. You are a young, aspiring writer, and even before you have published anything, you grow tired of following the accepted norms of writing, all the mannerisms that can telegraph the writer's worthiness as writer. But, if you want to create a truly unprofessional piece of composition in Stein's sense, then, your disavowal of professional rules must be still followed by a trying spell of learning. This time, your learning becomes a trial not because the requisite skills to be attained are difficult but because you do not know what to learn. You are not scaling the Alps of artistic virtuosity or professional fluency. You have to build your own new mountain before you get to conquer it. When Langston Hughes wrote his manifesto "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1927), his mountain was not some neat metaphor for race prejudice he had to overcome. He was telling his readers that he loved being tested by the task of building a new mountain worthy of climbing. Almost always, you can bet, behind the best compositions coming out of the 19205 was their creators' taste for the same sort of avoidable risks.

Of this new, postwar composition, Stein said that it "had a balance which was the balance of a space completely not filled but created by something moving as moving is not as moving should be." It is very well said; all I can do is have this abstract remark intuitionally filled with observable examples. My first example comes from Red Harvest (1929) by Dashiell Hammett (born in 1894), a revised version of his serial for Black Mask (see Chapter 22). The Continental Op receives a telephone call from a lawyer, who, having learned that the Op is suspected of a murder, intends to offer his services. Upon showing up at his office, the Op is greeted with this "oratorical" composition:

> "I may say, in all justice, that you will find it the invariable part of sound judgment to follow the dictates of my counsel in all cases. I may say this, my dear sir, without false modesty, appreciating with both fitting humility and a deep sense of true and lasting values, my responsibilities as well as my prerogatives as a — and why should I stoop to conceal the fact that there are those who feel justified in preferring to substitute the definite article for the indefinite? — recognized and accepted leader of the bar in this thriving state."

This is not subtle, but the following dialogue, between the Continental Op and his sidekick, should put to rest any doubt what of the lawyer's speech Hammett finds so ludicrous. The Op approaches his colleague who has been staking out a building and asks:

> "What's doing?"
> "Spot two. Out three-thirty, office to Willsson's. Mickey. Five. Home.
> Busy. Kept plant. Off three, seven. Nothing yet."

Compare the two passages with regard to the ratio of information to space. The lawyer's oratory is empty of information. He is saying things for the sake of saying. He is being oratorical, or performative, as we say today (but Churchill in her coda reminds us that even "performative" was a Jazz Age coinage). Here the medium is the message. Or to be more precise, the speaker's

professional command of his medium is the message. In certain occupations, the most important qualification is nothing more or less than your ability to master their professional dialects. Law is one of them. Academia is another. Hammett's implied polemic here is that the previous generations of authors have treated literature as one such occupation. The emptiness of the lawyer's speech is there juxtaposed with a sense of fullness. The lawyer utters a lot of words, which fill up the listener, if not with information then with their soundings. The space of communication, in this regard, is completely filled. Try to add more words to the lawyer's speech. You will realize quickly that Hammett made it almost impossible for you to enlarge on what the lawyer says. You cannot distend it any further, even by a word, which means it is filled to the limit. All this is turned upside down in the dialogue, if that is what it is, between the two gumshoes. It brims with information. Here swift transmission of facts and thoughts is the priority. As for the vessels of information, i.e., words, the fewer used, the better. These two men spit out severely abbreviated jargons from the side of their mouths as though they were scummy bits of cud; were it possible, they would certainly prefer to use telepathy. The informational fullness of the dialogue is accompanied by the tensile sparseness, or "the balance of the space completely not filled," of the medium. Despite the fact that so much is conveyed, these lines feel porous, being made up of as many ellipses as there are words. What is left out is what gets the lawyer's speech moving: the class of words used to manipulate the psychological relationship between the speaker and the listener. Also left out is an elaborate rendering of the logical structure of a statement. If the rhetorician's anxiousness to manipulate is absent, so is grammar. For these reasons, it is tempting, and easy, to add words to this dialogue, making explicit the nature of the connection between certain phrases here, emotionalizing certain phrases by troping them there, until the dialogue starts moving as moving should be. Stein, without a doubt, would have found the detectives' language more contemporary, more to her liking. Why not? Dorothy Parker thought, "Dashiell Hammett is as American as a sawed-off shotgun" — lighter in weight, compact in profile, easy to maneuver, lethal because casual, a menace to law and order.' Five years after the publication of Red Harvest, the National Firearms Act of 1934 mandated a special registration for this American weapon.

Now, consider another example, taken from Ezra Pound's The Cantos. Here are the opening lines of canto IV:

> Palace in smoky light,
> Troy but a heap of smouldering boundary stones,
> ANAXIFORMINGES! Aurunculeia!
> Hear me. Cadmus of Golden Prows!

This particular canto's place in Pound's oeuvre is comparable to that of Red Harvest in Hammett's. Canto IV was pivotal in the genesis of the whole poem. It was first drafted in or about 1919. Up to that point, Pound's style — his persona, syntax, even diction — wobbled and flopped in a new direction with every new canto. He had yet to find his footing, his major form, for his "poem of some length." But that period of trials and errors came to an end with this canto, more or less. The method of direct and fragmentary presentation, shown in this example, would evolve, absorbing new themes and new techniques, over the course of the next four decades, but Pound would never completely retire it. Seen one after another, then, it becomes apparent that Pound's breakthrough in poetics and Hammett's breakthrough in detective fiction were two independent results of the same quest for the truly contemporary composition. We know that, in an era of rapid change, it often so happens that several inventors, far from and unknown to each other, independently make the same discovery around the same time. Hence, the high incidence of patent dispute, as in the case of radio. The fitting model for the literary innovators of the 1920s might as well be found in modern industry — Marconi, Tesla, Edison, the Lumière brothers.

In place of the gumshoes shadowing killers, bootleggers, and corrupt cops, in this canto we overhear a modern poet aching for the age of heroes and gods, the age when mortals' affairs, because life held out the possibility of tragedy and apotheosis, mattered to the gods on top of Olympus. But don't let this surface contrast mislead you. In Pound and Hammett, the balance and movement of their composition result from the same deliberate assault on rhetoric. You may hear in your mind's ear all sorts of intonation, all sorts except the purls of the verbal manipulator, about to work on your mind, clearing his throat. You may

picture in your inner eye the author in all sorts of declamatory postures, all sorts except that of the influencer kneading his hands together in gleeful anticipation. Phrases, cut out with a sharp implement, retaining no torn connective tissues that may point you to the original contexts, are casually and unprofessionally thrown about. The artist does not seem desperate to impress you with his proficiency, with his good standing in a professional guild — a racket — that actually adds no value to life.

Instead of some professional services, which you probably do not even need, what Pound insists on giving you is a dance, a song, a proof that "canto" means "I sing." Listen again carefully to the cadence that is not if you know what I mean professional:

> Ting ta ta Ting ta Ting
> Ting ta ta Ting ta Ting ta ta Ting ta Ting
> Ting ta ta Ting ta Ting ta Ting ta Ting
> Ting Ting Ting ta ta Ting ta Ting

The recurring dactyls and trochees give rise to a loose network of aural correspondences that hovers over fractured allusions. This network is loose, because it does not sound as though it fits within externally imposed boundaries without a remainder; you do not sense that Pound is here striving to actualize a preordained form. Consequently, you hear something moving as moving is, not as moving should be. This verse can move as moving is, not as moving should be, because Pound wants it to mean what it says as much as possible. If Pound does not care how much this song can mean, the verse can move as moving should. But when Pound says and means "ANAXIFORMINGES!" ("the lords over the phorminx"), how many other ways are there to mean the same thing and make the song move in accordance with a given pattern? So, Pound must accept the way "ANAXIFORMINGES!" moves, give up on the effort to make it move as moving should, and score some sort of overall music that can move with it. It, of course, does not follow that sense always trumps melody and rhythm. Nonsense, to the extent it helps the overall music, can be incorporated into the song. Musically, "of Golden Prows" is perfect. It has exactly the right cadence. But no one has been able to identify this epithet. Pound probably made it up.

It is not unfair to other writers to say that more deeply than anyone else in his generation (the oldest in the generation of the 1890s, he was born in 1885) Pound understood the literary conventions of the times preceding his parents' and grandparents' generations. Thanks to his study of archaic forms like Provençal and Old English poetry, Pound knew that the poetic forms his parents and grandparents bequeathed to him had stopped being poetic or formal. No longer poetic because they were incapable of expressing emotions and convictions. No longer formal because they evoked no music to the modern ear. In the age of incalculable change, traditional poetic forms seemed to dissolve into formlessness, a dissolution that was happening at musical and expressive planes simultaneously. We see Pound's attempt at recrystallization in the major form of The Cantos. In his new equilibrium, we see meaning and music recombine again, and the meaning of the new meaning and the sound of the new music did not look or sound like what they superseded any more than the detectives in the mean streets spoke like the lawyers in their seedy offices. To appreciate the magnitude of the success of writers like Pound, Hammett, and Stein, you have to attend to your response to their works and to what sort of writing was accepted as "literature" before them. Today, we are so used to what Pound made happen that we have a hard time hearing music in and getting passions out of poetry written before Pound. Just as today no one dresses like Wharton and everyone dresses more or less like Millay, so too does today's poets work with the new modes and forms that Pound and his associates recrystallized during this transitional period.

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It bears emphasizing that the search for a balance between formlessness and cohesion was a unique task devolving chiefly on the shoulders of the members of the first generation in the new era, such as Toomer, Millay, Hammett, and Pound. The last generation of the previous era did not feel the urgent need for it. They intuited that old forms were ceasing to keep bare materials of life crystalized and manageable, but in the main, they wanted to remain in denial. They resembled those who belatedly realize that their wardrobe looks like ridiculous period costumes. Having missed the appropriate age window to discard them and

clothe themselves in a new style, they wait to die in their fusty garments. After all, those old wrappings still manage to cover their aging bodies. The second generation in the new era, those born roughly between 1900 and 1915, was similarly spared the task of finding a new equilibrium. By the time they started expressing themselves, the hardest part of the labor had been already done by the first generation. The younger ones, those who would make their debut in the 1930s and 1940s, already had at their disposal a new tradition. Their principal task was to tweak.

Read in this light, one of my favorite scenes in Fitzgerald's sad book, Tender Is the Night (1934), looks like a poignant dramatization of something more than a ritual of demographic turnover. After many years in Europe, the book's hero, Dr. Richard Diver (born in 1891), returns to Buffalo, NY to arrange his father's funeral. His father, a minister, was an anachronism, a hangover from the bygone era, one of those people about whom it is said with smug finality: "very much the gentleman, but not much get-up-and-go about him." He was brought up in the now defunct tradition that ingrained in him the belief that "nothing could be superior to 'good instincts,' honor, courtesy, and courage." Knowing this to be his last visit to his hometown, Diver kneels down in the cemetery, feels the presence of all the dead and buried, and bids his farewell:

> "Good-by, my father — good-by, all my fathers."

In a large measure, American literature of the 1920s, too, was a collective goodbye to the older generations whose "good instincts" their sons and

daughters felt they had to give up in order to make room for new instincts better suited to their ruder times.

American Literature in Transition, 1930-1940 by Ichiro Takayoshi [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108429382]

American Literature in Transition, 1930-1940 by Ichiro Takayoshi [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108429382] review pending

American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950 edited by Christopher Vials [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107143319]

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged as the dominant imperial power, and in US popular memory, the Second World War is remembered more vividly than the American Revolution. American Literature in Transition, 1940-1950 provides crucial contexts for interpreting the literature of this period. Essays from scholars in literature, history, art history, ethnic studies, and American studies show how writers intervened in the global struggles of the decade: the Second World War, the Cold War, emerging movements over racial justice, gender and sexuality, labor, and de-colonization. One recurrent motif is the centrality of the political impulse in art and culture. Artists and writers participated widely in left and liberal social movements that fundamentally transformed the terms of social life in the twentieth century, not by advocating specific legislation, but by changing underlying cultural values. This book addresses all the political impulses fueling art and literature at the time, as well as the development of new forms and media, from modernism and noir to radio and the paperback.

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On May 8, 1945, at 7:00 P.M. Pacific time, CBS radio aired a radio poem by Norman Corwin to mark the surrender of Nazi Germany earlier that day. Titled "On a Note of Triumph," it was a full hour in length, read by a narrator (Martin Gable) whose voice threaded lines of verse between musical numbers, studio sound effects, a score by Bernard Herrmann, and an ensemble of other voices representing the common people. Labeled "the most important broadcast of 1945" by a national poll of radio editors,' it began this way:

> So they've given up. They're finally done in and the rat is dead in an alley back of the Wilhelmstrasse. Take a bow, GI. Take a bow, little guy. The superman of tomorrow lies dead at the feet of you common men of this afternoon ... All the way from Newburyport to Vladivostok, you had what it took and you gave it, and each of you has a hunk of rainbow round your helmet. It seems like free men have done it again!

The formal qualities of "On a Note of Triumph" bear witness to a host of forgotten turns in US culture at the very center of this critical decade. Its status as a "radio poem," a genre popularized by Corwin, Orson Welles, and others through shows like The Columbia Workshop and Mercury Theatre on the Air, speaks to the cultural possibilities for a democratic art that had been opened, in part, by new mass media of the era. Equally significant was Corwin's self-conscious inspiration from Walt Whitman. The poem's exaltation of "the common men of this afternoon," in unadorned lines of verse accessible to a mass audience, indexes a populist aesthetic that formed the "other" of the New Criticism, the bedrock of twentieth-century English departments in the United States, which was emergent in this same decade. Fueled by the New Criticism, several generations of scholars would disavow the aesthetic of "On a Note of Triumph" in favor of the high modernist project embodied, in the United States, by figures such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Wallace Stevens.

The form and content of "On a Note of Triumph" also signal a political phenomenon far more visible in the public sphere of the 1940s than high modernist poetics. I refer here to the politics of the "Popular Front," Michael Denning's shorthand for the left-oriented political mass movements of the era.' In line with these politics, Corwin's work carried an internationalism that was quite popular at the time: his prototypical GI hails "from Newburyport to Vladivostok" and later in the broadcast identifies himself as "a private first class in the army of one of the United Nations." Moreover, the final part of the piece was didactically structured around "the lessons" that the listeners were to have learned from the war. As was typical of Popular Front sensibilities, these lessons required a leveling of the social hierarchies that the fascists had sought to etch in stone. For example, various voices shout, "We've learned that

women can work and fight as well as look pretty and cook!," "We've learned that the Cassandra and the Jew were right, and that the Cliveden set [pro-German aristocrats] was wrong," and "We've learned that those more concerned with saving the world from communism usually turn out making it safer for fascism!" However, to contemporary listeners cognizant of the imminent Cold War, some of the "lessons" ring with a more imperious tone too. One American voice shouts, "We've learned that our East Coast is the West Bank of the Rhine, and the defenses of Portland begin in Shanghai." Corwin clearly intended this line to be read within the context of his broader internationalism, but the ambiguities over the US role in global affairs raised by his words are also a telling marker of this critical juncture.

As a cultural artifact, "On a Note of Triumph" foregrounds many of the recurrent themes of this volume. Its populist sensibilities illustrate the political turn behind so much of the art and literature of the decade, one in which the political left enjoyed an unprecedented degree of influence on public affairs. As such, its gestures toward inclusivity — its uneven attempt to expand the notion of who comprises "the people" — suggest a shifting social terrain on which new publics were struggling for a place in the sun. Corwin's radio poem also signals the impact of new media and new institutions that vastly expanded the potential audiences for middlebrow and high culture and, in so doing, redefined the contours of the literary. Finally, "On a Note of Triumph" indexes the ways in which US cultural production in the 1940s intervened, in highly visible ways, to sketch a new global sensibility within a rapidly changing world order, and with outcomes far more uncertain than many scholars have assumed. Be that as it may, Corwin's career embodied the tragic foreclosure of radical possibility as the official logic of the US state entered the Cold War. At the beginning of the decade, he was celebrated as the de facto poet laureate of American internationalism; at its end, this very same internationalism triggered scrutiny by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and landed him on the blacklist of the anticommunist publication Red Channels. Moreover, the Victory in Europe Day he celebrated in "On a Note of Triumph" was followed three months later by a second ceasefire with more ominous implications. Truman enabled Victory in Japan Day through two atomic explosions in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that killed more than 100,000 people. As Christian Appy argues in this collection, these bombings signaled the continuity of US-led racial violence and world-ordering ambitions, and on a far grander scale, into the postwar period.

A single cultural artifact, however, cannot be expected to fully register the enormity of changes afoot in its historical moment. Indeed, these changes were legion in 1945. The decade of the 1940s was not merely one of transition, but a period of epochal upheaval. Indeed, the year 1945 denotes not only the middle of a decade but also, without hyperbole, the beginning of a whole new era in world history. The war that formally concluded on September 2, 1945, with approximately 60 million dead would be the last time (to date) that the major world powers settled their grievances with one another through military means, though organized violence would continue in new arenas. In the aftermath of the twentieth century's greatest bloodletting, the United States would emerge as the preponderant imperial power, yet would do so within the context of a decolonizing planet in which a "third world" was rapidly changing the rules of world hegemony. Along with its primary rivals, the S0viet Union and China, it would attempt to court the allegiances of newly enfranchised peoples across Africa and Asia, and the contours of this rivalry, dubbed a "Cold War" by Bernard Baruch in 1947, were already beginning to take shape before Corwin's GIs had even shipped home.

In its broadest outlines, all of this is well known. In US popular memory the details of World War II are far more familiar than the specifics of the American Revolution. As a result of countless twenty-first-century documentaries and narrative films restaging the conflict, the year 1941 has in many ways become the new 1776 to many Americans. Stock images of the Cold War — of Khrushchev and Kennedy, of Sputnik and the Apollo Missions, of McCarthyite witch hunts and family fallout shelters — are also readily accessible to most Americans. Yet this culture-industry—fueled memory boom has generally obscured the precise nature of the shifts that transpired in the 1940s: their causes, their actors, their signature events, their political implications, and, perhaps most importantly, the roads not taken. For most Americans, the true significance of the mid-

twentieth century is something that remains hidden in the light.

Over the past few decades, American studies scholarship has engaged this popular interest in the period by unearthing sites banished from cultural memory while attempting to shift the narratives in which familiar historical landmarks are ensconced. As this scholarship has labored to show, the 1940s were a time when anticolonial movements abroad and the dislocations of war helped gave rise to the modern civil rights movement; when the institutionalization of the New Deal through Keynesian economic planning dramatically increased the standard of living, equalized incomes, and created a truly mass consumer culture; when the demographic reshufflings of wartime created an unprecedented emergence of gay and lesbian publics; when transformations in radio and film, the introduction of the paperback book, and unprecedented state funding of culture were reshaping the United States as an "imagined community"; and when the political left was arguably at its highest point in institutional influence, a political fact that created uncertainties for the postwar direction of the United States in world affairs.

Such shifts are precisely what the chapters in this volume aim to show. American Literature in Transition: 1940-1950 brings together scholars in literature, history, art history, film studies, American studies, ethnic studies, and human rights. It aims to provide academics, cultural critics, and any student of the American past with a sense of the global and ever-shifting historical dynamics that produced the cultural work of the 1940s. As the chapters in this collection illustrate, a crucial context to consider here is the political impulse fueling the creation of art and culture in this decade. The 1930s and 1940s were a time when US artists and writers participated widely in international left and liberal social movements that fundamentally transformed the terms of American social life in the twentieth century, chiefly by challenging the color line, supporting the labor movement and radical parties, and facilitating the demographic shift to a sizable middle class. Following Michael Denning's lead, scholars have retroactively termed these movements "the Popular Front." The term originated with the Soviet-dominated Communist International, which in 1935 called for a nonsectarian left-liberal coalition to combat the rising influence of fascism. This movement assumed a life of its own in each national arena. American studies scholars extended the term from its Soviet origins, using it as a moniker for a set of left and liberal social movements of the 1930s and 1940s organized around antifascism, antiracism, and economic leveling. This left upsurge was the force from below that enabled Franklin Roosevelt and the US Congress to pass the signature legislation of the expansive and longlasting "Second New Deal." It so relentlessly diffused its message throughout the country that a Fortune magazine poll in 1942 found that 25 percent of Americans "favored socialism" while another 35 percent "had an open mind about it."

Ironically, this political impulse was illegible to literary academics through most of the twentieth century, largely until the work of Barbara Foley, Michael Denning, and Alan Wald prompted a vast project of recovery among a host of scholars. Some of these scholars are represented in this volume, including Benjamin Balthaser, Floyd Cheung, Sarah Ehlers, Aaron Lecklider, Julia Mickenberg, Bill Mullen, James Smethurst, Judith Smith, Alan Wald, and me. However, literary, critics in the second half of the twentieth century overcame the baggage of New Criticism far too infrequently, reducing US literary output from the 1920s to the 1940s to scattered works of high modernism. Yet, as the chapters in this collection show, cultural producers in these years participated in social movements not simply by using their work to "soap box" for specific legislation or topical events, but to change underlying values in the terrain of culture — the terrain where, following Raymond Williams, ideology is lived and experienced. The degree to which they succeeded and failed, over short-term and long-term arcs, will be a thread uniting many of the chapters across all three parts of the volume.

But the insurgent political impulse in arts and letters is not the whole story of US literary history in the period. To frame this history as broadly as possible, this collection is divided into three parts: "The United States in the World," "Emergent Publics," and "Media and Genre." Part I, "The United States in the World," comprises chapters detailing how American writers — and the broader public sphere in which they operated — shaped new global imaginaries within the United States.

Writers used their work to fashion and at other times to resist official imperatives that shifted rapidly from the exigencies of World War II to the Cold War. In highlighting this process, these essays challenge the twenty-first- century American national narrative of "the Greatest Generation," as well as the earlier New Left historiography that first contested "the Good War" by reconsidering it as just another US imperial venture. They also add new perspectives to the historiography that question the inevitability of American rivalry with the Soviet Union. In emphasizing how global currents and so-called foreign policy matters affected US culture "at home," they participate in a transnational turn in American studies and American literary studies that has collapsed the distance between the foreign and the domestic. Such moves, however, are not limited to the chapters in this part.

Part II, "Emergent Publics," focuses on emergent voices and newly visible bodies in the US public sphere in the 1940s. A convergence of social forces created spaces in the civic area for working women, gays and lesbians, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Asian Americans to articulate emergent selfhoods to a degree unknown in prior decades. Chief among these social forces was the political organizing and cultural work from the margins. The historiography of the "long civil rights movement," for instance, dates the real beginnings of the modern US black freedom struggle to the 1930s and 1940s; historian Martha Biondi in particular has argued that the civil rights movement first came together during World War II in New York City.' As the chapters by Bill Mullen, Floyd Cheung, and James Smethurst show, high-profile agitation by people of color and their allies capitalized on the war against Hitler to deepen the campaign for racial justice. In the process, they created a critical discourse on "racism," a term that surfaced in the United States in the late 1930s and spread thereafter through antifascist and antiracist political and cultural work.

At the same time, a number of scholars in LGBT studies, most notably Allan Bérubé, have shown the 1940s to be a watershed moment in the history of sexuality in the United States. In the same-sex spaces of military life and domestic production, the war produced a new sexual situation that allowed those with homosexual inclinations to explore and express them with diminished fears. Over the course of the decade, the number of gay social spaces increased dramatically, and large homosexual populations began to coalesce in major, wartime port cities and production centers like New York, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay area.'° As Aaron Lecklider's chapter reveals, this ferment gave rise not only to the formation of the Mattachine Society in 1950 — the first modern gay/lesbian advocacy organization in the United States — but also to an innovative and often overlooked corpus of literature.

However, the emergent voices of the decade did not all arise from the margins. The political center had certainly shifted to the left in the 1930s and 1940s, yet some actors on the political stage remained deeply unhappy with history's apparent tilt. As Kathryn Olmstead's chapter argues, the end of the decade saw the resurgence of political conservativism, and in a form that anticipated the phenomenon now known as neoliberalism. But whether writers of the 1940s called for racial justice or for a stop to the communist menace, their work formed the building blocks of the public sphere, joining the efforts of others to articulate new group identities and transforming the discursive terrain in the process.

Part III, titled "Media and Genre," distills some of these same historical dynamics through the lenses of literary genre and the material sites of cultural production. Scholars who evoke Raymond Williams's concept, "the structure of feeling," often forget that he initially applied it to the literary form. Williams emphasized how literary forms were in themselves "structures of feeling." That is to say, to see cultural forms as a structure of feeling is to acknowledge that individuals do not simply absorb and passively reproduce formal ideologies; rather, they incorporate formal ideologies into the sum total of their experiences — always social and generational in nature — thereby transforming these ideologies and becoming conscious of them only through their lived relationships." Thus, literary genres — such as realism, noir, the five-act play — are collective ways that artists imaginatively distill the contradictory social forces and discourses of their historical moment into concrete works of the imagination, creating something new of these contradictions in the process. In a similar vein, the chapters in this part — on intersecting aesthetics of noir, modernism, realism, the World War II

narrative, and the imagination of the city — treat signature genres of the period as structures of feeling. As they show, such genres mark how artists creatively and collectively registered the epic transformations of their era, how they combined contradictory discourses and their own lived experiences into new aesthetic forms, and, in so doing, worked to transform the world into something different from what they found.

Part III also attends to the material institutions out of which literature emerged. Wartime conditions and the turn to Keynesian economics enabled an expansive interpenetration of mass culture — inclusive of Hollywood film, network radio, and the publishing industry — into the everyday lives of Americans in the 1940s. The decade witnessed the introduction of the paperback book, a now familiar innovation of the publishing industry that rev0lutionized literary readership. In this context, the essays of Erin Smith and Joan Saab both highlight the role of the Council of Books on Wartime, a government-funded program through which the major publishing houses distributed millions of free novels to servicemen during the war, expanding readership in the process. During the war, with rising incomes at home and bored servicemen overseas, the audience for Hollywood pictures swelled, and more importantly, its productions gained a newfound place in the national mission.

As media scholars have noted, radio was in many ways the television of the 1930s and 1940s. The medium was also widely accessible to Americans:

> 83 percent of all US residents, rural and urban, owned a radio by 1940, with a majority of its audience female. Indeed, radio arguably brought the public sphere into private homes more than any other medium of the era, and at a time when a number of artists used its unique qualities to recreate literary classics and fashion avant-garde cultural works on the air. As the chapter by Judith Smith demonstrates, radio writers and directors used the medium's "intimacy effects" to expand the audience for Popular Front and early civil rights messages. But as Joan Saab's chapter underscores, not all cultural production was financed by the culture industries. The turn to more state-centered, Keynesian economic policies from the 1930s through the 1960s had its corollary in the arts. These decades saw an unprecedented effort by the state to influence public tastes by directly employing or indirectly subsidizing a legion of painters, writers, filmmakers, and photographers.

In mapping the position of literature within this global tableau, the chapters in this collection aim to make its readers aware of the historical possibilities of the 1940s as a window of time, a window through which a whole other social reality might have passed. To imagine a historical moment as such an open-ended possibility is to engage in what Lisa Lowe has called "a past conditional temporality." That is to say, to reconstruct the space of literature, along with the social movements that breathed life into its words, is to resurrect a space of possibility, a set of "what ifs" where the course of struggle is not yet determined. It is to enter a space where US racial hierarchies might have assumed a very different form, where the social democratic reforms of the New Deal might have perished in their infancy, where the United States may not have placed anticommunism at the center of its world-ordering ambitions, and where we might have consequently remembered the literary history of the period very differently from the outset. To see cultural history through the lens of a past conditional temporality, in other words, is to refuse to impose a stable course of events on what was a highly contingent political struggle. I sincerely hope the readers of this volume can use these essays to bridge the distance between the decade of the 1940s and their own, recognizing the possibilities of the present in the pages of the past. Christopher Vials

American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960
edited by Steven Belletto [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108418232]

American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 explores the under-recognized complexity and variety of 1950s American literature by focalizing discussions through a series of keywords and formats that encourage readers to draw fresh connections among literary form and concepts, institutions, cultures, and social phenomena important to the decade. The first section draws attention to the relationship between literature and cultural phenomena that were new to the 1950s.

The second section demonstrates the range of subject positions important in the 1950s, but still not visible in many accounts of the era. The third section explores key literary schools or movements associated with the decade, and explains how and why they developed at this particular cultural moment. The final section focuses on specific forms or genres that grew to special prominence during the 1950s. Taken together, the chapters in the four sections not only encourage us to rethink familiar texts and figures in new lights, but they also propose new archives for future study of the decade.

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If this book had been published in 1960, its shape would have been much different. There would have been authoritative comment on a handful of heavy hitters — mostly well-respected white men, with the odd woman, person of color, or old Leftist mixed in — and there would have been much hand-wringing over whether literature, particularly the novel, might stem the implacable rising tide of "mass culture." After all, early in the decade, Partisan Review, an important little magazine out of New York City, published a symposium, "Our Country and Our Culture," premised on the idea that "the artist and intellectual who wants to be a part of American life is faced with a mass culture which makes him feel that he is still outside looking in," a dire situation indeed for those who lamented the paradox proposed by the editors, that "a democratic society necessarily leads to a leveling of culture, to a mass culture which will overrun intellectual and aesthetic values traditional to Western civilization."' Having narrowly survived such a cultural emergency, had this book been published in 1960, the discussion would have tended toward those writers who showcased both seriousness of purpose and certain formal qualities approved by the academy and venues like Partisan Review.

We may well have followed the lead of eminent critic and editor Malcolm Cowley, veteran of the Lost Generation, who took it upon himself to survey what he called the "literary situation" in the US

circa 1954. Summarizing the critical terrain with wry detachment, Cowley listed what he considered the au courant characteristics that could elevate a work to that ineffable realm of the literary, at least according to "younger critics":

> Today the bad words applied to fiction by a great many of the younger critics are naturalism, liberalism, optimism (which is either vague or shallow), progressive (usually put in quotation marks), scientific, and sociology. Among the good words and phrases are tradition, depth or inwardness, values (especially if they are moral and permanent), irony, formal patterns, close texture, meanings on different levels, symbols, and myth.

Cowley's droll notes register a shift in the first years of the decade away from styles or movements deemed innovative in the earlier part of the century, such as naturalism, as well as from overt commitments to politics (hence the poor progressive is forever banished to scare quotes). In their place, he identifies the perceived importance of literature invested in tradition — an importance echoed by Partisan Review's worry that mass culture will obliterate Western civilization — and suffused with values made visible by inwardness, or the experience of the individual. This sort of "depth," according Cowley's story, is best articulated via the formal elements prized by the New Criticism: irony, intricate patterns, close texture, and so on. Cowley is not so sure about the ultimate merit of literature measured in these terms, but part of his hesitation is perhaps attributable to nostalgia for his younger and more vulnerable years, as when he lays bare a basic assumption of the book: "Unlike the present age, the 1920s were a time of experiment in all the creative arts, including poetry, fiction and hot jazz". On its face, this statement is so wrong-headed as to be absurd. It's not wrong because the 1920s were not a time of fertile experimentation in the arts but because this fact does not in turn mean 1950s literature amounted to a complacent reworking of tradition. In fact, one of the broad contentions of American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 is that the 1950s were a time of radical experimentation and change across many facets of US literature, only one or two of which seemed to Cowley worthy of discussion.

Indeed, Cowley's assessment really only seems plausible if we recall that during the 1950s good or worthwhile literature was tasked with doing particular work other cultural forms — television, the movies, popular fiction — could not. Consider, for example, a collection that appeared at the end of the decade, Herbert Gold's Fiction of the Fifties (1959), which had a kind of retrospective finality to it; as Gold aims to represent short fiction of the decade, he takes pains to cordon serious literature from potentially dangerous pretenders. In his introduction, he argues that certain writers are good for certain readers, those who "have been driven to asking the ultimate questions ... What is the relation between freedom and isolation? When am I free and when am I merely isolated? When am I alone and independent? When am I responsible? When am I groupy, togethered into socialized isolation?" According to the version of 1950s cultural history that emphasizes the perpetual struggle between individuality and the pressure to conform — the topic of William Whyte's widely read The Organization Man (1956), among others — Gold's questions are apropos, as they are all preoccupied with individual freedom versus the threats of conformity or rcollectivity. Little wonder that Gold's serious writers are all but required to tackle such questions, as they illuminate the "disasters and challenges of our time". A far cry from those rare creatures capable of such magic, Gold presents a catalog of those who do "NOT" offer "the strongest view of the time". Here is a sample:

> Not the fabricated fakes of television, Hollywood, and the mass magazines (not Harry Belafonte improving race relations by playing a Chinese version of Green Pastures in yellowface);
> [...]
> Nor Sloan Wilson and Herman Wouk with their new upper-middle soap opera (an easier detergent for the togethered souls of suburban lads and lassies of whatever moribund condition);
> Nor the Young Fogies queerly proclaiming a brotherhood of gangbang and gangwhimper — real toadies in imaginary gardens ("I'm one Hell of a Guy, Damn! A-tearin' down society and grammar! A-preachin' of the gospel to all us delinquent kids! Man! Zip! Zen! Wow!");

> Nor the Elder Tired Revolutionists [who imitate Henry James and "Tom Eliot"] ... Nor the Beauticians and Uglifiers like Tennessee W, Truman C., Speed L. ("It's so dreadful out here in the world. Lemme back, Ma!")

The virtuoso glibness camouflages a familiar attack: like the editors of Partisan Review, Gold worries that Western civilization itself is threatened by mass culture and that serious literature could be a vanguard in its defense. This pose authorizes Gold to dismiss anything smelling of mass media, the middlebrow, or the counterculture — as well as those merely derivative of Modernism or apparently too bleak or cynical in worldview for his taste. By thus chipping away at all the unwanted elements of the literary scene in the 1950s, Gold is left with that which is worthy of sober consideration, works that probe the Big Questions outlined above, thereby ennobling or at least improving those readers discerning enough to value "thought in fiction" (a group a cut above the "good citizens" hooked on "family novels, fat historical romances, suspense and mystery stories"). Following this model, Gold collects fifteen writers, apologetic that Norman Mailer and J. D. Salinger had turned him down, and stoic that others like Thomas Berger, Vance Bourjaily, Ralph Ellison, Albert J. Guerard Jr., Alan Harrington, James Jones, M. R. Kadish, Wright Morris, William Styron, and Bernard Wolfe are writers "whose short fiction does not represent them at their best" (18). This leaves him with those he deems capable of wrestling weighty existential questions in abbreviated form: James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, Anatole Broyard, R. V. Cassill, John Cheever, Evan S. Connell Jr., William Eastlake, George P. Elliott, Leo Litwak, Bernard Malamud, Flannery O'Connor, J. E Powers, Frank Rooney, and Harvey Swados — and of course Gold himself.

Contemporary readers may be forgiven for being slightly puzzled by this list, for after all the buildup, who could blame us for expecting lights of eternal wisdom still beloved today? Instead, only three of these writers are regularly read or taught (Baldwin, Bellow, and O'Connor), with two more well-respected but somehow old-fashioned seeming, useful for emblematizing a period but appearing on fewer and fewer must-read lists (Cheever and Malamud, although see below). Some others might be mentioned in passing in literary histories (Broyard and Cassill) or were esteemed in the 1950s but have since been largely ignored (Powers, Swados and Gold himself). I think you would be hard-pressed to find any reader born after 1930 who has heard of, much less been enlightened by, the others.

On one hand, this is to be expected, since critical and popular tastes change, and the idea of a canon or canons is always in flux. But on the other, it reminds us that one reason the 1950s can still seem bland and white bread, with a literature to match, is because at the time the same kinds of writers tended to be celebrated while whole groups of others were seen as unliterary, appealing either to the masses or to fringe niche audiences — equally damning associations for defenders of high culture. This critical view has been so powerful that there remains still a persistent sense that high culture defines worthwhile literature, a sense underwritten by the usually tacit assumption that high culture is the province of white men, a demographic that dominates Gold's volume. In 2014, for example, The American Scholar published a list of the "one hundred best American novels" chosen by David Handlin, a well-known architect and avid reader of fiction. The list is telling insofar as Handlin represents a smart, educated reader, a self-identified "enthusiast, not ... a scholar." Of his list of a hundred, thirteen were written or published in the 1950s: Flannery O'Connor's Wise Blood (1952), Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1952), Saul Bellow's The Adventures of Augie March (1953), James Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain (1953), Raymond Chandler's The Long Goodbye (1953), William Gaddis's The Recognitions (1955), Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita (1955), John Cheever's The Wapshot Chronicle (1957), Jack Kerouac's The Dharma Bums (1958), John Updike's Rabbit, Run (1960), Walker Percy's The Moviegoer (1961), Joseph Heller's Catch-22 (1961), and Richard Yates's Revolutionary Road (1961).6 What is immediately striking about this list is how audibly it echoes a 1950s critical sensibility: with the exception of O'Connor, Baldwin, and Ellison — all of whom were notable exceptions to WASP dominance in the 1950s — Handlin's picks are predominantly white and male (if Percy's Catholicism and Bellow's Jewishness also mark some measure of difference, religious identification seems subordinate in the particular works Handlin

names to questions about personal autonomy, focalized in Percy's case through existentialism and in Bellow's through his picaresque effort at the Great American Novel — recall Augie March opens "I am an American, Chicago born").7 While most mid-century literary critics would have been skeptical of the aesthetic merits of a hard-boiled novel like Chandler's The Long Goodbye and especially of Kerouac's The Dharma Bums (whose language Gold would have paraphrased as "Man! Zip! Zen! Wow!"), the tenor of Handlin's list would have made general sense to them.

Given Handlin's position as a committed amateur reader, it is not surprising that his list should tend toward the sorts of works that were lauded in the 1950s and subsequently packaged as modern classics — in this regard only Salinger is conspicuously omitted. For a twenty-first-century critic more conversant in the less-lit corners of the literary landscape, Handlin's list might seem serviceable, though limited in scope. Such is the contention of Sandra M. Gilbert, whose response was intended "not as an alternative to but as a provisional expansion of Handlin's list."' Of Gilbert's hundred novels, sixteen are from the 1950s: Carson McCullers's The Ballad of the Sad Café (1951), J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye (1951), Conrad Aiken's Ushant (1952), E. B. White's Charlotte's Web (1952), Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 (1953), Gwendolyn Brooks's Maud Martha (1953), Randall Jarrell's Pictures from an Institution (1954), Patricia Highsmith's The Talented Mr. Ripley (1955), James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room (1956), Shirley Jackson's The Haunting of Hill House (1959), Paule Marshall's Brown Girl, Brownstones (1959), Philip Roth's Goodbye, Columbus (1959), H. D.'s Bid Me to Live (1960), Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird (1960), Robert A. Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land (1961), and Tillie Olsen's Tell Me a Riddle (1961). As she accounts for her choices relative to Handlin's:

In recent decades ... we've come to understand the force of women's writing throughout American history, and we've come to understand, too, the emergent power of those hyphenated literary traditions, traditions shaped by African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Italian-Americans, Jewish-Americans, as well as Native Americans, Chicanas, and Chicanos. Too, we've come to appreciate the generic range and diversity of American fiction. Not every great American novel is what we now call a "mainstream" publication ... But most of the books he includes would fall into any publisher's mainstream (even, dare I say, male-stream?) category.

When Gilbert writes about what "we" have come to understand or appreciate, she is not so much referring to readers such as Handlin, but to fellow literary critics or social and cultural historians. Indeed, despite lingering impressions of the American 1950s as more or less the Cleavers' block on Leave It to Beaver, its variety of literature and culture is not exactly news to scholars. For decades there has been a whole critical cottage industry pushing back against popular, facile memories or depictions of the 1950s, from social and cultural histories like Douglas Miller and Marion Nowak's The Fifties: The Way We Really Were (1977) to Stephanie Coontz's rejoinder The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap (1992), to critical collections such as Lary May's Recasting America: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cold War (1989) and Joanne Meyerowitz's Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960 (1994), whose very title renounces the fuzzy nostalgia reified by Leave It to Beaver in syndication. In 2005, with volumes like Meyerowitz's specifically in mind, Deborah Nelson claimed that "Nearly all scholars working on the 1950s in the US make a distinction between their own critical revisions of the decade and mainstream nostalgia for the 1950s as a time of prosperity, family togetherness, and national strength. Against the massive edifice of this ideal, a revisionary account has been mounted, primarily from the political Left and in the realms of gender and sexuality studies."9 However ironically, versions of this "revisionary account" have become a standard way for literary and cultural critics to frame the 1950s in retrospect.

Like Nelson, Joel Foreman, in the introduction to his important collection The Other Fifties: Interrogating Midcentury American Icons (1997), takes May, Meyerowitz, and others as examples of scholars who have the advantage of historical hindsight, and are thereby capable of presenting a more complex picture than someone writing at the very end of the decade. He therefore contrasts The Other Fifties to Joseph Satin's The 1950's: America's `Placid" Decade (1960), which argues

for quiescence as the era's defining feature, choosing to focus on its most obvious, Beaver Cleaver-like contours — enticing fodder for any scholar with revisionist impulses. Foreman's answer to Satin could well apply to the present volume:

Writing in the late fifties, [Satin] could not possibly interpret as we do the emergent trends (civil rights, cultural diversity, feminism, the collapse of the communist bloc) which are now visible and so unavoidably shape our thinking about the past. With the knowledge of these trends as an interpretive foundation, the writers of the essays in this book tease out the contradictions built into the representations of a culture in transition. Even as the present volume shares with The Other Fifties the premise that America in the 1950s was a "culture in transition," our approach to understanding the nature of this transition differs as we are particularly focused on literature. For in a move that would have given the editors at Partisan Review a collective heart attack, The Other Fifties focuses primarily on popular culture since "mass media representations of the 1950s are quintessential representatives of their time ... [that] captured the needs, desires, and expectations of so many people as to provide significant indexes of the changing behavior and the internal tensions of that cultural body we call America" (6). This methodology means that literature is relevant mainly when viewed as part of a matrix of mass culture, and so therefore the most widely read novels or widely seen plays are of the most interest. But this approach runs the risk of ironically retrenching the divide between high and mass cultures 1950s gatekeepers tried desperately to maintain while reversing its terms: popular culture is dynamically "representative" and therefore worthy of consideration, whereas high culture is stodgily esoteric, understandable to a privileged few, so therefore not immediately vital to understanding the "cultural body we call America." Of course, in the aftermath of postmodernism and poststructuralism, such bifurcation may seem very much of the 1950s, even as there were many constituencies in the decade who would have balked at the supposedly singular power of serious, highbrow literature.

Building on more recent scholarship that has helped to reframe our understanding of 1950s literature and culture, American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 looks at not only those writers deemed worthy of consideration by contemporaries like Cowley and Gold but also those Gold mocks — writers for television, middlebrow best sellers, the Beats, and those still writing committed literature are all discussed at length in this volume, and are examples of the creative ferment of the period." Because the novel was the most visible site of the confrontation between the highbrow literary and mass cultures, both Cowley and Gold — like many others in the 1950s — focus on fiction to the exclusion of poetry (for Cowley, the literary situation is apparently a narrative one, as he only gives more than passing mention to T. S. Eliot, whose influence he sees everywhere), even though there was tremendous energy in this genre. With all the usual caveats about the fluidity or arbitrariness of poetic "schools," for instance, it is worth pointing out that the 1950s was the decade when the writers and artists associated with the radically experimental Black Mountain College flourished, as did the Beat writers, those of the New York School, as well as the so-called Confessional Poets, all of whom are explored in this volume.

For those 1950s cultural arbiters invested in maintaining highbrow literary culture, the Cold War and the mass media were the twinned demons looming over this culture, and as I have said "serious" literature was held out as a singular resource that might counter the darker tendencies of each. With the hindsight mentioned by Foreman, this volume of course recognizes the marked importance of the Cold War (Chapter 1) and the influence of mass media (Chapter 2), but tries to understand them in new ways. Thus Part I, "Cultural Issues," begins with a chapter looking at various models for conceptualizing the relationship between the Cold War and the literature of the 1950s. Chapter 2 challenges the assumption that "mass media" was a monolithic cultural wasteland by demonstrating its more complex, "literary" elements, using television dramas as illustrative examples. The chapters to follow explore other cultural issues vital to understanding the particularity of 1950s American literature: the rise of popular understandings of psychoanalysis (Chapter 3), the connection between the decolonizing Third World and domestic race relations (Chapter 4), the imbrication of different kinds of religious thinking into nearly every facet of American life, including literature (Chapter 5), and

the unavoidable politicization of daily life (Chapter 6). These issues are especially instructive with respect to literature, and Part I is organized around them with the aim of helping us think about what was distinctive about the 1950s in terms of the social, the cultural, and the historical.

Implicit in the nostalgic, Happy Days version of the 1950s is that it was a culture by and for middle-class white people, particularly men. While no one would dispute that this demographic played a defining role in the literature and culture of the American 1950s, it was in fact only one of many demographics, and Part II, "Varieties of Literary Experience," takes readers through the range of subject positions important in the 1950s, but still not visible in many accounts of the era. Beginning with an analysis of WASP culture (Chapter 7), Part II emphasizes that while middle-class whiteness was certainly an imp0rtant dimension of the 1950s experience, we should be careful not to conflate it with the totality of that experience. This chapter is therefore followed by analyses of African American literature (Chapter 8), Chicana/o literature (Chapter 9), and Asian American literature (Chapter 10). Of these, only African American literature would have been recognized in the 1950s as an identifiable subset of writers; in The Literary Situation, Cowley even remarked that Mexicans were "such recent arrivals and were so handicapped educationally that they had no writers to speak for them in English; their admired representatives were still boxers or baseball players" (155). Despite their invisibility to Cowley, there were indeed people of Mexican — and Asian American — descent writing in English in the 1950s, even if, as parts of bodies of work, they were not classed as such until later decades. These chapters acknowledge how tricky it is for literary scholars to name or identify like bodies of work, and many of them in fact take this difficulty as a starting point for their explorations. Thus while some readers may be surprised to find chapters on, say, Chicana/o literature in a book about the 1950s, the fact remains that such literatures were produced during the decade, and contending with them represents a critical shift in both how we map "1950s literature" and how we understand the American experience as reflected by such literature — even as some constituent voices have not been as amplified as others.

The subsequent chapters thus focus on other key subjectivities in the 1950s: gay and lesbian culture (Chapter 11), feminist literature (Chapter 12), and youth culture (Chapter 13). Although contemporary readers are no doubt acquainted with 1950s youth culture through tropes like the rebellious teenager or the leather-jacketed tough — still vivid thanks to films like Rebel Without a Cause (1955) and The Wild One (1953) — the other energies in gay and lesbian and feminist literature may be less familiar. These literatures especially have been victims of the hypermasculine culture exemplified by a writer like Norman Mailer, who in 1959 surveyed those he perceived as his literary adversaries, making declarations such as "the only one of my contemporaries who I felt had more talent than myself was James Jones," author of From Here to Eternity (1951), a World War II novel apparently rival in Mailer's eyes to his own The Naked and the Dead (1948). As he works his way around "the talent in the room" — a room occupied almost exclusively by straight white men — Mailer pauses to wonder why no women command his attention, then speculates that it is probably because "a good novelist can do without everything but the remnant of his balls". However reluctantly, he is finally able to "admit" the merits of a handful of women writers, so long as his appraisal is framed in sexualized terms: "the early work of Mary McCarthy, Jean Stafford and Carson McCullers gave me pleasure". Although Mailer puts it more crassly than others might, his position is not all that unusual for a straight white male in the 1950s, and it is this sort of thinking that has compounded the dismissal of other subjectivities and experiences, leading, as I have said, to the impression that it was only straight (white) men who wrote during the decade. The chapters in Part II correct this impression and aim to help make a greater multiplicity of such voices heard.

Part III, "Schools, Movements, and Sensibilities," comprises chapters organized around works that share conceptual or thematic affinities.

Sometimes these affinities were clear to people in the 1950s, if not always properly understood (the Beats or Confessional Poets, for example), whereas others are really only discernable in retrospect because they needed subsequent work to bring them into focus (proto-postmodernism), or because the political climate rendered them taboo

(committed Leftist writers). Part III begins with a phenomenon that was legible in pieces, but did not yet have a name: Proto-postmodernism (Chapter 14), which describes the development in the decade of aesthetic and philosophical features that would later be associated with postmodernism. Following this, chapters take up some more established ways the 1950s have been categorized or understood by literary scholars: the experimentation at Black Mountain College (Chapter 15), the Beat movement (Chapter 16), the Confessional Poets (Chapter 17), and the New York School (Chapter 18). Although these groups are well known to students of twentieth-century literary history, each chapter problematizes the very notion of a school or movement with the aim of exploring what if anything was distinctive about them in the context of 1950s history and culture. Indeed, what is perhaps most useful about these chapters is that they do not merely repeat conventional wisdom about those flying under particular banners, but rather interrogate why they have been seen by literary critics as what Gold would have called "groupy, togethered." Chapters 19 and 20 look at the concepts of exile and committed writing, respectively, to explore other kinds of "togethered" writers who have not been as readily perceptible to literary critics. Although there is a long tradition of American émigré writing, for example, those figures sometimes fit uneasily into broader generalizations about the 1950s as domestic and "contained." Moreover, as Chapter 20 argues, thanks to the political mandates of the Cold War, committed writers on the Left were and continue to be all but erased from most literary histories, even though they were producing significant writing throughout the decade.

Finally, Part IV, "Formats and Genres," investigates some particularly consequential modes of literary production in the 1950s: little magazines (Chapter 21), best sellers (Chapter 22), and science fiction (Chapter 23). These chapters can be read in conjunction with one another as they represent differing facets of the 1950s literary scene sometimes unnoticed by those tuned exclusively to the highbrow. Although, as we have seen, some little magazines, such as Partisan Review, did their best to maintain high culture, there was a proliferation of other kinds of avant-garde or countercultural magazines during the decade that were influential in certain, often nonoverlapping, circles, and Chapter 21 charts the fragmentation of highbrow consensus over the course of the decade. Likewise the best seller, long the object of dismissal or ridicule, actually contained a surprising variety of work essential for those assessing the 1950s (Sloan Wilson's middlebrow best seller The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit [1955] is one of the most frequently discussed works in this volume). The final chapter views the 1950s as the decade when science fiction blossomed into its own and demonstrates that a discussion of its literature would be incomplete without considering the nuances of this perennially influential genre.

One positive effect of this organizational plan is, I hope, that readers will find connections, patterns, or other resonances across many chapters. Although each chapter can certainly stand alone — and will perhaps be of use to students and others interested in their respective subjects — reading across the volume allows one to recognize the same ideas, figures, or texts turning up in different places, variously illuminated according to the preoccupations of the specific contributor. Or one might notice the subject of a given chapter reverberating through several others, suggesting the importance of critical cross-talk and the fluidity of the categories many literary critics in the 1950s worked to maintain.

As far as we are from 1960, American Literature in Transition, 1950-1960 is inevitably as much a product of the twenty-first century as it is of the 1950s. Accordingly, and taking a cue from a prominent work of literary and cultural criticism that appeared at the very center of the decade, R. W. B. Lewis's The American Adam (1955), it seems remiss not to pause over how the 1950s have been circulated — perhaps "deployed" is a better word — in our own present moment. Although The American Adam is about the nineteenth century, Lewis uses his epilogue to reflect on the current "age of containment" that in his opinion has abandoned the optimism of the previous century. For Lewis, America in the 1950s is "curiously frozen in outline," blind to the generative potential of irony, wracked by "hopelessness," and hostile to "human nature." Lewis sees such features in contrast to the literary lights of the nineteenth century, figures he finds "hopeful and ironic," writing as they did in an age he wistfully characterizes as one of opportunity, self-reliance, and "moral maturity".

From the vantage of our own contemporary situation, Lewis's dim view of his intellectual and political era might seem somewhat surprising, since that era has long been hardened into "the 1950s," for many shorthand for the Good Old Days of opportunity, self-reliance, and moral maturity. Although this version of "the 1950s" has been reified over several decades in ways sketched throughout this introduction, our current moment is palpably haunted by the specter of "the 1950s" that is rooted in trite nostalgia rather than in the way things "really were." Recently, the most visible holder of this perception has been Donald Trump, who, when asked in a 2016 interview when he thought the US "last had the right balance, either in terms of defense f0otprint or in terms of trade," responded by invoking the Good Old Days: "I would say during the '40s and '50s we started getting, we were not pushed around, we were respected by everybody, we had just won a war, we were pretty much doing what we had to do." Clearly this answer telescopes "the 1950s" into a single narrative about post—World War II triumphalism, and the use of "we" conceals the experiences of a whole host of demographics living in the US during its rise to global prominence. For this story about geopolitical authority or national self-reliance to have maximum impact, "the 1950s" must be figured in terms of the first-person plural, itself shorthand for only those experiences which confirm a nostalgic view, thus by necessity disregarding others that might challenge it. That the 2016 presidential election broke the way it did suggests that Trump was not producing but rather affirming this perception of the 1950s, as a survey that year found that 72 percent of his likely supporters "say American society and way of life has changed for the worse since the 1950s." Such a judgment depends both on one's worldview — roughly the same number of likely Clinton voters thought American society had changed for the better — and likely on one's demographic, as suggested, for instance, by the 74 percent of white evangelical Protestants surveyed who thought that "American culture has changed for the worse since the 1950s." It would be easy enough to juxtapose this opini0n with its inverse by canvassing those who do not recall (or imagine) the decade so fondly, as is the case with writer-director John Waters, whose transgressive, campy aesthetic turns 1950s conformist culture inside out, and who frequently insists that "the fifties were such a terrible time. They weren't happy days, they were horrible. Everybody had to be like everybody else."' Or sociologist Wini Breines, the title of whose study Young, White, and Miserable: Growing Up Female in the Fifties (1992) succinctly sums up her perspective on the decade. Or poet and playwright Amiri Baraka, who marked 1957 as "a time of ... transition" from the "cooled-out reactionary 50's ... of the Cold War and McCarthyism and HUAC, to the late 50's of the surging civil rights movement" — his Autobiography is but one among many by those heedful of the various social and political panics that punctured the fiction that all Americans in the 1950s were prosperous and content.

But it's worth underscoring not merely that whitewashed narratives have been repeated into reality, but that voters evidently act on this reality. From our own contemporary situation, then, the question of how we understand the 1950s is far from academic, as it has and will likely continue to have profound effects on the shape and direction of the country. However platitudinous it is to say that literature is replete and complex because our lives are so, in the particular case of literature of the American 1950s, attending to the difficulties and realities described therein might help us clarify our present moment as much as the decade under study, as now roughly equal numbers of the populace seem, to borrow Lewis's terms, either consumed by hopelessness or newly optimistic about a future modeled on an imagined past. All of the chapters to follow are attuned to and rooted in the multifarious complexities of the 1950s — intellectual, political, aesthetic, and otherwise — and so rather than a declaration of revision or even reconstruction, this volume is better understood as a wide-angle retrospective analysis of what had always been there.

American Literature in Transition, 1960-1970 by David Wyatt [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107165397]

The decade of the 1960s has come to occupy a uniquely seductive place in both the popular and the historical imagination. While few might disagree that it was a transformative period, the United States remains divided on the question of whether the changes that occurred were for the better or for the worse. Some see it as a decade

when people became more free; others as a time when people became more lost. American Literature in Transition, 1960-1970 provides the latest scholarship on this time of fateful turning as seen through the eyes of writers as various as Toni Morrison, Gary Snyder, Michael Herr, Amiri Baraka, Joan Didion, Louis Chu, John Rechy, and Gwendolyn Brooks. This collection of essays by twenty-five scholars offers analysis and explication of the culture wars surrounding the period, and explores the enduring testimonies left behind by its literature.

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Excerpt: A year before Jacques Derrida delivered his first lecture in the United States, Frank Kermode accepted the Mary Flexner Lectureship at Bryn Mawr College. The honor is "given to an American or foreign scholar highly distinguished in the field of the `Humanities,' using the term `Humanities' in its broadest connotation.'" In the second decade of the twenty-first century — given the current "crisis" in the Humanities — there is something almost quaint in the Bryn Mawr formulation. In his six lectures, Kermode took it as his task to reveal such crises as recurrent rather than unique. Entitled "The Long Perspectives," the lectures were published in 1967 as The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction.

Kermode begins with the question of where we find ourselves in time. Are we nearing its promised end? The "growing sense of apocalypse in American life'" of which Norman Mailer writes in The Armies of the Night (1968) is not properly Kermode's subject, but he does deal with the history of the idea of apocalypse and our many related "fictions of the End." Within this tradition Kermode discerns a shift away from fictions imagining a literal end of the world and toward a suspicion of any paradigm proposing to impose such a shape on time. As mid-twentieth-century persons, Kermode maintains, we live in "the middest," at best, perhaps, in an epoch "of transition," and because "we move from transition to transition, we may suppose that we exist in no intelligible relation to the past, and no predictable relation to the future."

Is there anything that can deliver us from this sense of perpetual ongoing transition, of living in T. S. Eliot's "waste sad time / Stretching before and after?"4 Why not break up the time into a series of decades, a convention surely artificial but one that is useful in helping us to mark out the days?

It will not do, my reader might object, to introduce a volume entitled American Literature in Transition by throwing into question the bounding outlines of the project. But this is precisely what is called for, especially with the volume in the series dedicated to the 1960s. No decade in the twentieth century comes to us more shrouded in myth; the two words "The Sixties" trigger in many minds an autonomic response. Literature itself, and the study of it, Kermode argues, assists in clearing away such reflexive motions of mind — the reversion to myths about that "time" — by replacing them with more flexible and adaptive fictions.

After demonstrating how suspicious we have become of fictions of "the End," and thereby of our corresponding fictions of "the Beginning," Kermode proceeds to argue for the efficacy of some sort of time reconciling fictions. They offer us a "comfort." Here is Kermode at his best: "in `making sense' of the world we still feel a need, harder than ever to satisfy because of an accumulated skepticism, to experience that concordance of beginning, middle and end which is the essence of our explanatory fictions."

Words like "need," "satisfy," and "fiction" reveal Kermode's debt to Wallace Stevens, and it is Stevens, more than any other modern writer, who presides over Kermode's project. Stevens works for Kermode because he offers his fictions not for their truth but for their usefulness; as he writes in the Necessary Angel, poetry "helps people to live their lives." Stevens was resolute in declaring that we must remain self-aware about the provisional status of our ongoing attempts at poesis, our fictive makings. We do not offer them our unquestioning assent but approach them rather by way of "the nicer knowledge of / Belief, that what it believes in is not true." The temporary authority we may grant to our fictions is all a matter of attitude — hence the distinction, implicit in Stevens and explicit in Kermode, between myths and fictions. "Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive ... Fictions are for finding things out, and they change as the needs of sense-making change. Myths are the agents of stability, fictions the agents of change. Myths call for absolute, fictions for conditional assent."' One fiction routinely projected onto the 1960s, a fiction in some quarters degenerating into a myth, is of its having been a unique and largely unhappy interval of crisis and change.

Whether contributors to this volume began a career in the study of literature in the 1960s or belong to a younger generation, as many do, it is unlikely that any of us have been untouched by this rhetoric of crisis. Only one year after Kermode drew attention to the enduring appeal of the "concept of crisis," the dynamic was given further elaboration in a lecture delivered at the University of Texas by Paul de Man. The lecture was published in 1967 and appeared as "Crisis and Criticism" in de Man's 1971 Blindness and Insight.

Attempting in 1967 to account for "the crisis-aspect" of contemporary criticism, the outward symptom of which is "the incredible swiftness with which often conflicting tendencies succeed each other," de Man concludes that there is "nothing particularly new" about the phenomenon and that again and again in the history of thought "the notion of crisis and that of criticism are very closely linked." De Man is quite skilled at dehistoricizing any subject he touches: his undersong is, "It was ever thus." And yet his felt need to address a current so-called crisis is itself a sign of something deeply embedded in the historical moment out of which he writes. It is a moment in which the old confidences and practices about the work of criticism have given way to a profound skepticism. The skepticism arises out of a newly emergent consensus about the activity we call "signification."

Ferdinand de Saussure may have asserted as early as 1911 the "arbitrary" relation of the signifier to the signified, but very few literary critics, either on the Continent or in the United States, were speaking about the slippage between word and thing before the 1960s. It is only literature that has always known this, as de Man proceeds to argue.

Literature, unlike everyday language, begins on the far side of this knowledge; it is the only form of the language free from the fallacy of unmediated expression. All of us know this, although we know it in the misleading way of a wishful assertion of the opposite. Yet the truth emerges in the foreknowledge we possess of the true nature of literature when we refer to it as fiction.

And so we come round again to Kermode's word, despite de Man having stripped it of Kermode's accompanying terms, words like "comfort," "concord," and "need." Whether we find ourselves drawn to Kermode's affirmative or de Man's deconstructive sensibility, their virtually overlapping efforts encourage us to think of crisis as more a fiction than a fact.

At the end of his life and the end of his century, John Dryden took a long look back.

> Thy Chase had a Beast in View;
> Thy Wars brought nothing about;
> Thy Lovers were all untrue.
> Tis well an Old Age is out,
> And time to begin a New.

The fantasy being expressed is of a new and more promising start, even a clean break. As Dryden well knew, however, having lived through a monarchy, its beheading, a Restoration, and then a further Glorious Revolution, one age never goes out before another begins. When it comes to ages, all history offers, especially literary history, is a continual series of refrains and overlaps. Decades are a construction of the calendar, not indicators of distinct eras.

And yet the fiction of the determining decade can prove useful in giving a manageable shape to "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history," a condition Eliot saw as belonging to his, the twentieth, century. Of the decades of the century, the sixties have come to occupy a uniquely seductive place in both the popular and the historical imagination; former TV anchor men compete with Pulitzer Prize-winning historians to give the interval significant form. It is a time "when America turned," to use Lieutenant John Kerry's words from his 1971 speech before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. While few might disagree that a turning did occur, the United States remains divided on the question of whether it was a turning for the better or for the worse.

The sixties were, arguably, the transitional decade of the "American Century." Yet a transition from what to what? How does one mark out and distinguish all that came before from all that followed? Michael Herr restates the problem instead of answering the question.

You couldn't find two people who agreed about when it began, how could you say when it began going off? Mission intellectuals like 1954 as the reference date; if you saw as far back as War II and the Japanese occupation you were practically a historical visionary. "Realists" said that it began for us in 1961, and the common run of Mission flak insisted on 1965, post-Tonkin Resolution, as though all the killing that had gone before wasn't really war. Anyway, you couldn't use standard measures to date the doom.

Dispatches here engages in an anguished response to the question of when the Vietnam War really began. As perhaps the crucial event of the American 1960s, the war was to offer a remarkable challenge to the storytelling imagination. Without a defining beginning point — the convenience of a Pearl Harbor — there was no way to contain the war within a convincing narrative. And as the decade wore on and the war continued, any desire for "closure" was as frustrated among those who believed in fighting the war as it was among those who fought to stop it.

For George Herring, the sixties were a mere interval in America's Longest War. He dates the doom as beginning in 195o and as ending in 1975. The sixties were certainly the heart of it, with the largest American casualty rates occurring in 1968 and 1969. Then Nixon's "Vietnamization" set in, and the troops began, slowly, to come home.

By the time he completed Dispatches in 1977, Herr had come to see the war as the new American ghost. Like Morrison's "rememory," it was a past the future was destined to bump into, especially when least looking for it. What Herr foresaw was that the war would remain present even when appearing to be absent, a phenomenon on evidence in a book published in the year Herr began his own. The word "Vietnam" appears only a few times in Joan Didion's 1968 Slouching Towards Bethlehem. But the war is felt to be there in the creeping dread she feels in Death Valley on the night the diver goes down in search of a missing body and comes up raving about "underground nuclear testing," there in the sorrow she feels in the graveyard on Oahu commemorating an earlier war, and there in the very "atomization" of American society she announces at the beginning to be her subject. Herr and Didion sense that something has begun that is not going to stop as America chose, perhaps once and for all, to commit itself to fighting perpetual war on behalf of a perpetually receding peace, a turning Robert Lowell predicted in 1967.

> peace to our children when they fall
> in small war on the heels of small
> war — until the end of time
> to police the earth, a ghost
> orbiting forever lost
> in our monotonous sublime.

Thus, "until the end of time," Lowell writes, as if the consequences of the present crisis are to prove infinite. Vietnam is only the most salient example of an experience associated with the sixties that had an end as hard to imagine as its beginning was difficult to locate. To cite another example: the civil rights movement began, of course, well before

Rosa Parks refused in 1955 to give up her seat on the bus and could be said to have its beginnings in the first slave revolts in the New World. Cresting during the mid-sixties in the great marches and speeches and acts of legislation occurring in 1964 and 1965, the movement promised to deliver the United States to a post-racial future. Then that future unfolded into one in which, fifty years later, the same old battles still needed to be fought, at least in the hearts of men, as the nation suffered through the killings of its black citizens in Sanford, Florida, in Ferguson, Missouri, in Baltimore, Maryland, and at a church in Charleston, South Carolina.

It is a difficult thing to believe in the reality of change when faced with the persistence of hardened attitudes. And yet a number of the essays in this book argue that because of the sixties, real change did happen. To those who continue to view the period as a hapless regression or a turning gone wrong, Toni Morrison has made an eloquent rejoinder: "Killing the Sixties, turning that decade into an aberration, an exotic malady ripe with excess, drugs and disobedience is designed to bury its central features — emancipation, generosity, acute political awareness and a sense of shared and mutually responsible society." By contrast, historian Gerard J. DeGroot can dismiss the sixth decade of the twentieth century as "an era of magnificent futility." Only the sixth decade of the previous century — and they were both decades of civil war — continues to evoke equally passionate disagreements.

The decade of the sixties is unlikely any time soon to disentangle itself from metaphors of crisis. For Didion, it was the time of the "Second Coming," and she turned to Yeats's poem — itself written in response to the Russian Revolution — for guiding inspiration. Mailer, marching in 1967 across the Potomac, smells wood smoke in the air, the smell of the old, true America, and senses himself to be stepping "through some crossing in the reaches of space between this moment, the French Revolution, and the Civil War." In his very choice of title James Baldwin calls down a biblical apocalypse in The Fire Next Time.

In searching for adequate fictions about the past, for the words "crisis" and "apocalypse," we might consider substituting words like "endings" and "beginnings." These, at least, can sometimes be pinned down. By the end of the sixties, the great moderns, except for Marianne Moore and Ezra Pound, had departed the scene. Hemingway and Loy died in 1961, Faulkner in 1962, Frost and Williams in 1963, Eliot in 1965, and Hughes and Toomer in 1967. Even the word "modern" itself experienced a kind of death. While working toward my Ph.D. at UC Berkeley, I befriended a fellow graduate student who devoted considerable effort searching for a term with which to label the new writing by Barth, Barthelme, Heller, Pynchon, and Vonnegut. She decided to go with "black humor." It would be a decade before work combining extreme verbal effects with flattened affect became widely spoken of as "postmodern."

Other important endings occurring in the sixties include the legal end of Jim Crow, the legal end of an old quota immigration system and its replacement in 1965 by a more inclusive arrangement, the beginning of the end of most, although not all, non-coeducational colleges and universities, the end of the dominance of the city with the out-movement to the suburbs, the end of the postwar economic boom and the peaking of the value of the minimum wage in real terms in 1968, and the end of the canonical and its diffusion into the multicultural.

As for beginnings, in literature, one might point to the efflorescence of the hyphenated literatures: Asian-American, Native-American, Mexican-American. None of these traditions began in the sixties, but the willingness to attend to them and to move them into the curriculum did. In 1968, a group of scholars launched an enterprise resulting in The Heath Anthology, offering a new configuration of writers meant "to reconnect literature and its study with the society and culture of which it is fundamentally a part." "Context" became the new watchword.

Other beginnings, sometimes described as liberations, were more strictly political. Supreme Court decisions in 1965,1967, and 1973, along with the founding of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, opened new possibilities in the lives of women. Gay liberation can trace a dramatic moment of inception to the Stonewall riots of 1969. Even the natural world required liberating, and the modern environmental movement, with roots reaching back to the founding of the Sierra Club in 1892 and the Audubon

Society in 1905, can be dated not only to the passage of the Water Quality Act of 1963 but to the publication of a book, Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, in 1962.

No wonder the sixties were the decade in which the study of literature became openly politicized. When Toni Morrison said, "All good art is political," she appeared to be voicing support for this way of looking at things. But, as she added, art has to be "beautiful and political at the same time." Morrison's "and" speaks to the abiding tension in literary studies between the celebration of form and the unpacking of content.

In her 1964 "Against Interpretation," Susan Sontag argued for this divide as an inevitable consequence of a mimetic theory of art. The theory, as Sontag understands it, places art "in need of defense" against the charges that it is either a lie (Plato) or merely therapeutic (Aristotle). It is the need to produce a defense of art from these charges, Sontag continues, "which gives birth to the odd vision by which something we have learned to call `form' is separated off from something we have learned to call `content,' and to the well-intentioned move which makes content essential and form accessory."

For Sontag, interpretation has become the villain of the story. "What the overemphasis on the idea of content entails is the perennial, never consummated project of interpretation. And, conversely, it is the habit of approaching works of art in order to interpret them that sustains the fancy that there really is such a thing as the content of a work or art." In order to counter the "open aggressiveness" of interpretation toward the literary work, Sontag calls for a criticism "that dissolves considerations of content into those of form." As practitioners of such an approach, she recommends Erwin Panofsky, Northrop Frye, Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, and the "best essays" in Eric Auerbach's Mimesis.

Sontag's essay anticipates the explosive growth of interpretative communities occurring during the closing decades of the twentieth century and may even seem to presage the publication, in 2015, of a volume entitled, The Limits of Critique. We have even been recently admonished that "Context Stinks! Despite such objections, the content-oriented and contextualizing critics appear to have prevailed, if one can judge from the syllabi in major departments of English as well as the titles of most works of academic criticism. Many of the chapter titles in this volume are content driven; to approach literature as if it is about some historical issue, social practice, or political institution has become almost habitual.

The sixties were the decade in which the contextualizing began. To speak of women's literature or black literature or gay literature was immediately to evoke some sort of ground out of which the imagination had sprung. But in the sixties the desire to assert such defining and constraining categories of value was passionately expressed rather than theoretically sophisticated. The theory came later and assumed the name of the "New Historicism." Now the limits of this approach have themselves been put into question. Such turnings upon prevailing critical practice are not only familiar but also necessary; any long perspective on the history of how we read will reveal a continual swinging between the attending to content and the attending to form.

The question remains: which novels and plays and poems and works of nonfiction deserve to make their way 'onto anyone's reading list? In answering this question, content alone will not serve us; only when its content has been rendered "beautiful," to use Morrison's word, does a piece of writing call forth our lasting attention and vie for inclusion in the canon. As Eliot argued in 1919, it is only the "new (the really new) work of art" that permanently enters tradition and, in entering, alters it. And the "new," Eliot believes, can only be new if it marks an innovation in literary form.

I have divided the chapters in this volume into three sections: Modes, Forces, and Movements. The opening chapters on recognized kinds of utterances draw attention to the power of literary forms to persist and to renew themselves. Once it has been established that writers in the sixties succeeded in making it new, the volume then takes a more topical approach, one in which the shaping power of events and institutions is given greater attention. The volume ends by turning to questions of how writers succeed in grouping themselves together in order to achieve social change.

Contributors to this volume come to the form-content debate from their own unique angles of vision. As the general editor of the volume, I have made my

position clear but have not sought to achieve consensus on the question of just what was, in the American 1960s, truly new. The result is a gathering of essays indicative of the possible range of responses to the question of what constitutes a compelling and enduring work of art.

American Literature in Transition, 1970-1980 edited by Kirk Curnutt [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107150768]

American Literature in Transition, 1970-1980 examines the literary developments of the twentieth-century's gaudiest decade. For a quarter century, filmmakers, musicians, and historians have returned to the era to explore the legacy of Watergate, stagflation, and Saturday Night Fever, uncovering the unique confluence of political and economic phenomena that make the period such a baffling time. Literary historians have never shown much interest in the era, however - a remarkable omission considering writers as diverse as Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, Marilyn French, Adrienne Rich, Gay Talese, Norman Mailer, Alice Walker, and Octavia E. Butler were active. Over the course of twenty-one essays, contributors explore a range of controversial themes these writers tackled, from 1960s' nostalgia to feminism and the redefinition of masculinity to sexual liberation and rock 'n' roll. Other essays address New Journalism, the rise of blockbuster culture, memoir and self-help, and crime fiction - all demonstrating that the Me Decade was nothing short of mesmerizing.

American Literature in Transition, 1980-1990 edited by D. Quentin Miller [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781108415606]

History has not been kind to the 1980s. The decade is often associated with absurd fashion choices, neo-Conservatism in the Reagan/Bush years, the AIDS crisis, Wall Street ethics, and uninspired television, film, and music. Yet the literature of the 1980s is undeniably rich and lasting. American Literature in Transition, 1980-1990 seeks to frame some of the decade's greatest achievements such as Toni Morrison's monumental novel Beloved and to consider some of the trends that began in the 1980s and developed thereafter, including the origins of the graphic novel, prison literature, and the opening of multiculturalism vis-...-vis the 'canon wars'. This volume argues not only for the importance of 1980s American literature, but also for its centrality in understanding trends and trajectories in all contemporary literature against the broader background of culture. This volume serves as both an introduction and a deep consideration of the literary culture of our most maligned decade.

Excerpt: The Screen and the Page by D. Quentin Miller

We search for quintessential moments that can sum up a decade, snapshots that open the door to the larger story. It's not hard to think of defining moments for the 1980s, though it's hard to select the perfect one. Some good contenders are the 1981 debut of MTV with the almost too self-consciously constructed Buggles hit "Video Killed the Radio Star," the explosi0n of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986, or the soothing patriotic voiceover of Ronald Reagan's 1984 campaign ad that begins "It's morning again in America." What's more difficult is to penetrate beneath the surface of these key moments to figure out what they actually signified in a decade that was undeniably unstable. Positioned somewhere between the social revolutions of the 1960s and the dawn of the Information Age, the 1980s tend to be summarily dismissed. Gen Xers blush when confronted with its legacy. Preppies. Hair Metal. Dallas.' It was the decade of the shopping mall, of the divorce lawyer, of fad diets, and sit-com spinoffs, and movie sequels, and a wide array of music and fashion trends we would rather forget.

What is striking about many of these trends is how interconnected they are with screens. When the space shuttle Challenger exploded just after takeoff on January 28, 1986, comparisons to the Titanic disaster three-quarters of a century earlier were inevitable, but images of the Titanic's destruction could only exist in the imagination. The Challenger exploded on screen in front of millions of watching eyes. As the spacecraft dissolved into a serpent-like plume of white smoke, it was hard to separate what was happening on screen from the special effects that had come to be synonymous with contemporary blockbuster films. Reality and simulation were contested domains when the Challenger disintegrated. Three years earlier, the popular film WarGames featured a computer

hacker who believed he was playing a computer game when in fact he was linked into the US military's nuclear control system, and was on the verge of touching off World War III. Reagan, the Great Communicator, came to Americans via the silver screen, and his success stemmed from an uncanny ability to reframe himself on the smaller screens that now stood at the center of every living room in America. The satirical character Max Headroom — a television host generated by a computer who alternately spoke with authority and stuttered or dissolved into pixels — was clearly an icon of the times, and Doonesbury cartoonist Gary Trudeau did not have to do much work to translate him in his comic strip into Ron Headrest, a parody of Reagan. The culture was highly anxious that the line between the authentic and the artificial was blurry, or nonexistent, and Reagan's ability to control the medium didn't help. Video could both kill the radio star and create the politician. It could also capture tragedy and distance its audience from ensuing emotions.

It was, borrowing from theorist Jean Baudrillard, the decade of the simulacrum. "Simulation," he writes in 1983, "is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal." Take MTV, arguably the most influential American cultural force of the 1980s. "Music/Television." The two terms make strange bedfellows. Their offspring is a three-letter acronym that puts it firmly in the tradition of the television network (ABC, PBS, BBC, etc.), yet it begins with the "M," the music. The music is meant to be primary. Yet it wasn't uncommon in the 1980s to hear one teen say to another, "Have you seen the latest Michael Jackson song?" The music video format had to conquer rather than synthesize. Video had to kill the radio star rather than cooperating with him or her. The logo for MTV, tellingly, was an astronaut planting an MTV flag on the moon, colonizing territory that had already been claimed. The astronaut's face was a television screen. He might have been a robot. He was undoubtedly the "model of a real without origin or reality."

Or take Mork, a manic extraterrestrial played by Robin Williams. If you were channel-surfing in 1981— a quintessential 1980s activity made possible by the invention of the remote control — you might have flipped from MTV's screen-faced astronaut to Mork and Mindy, a sitcom set in present-day Colorado where a character named Mork from another planet actually had his origin in another sit-com, a nostalgic one about the 1950s. The inspiration for introducing Mork into a Happy Days episode came from an actual 1950s TV show, My Favorite Martian. Mork was not from Ork; he was from televisi0n. Enhanced by a new mode of transmission known as cable, television in the 1980s had become a world unto itself, with no real obligation to acknowledge the existence of the world it supposedly reflected. The decade's most p0pular sit-com was The Cosby Show, centered around an African American family whose economic prosperity was, for the majority of black Americans, not commensurate with reality. Film, too: one of the most recognizable phrases of the 1980s was the phrase, "Greed ... is good." It was spoken by Gordon Gekko, a fictional character in Oliver Stone's film Wall Street.

In short, America was confounded by the interface between the real and the unreal in the 1980s, and that interface was the television screen and its offspring: video games and computers. Looking for origins, outer space was a popular choice. Two popular MTV-inspired dances were "the Robot" and "the Moonwalk." Wildly popular movies like E. T: The Extra Terrestrial (1982) and Cocoon (1985) showed the young and old alike cavorting with space aliens. At the same time, the popular imagination was exploring the interface between the human mind and artificial intelligence on a much more theoretical and more down-to-earth level: that is, the interface between our brains and our machines. A science fiction genre called "cyberpunk" arrived in the 1980s. Its best-known illustration was the 1982 film Blade Runner, based on a 1968 story by Philip K. Dick about a dystopian future in which replicants have begun to take over people's bodies. The 1984 novel Neuromancer by William Gibson, the first chapters of which look strikingly like Blade Runner in a futuristic urban underworld where it always seems to be night, and raining, and sort of Japan, brings the reader into a new frontier called cyberspace, a computer-generated world where one can travel virtually.

In both texts, bodies are invaded. In Blade Runner, manufactured replicants resemble humans to the point that few can tell them apart. They are sent to space to perform manual labor, but return to

extend their "lives." In Neuromancer the protagonist is subjected to a toxic bodily implant that will leak and kill him if he does not perform his task of hacking. In her magnificent study How We Became Posthuman, N. Katherine Hayles pushes back against the developing notion that humans, like computers, are just information patterns, citing the importance of the body in establishing valid definitions of the human: "embodiment makes it clear that thought is a much broader cognitive function depending for its specificities on the embodied form enacting it." New technologies may be invading from outer space, or they may be under our skin. Either way, in the 1980s, considerable anxiety over technology and over a shifting relationship to the machines we had developed and brought into our lives constituted a potential threat.

One would think, then, that video would have no problem killing the author if it was capable of killing the radio star. What chance did literature have in a technology-obsessed culture in which pop stars asked "Are Friends Electric?" and explained sexual allure as "Science!" The author was already on the ropes: Michel Foucault had declared the metaphysical death of the author in 1969, around the time the media specialist Marshall McLuhan was building a career on the premise that print media were very much passé. Indeed, in terms of American cultural production, the 1960s were best known for music, and the 1970s are considered a golden age of cinema. The 1990s, of course, produced the Internet. Sandwiched between these decades, the 1980s, perhaps because of the extreme anxiety I describe above in terms of shifting technologies, embraced reading. It may sound like a joke at first, but the 1980s can be considered the greatest decade for American literature in the latter twentieth century. Literary critics from the academy crossed over into the mainstream: Harold Bloom, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Stanley Fish, Annette Kolodny, Stephen Greenblatt, Camille Paglia, Gilbert and Gubar (to name just a few) became nearly household names as they framed debates about "How to Read, and Why" (to pinch one of Bloom's many titles). Authors were discovering and inventing new modes (such as cyberpunk), capitalizing on new or hybrid forms (such as the graphic novel), tapping into cultural trends (such as "Brat Pack" fiction, finance fiction like Tom Wolfe's huge best seller The Bonfire of the Vanities, or the AIDS crisis), and, in many genres, producing some of the most mature, most important works in the American literary tradition (Morrison's Beloved, August Wilson's Twentieth Century Cycle, Rita Dove's Thomas and Beulah, to take three examples from the African American tradition alone). Despite the rise of MTV, HBO, the VCR, and other three-letter words, it was a decade when everyone was reading. Stephen King's novels alone accounted for more sales than any American author who has labored in his shadow ever since, to say nothing of romance novelist Danielle Steel or manufacturers of Cold War intrigue like Tom Clancy.

Although these are not necessarily "literary" authors, the borderline between popular culture and high culture had never been blurrier. Reading was, in many ways, democratized in the 1980s. To some extent, this trend can be seen as the triumph of postmodernism, a mode that certainly has the ability to alienate readers, but that also has the ability to make reading and writing delightful, playful, and limitless, mixing cultural trash and sophisticated thought as it does so. American postmodernism's emergence and pinnacle are often associated with the 1960s and 1970s when its main practitioners (Pynchon, Barth, Barthelme, Doctorow, and DeLillo) made their mark. But the 1980s can be seen as the decade where postmodernism became a contested category in need of articulation, despite (or more likely because of) Pynchon's disappearing act that lasted from 1973 until 1990. Barth began that decade with his essay "The Literature of Replenishment" in which he not only defines the category, but provides a list of its practitioners. Ihab Hassan in 1987's The Postmodern Turn also provides a (lengthy) list, and offers a table contrasting modernism and postmodernism. Barth writes, "My ideal postmodernist author neither merely repudiates nor merely imitates either his twentieth-century modernist parents or his nineteenth-century premodernist grandparents. He has the first half of our century under his belt, but not on his back." A decade earlier Hassan had written hopefully of an unburdened art as postmodernism matures: "I can only hope that after self-parody, self-subversion, and self-transcendence, after the pride and revulsion of anti-art will have gone their way, art may move toward a redeemed imagination,

commensurate with the full mystery of human consciousness."

By defining his ideal postmodernist as one who did not have his literary predecessors "on his back," Barth indicated a hope for the freedom from anxiety that had paralyzed him in the 1960s during a spate of writer's block, or the anxiety that Harold Bloom had identified in his influential 1973 study The Anxiety of Influence in which he examines the way "major" writers "wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death." Postmodernism's ethos was based on acceptance as well as experimentation. This acceptance led not only to new forms and subject matter for literature, but to new explorations of the source material for literature. The decade was marked not only by a turn toward popular culture, but to the stories of representatives of marginalized people: non-European immigrants, gay and lesbian writers, the lower middle class. Hence, Latino literature and Asian American literature, the further development of Native American and African American literature, the beginnings of contemporary prison literature, a new category of lower-middle-class writers sometimes known as "dirty realists" all stepped up during the 1980s and took their place next to the postmodernists, the cyberpunks, the Brat Pack writers, and the enduring white mid-century stylists like John Updike, Mary McCarthy, John Cheever, and Philip Roth.

And thus began "the canon debates" (sometimes called "wars") inside and outside the American academy. Hoping to expand the understanding of who "belonged" in the canon, a group of American literature scholars led by Paul Lauter brought out the first edition of The Heath Anthology of American Literature in 1980 to challenge not only contemporary definitions of the literary, but to restore to American literary history writers who had been forgotten due to a long tradition of bias that favored the experiences of white men of northwestern European descent over the many stories that constituted what they believed to be a truer version of our literary tradition. Even authors, notably Alice Walker, got into the business of recovering and honoring voices from the literary past who had been forgotten on the basis of their race and gender. One of the surprise bestsellers of the 1980s was in fact Zora Neale Hurston's 1937 novel Their Eyes Were Watching God. Walker argued vociferously and convincingly that it should be taken seriously as one of our national literary treasures, and as a result of her efforts it became a staple in high school and college courses after having fallen out of print for nearly a half-century. Worried that the current literary scene was too accepting of all comers, literary critics like Bloom became not just interpreters, but tastemakers, identifying works that deserved to be called literature and dismissing others as beneath notice. Reporting from the scorched battleground of the aftermath of the canon wars, Bloom writes ruefully of "the attack on poetry" that had reduced literature to "a mystification promoted by bourgeois institutions." Most contemporary readers would notice immediately that Bloom's canonical authors (as explored in The Western Canon) are all white, and mostly male, though he would scream that such readers were missing the point, but still: while refusing to surrender, Bloom realized in 1994 that he was on the losing side. (In 1987, celebrating the introduction of a new course that studied works by women and minorities in their curriculum, Stanford University students pinched a line from their 1960s predecessors and adapted it to the times, chanting, "Heave heave, ho ho, Western culture's got to go.") The battle raged throughout the 1980s, and multiculturalism (or what Bloom called "the new multiculturalism") clearly won.

The more we look at the literary scene in the 1980s, the richer it becomes. The canon debates were a necessary opening that validated the efforts of marginalized writers on a nearly unprecedented scale. As Trey Ellis writes in his influential 1989 essay "The New Black Aesthetic," "Somehow these dry, neoconservative Eighties ... are proving one of the most fertile periods black culture has ever known." The same might have been said of the 1950s, associated in the popular imagination with the arms race, Eisenhower, and Leave It to Beaver on the surface, but also the decade that saw the publication of Ellison's Invisible Man, James Baldwin's Giovanni's Room, Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun, as well as Gwendolyn Brooks's Pulitzer Prize in Poetry and Amiri Baraka's arrival on the literary scene. The screens that seem to reflect American cultural reality in the 1980s were capable of distorting what was really going on, including a literary flowering that was nearly unprecedented. Much of

what paraded across our screens in the 1980s was easily forgotten. The books written and published in that decade have proven much more enduring. As time passes, it may well be that everyone has forgotten MTV, Reagan's "Morning in America" ad, and even the Challenger disaster. The defining moment may well be when the title character of Toni Morrison's Beloved — a strong candidate for the Great American Novel — returns from the dead to insist on the enduring importance of her story.

The chapters in this volume are organized into three main groupings: themes, genres and formats, and institutions. In the first, some of the unique topics and modes of 1980s literature are examined. The first two chapters (by me and Kevin Ferguson) look at world mythology and tales of youth culture, or at least privileged, white youth culture (alluded to earlier as "Brat Pack fiction"). Chapters 3 and 4 by Kameelah L. Martin and Josef Benson regard womanism (the intersection of feminism and racial identity) and the resurgence of masculinity as a topic of literary inquiry, perhaps in response to the rise of feminism in the 1970s. The final three chapters in Part I analyze three dimensions of history that appeared widely in 1980s fiction: the Holocaust (S. Lillian Kremer), slavery (Beauty Bragg), and the

US war in Vietnam (Walter Hölbling). Part II gathers essays on genres that either developed or matured in the1980s. The novel sequence — brought to new heights in the 1980s by John Updike and Philip Roth, among others — provides the basis for Kathy Knapp's chapter on the evolution of Updike's Rabbit novels and Roth's Zuckerman novels in response to a changing cultural landscape. Katy Ryan looks into the origins of contemporary prison literature. Carl Sederholm scrutinizes the rise and rise of Stephen King in the 1980s while Thomas Gardner reveals developments in neoconfessional poetry, a genre in many ways the opposite of King's sprawling, dark fantasies. Brian Cremins gives an overview of the development of graphic narratives, Colleen Rua takes on the dichotomy between Broadway megamusicals and far less lucrative (if more consciously artful) off-Broadway theatre, and Evan Brier offers an original take on "dirty realism," a supposedly new genre that combined minimalism with working-class sensibilities.

Part III collects essays that marry the cultural, historical, and literary contexts of the decade under consideration. Mary Jo Bona offers a reading of the so-called culture wars in the academy that had as their battleground the status of the established literary canon. Nicole L. Sparling's essay troubles the study of "American literature" as a potentially colonial project and reads outward from US literature into the wider global literary landscape. Tyler Bradway's chapter involves literary works produced in response to the AIDS epidemic. Thomas Heise connects the violence that pervaded some 1980s fictional works to the rise of free-market ideology. The influence of neoconservative politics on 1980s literature is the subject of Bob Batchelor's essay. Leigh Claire LaBerge's chapter considers the literature of high finance. Concluding the volume, Steven Belletto's essay on the end of the Cold War questions how that monumental global event redirected the trajectory of a certain strain of American thought, setting the table for what George H. W. Bush termed the New World Order.

On that final note, there may have been something naïve about the type of thinking that accompanied the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. Realignments don't necessarily signify ends so much as transitions. A State Department official named Francis Fukuyama famously asked if the end of the Cold War marked "The End of History" in a 1989 essay (later a book) of that same title. He speaks of "the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." There have certainly been global and domestic events since then that have belied this premise. Even at the time, Fukuyama's essay was hotly debated and roundly disputed. The disintegration of the Iron Curtain did not mark the end of history in any sense, of course, but it might have marked the end of the 1980s, one final grasp for a defining phrase that would make the decade live on. In the short term: "Greed ... is good." "It's morning again in America." "The End of History?" In the long term: "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom." The decade marked neither the beginning of American literature nor its end, but one tremendously rich period in the middle.

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American Literature in Transition, 1990–2000 edited by Stephen J. Burn [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107136014]

Written in the shadow of the approaching millennium, American literature in the 1990s was beset by bleak announcements of the end of books, the end of postmodernism, and even the end of literature. Yet, as conservative critics marked the century's twilight hours by launching elegies for the conventional canon, American writers proved the continuing vitality of their literature by reinvigorating inherited forms, by adopting and adapting emerging technologies to narrative ends, and by finding new voices that had remained outside that canon for too long. By reading 1990s literature in a sequence of shifting contexts - from independent presses to the AIDS crisis, and from angelology to virtual reality - American Literature in Transition, 1990-2000 provides the fullest map yet of the changing shape of a rich and diverse decade's literary production. It offers new perspectives on the period's well-known landmarks, Toni Morrison, Thomas Pynchon, David Foster Wallace, but also overdue recognition to writers such as Ana Castillo, Evan Dara, Steve Erickson, and Carole Maso.

Excerpt: American Literature Under the Shadow of the Millennium by Stephen J. Burn

American Literature in Transition, 1990-2000 gathers twenty-three essays to present a collaborative map of the decade's shifting literary forms, obsessions, and crises. It does not attempt to curate the memory of a sequence of isolated literary works or authors, but instead tries to see

the decade in motion, thinking through both the ways American literature evolved in the period and the dynamic contexts that incubated such changes. Relentless change is figured as the default status of American history writ large in one of the decade's key texts when, near the end of Mason & Dixon (1997), Thomas Pynchon describes his two surveyors glimpsing a "a ceaseless Spectacle of Transition"' after they have marked the divide between the country's north and south. Settling a colonial boundary dispute and marking the border between what would be the free and slave states, Pynchon's characters might conceive of transition as encompassing large-scale, national ruptures: the War of Independence, the Civil War. Yet on smaller scales, transition can also mean succession in time, a localized metamorphosis, or adaptation to new conditions. These various resonances, working at both macro and micro levels, inform and shape the chapters that follow as they document the unusual diversity of literary production in a decade that Daniel T Rodgers describes as an "age of fracture."'

"Time has no divisions to mark its passage," Thomas Mann noted in The Magic Mountain (1924), "there is never a thunder-storm or blare of trumpets to announce the beginning of a new month or year. Even when a new century begins it is only we mortals who ring bells and fire off pistols." Although American literary and cultural history "has perennially" been conceived "in terms of decades," to abbreviate the "ceaseless Spectacle of Transition" to the dynamics of a single decade might seem to risk the kind of empty ceremony Mann identifies. The 1990s are particularly vulnerable to this charge, not just because of the vast cultural and historical weight that was placed on the arbitrary moment when the clock ticked past midnight on December's last day in 1999, but also because the two signal historical events that bookend the decade lie beyond its boundaries: the fall of the Berlin Wall in early November 1989, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The latter pair of events provides the frame for several earlier studies of the period. The former calls for much larger temporal perspectives that can take in the long arc of the American writer's fascination with the millennium.

The approach of the millennium exerted a magnetic attraction for American writers long before the last decade of the twentieth century. As Douglas Robinson has shown, because America was "settled by millenarian religious groups," apocalyptic imagery — not simply the end of the world, but in eschatological terms, "the unveiling of the future in the present, the encroachment of a radically new order into a historical situation that has disintegrated into chaos"' — has always run through American literature, especially in cohort with reflections on time and judgment. American history reminds us that such doctrines of last things need not be tied to the calendar's signal dates — William Miller's 100,000 followers famously expected a millennial conflagration on October 22, 1844 - yet the year 2000 remained compelling for many writers.

Edward Bellamy's speculative fiction, Looking Backward: 2000-1887 (1888), is a particularly representative carrier of the millennial infection. Bellamy's novel tells the story of Julian West, who goes to bed in May 1887, amid reports of imminent labor disputes, and awakens more than a century later in a tranquil Boston that embodies the utopian dream of perfect solidarity. Mingling the suspicion that this futuristic world has authentically "entered upon the millennium" 7 with a quasi-Darwinian explanation for the newly peaceful society, Bellamy's vision of the future at times comes chillingly close to unintentional cultural prophecies: West wakes up on the "tenth day of September in the year 2000," a year and a day before the first landmark moment for America's new century. But his relevance, here, is in the way that the imagined millennial future acts as a rhetorical tool to highlight and displace the inequities of Bellamy's present day through a series of inversions: the selfish nineteenth-century's "age of individualism" has been replaced by "that of concert"; class distinctions and the rise of "ever larger monopolies" are supplanted by a total redistribution of wealth, where business is "conducted in the common interest for common profit"; and even the "horrible babel" of advertising is succeeded by an age without billboards. Or rather, this world almost displaces the past, for in the book's last pages Bellamy suddenly returns West to the squalor and clamor of his nineteenth-century origins, before restoring him to the year 2000, as if, through this final narrative juxtaposition, to remind the reader that the need to

grapple with realities of the past should not be completely forgotten amid dreams of the millennial "solidarity of the race and the brotherhood of man."

The millennium, then, performed narrative labor for American novelists long before the twentieth century's last years, but to think of the 1990s as a coherent transitional moment does not mean that the decade's literature must be thought of in isolation from this longer history. John Updike's Toward the End of Time (1997), for instance, rewards being read from such a dual temporal perspective. Just as Bellamy mined the past for the conceit that drives his novel — Looking Backward is effectively an exponential rewrite of Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) — so, in this long view, does Updike seem to deliberately revise and update Bellamy's model in his late, millennial fiction. Not only does Updike imagine his narrator, Ben Turnbull, living in the twenty-first century as "a nineteenth-century-minded custodian of ... Dickens" (West's "prime favorite among the book writers")," but the books are also united by a sequence of parallels. Following Bellamy, Updike's vision of a postmillenial future (the book is set in 2020) measures time's passage by having his protagonist move around a reimagined Boston. Both authors estrange us from our contemporary moment by replacing the economic status quo with new monetary systems (Updike has "welders" replace dollars; Bellamy imagines an equitable system of credit). Finally, just as Bellamy brusquely returns West to the nineteenth century late in the book, so at key points does Updike's future world suddenly drop away to put Ben in earlier moments of historical transition: Ancient Egypt, Late Rome, Monastic Ireland, "Poland in early 1944." Time is uncertain in both books, and the past tugs each character backwards into the "abysmal well of time" in unpredictable ways.

Yet while Updike's novel might be read as echoing earlier instalments in the long history of American millenarianism, it can equally be set in its specific 1990s context, a process that marks differences, rather than continuities, from Bellamy. While Looking Backward can manage its dramatic shifts in time through the quaint narrative mechanism of "mesmeric sleep" and the "extraordinary dream," Updike instead draws on late twentieth-century quantum physics and its "Many Worlds Interpretation" to underwrite its sudden leaps beyond calendrical succession. In what Judie Newman calls a "syncretic and creative" elaboration on "the idea of many universes," Updike invokes the "little fork in reality when a quantum measurement is made" to allow "another universe, thinner than a razor blade" to slice into and potentially destabilize the authority of any given narrative moment. This approach parallels the work of a distinct strand of 1990s writers who set their novels in the quantum realm of parallel universes (notably Don DeLillo, Helen DeWitt, Thomas Pynchon, and David Foster Wallace), but Updike is arguably most characteristic of his 1990s moment — and most different from Bellamy — in his insistence that the postmillenial world's transitions will involve incremental decline rather than revolutionary breakthrough. From a purely pragmatic perspective, this difference partly reflects relative proximity to the year 2000: the millennial threshold, for Updike in 1997, is now too near to permit the total reversal and renewal of society that Bellamy allows. In place of the strategic inversions that characterize Bellamy's future world, Updike instead extrapolates his future from an extension and acceleration of current conditions. Toward the End of Time's America has, for instance, been devastated by a Sino-American conflict that, as Newman has shown, "closely resembles" arguments predicting a coming conflict with China that were developing in the 1990s. The logical conclusion of Updike's extrapolations is a decline whose scope is neatly encapsulated by a final comparison with Looking Backward. While Bellamy's novel can imagine millennial Boston made up of "public buildings of a colossal size and ... architectural grandeur," set next to the "sinuous Charles" like a "blue ribbon winding away to the sunset," more or less the same view is rendered in much bleaker terms in Updike's novel: "Looking back at the city's profile from ... above the Charles, we saw the blue-glass, postmodern downtown buildings darkened in their post-war desolation, and rusty stumps of projected construction that had been abruptly abandoned, as too expensive for our dwindled, senile world." Visions of waste and detritus were not always coded so negatively in the decade. A. R. Ammons's riffs that "garbage is spiritual," and the trash artists in DeLillo's Underworld (1997) spring to mind. But Updike's vision of decline is apocalypse in the

1990s vulgate, a vision dominated by the rhetoric of endtimes that becomes the keynote in much of the decade's literature and broader cultural discourse.

Published in the middle of the decade, John Barth's "The End: An Introduction" directly addresses the proliferation of such end-oriented discourse in the period. Barth's deft fiction is presented in the form of an introductory speech delivered to an audience who awaits the arrival of the main speaker, a writer-under-threat partly modeled on Taslima Nasrin and Salman Rushdie. As the speaker's arrival is delayed and delayed, the introducer starts to meditate on what Barth will later call "those fin-de-siècle and millenarian currents, more or less apocalyptic, much astir by the mid-1990s,"

> [A]s we end our century and millennium ... it is no surprise that the "terminary malady" afflicts us ... not long ago, believe it or not, there was an international symposium on "The End of Postmodernism" — just when we thought we might be beginning to understand what the term describes! In other jurisdictions, we have Professor Whatsisname on the End of History, and Professor So-and-So on the End of Physics (indeed, the End of Nature), and Professor Everybody-and-Her-Brother on the End of the Old World Order with the collapse of the Soviet Union and of international Communism.
>
> In short and in sum, endings, endings everywhere; apocalypses large and small .... The end of this, the end of that; little wonder we grow weary of `endism,' as I have heard it called.

As is typical of Barth's late fiction, what may seem mere rhetorical performance is a densely encoded distillation of the times that permits and rewards annotation. The sequence of End of titles begins with literary fiction, referring to the August 1991 Stuttgart seminars on "The End of Postmodernism," which featured Barth himself. His reflection that in the early 1990s "we might be beginning to understand what the term describes" on one level surely refers to the more formal updates on his seminal essays on literary exhaustion and replenishment that he presented in Stuttgart, yet from our perspective this phrase might also be linked to the appearance of Fredric Jameson's landmark volume, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, in 1991. "Professor Whatsisname" is Francis Fukuyama, cited here for his 1992 book-length expansion of his earlier claim that we had reached not simply the end of the Cold War but "the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." "Professor So-and-So" is presumably David Lindley, whose The End of Physics (1993) argued that speculative superstring theorists had become a branch of aesthetic theory, "because their theories could never be validated by experiments," while "the End of Nature" points to Bill McKibben's 1989 account of global warming and the worsening environmental crisis. Barth reminds us that such apocalyptic musings and their attendant political upheavals are not new, through his sly echo of a work from a different fin-de-siècle: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798), which Coleridge wrote through the last years of the French Revolution. Yet the range of parallel fields — moving from the literary, through global politics and advanced science, to emerging environmentalism — that are each arcing toward endings and perhaps renewal speaks to the way the proximate millennium's shadow gathered an unusual concentration of transitional moments within the decade. In light of these intersecting discourses, Jay Prosser's claim in American Fiction of the 1990s (2008) that "the figure for the 1990s may be trans: transnational, transhistorical, and transitional" seems apposite.

The decade certainly featured works that ask — like Toward the End of Time — to be read in the longer history of a specifically millennial transition: Richard Powers's Gain (1998) retells the story of William Miller's belief that the millennium would arrive in 1844; Wallace's Infinite Jest (1996) plays with the etymology of millennial apocalypse through its multiple veils and games of eschaton; and DeLillo's research materials for Underworld's vision of "Last Things" include documents that helpfully explain "How Should I Prepare to Be Raptured?" But as the chapters gathered in this book illustrate, while millennial energies are rife, the period's literary trigger points often stem from the larger end-oriented debates that Barth glossed in his short fiction. Part I maps different iterations of the millennial sense of an ending across 1990s

American literature. Chapter 1 considers the intermingling of hope and terror in the decade's developing apocalyptic imagination, as represented by Jorie Graham, Steve Erickson, and Don DeLillo. As Jeremy Green shows, in some cases (Tim LaHaye's and Jerry Jenkins's Left Behind series, for example), such visions are explicitly based in Biblical writings, yet with notable exceptions (Norman Mailer's mild expansion of Biblical sources in The Gospel According to the Son [1997]), the period typically saw such staples of millennial religion as the appearance of angels or the return of the dead float free of their traditional religious valence. In Chapter 2, Brian McHale examines the presence of such angels, in particular, through a wide-ranging discussion of works by Ana Castillo, Tony Kushner, and Thomas Pynchon.

Moving beyond the accoutrements of millenarianism, the next four chapters trace literary shifts in relation to various end-oriented discourses. The end of the twentieth century seemed to overlap with the ends (either real or imagined) of a sequence of aging male writers' careers. While some of these writers released final books that had been decades in the making (Ralph Ellison's posthumous Juneteenth [1999] is a key example), others (Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Norman Mailer) turned toward retrospection after enormously prolific careers. Marshall Boswell examines such late works in Chapter 3. Rhetoric of approaching end-times was often accompanied by iconic visual footage of escalating violence in the period, but the period's specifically literary explorations of violence might be classified into two tracks. On the first track, writers were drawn magnetically to signal instances of earlier twentieth-century violence (James Ellroy and Mailer on Lee Harvey Oswald; John Edgar Wideman on the 1985 bombing of a Philadelphia row home in Philadelphia Fire [1990]). On the second track, there were meditations on what seemed to be specifically 1990s manifestations of violence (Anne Deveare Smith's one-woman play response to the Rodney King beating; Chuck Palahniuk and Bret Easton Ellis on crises in masculinity; Joyce Carol Oates's near-encyclopedic sequence of books on rape, serial killers, child murder, and so on). In Chapter 4, Sean Grattan reads the LA riots as crystallizing larger violent social changes in the period, setting the events of 1992 alongside later works by Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and Dennis Cooper.

While the 1990s saw the fundamental staples of a postmodern metafiction that many critics had almost solely associated with white, male writers, adopted and adapted by a much broader swathe of multiethnic writers (so Sherman Alexie's superb The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven [1993] revels in funhouse imagery, stories-embedded-within-stories, and traces the ubiquity of television's "white noise"), it has nevertheless become commonplace to see literary postmodernism abruptly coming to an end in the decade, to be simplistically succeeded by some successor movement that abandons all trace contamination of its literary ancestors. This move is no doubt related to the increasing prominence of orphans in millennial work (Lethem's Motherless Brooklyn [1999], Eggers's Heartbreaking Work [2000], Foer's Everything is Illuminated [2002]), even as it ignores the continued productivity of writers such as Robert Coover, John Barth, and William Gass in the twenty-first century. What it also ignores (as Ralph Clare demonstrates in Chapter 6) is that narratives of the end of postmodernism were themselves a narrative propounded by a postmodernist fiction that had been "playing posthumous" for much of the decade. One of the central figures in early constructions of American postmodernism — Robert Coover — was also (perhaps unwittingly, as David Ciccoricco shows in Chapter 5) one of the key architects of the decade's fascination with the end of the book and the corresponding rise of electronic fictions.

Part II shifts the focus to changing forms in the decade, though in many ways this topic retains a millennial flavor. The "formal sense of millennium," DeLillo has noted, "not only looks ahead to the year 2000 but recollects as well." In Bellamy and Updike this dual temporal perspective is manifest in the way both books shuttle between different eras, but a comparable effort to look forward by dwelling on the past is manifest throughout this section. Chapter 7 traces the encyclopedic novel's development in the hands of the younger writers whose apprenticeship was indebted to ancestor texts by DeLillo, Gaddis, and Pynchon. The historical novel has always worked the hinge between recollection and speculation, but — as John Duvall demonstrates in Chapter 8 — the

unusual centrality of historical fiction in the decade stems from a post—Cold War intellectual climate that made history the time's "key cultural issue." One of the key binaries, for Duvall, is represented by the divergent interpretations offered by Linda Hutcheon and Fredric Jameson of history in novels from the 1970s; for lyric poets in the 1990s, Thomas Gardner (Chapter 9) identifies a different opposition whose resolution finds echoes throughout the decade. Gardner reads the changing form of 1990s lyric poetry as the result of a hybrid aesthetic that spliced the previous decade's opposed camps — poets committed to a program of realist self-expression and those pursuing more avant-garde strategies — into a fertile union. Similar hybrids are charted in Paul March-Russell's account of the revival of the story cycle (Chapter 10), which moves from Tim O'Brien, through Louise Erdrich, to A. M. Homes, and in Mary K. Holland's discussion of the competing claims of physicality and textuality in Mark Z. Danielewski, William Gass, and Carole Maso (Chapter 11).

Part II ends with two chapters that explicitly engage with the split temporal perspective that DeLillo accords the formal millennium. In Chapter 12, Rachel Greenwald Smith examines debates about self-expression that stem from the way the decade's fiction manifestoes often looked to the future by looking backwards. In Chapter 13, Christian Moraru examines the revisionary strategies that we have seen employed by Bellamy and Updike, in a much wider context that carries into the book's later explorations of globalization.

If the 1990s were rife with millennial imagery that, as Douglas Robinson has argued, stemmed back to "the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony," the legacy of the European arrival in the New World inevitably carried a different valence for different segments of American society. Danzy Senna's 1998 passing novel, Caucasia, for instance, satirizes the equation of American history and whiteness not just in her choice of title but also by having her mixed-race central character, Birdie, be ferried around the country in a car that's a near echo of Christopher Columbus's La Pinta. Ironically replaying America's colonization in a fashion comparable to Gerald Vizenor's The Heirs of Columbus (1991), these scenes typically insulate Birdie from the world around her rather than bringing genuine contact: "[S]ometimes when we drove around in the back of my mother's Pinto, I would stare at the children outside with newfound interest, wondering which one of them I would become." Growing recognition of America's long-standing plurality brought an overdue critique not just of the illusory racial neutrality of the American literary canon (notably by Toni Morrison's Playing in the Dark [1992]) but more generally of the category of national identity. As Katha Pollitt reported in 1994, "Sheldon Hackney of the National Endowment for the Humanities wants to fund what he calls a `national conversation' to determine what it means to be an American. Hackney himself acknowledges that he does not know the answer, but believes the question is worth pursuing."

Part III begins with the pressing need to think of both American identity and 1990s American literature in more expansive terms, both in terms of the period's changing conception of "borders" (addressed by Aliki Varvogli in Chapter 14's discussion of Cormac McCarthy, Karen Tei Yamashita, and Jhumpa Lahiri) and in the increased prominence of globalizing forces (as mapped by Paul Giles in Chapter 15, with an eye on Jessica Hagedorn, Bob Shacochis, and DeLillo). Emphasis on globalization and interconnectivity often functioned — at the largest scale — in terms of emerging debates about the ecosystem, which Heather Houser takes up in Chapter 17's discussion of Leslie Marmon Silko, Richard Powers, and David Foster Wallace. As Houser's references to biology and geology show, addressing ecology in the 1990s often required interdisciplinary perspectives. The wider blurring of the line, between what was once the clear domain of the literary and the scientific, in the 1990s is addressed in Jon Adams's discussion of "the Two-Cultures Novel" (Chapter 16), a designation that ranges from Barbara Kingsolver's Animal Dreams (1990) to Jonathan Lethem's Motherless Brooklyn (1999). The different kinds of interconnectivity explored in this chapter were variously enabled, studied, or imagined during the period by emerging computer networks and technologies. This section ends with Joseph Conte's assessment of the way the decade's literature (by Neal Stephenson, Richard Powers, and Pat Cadigan) responded to the various utopian promises offered by virtual reality, which once seemed to represent the leading edge of such technologies.

While globalizing technologies reshaped America at the largest scale, those same technologies were often also implicated in reshaping life at much smaller levels. While many major social networking platforms only emerged after the millennium — MySpace in 2003, with Facebook appearing the following year — the foundations of the social media revolution are strongly rooted in the nineties, with, for instance, the 1995 development of Classmates.com in the United States. If social media provides a membrane through which the once private becomes public, then its emergence in the 1990s might be seen in the context of a cluster of other intersections of the public and private whose literary ramifications are considered under the umbrella of the book's fourth section. Near the start of the decade, Madonna published her coffee-table book Sex (1992), and its implicit meditation on the relationship of sex and power proved unintentionally prophetic as the decade saw a sequence of scandals that brought private sex acts into the public domain of specifically political power as, first the Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinksy scandal, and then the Hemings-Jefferson controversy unfurled. Such major news stories provide the backdrop for literary reflections on both the reputed demise of the quintessential American family and its attendant mythology (in Chapter 20, Kasia Boddy's wide-ranging study triangulates the family, television, and writers from Edwidge Danticat to Junot Diaz), and for the prominence of AIDS narratives as a representative example of one way that the private world of sex was brought into wider public discourse in the decade (Lesley Larkin's account of Tony Kushner, Rabih Alameddine, and Jamaica Kincaid, in Chapter 21). As Patrick O'Donnell observes, the public revelation of sexual offenses was also at the heart of the outpouring of recovered memory debates in the period, and this shift is considered in concert with the rise of Trauma theory in the academy in Chapter 19.

The book's final section considers the decade's changing institutional foundations. The 1990s were rife with typically end-oriented accounts of the deleterious impact of specifically academic institutions on literature. Alvin Kernan announced The Death of Literature (1990), charging that academic culture wars had "emptied out" canonical works "in the service of social and political causes that are considered more important than the texts themselves." Moving in parallel, Harold Bloom's The Western Canon (1994) offered "an elegy for the canon," as "the ages of reading ... now reach terminus" leaving an "almost wholly ... oral and visual culture." John W. Aldridge blamed the rise of creative writing programs for producing a generation of writers whose work was "technically conservative, stylistically bland, and often extremely modest in intention." Both Kernan's and Bloom's positions have been read as reactionary responses to the unsettling of white male power in the university, something like the critical equivalent of the struggle David Mamet dramatized in Oleanna (1992). Many voices, of course appropriately celebrated the unsettling of the conservative canon: Jay Clayton's The Pleasures of Babel, for instance, welcomed the creation of a "literature without masterpieces," a pluralistic vision where no single "writer or style" could "hold sway"; Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s address, "Canon-Formation, Literary History, and the Afro-American Tradition," similarly saw "wondrous" potential for black canon formation (a widely discussed topic across the decade) at the decade's start. But while it was often reactionary complaints that made the decade's news (the New York Times responded to The Western Canon's publication by christening Bloom "a colossus among critics"), as Daniel Punday illustrates in Chapter 22, axial changes to the university took place away from the headlines, and need to be read in relation to economics rather than the canon.

Massive economic and institutional changes also provide the backdrop for the final chapter's discussion of independent presses. Corporate consolidation across all areas of American life characterizes the 1990s, and in literary publishing the power and influence of a small group of publishers expands greatly by decade's end. In spite of such imperial expansion, Jeffrey Di Leo nevertheless documents the resilient vitality of independent presses in the decade, which served as a home and an incubator for both avant-garde experimenters and multi-ethnic writers (Chapter 23). While (as earlier chapters demonstrate) there is a strong eschatological flavor running through much of the decade's thinking, independent presses and affiliated magazines were often home to more forward-thinking currents. In October 1992, for instance, the University of Kentucky's ANQ acknowledged the prevailingly "bleak commercial

conditions," yet gathered a sequence of writers and critics to speculate on the future of American fiction, identifying such younger figures as Susan Daitch, Steve Erickson, William T. Vollmann, David Foster Wallace, and Mark Leyner as writers-to-watch in the coming decade. Four years later, the Review of Contemporary Fiction followed suit, asking Wallace to edit a forum called "The Future of Fiction," drawing in such writers as Franzen, Vollmann, Bradford Morrow, and Carole Maso.

That so many of these writers might be associated with independent publications and yet be published by mainstream presses before the decade ended points to the prevailing trend in the 1990s for what was once marginal to become mainstream. In music, Nirvana and grunge displace Michael Jackson. In cinema, Pulp Fiction breaks records for an "indie" film. In literature, not only is this shift manifest in the arc of Dave Eggers's career, moving from early work within the model of the "little magazine" to the mainstream success of A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, but also — in larger terms — in the fate of African-American writers who, as Prosser notes, "began their careers in the 1970s and 1980s redefining the canon" and then "became central to it and set the trends for their times." No single figure reflects this shift more completely than Toni Morrison, who, in 1993, became the first African-American writer to win the Nobel Prize.

The 1990s are still close enough for recent memory to make the decade available for nostalgic consumption, but they have receded sufficiently for the difference between our millennial reflections on the decade and the time's judgment on itself to be revealing. At times, such differences are simply terminological: the Gulf War of 1990-1991, for instance, must

now be known as the first Gulf War. In other cases, they involve wholesale reevaluations. In 1996, for example, Granta ran its first special issue devoted to picking the "Best of Young American Novelists." The list was noted even at the time for its tame selection — David Lodge (in terms that echo Aldridge's attack on Creative Writing programs) diagnosed "nothing very startling or ambitious" in the work chosen, but rather a "certain sameness" amid "a high standard of technical competence" — and the passing of years has not often endorsed the judges' cultural speculations, especially in their narrow preference for a kind of well-behaved dirty realism. Preparing a new list in 2007, even Granta's editor — Ian Jack — wisely repudiated the 1996 list, lamenting "judges with God-knows-what axes to grind in California or Kansas." At times the essays gathered in this book return to debates current in the decade about key transitions — the emergence of hypertext fiction, the end of postmodernism, and so on — but they also rely on the wisdom of distance to identify shifts that were less remarked at the time — the prevalence of AIDS narratives, the role of independent presses, the changing shape of the lyric. In doing so, they cover many of the widely recognized key works from the decade, but they also seek out less familiar names, deliberately aiming not just to enlarge our sense of how literature changed in this decade-in-transition, but also of who helped drive those transitions.

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American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 edited by Rachel Greenwald Smith [American Literature in Transition, Cambridge University Press, 9781107149298]

American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 illuminates the dynamic transformations that occurred in American literary culture during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The volume is the first major critical collection to address the literature of the 2000s, a decade that saw dramatic changes in digital technology, economics, world affairs, and environmental awareness. Beginning with an introduction that takes stock of the period's major historical, cultural, and literary movements, the volume features accessible essays on a wide range of topics, including genre fiction, the treatment of social networking in literature, climate change fiction, the ascendency of Amazon and online booksellers, 9/11 literature, finance and literature, and the rise of prestige television. Mapping the literary culture of a decade of promise and threat, American Literature in Transition, 2000-2010 provides an invaluable resource on twenty-first century American literature for general readers, students, and scholars alike.

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This volume charts the literary production of the early twenty-first century by tracing its major historical, institutional, and aesthetic changes. The project therefore engages in an analysis of a very recent historical period that is nevertheless a discrete, closed one. While most scholarly works on twenty-first-century literature to date have been efforts to think "the contemporary" as it evolves in real time, this volume examines a brief slice of our present that is already a part of our past.' Indeed, when we think of the eight years of the George W. Bush administration or the immediate aftermath of the election of Barack Obama, we might feel very far from this decade that is nevertheless so close to our present. The 2000S are, in many ways, contemporary: they saw the rise of the iPhone, of Facebook and Twitter, of the War on Terror, and of the Great Recession, which are all still major influences on our world today. But by the end of 2010, many of the historical events that have defined our present had not yet occurred.

We would have to wait until the 2010s for the expansion of social networking to coalesce into the Arab Spring, the aftermath of the recession to incite Occupy, post-race thinking to see its refusal in the Black Lives Matter movement, and the privacy infringements of the Patriot Act to be countered by the whistleblowing of Edward Snowden.

When midnight struck on January 1, 2000, there was little of the apocalyptic Y2K chaos that some anticipated, and the millenarian prophecies of so much cultural production of the 1990s seemed unfulfilled. Despite Prince's warning that "2000-zero-zero" would mean "party over with, out of time," we largely went on dancing in the early weeks of 2000 as if nothing had changed.2 But within a few months, so many of the structures that marked the 1990s had begun to crumble. First, there was the end of the dot-com bubble. As Jonathan Franzen puts it in his 2001 novel, The Corrections, albeit with a touch of already-nostalgic hyperbole, the late 1990s were "the years in America when it was nearly impossible not to make money, years when receptionists wrote MasterCard checks to their brokers at 13.9%

APR and still cleared a profit." The end of this era came in the form of the steep decline in the NASDAQ and, consequently, most major stock market indices in spring 2000. The disputed election of November 2000 initially signaled a degree of political continuity from the 1990s, given the moderate approach that both parties favored — the Bill Clinton administration, of which Al Gore was a part, had moved to the right during its second term, and George W. Bush's campaign had been successful largely in its appeal to a proto-liberal "compassionate conservatism." As it turned out, however, the election would open the door to the notoriously hawkish administration of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld. Finally, the events of September 11, 2001, and their immediate aftermath dramatically changed the geopolitical imagination of most US citizens, involved major transformations in domestic law, and led to the advent of a war that would last for the rest of the decade and beyond. So when we look back to the 1990s, to a world with no Friendster, MySpace, or Facebook, to a Federal Prime Rate of nearly 9 percent, to a moment that preceded MP3 players, when the name "Katrina" held no large-scale significance, we can say that it was during the 2000s that many of the most significant economic, technological, and social touchstones of our contemporary moment emerged.

Focusing on the literary culture of the turn of the twenty-first century, the 1990s might not, at first blush, seem as distant as they do when considered in terms of geopolitics, technology, and economic realities. After all, it was the 1990s that many literary critics agree saw a definitive departure from the most recent literary movement about which there has been large-scale consensus: postmodernism. The 1990s saw the initiation of large-scale suspicion toward and innovations away from postmodernism among high literary authors. The 2000s might, then, be understood to merely extend those innovations, and be therefore in literary historical terms more continuous than disjunctives. To some extent, this is, indeed, the case. One way to frame the literary climate of the 2000s is to say that it saw the fulfillment of many of the stated, but not yet thoroughly achieved, goals of writers of the 1990s. As Adam Kelly argues in his chapter in this volume, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century a conservative formal stance against postmodernist experimentalism "had coalesced into a self-conscious movement in American fiction." In 1996, Jonathan Franzen's stated mission to reject postmodernist social critique in favor of what he defined as the "conservative" posture of

psychological realism might have seemed like a radical pronouncement. But by the publication of his novel, Freedom, in 2,010, the author would appear on the cover of Time magazine as an icon of the literary scene of the 2000s. The 1990s and the 2000s can both be periodized as, to borrow Andrew Hoberek's term, "After Postmodernism," but that posture in the 1990s looked like a polarizing confrontation, while in the 2000s it looked more like collaboration, as authors increasingly drew from a range of stylistic tools. What resulted from this truce between formal experimentalism and formal conservatism was mind-bendingly plural, as the diverse chapters of this volume attest. Despite this plurality, there was a general acceptance among 2000s authors and critics that the literary landscape had become unanchored from any single descriptive periodizing term, an acceptance that would have pleased, but nevertheless surprised, writers like Franzen and David Foster Wallace in the late 1990s.

If the literary climate of the 2000s should be characterized primarily by its plurality, by its comfort with withdrawing from the kind of large-scale periodizing movement that many postmodernist writers knowingly positioned themselves within, then how to give shape to this unruly decade? It is the argument of this volume that we can identify two separate, and often conflicting, valences of subjective experience that the economic, social, technological, and political circumstances of the decade produced. The literary movements that this volume maps reflect these dueling impulses in a wide range of themes, formal approaches, contexts, and genres.

On the one hand, the first decade of the twenty-first century was marked by a series of crises: a disputed election, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Great Recession. These events brought renewed attention in American cultural production to some of the great themes of literature: violence, war, global contact, and environmental change. Paired with the prevailing climate of suspicion toward postmodernist formal orthodoxies, the belief that American literature should again engage in earnest with the realities of human experience quickly became commonplace in the early years of the century, as the political, economic, and ecological realities of the time accelerated and cemented aesthetic changes already in process. The urgency of war, of planetary threat, and of sudden mass unemployment provided ample evidence to support the notion that the cerebral experiments of experimentalist writing should give way to more accessible forms — including memoir, psychological realism, and lyric poetry — that might better give direct voice to human experience.

On the other hand, there occurred a set of equally significant changes that took place without widely publicized disruptions or signal events. These include the growth in digital technology with its reach to the most basic social structures that govern everyday experience and the increased twenty-first century saw the distance between the popular and the highbrow closing. As Andrew Hoberek argues in his chapter, the twentieth century was, in some ways, unique in literary history in its development of two apparent formal choices for fiction writers: realism or experimentalism. "What gets excluded when this shift occurs," he argues, "is a third realm of fictional possibility ... the simultaneously non-realistic and nonexperimental world of genre fiction." This third realm once again comes to prominence in the 2000s, a decade in which, he argues, "It is no longer possible to distinguish realism confidently from genre fiction." And even within the realm of genre fiction, the decade sees a blurring of boundaries, evidenced by the rise of competing terms for genre fuzziness, including "the New Wave Fabulism," "slipstream," and "speculative fiction." Kate Marshall contends in her chapter on fabulism that the proliferation of such terms suggests "a simultaneous desire to taxonomize and to develop alternatives to rigid taxonomies" during the period, a desire that might be productively understood to accompany the decade's push toward formal hybridization in general. High literary culture's embrace of popular forms, however, also required some tricky rhetorical footwork. Philip Maciak argues, for instance, that the tendency for critics in the 2000s to declare that television series had become "the new novel" should be read within a larger context of contested sites of valuation and media history. In particular, such claims tend to be motivated as much by anxiety about the fate of the novel as any complex understanding of televisual form. While the novel and television undoubtedly can be mutually illuminative, they can also coexist. "To suspect that the novel must either surrender bloodlessly or fight

its rival to the death," Maciak writes, "is to advocate a particularly extreme understanding of cross-media influence."

Alongside these self-conscious experiments in generic hybridity were also literary modes that sought out a more direct representation of reality. And yet, as Daniel Worden observes in his chapter on memoir, early twenty-first-century writers were keenly aware of the interventions of postmodernism and poststructuralism which saw the linguistic representation of human experience as being impossible. Contemporary memoirs, in his view, therefore "[hold] out hope for a kind of authentic way of being in the world, while also acknowledging the mediations that make that authenticity difficult to capture." Similarly, Lee Konstantinou sees in the neorealist impulse in twenty-first-century fiction a direct response to, rather than a side-stepping of, postmodernist critique. For Konstantinou, "varieties of neorealism all recognize the contingency of the language game of realism but play the game without (or with less) anxiety." And, as Stephen J. Burn notes, contrary to literary critics who saw realist characterization as offering the most authentic representation of human experience, the persistence of postmodern stylistic techniques in 2000s novels better reflects the insights of the neuroscientific research of the period. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that the diverse styles, movements, and works highlighted in the second section of this volume, entitled "The Return of Authenticity," demonstrate that while the impulse to represent authentic experience might be understood as a "return," the formal operations of these texts are just as often innovative as conservative.

Konstantinou, for instance, argues that neorealist fiction can be understood to fall into two broad categories. On one hand, he argues, there are novels like Franzen's The Corrections that see realism as a genre that one might embrace knowingly in opposition to postmodernism. These novels often thematically address the problems with postmodernism as explicit defenses of their realist forms. On the other hand, there are novels like Sheila Heti's How Should a Person Be? (2010) that see realism as an epistemological aim that might require nonrealist formal strategies. These works, unlike those in the first grouping, see "the real" as something that might be representable outside of "realist" form. Mitchum Huehls also offers a formal taxonomy for understanding literary efforts to grapple with authentic experience in his chapter on historical fiction. For Huehls, the historical novel as Georg Lukács and Fredric Jameson envisioned it finds itself under threat after the end of the Cold War. But, he argues, "that does not necessarily mean that contemporary authors have abandoned the project of `making history appear.' It's just that what counts as `history' has changed, as have the techniques deployed for its conjuring." Indeed, as Huehls points out, the major events of the 2000s including 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina mean that authors of the period register the fact that "we are drowning in history once again." But this registration can take the form of everything from the persistence of postmodern or realist forms to new versions of historical genre fiction, speculative fiction, and even a future-oriented "historical" science fiction. As Georgiana Banita contends, even 9/11 fiction, often held up as the subgenre of 2000s literature that most requires a position interested in representing experience with as much verisimilitude as possible, takes a range of forms, casting the event variously in personal, political, historical, and even ecological terms.

The third section of the volume, entitled "Digital Revolutions," similarly grapples with the relationship between the authentic and the artificial, but does so by focusing on literary practices that took up the increasingly mediated quality of experience in the digital age. Just as literary works interested in getting at the reality of human experience had to engage with the inescapability of the distorting forces of mediation, these works that are all about mediation also end up having more to do with experience, emotion, and embodiment than one might think. As Scott Selisker finds, the decade saw the publication of works like Jennifer Egan's A Visit from the Goon Squad that positioned social networking as the antithesis of something like the punk ideal of authenticity and no-sell-out values, but it also saw the rise of works like Karen Tei Yamshita's I Hotel that figured the network formally as a pro-social, politically engaged force of interconnection. Similarly, Lindsay Thomas argues that while some works of literature in the 2000s reconfigure the reader as a technological "user," minimizing the need for interpretation and imagining their audiences as surface recipients of

information, the experience of the user is not, as some scholars have suggested, merely instrumental. Instead, users of texts can be understood to be immersed in a textual experience that is deeply affective, just as our engagements with technology during the decade — particularly visible with the rise of the iPhone and iPad — were interactive, pleasurable, and sensorially engaged. Jennifer Ashton demonstrates that efforts to purge the lyric impulse from poetry in the form of conceptual experiments — experiments often motivated by the conviction that digital culture had made the creative agent unimportant — actually culminated in a renewed emphasis on subjectivity, taste, and expression. And for Brian Kim Stefans, even the seemingly impersonal foundation of digital media — the algorithm — has a material life. Giving rise to a mind-boggling array of textual practices, from neo-Oulipian text-based poetry to entirely digital interactive video game narratives, algorithmic writing is, for Stefans, ambivalently positioned such that it might have social influence even if it has been largely depoliticized.

Having mapped the expansive role of digital culture in the 2000s, the volume moves on to address global and planetary changes that informed the decade's social, political, and ecological contexts. Beginning with Francis Fukuyama's 1989 suggestion that the end of the Cold War had ushered in "the end of history," the 1990s were marked by discourses of globalization that saw the nation-state as on the wane and an interconnected world as a space of either utopian promise or apocalyptic threat." In direct contrast, as a result of the global recessions of 2000 and 2008 along with the terrorist attacks of 2001, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw a renewed belief in the relevance of borders, states, and scarcity. At the same time, the expansion of global markets continued apace, formal and informal migration into the US continued, and the media's focus on the terrorist threat meant that American life became increasingly unthinkable outside of its global context. Many scholars in the period therefore argued with growing conviction that the study of contemporary American literature should be understood in the context of the hemispheric and global dynamics that informed both US experience and writing.

This desire to register the experience of Americans within a global context also confronted the central conundrum of the decade: how to represent the immediacy of individual experience and the constructed nature of that experience at the same time? The answer, according to the authors in this volume's "Transnational Currents" section, is often a turn to literary forms — genre fiction, documentary poetics, allegorical writing, and writing that intentionally positions itself as to some degree autonomous from its social context — that highlight their own artificiality even as they grapple with the material effects of global forces. For instance, both Emilio Sauri and Timothy Melley argue that literary representations of subjective experience might elide structural economic and geopolitical conditions that can only be seen from a position of remove. In his chapter on borders and migration, Sauri argues that much of transnational literature and literary criticism has failed to fully register the shaping force of the global economy. Efforts to get at the particularity of transnational experience, identity, and cultural marginalization in 2000s literature and literary criticism, he argues, have led to a dangerous erasure of the economic structures that inform and shape these forms of life. Similarly, Melley finds that efforts to represent the War on Terror from the perspective of American individuals often run into the problem of widespread American blindness as to the reality of the conflict. For Melley, the noted lack of traditional combat narratives about the War on Terror is the effect of the particularities of the conflict, which he argues is "less a war than a new security paradigm." As a result, the American experience of the War on Terror was often one of "public befuddlement, naivete, and unknowing." Allegorical narratives like Jess Walter's The Zero and Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist, then, become the preferred mode of representation of the War on Terror because of their ability to bridge the gap between the bewilderment of individual experience and a larger structural analysis of geopolitical forces. A similar interest in the power of nonrealist forms to register complex global dynamics motivates Annie McClanahan's chapter on financialization, which argues that a prevailing account of twenty-first-century

global capitalism that focuses on the fictional quality of baroque financial instruments finds its challenge in a range of literary texts, including

works of documentary and experimental poetry, science fiction, farce, and allegory. These works, McClanahan finds, highlight the contradictions that exist between the apparent abstraction of financial instruments and the precarious material forces that underpin the global economy, including the instability of state-based political power, the limits of resource extraction, and the damaging effects of exploitative labor practices.

Much of the literature of the 2000s was concerned with the tension between the desire to represent immediate experience and the need to contend with the mediated nature of that experience. The environmental literature of the period responds to this tension by pointing to the artificiality of what might appear to be the most unmediated dimension of experience: nature itself. As a result, ecocriticism, a subfield initially institutionally recognized in the 1990s, turned toward intersectional, interdisciplinary, transnational, and planetary frameworks that demand a grappling with not only the natural, understood as that which is not human, but the ecological, understood as systems of living and nonliving things that include humans. This shift is chronicled in this volume's section entitled "The Ecological Turn." In the opening chapter to the section, Janet Fiskio and Sophia Bamert argue that one of the major changes to the field of environmental literature during the decade came with the awareness that texts not explicitly about the natural world - from Patricia Smith's book of poetry about Hurricane Katrina, Blood Dazzler to Chang-rae Lee's novel about race and suburbanization, Aloft — can be productively read through an ecocritical lens. Likewise, Jonathan Skinner sees the transition between pastoral poetics and what he calls "post-pastoral ecopoetics" as relying upon the dissolution of binaries between the natural and the unnatural, the urban and the rural, the center and the periphery. He writes that while "pastoral historically has reinforced a distinction between figure and ground," this distinction has been troubled to the point of dissolution by "an erosion of the American exception" that has come with the decade's many crises. These signals of "vulnerability to a world system" undermine the central logic of the pastoral, making it the form no longer fit for the representation of twenty-first-century environmental concerns.

Of these concerns, perhaps the most paramount during the decade was climate change, increasing awareness of which gave rise to the literary subgenre of climate change fiction or "cli-fi." As Matthew Schneider-Mayerson argues, climate change fiction has an enormous formal span. Some works, like those he defines as "denial, avoidance, acceptance" narratives, utilized "hybrid realisms" to personalize the understanding of climate change and offer model conversion narratives to a potentially skeptical public. Others, like those he calls "cautionary fables of the Anthropocene," take on dystopian or postapocalyptic scenarios to imagine what a world after a climate catastrophe might look like. Looking forward, however, SchneiderMayerson suggests that climate change fiction may be a fleeting subgenre. "In the coming decades," he writes, "we might find that almost any narrative with representational ambitions will be forced to engage with the reality of extreme weather events, heat waves, drought, rising seas, environmental migration, mass extinction, and other anthropogenic climatic events and their fallout." As a result, he speculates, "in the very near future, almost all [fiction] will become a form of what we now think of as climate change fiction." What we think of as a subfield — environmental literature — might, indeed, be expanding to include an enormous swath of our literary culture. Highlighting, as they do, the presence of hybrid forms, popular and mixed genres, intersectional analysis, technological change, and transnational political and economic formations, the chapters in "The Ecological Turn" demonstrate that environmental literature of the period, perhaps more than any other subgenre, drew expansively from the diverse preoccupations of 2000s literary culture as a whole.

In its final section, this volume examines how these various literary movements, themes, and forms were shaped by the material practices surrounding twenty-first-century American literature's publication, reception, and dissemination. Several of the thematic foci of the volume reappear in "Institutional Shifts," cast this time in terms of their roles in shaping the conditions for literary production and consumption. For instance, perhaps the single most prominent cultural force registered in these chapters is the rise of digital media. While much of the critical writing on the future of American literature in the 1990s imagined that the

emergence of digital media in the twenty-first century would have a profound impact on American literary culture, the findings of these chapters suggest that the first decade of the twenty-first century both did and did not bear out these millennial concerns. For example, Evan Kindley argues that the rise of digital venues enabled new modes of literary assessment, insofar as the literary blogs that emerged in the middle of the decade often explicitly challenged the norms of older forms of literary critical discourse. And yet, as he shows through an analysis of a new batch of digital "little magazines" including The New Inquiry, The Millions, LARB, and others, this opposition — between the old critical posture of print media and the new irreverence of digital media — did not ultimately hold. Ultimately, he finds that academics infiltrated digital literary critical culture and made it look more like older print venues like the New York Review of Books and less like the intentionally subversive language of Bookslut, leading to something that looked less apocalyptic and more like a definitive, but far from destructive, shift in our literary media culture. Similarly, even as Loren Glass argues that "the rise of digital literature ... radically transformed the global media ecology," his account is ultimately optimistic insofar as he sees the decade closing with the widespread persistence of quality print literature. "Once the digital dust has settled," he prophesizes, "the traditional book will surely still be standing."

Finally, all three of these chapters suggest that the beginning of the twenty-first century saw changes in the way literary culture constituted itself in relation to everyday life. Consistent with this volume's focus on the tension between authenticity and artificiality, literary institutions both helped to break down distinctions between everyday experience and literature and reinforced those distinctions. In some senses, literature and life become closer Glass finds that the decade sees a marked rise in self-publishing, Kindley traces the emergence of personal/literary blogs, and Eric Bennett theorizes the increased focus on autobiographical fiction in creative writing. But each of these accounts also sees the literary as ultimately retaining its separate status: Glass notes the retention of formal publishing avenues, prestige markers, and the print codex form; Kindley puts emphasis on the maintenance of major literary capitals like San Francisco and New York as well as the continued influence of academic discourse on literary media; and Bennett suggests that even in the face of the neoliberalization and individualization of the university, institutional power structures and bureaucracies have been surprisingly resilient. The notion that the representation of "authentic experience" as the measure of literary worth therefore both becomes subsumed into high literary culture during the decade and is continuously rejected by it.

Taken together, the major literary changes of the 2000s reflect the changing nature of American experience in a decade marked by unexpected violence, technological innovation, economic instability, and environmental crisis. This volume of American Literature in Transition maps the processes by which these changes occurred and takes stock of their effects, ultimately offering a picture of the recent history of what has become our present. Seeing this recent period as historical rather than contemporary might allow us to see the present from a position of estrangement. And that estrangement, in turn, might help us better understand the potential and pitfalls that inhere in our contemporary moment.

The Goat Getters: Jack Johnson, the Fight of the Century, and How a Bunch of Raucous Cartoonists Reinvented Comics by Eddie Campbell [IDW Publishing, 9781684051380]

A rip-roaring and exhaustively researched new take on the origin of the comic strip by one of the leading cartoon storytellers of our time.

With more than 500 period cartoons, The Goat Getters illustrates how comics were developed by such luminaries as Rube Goldberg, Tad Dorgan, and George Herriman in the sports and lurid crime pages of the daily newspaper. This wild bunch of West Coast-based cartoonists established the dynamic anatomy and bold, tough style that continue to influence comics today, as well as their own goofy slang that enriched the popular lexicon.

The Goat Getters also captures early twentieth century-history through the lens of the newspaper comics: the landmark 1910 boxing match in Reno, Nevada between Jim Jeffries, the "Great White Hope," and Jack Johnson, the first African-American

heavyweight champion; the nationwide race riots that followed; the San Francisco graft trials that culminated in the shooting of the Federal Prosecutor; and the trial of Harry Thaw for the murder of architect Stanford White, a crime of passion that centered on Thaw's wife, show-girl Evelyn Nesbitt Thaw--all were venerated or vilified by Nell Brinkley, Jimmy Swinnerton, and their fellow directors of the ink and newsprint stage. A goodly number of the pictures in this book are reproduced from paper copies in the Ohio State University Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum, San Francisco Academy of Comic Art Collection, as noted in their individual captions.

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Excerpt: To get a person's goat, meaning to aggravate and upset them, originated in the custom of keeping a goat in a racehorse's stable to calm the horse. Whether at home or brought along to the racetrack by the owner, the two would be stabled together overnight. You can still find the practice today, as shown by this excerpt from a recent lightweight news item, "GOAT HELPS SOOTHE KENTUCKY DERBY HORSE—An owner gave us a horse, and they told us to go pick it up at another trainer's stable, and we went and picked it up, and they said, 'Oh, by the way, it comes with this baby goat." The idea, conceived by an unscrupulous individual, was to "get the horse's goat," meaning to steal the little animal and thus unsettle the horse in order to gain a betting advantage in the next day's race. The coining of this phrase, one among many, came out of early sports-page cartooning, where it played out as a fad for a year or two before entering everyday speech.

Another thing that largely came out of sports page cartooning was the six-days-a-week comic strip. So many of the great characters and series started out on the sports page. I'm talking about Barney Google of course, and Ripley's Believe it or Not!, but also Krazy Kat.

A humorous strain of slang and a vital component of the celebrated art of comics both came from sports cartooning. But the sports cartoon has slipped from the popular memory and we do not know very much about it. It was a unique thing, not just a drawn squib on a sporting subject, but a form of cartoon that could convey other subjects. In its classic mode, it mashed up the serious, the humorous and the photographic in a unique way. But how did it get like that? The present reader may not be able to picture what I mean, for it's an art of long ago, like Sunday color funnies that filled a whole

big page each, and so many of those old silent movie comedies that are so much funnier than you imagine they could still be.

And where did the early comic book artists get their concept of dynamic anatomy? That didn't come out of regular literary illustration, or even the pulp magazines, for all that some have said that it did. It came from sports cartooning.

To give a sense of the continuity of the period I have focused largely on one sport, the story of the early World Heavyweight Boxing Championship. With careful selection and the right commentary, it makes a good story. It is full of social drama and thumps.

***

How I came to it England, 1980. Thirty-eight years ago, I was working in a small factory, cutting sheet metal into rectangles. This unchallenging work suited me, as it freed my brain to roam the universe of information, making connections between one thing and another, without anything practical getting in the way. While my contemporaries were going to college and getting degrees, I imagined myself a philosopher, in my oily apron, with my noodle in the cumulus.

Parked next to my mechanical guillotine was a rough bookstand I had made, just a weird bent thing really, as my competence did not stretch to actually working the metal. Upon this bent thing, while I was doing the endlessly repetitive labor, I read books about every thinkable subject. I read them all, whether they interested me or not, out of a random and daft curiosity. And so, between the origins of money and a study of the obscene sculptural decoration on the exteriors of Romanesque churches, between the rudiments of logic and a discography of 1920s London dance orchestras, I read a pictorial history of the sport of boxing.

The early pages of this book were illustrated with old heavy-handed same-looking prints of solid anatomies facing off against each other, with fists raised and feet splayed just exactly so. The later pages showed all the great photos of the ring from the twentieth century. But right there in the hinges were a couple of cartoony pen drawings reproduced from old newspapers. One was signed "Tad," a name I had come across, and the other was unsigned, in a style that I have come, correctly or not, to characterize as "San Francisco style."

The loosely hand-lettered caption read: "Jordan gives himself up to astronomy in the 16th round." And the picture showed the boxer lying on his back on that square of roped-off canvas, looking up through an incongruous telescope. Everything else in this book of boxing history was literal except for this insouciant little drawing of a guy, on his back, seeing stars. It wasn't even a particularly complicated or original joke, as every possible variation was already being wrung out of the "seeing stars" gag, though I didn't know it at the time. Every joke is a variation on some other joke after all. I resolved there and then to one day find out where it came from, this little sketch, and how on earth it came about that facetious doodles should be the documents of authority in the history of anything.

This kind of cartoon may turn up occasionally as memorabilia, or as an illustration of a famous ballgame or prizefight when a photo is lacking, but with little attention given to the pen and ink artist who drew it. It can be a useful record, in particular, of the early days of the Queensberry Rules era of boxing. The essential differentiating principle of this era was the replacement of bare knuckles with gloves. The first world champion of boxing under the Queensberry Rules was the subject of my chapter title above— John L. Sullivan could thrash 'em all, and was ready to do it at the drop of the first hat. He was a cartoon character before anyone got a pencil out.

Passing references to this kind of cartooning also turn up in the published histories of comics. Coulton Waugh, writing one of the first of these in 1947, acknowledged the precedence of the sports page:

The established convention of these racetrack and baseball artists was to spot their sport material around in a free and easy way, and then, for fun, add a few boxes with comic characters. This was the start of many of the famous daily strips; the little, funny characters would catch on, dominate the scene, and the sports cartoonist would find himself a comic artist, with a set of characters, and a following of fans.

The historians of the comics have never gone deeper than that. It all remains in a mist back there at the beginning. Nobody has shown that the sports

page of the newspapers was the venue for some of the most inventive and exciting cartooning of its time, a large amount of it not even related to actual sporting activity. It is worthy of attention as a unique event with its own artists, devices, characters and history. In addition to being an artistic event in its own right, it is also something of a missing link, standing as an important stage in the evolution of the medium of comics.

The genre originated in San Francisco. Its leading practitioners either came from or first made their mark on the West Coast of the USA. They invented and shared a lively variety of methods and stylistic peculiarities, including graphic tricks and a lexicon of colorful slang. Then they brought it all east to New York.

I am told that one no longer uses the vulgar "Frisco" for the city's name and I can only think it must be for all the wrong reasons. You will find me using it in the way that most of the artists I am writing about used it, with a reflection of their civic pride. We can hardly expect them to stand on ceremony since they were bending the language out of shape in every other respect There was an easygoing, hat on the back of the head, foot on the desk feeling about the sports artists, and the language of Mr. Mutt is ripe and low-down, from the start. The first strips abound in such expressions as fall guy" "tumbling to himself," good thing," "piker," "got his goat, "all quite new in 1907. (Waugh)

Right at the start here, for the casual reader who might feel that the subject is outside their normal area of curiosity, let me clarify that I myself have only a passing interest in boxing or other sports. I have never bet on a horse and I wince at the sight of blood. Furthermore, I am not familiar with San Francisco beyond a few short visits. My subject is the story of a popular art, and all the peculiar ways by which it got the way it got. I write as a person who has made his living from writing and drawing and accumulating cartoon art for over forty years. What drives me is a fellow feeling for those artists putting in their day's work over a century ago. They unselfconsciously capture a great deal of the ordinary working life around them, and for me the looseness of their lines gives it a freshness, as though it were happening last night.

Of the characters in this story, some are real, some are too daft to be real. The personalities of the likes of Tad and Rube Goldberg are all in their work, and whether what they have to say about Jack Johnson or Jeff or Fitz or Wee Willie Hearst or Tex Rickard or Silk Hat Harry is true or balonious, by the time you are finished you will no longer mind much as to the difference. Alas, there will be occasions of political incorrectness. For the sake of an accurate picture, they stand uncorrected. Most of us would not much like the world of 1900. We would find its racism reprehensible and its sexism indefensible. Hell, we wouldn't even put up with the smoke.

The "missing link" of comics is what I suggested above, and you may be wondering why this evolutionary model is in need of a copula. It has been well enough documented that the daily comic strip, the six-days-per-week black and white sequence of images running across the newspaper page, originated in the papers' sports sections. It's true that black and white strips had appeared already in the daily papers in a sporadic fashion, even for several weeks at a time. However, the idea of a character appearing in the same place every day, on and on indefinitely, is said to have begun with "A. Mutt Starts in to Play the Races" in the San Francisco Chronicle of November 15, 1907. I'm not interested in arguing about "firsts," for too much ink has been wasted on that already. My purpose is to show how and why the sports page was the venue for such an invention, and, more specifically, why San Francisco was the place it had to happen.

This period has never been adequately treated in our assorted histories. It is uncharted, this ten-year gap between Jimmy Swinnerton's departure from San Francisco and Augustus Mutt's arrival there, apparently from out of nowhere. For the reader who has not heard of these people, the former was a cool dude and the latter was an incurable boob, in the 1907 meaning of the word. The question, then: what went down in that long-ago city that produced more than its share of first-rate cartoonists?

Cartoons: Four Types

The word "cartoon," in the 1890s, meant a political satire, or "a pictured editorial," and some hardliners resented its extension to include comics. While cartoons, in either restricted or expanded meaning, had occasionally appeared in newspapers, before this period their home was in

the news weeklies, such as those mentioned above. Also, America had a growing number of weekly satirical magazines. The leaders at the time were Puck, Judge, Life, and Truth. Any major city was more than likely to have produced one. San Francisco had the Wasp (founded in 1876). Like the general interest magazines, they too would pass away.

A taxonomy of the cartoon for this period would encompass six types. For present purposes, four will do the job.8 The traditional categories were settled by the 1890s, comprising firstly the freestanding caricature, typically a big head on a small body. It was a representation of a person being referenced, or interviewed, or spotted at an event. It was the "portrait-charge," as the French called it, a close likeness with humorous insight into the personality of an individual. Cartooning was there at the beginning of, and integral to, American newspaper illustration. This beginning is customarily dated to the success of the assorted series of caricatures drawn by Russian-born Valerian Gribayedoff (b.1858) in the New York World in 1884. They were presented on Sundays, in sets, as many as twenty-two on a broadsheet, with amusing text profiles under the images. Subjects included "Wall Street Nobility," and "The Fire Department."

Secondly there was the political cartoon, often just "the cartoon," an editorial commentary on current news using a mix of emblem and caricature. In the humor weeklies they were complex allegories, color lithographs demanding some attention and made for framing. In the swiftly produced and digested daily papers they needed to be simpler, and could be so as the news on which they commented was usually printed nearby. The political cartoon followed the free-standing caricature in the New York World, and made its permanent home in the newspapers.

Thirdly there was the "comic," meaning a picture whose only purpose is to be funny, sometimes with a caption, or dialogue, under the image. These could be extended into several pictures to make a funny incident, as done famously in Harper's Weekly by A. B. Frost. But one must remember that when Frost referred to "comics" he still just meant funny pictures. The "comic strip" wasn't a specific trick yet and anybody who tries to make a separate genre of the multi-picture comic too early tends to introduce confusion into the historical record. It is more useful to think of sequential images as simply one type of compositional procedure. In my usage, "comic" and "sequential art" are never to be considered equivalent.

Comics depicted foolish people being foolish. Ethnic types and the lower classes were apt subjects. Or they could be whimsies for the amusement of children. Recurring locations and characters become typical. With no connection to the day's news, they were space-fillers, the kind of thing a paper could buy from freelancers and keep on hand. They started importing, a word I shall use to mean reusing with permission, or without it for all I know, comics from the magazines. This is how the famous Yellow Kid originated, in a number of cartoons by R.F. Outcault, set in "Hogan's Alley." These first appeared in Truth in 1894 and were imported shortly after to the interior pages of the humor supplement of the World, whose preeminence in funny pictures had not yet been challenged.

Once you put the cartoon into a new ecosystem, it evolves its own subspecies. In addition to the three recognizable types, a fourth, newspaperspecific genre, appears around 1894. Its specificity and repetition of form suggest that there would have been a name for it, or else how would an editor have assigned one. I'm calling them "story cartoons," and my purpose will become clear." A "story," in newspaper argot, means a written report, whether on crime, finance, society, sport etc. I'm referring to those instances when the "story" is accompanied by funny sketches arranged in a box. The separate text is the defining feature, with the multi-part graphic form also being apropos. The cartoonist is expected to bring out the humor of the situation, in his exaggerations, and his imagining of an outcome to the predicament.

Under "story cartoon" I'm corralling a range of lightweight journalistic jobs. A cartoonist could be sent to cover an event like a community picnic, a charity ball, a parade, or be required to draw humorous "sidelights" to an inconsequential anecdote, such as the landlady who took possession of her tenant's clothes until he paid his rent. Covering a ball game was a choice job, while the new artist was often assigned to attach his observations to a review of a stage play, in a little vertical two-column spot in the back of the paper. You always have to check those. The career of somebody important might begin there, after he

has served an apprenticeship as a copy boy, sharpening pencils and running up and down stairs between the art room and the print room.

San Francisco

Those guys all started so young. William Randolph Hearst (b.1863, San Francisco) was a young guy himself. He was twenty-three and just expelled from Harvard for his outlandish pranks, when he persuaded his father, the millionaire George Hearst, soon to be Senator Hearst, to hand him the reins of the San Francisco Examiner. He wrote to his father, "We must have, as the World has, active intelligent and energetic young men; we must have men who come out west in the hopeful buoyancy of youth for the purpose of making their fortunes and not a worthless scum that has been carried there by the eddies of repeated failures." William Randolph's name first appeared as proprietor and editor at the top of the editorial page of the Examiner in March 1887.

San Francisco had four major dailies. TheExaminer, when William Randolph Hearst took it on, had a circulation of 26,475. The city's leader, the Chronicle was doing 37,500, with the Call falling between them. By the time of the great earthquake in 1906, the reported circulation of the Examiner was 98,000 with 80,000 for the Chronicle and 62,000 for the Call. The Bulletin was the fourth of the dailies. It was still one of a handful of smaller papers in the mid-1890s, with a circulation of 9,000 in 1895, rising to 20,000 by 1898 and 50,000 by 1906. Smaller still were the Evening Post, the News, and the Daily Report. If that feels like a whole lot of newsprint, bear in mind that San Francisco was America's largest city west of the Mississippi until Los Angeles took the title around 1920. For comparison, New York City had seventeen dailies.

The publishers left their names on the map. Hearst's father got rich from the Comstock Lode and other famous mines; Hearst got even richer from publishing newspapers. The fabulous "Hearst Castle" he built at San Simeon is today a California tourist attraction. Michael De Young published the Chronicle. His name is on a memorial museum in Golden Gate Park, a memento of the Midwinter Fair of 1894. John D. Spreckels published the Call; the Spreckels Building at Market and Third, also called Central Tower, is named after him. Fremont Older edited the Bulletin for twenty-three years, during which time he took on the corrupt political machine, leading to the jailing of the mayor. There's an open space preserve and an elementary school named in his honor.

Palgrave Studies in Comics and Graphic Novels

This series concerns Comics Studies—with a capital "c" and a capital "s." It feels good to write it that way. From emerging as a fringe interest within Literature and Media/Cultural Studies departments, to becoming a minor field, to maturing into the fastest growing field in the Humanities, to becoming a nascent discipline, the journey has been a hard but spectacular one. Those capital letters have been earned.

Palgrave Studies in Comics and Graphic Novels

covers all aspects of the comic strip, comic book, and graphic novel, explored through clear and informative texts offering expansive coverage and theoretical sophistication. It is international in scope and provides a space in which scholars from all backgrounds can present new thinking about politics, history, aesthetics, production, distribution, and reception as well as the digital realm. Books appear in one of two forms: traditional monographs of 60,000 to 90,000 words and shorter works (Palgrave Pivots) of 20,000 to 50,000 words. All are rigorously peer-reviewed. Palgrave Pivots include new takes on theory, concise histories, and—not least—considered provocations. After all, Comics Studies may have come a long way, but it can't progress without a little prodding.

Series Editor Roger Sabin is Professor of Popular Culture at the University of the Arts London, UK. His books include Adult Comics: An Introduction and Comics [New Accents, Routledge, 9780415044189], Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art [Phaidon Press, 9780714830087], and his recent research into nineteenth-century comics is award-winning. He serves on the boards of the main academic journals in the field and reviews graphic novels for the international media.

Alan Moore, Out from the Underground: Cartooning, Performance, and Dissent by Maggie Gray [Palgrave Studies in Comics and Graphic Novels, Palgrave Macmillan, 9783319665078]

This book explores Alan Moore's career as a cartoonist, as shaped by his transdisciplinary practice as a poet, illustrator, musician and playwright as well as his involvement in the Northampton Arts Lab and the hippie counterculture in which it took place. It traces Moore's trajectory out from the underground comix scene of the 1970s and into a commercial music press rocked by the arrival of punk. In doing so it uncovers how performance has shaped Moore's approach to comics and their political potential. Drawing on the work of Bertolt Brecht, who similarly fused political dissent with experimental popular art, this book considers what looking strangely at Alan Moore as cartoonist tells us about comics, their visual and material form, and the performance and politics of their reading and making.

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Excerpt:

Alan Moore—Cartoonist?

Alan Moore is internationally renowned as a comics writer, `author' of best-selling and critically acclaimed titles, such as Watchmen, V for Vendetta, and From Hell. His work has been credited with bringing a level of literariness to the field, as part of the wider `adult revolution' of the mid-to-late-1980s that began to see comics elevated from their lowbrow status as trashy juvenile ephemera to a higher level of cultural legitimacy and artistic currency.' As well as receiving a spate of media attention of the `Kapow! Splat! Comics Grow Up!' variety, being promptly repackaged as a glossy collected edition marketed under the more respectable term `graphic novel', and being awarded a literary accolade in the form of a Hugo award, his best-known work, Watchmen, was also critically acknowledged by the academy. As graphic novels started to cement their place on the shelves of bookshops and libraries in the mid-1990s, Anglophone comics scholarship made concurrent inroads, extending from more marginal fields, such as popular culture studies and cultural studies, into literature departments. Discourse around Moore as a star writer, which emerged with the flurry of critical attention around Watchmen and was brought into struggles over authorship and copyright in which he subsequently became engaged, has thus played an important role in the gentrification of comics as a cultural form, their designation as literature and incorporation into the literary canon. As a result, much comics scholarship on Moore has approached him as a literary figure and applied frameworks of interpretation derived from literature studies (albeit often inflected by cultural studies, political theory, psychology or philosophy). Yet as comics studies has developed as a multidisciplinary field, other strands of scholarship have challenged these paradigms.

Despite his celebration as an exemplary comics writer, Moore actually began his career as a cartoonist, as is well documented in comprehensive non-academic texts by Gary Spencer Millidge, Lance Parkin, and George Khoury. As Parkin's biography notes, it was likely not until Moore began scriptwriting for Image Comics in the 1990s that comics he had written surpassed the circulation of the strips and illustrations he drew for the British music press in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Yet most academic writing on Moore has tended to either ignore or gloss over this material.$ This book, by contrast, looks in detail at Moore's work as a cartoonist, which developed in the context of the hippie counter-culture and the British underground comix scene of the 1970s, reached its peak with his weekly comic strips for national music paper Sounds in the early 1980s, and continued to appear regularly in print right up until Watchmen commenced publication in 1986. One of its aims is to highlight the degree to which Moore's approach to making comics, as well as the anarchist politics that informed this approach, was forged in this context. Yet by looking at Alan Moore the cartoonist, rather than Alan Moore the writer, from a materialist art and design history perspective, it also aims to contest the dominance of formalist approaches to comics as transcendental, dematerialised, self-sufficient narrative `texts' that emerged with the literary turn in comics studies. Such approaches, often focused on structures of visual narrative or the mechanics of visual language, have tended to elide the expressive

qualities and aesthetics of visual form, the significance of graphic style and material facture. Moreover, they have tended to abstract comics from the concrete historical and social contexts of their production, and thereby the politics of that visual and material form.

Moore the Auteur

Where Moore's cartooning has received mention in academic research, it has often been treated as a cursory preamble to his more significant, sophisticated, and serious work as a writer.9 Yet Moore himself has discussed the importance of his experience as a cartoonist, in terms of helping him develop a `visual sensibility' that he has continued to draw from in his scriptwriting, with respect to considerations, such as the number of panels on a page, their contents, and relations. As he recalls, what emerged from those `laborious hours spent over the drawing board' was an understanding of 'how to visually compose a satisfying picture, and how to string pictures together into a visual narrative'. His writing process often still involves forms of image-making, drafting rough thumbnail storyboards on which to base his scripts. While commentators such as Millidge have seen this visual sensibility as underpinning the success of Moore's collaborations with different illustrators, for others it substantiates the attribution of the authorship of many of the comics he has worked on conjointly, primarily to Moore. In view of the challenge of applying Romantic literary models of authorship to industrial contexts of production involving the activity of multiple agents, as in mainstream comics publishing, (which has led to a tendency to prioritise alternative single-creator works), such claims are often made via reference to the concept of the auteur.

Indeed, the approbation of Moore as an esteemed comics writer has made him emblematic of the auteurist strand of comics scholarship. His work was selected as a case study for the application of auteur theory to comics by Matthew J. Smith in the survey of critical approaches to the art form he edited with Randy Duncan. From the auteurist perspective, for Smith, what makes Moore's comics writing distinctively adept and visionary—his `creative signature'—is his ground-breaking treatment of what are deemed the medium's essential features; his blending of words and pictures, and use of the spatial layout of panels to interweave layers of plot and different narrative timeframes. This clearly downplays the contribution of the illustrators Moore collaborates with, who draw the pictures, inscribe the words, and compose the panels on the surface of the page. Like the cinematic auteur, Moore as scriptwriter is ascribed the singular vision and creative oversight that determine the outcome of the comic as a designed whole. This occludes the creative labour of not only pencillers, inkers, letterers, and colourists, but also the input of editors, art directors, layout artists, printers, distributors, vendors, critics, and fans. It obscures the entire social and organisational contexts of comics production, dissemination, and consumption, which have been highlighted by countervailing strands of comics studies that take a sociological or `production of culture' approach.

Chapter Structure

Each chapter of this book considers Moore's creative output in a specific situation of production. This is used as a way of opening discussion of the aesthetics and politics of comics' form by thinking about the relationship between comics and other artistic fields, within the particular contexts of underground and post-underground cultural movements in the UK. Thus Chap. 2 examines Moore's work in the Northampton Arts Lab and subsequent Arts Group as a way of exploring the relationship between comics and poetry, comics and illustration, and above all, comics and theatre, in relation to countercultural attitudes to the practice and presentation of the arts in general. In particular, it considers the decorative aspects of the comics page in relation to the politics of hippie aesthetics. Chapter 3 looks at Moore's cartooning for underground comix and alternative local papers as a way of considering the relationship between comics and graphic design and comics and animation, in the context of wider visual approaches of underground media. It interrogates the expressive, material quality of line and drawing style in relation to the politics of underground design. Finally, Chap. 4 tracks Moore's move into professional practice in the commercial music press as a way of examining the relationship between comics and music. This is used to consider the abstract underscore of comics' visual form, particularly tone and texture, in relation to the politics of authenticity and artifice thrashed out in punk and post-punk scenes.

Overall, this book hopes to offer an alternative way of seeing Alan Moore's work that uncovers the specifics of his visual sensibility and thereby enhances understanding of his oeuvre. By looking in this strange way at a creator emblematic of the literary turn in comics studies, it is also hoped it will contribute to pressing debates in the field, questioning some of the tendencies that have come to dominate comics scholarship since the form allegedly 'grew up' with Watchmen. As Charles Hatfield has argued, the strength of comics studies lies in its potential `indisciplinarity', its ability to draw from multiple discourses and thereby evade the pitfalls of disciplinary specialisation. This book intends to contest some of the trends in comics research that downplay the aesthetics, materiality, and politics of the visual in the spirit of frank interdisciplinary dialogue Hatfield advocates.

Maxwell the Magic Cat: Go Out and Start Your Own

Alan Moore's early trajectory as a professional comics writer, from his deconstruction of science-fiction and superhero genre conventions as part of the upstart post-underground generation working on titles such as 2000AD and Warrior to his confrontation with the US mainstream industry and iconoclastic revision of DC comics such as Swamp Thing and Watchmen, has been well-documented. Yet throughout this period he continued also to work as a cartoonist. He produced his `Maxwell the Magic Cat' strip about young Norman Nesbitt and his talking cat for the Northants Post from August 1979 to October 1986, one of the longest-running projects of his career. Although its visual style was sparser than his Sounds work, with simpler line drawing and minimal background detail, and returned, in its single tier five-panel format, to the compressed gag-a-week newspaper strip structure used in 'Anon E. Mouse', it maintained the underground sensibility of his other cartooning in its political engagement and performativity.

Moore used the rapid production schedule of the strip, usually drawn three days before publication, to respond quickly, on a local level, to anything he felt like `mouthing off against'. He consistently satirised the Thatcher government's domestic and foreign policy, addressing issues of inflation, pay cuts, unemployment, heavy-handed policing, and nuclear Cruise missiles. Among the strip's bouts of limited continuity was a ten-week storyline that dealt with the threat of redundancies due to privatisation, attributed to the need to have 'a slimmed down and virile comics strip able to compete in today's tough economic climate'. Maxwell the cat attempts to organise wildcat strikes against the redundancies but is distracted by a war against the mice. The allegation that a military conflict could be a plot by authorities to divert attention from redundancies was as forceful a condemnation of the 1982 Falklands war as could be found in the British media, and Moore went on to parody the xenophobic response of the national press to the conflict, with Maxwell's friend Delroy attempting to make it into the tabloids by coming up with more and more insulting ways to refer to the mice. Thus, Moore continued to use his cartooning as a form of comics activism and a means of critical intervention in political and social struggle.

Like his earliest comics, the `Window Funnies' of Embryo, in `Maxwell the Magic Cat', Moore drew on the vaudeville reflexivity of early newspaper cartoonists to experiment and play with comics' form, the `roots, nuts, and bolts' of the medium, in performative ways. Both Moore's character design and pared-back style made clear reference to Charles Schulz' Peanuts, and, in one episode, Maxwell even wakes up on Snoopy's kennel saying 'Good God, how embarrassing! I'm in the wrong comic strip!'6 Slapstick self-referential allusion to the mechanics, conventions, and materiality of the strip itself abounded: in one episode, `Several Strange Things That Cartoon Characters Can Do', Maxwell ties a speech balloon saying `Helium' to his tail that then floats up in the air; in another, Norman gets freaked out when he sees the huge face of the reader looking at him and says `I wish they'd knock before they turn the page'; while a third was entirely concerned with the claustrophobic effect on the characters of existing within a `little box measuring 4.5 cm by 3.4 cm'. As with Moore's cartooning more broadly and its intersections with his wider practice in poetry, drama, and music, the theatricality of this formal play was pronounced, often figuring the space of the panel as a stage. In one episode, Maxwell and Norman are shown with their back to the viewer and their speech balloons are empty—the strip ends with Maxwell turning to address the reader, saying `well, now you know what a comic strip looks like from the back ...' In a homage to the unruly reflexive performativity of

comic strip precursors that similarly defied the rational transparency of the grid, another episode sees Norman sneeze and destroy the panel borders in direct imitation of Winsor McCay's Little Sammy Sneeze. Again, as with much of his cartooning, Moore also called attention to the strip's material fabrication and the act of graphiation, with characters referring to being badly drawn, and one episode featuring an incredibly wobbly, jittery line that Maxwell attributes to the heating having broken down in the cartoonist's workroom.

The DIY ethos underscoring this metafictional performance of the graphic and material production of comics was emphasised in Moore recent return to his `Maxwell the Magic Cat' strip when he took over the editorial of the final issue of the Northants Herald & Post, in December 2016. Moore produced a final instalment of his strip with an ageing Maxwell and Norman, references to Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, and self-reflexive allusion to the comics form (`I'm still big, it's just the pictures that got small'). In the text accompanying the strip, Moore argued that, in a political and social climate with echoes of the 1970s, alternative media was more necessary than ever, prompting the reader to start their own: 'By all means mourn the passing of this venerable, important paper. But then go out and start a better one'. Interestingly, the takeover of the final edition was carried out by the Northampton Arts Lab, a new incarnation formed in the autumn of 2015, coming together after an `Under the Austerity, the Beach: A Day of Counter-Culture' event at the University of Northampton (its title riffing on the famous May '68 slogan). This twenty-first century re-boot, which includes local comedians, cartoonists, poets, graphic artists, animators, writers, and performers, according to Moore, is bigger, more diverse, more technically competent, and more ambitious than its predecessor. The new Lab has put on several performances including music, poetry, drama, and film, beginning with 2016's *Artmageddon* in which a range of different acts came together under the premise that all art and culture had died overnight and had to be falteringly reconstructed, including how to go to the toilet in the intermission (and what an intermission was). They have staged a play called The Annual General Meeting of a Small to Medium-sized Firm of Accountants, set in an office with different members behind desks performing when spotlighted (including one who is in love with his desk), and published the magazine Peasants with Pens 'to showcase art and counterculture from Northampton and beyond'. Moore's editorial in its debut issue ended with an appeal to join in, seize the opportunity, and 'do something fluorescent', and, apparently, further collectives have sprung up in Liverpool, Brighton, and Sheffield. The imperative in Moore's practice therefore remains, as it was for Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin in the 1930s, and the original Arts Lab movement in the 1970s, the socialisation of the cultural means of production, the functional transformation of the creative apparatus to turn consumers into producers, `readers or spectators into collaborators.

All Comics Are Political

This book has argued that Moore's cartooning practice was one founded on performance and dissent, using strategies of theatrical formal self-reflexivity as a means of political intervention and cultural activism. It has contended that to understand Moore's comics work it is imperative to situate it in relation to his wider multidisciplinary practice as a whole, and the specific contexts of cultural production and presentation in which that practice took place, in a way that highlights the correspondences between comics and theatre, music, poetry, illustration, graphic design, photography, animation, and film. Moore has continued to work as a cartoonist and as a performer throughout his career, illustrating posters and record covers, cartooning for titles such as Harvey Pekar's American Splendor, and Lionel Gracey-Whitman and Don Melia's Heartbreak Hotel and Strip AIDS, performing in site-specific multimedia magical workings such as Snakes and Ladders, and, most recently, appearing as art-fascist baboon 'The Mandrill' at the Arts Lab events (recalling his former Translucia Baboon persona). Moore and Joe Brown's `Mandrillifesto' piece, which declares 'if there's no culture in the land then you must make one', was subsequently produced as a record with artwork by Dom Mandrell riffing on Shephard Fairey's `Hope' poster and reworked as a Destroyer Dub remix by former Killing Joke bassist Youth, demonstrating the continuing intersection of different media in Moore's practice, as well as its ongoing highly collaborative nature.

Alan Moore has argued that 'all comics are political'. What this book has aimed to demonstrate is that to understand the politics of Moore's transdisciplinary practice it is necessary to understand the politics of form. This is not to argue that questions of narrative content, structure, and mechanics are not pressing, but that they cannot be addressed as if that narrative is extractable from, or exists apart from, comics as designed and material objects produced and consumed in specific historical, social, and organisational contexts. Comics scholarship has had a tendency to elide the sensuous materiality of the medium and the aesthetic and affective qualities of its plasticity, in the same way that shifts in our ideas about writing and language have meant 'the page lost its voice'; in the splitting of writing from music, words became silent and their sonority overlooked. In this process, conventions of comics' visual structure and presentation have become essentialised and idealised, treated as transparent in a way that obscures the degree to which all visual representation is the presentation, not just of content to be seen, but of forms of seeing itself, ways of seeing, which are themselves political. As John Berger notes, the lines of drawing are not just the traces of the hand, but also `traces left by the artist's gaze'—drawings reveal not only the process of their own making, but of their own looking. The danger in overlooking this is that certain viewpoints and worldviews become naturalised as common sense in a way that ultimately affirms the given, the process that is ideology. Both Bertolt Brecht and Alan Moore contest this process by laying bare the devices of construction, showing the acts of showing, spotlighting the formal underscore of the work in the same way that Brecht advised using special lighting to make the orchestra visible when it played.

Prizing apart action and music, story content and plastic form, a Brechtian `radical separation of elements' is political because it calls attention to the construction of a work in a disruptive way, opening up a critical gap that questions what is given. It invites the viewer to adopt a `watching-while-smoking' attitude to the realities presented, to look critically, autonomously, unorthodoxly, playfully. For Brecht this was an attempt to promote 'a specific sort of practical behaviour, one that aims to change the world', emphasising that reality is mutable, contingent, and contradictory, and therefore, as the anti-capitalist movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s put it, another world is possible. Thus, the performativity of Brechtian methods of *Verfremdung* is not a reflexivity that turns the work in on itself, or returns to the creator as virtuoso auteur or glorified conductor, but is aimed outwards at social transformation. Similarly, as Annalisa di Liddo puts it, Moore's work, `despite being overtly metafictional, resists withdrawal into itself and opens out onto precise historical, social, and cultural issues', undermining its frequent categorisation as postmodern.

A key aspect of this self-referential exposure of the processes of making was the demystification of creative production, crucially connected to drawing as a practice and to graphic style. The performance of the graphiateur inscribed in comics' visual form is reproduced by the reader in the sensuous performative acts of reading, and the reflexive highlighting of that imaginative performance positions the reader as collaborator and maker in their own right. Thus, while it is important that comics scholarship attend to the significance of graphiation, it is important not to reproduce the romanticisation of creative authorship or to fetishise drawing. Fundamental to this is an acknowledgement that graphic style is social as well as individual, that the timbre of the graphic voice, the expressive handling of material and medium, as well as being physically located, is historically situated and embedded in networks of cultural value. As Baetens continues, `every style signifies a choice among those available at a historic moment, a choice which can be understood and interpreted'.

This historical aspect of style, the way it is embedded in specific contexts of cultural, social, and political struggle, importantly, means that particular methods, approaches, and techniques cannot be reproduced in different historical circumstances to the same effect and value. As Brecht argued in the debates about realism in the 1930s, forms have varying social functions over time, and it is therefore a restrictive formalism 'to hold fast to conventional forms while the changing social environment makes ever new demands on art'. Both Brecht and Moore insisted on the necessity on ongoing formal experimentation and appropriation of new techniques, technologies, and

media adequate to a constantly changing social reality. Nostalgia in these terms is useless and counterproductive—as seen in the ongoing romanticisation of the hippie counterculture that flattens out its heterogeneity and contradictions, and elides the way in which its counter-values of play, indeterminacy, and spontaneity have been adopted in the precarious, gamified, performance-driven workplace of neo-liberal globalisation. Nevertheless, the possibilities for radically experimental, political popular art remain, including the possibilities to make comics politically. As Alan Moore puts it, we can occupy comics:

> if you care about what you are saying, if you seek a more effective way of saying it, then pick up that brush, pencil, pen that mouse or even that discarded cardboard box out in the alleyway and pour your heart, your mind, yourself into as many little panels as it takes to make your statement. You may find it opens up modes of expression and dissent that you have previously not considered or imagined.

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