SCRIPTABLE

A Bispectral Review of Recent Books

Robert Tenor, editor
6-15-2020

New Series Number 74

EDITORIAL

Scriptable is an irregular review of what was once called the belles-lettres, where we essay upon a wide assortment of current books and articles with an eye open for "the beautiful jumble of discordant congruencies" derived from the authors and titles under discussion. We cast a wide academic net through the social sciences and humanities, with a strong orientation toward current events, social theory, religious and cultural studies.

With this number we move away from simple reportage of current scholarship to something more ambitious. The body of each issue includes editorial essays examining themes inspired by the works under consideration. Our Annotated Bibliography will review, list and link the titles under discussion, providing a faithful summary of its content and audience.
Our purpose is to inform and entertain. Through the review essays we hope to visit new and timeworn places through unsettled ideas in currency newly minted. Perhaps to see the outlandish as intimate and to show up the familiar as stranger than before thought.
Each issue should surprise.

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THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF MYSTICAL THEOLOGY
edited by Edward Howells and Mark A. McIntosh [Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press, 9780198722380]

This collection provides a guide to the mystical element of Christianity as a theological phenomenon. It differs not only from psychological and anthropological studies of mysticism, but from other theological studies, such as more practical or pastorally oriented works that examine the patterns of spiritual progress and offer counsel for deeper understanding and spiritual development. It also differs from more explicitly historical studies tracing the theological and philosophical contexts and ideas of various key figures and schools, as well as from literary studies of the linguistic tropes and expressive forms in mystical texts. None of these perspectives is absent, but the method here is more deliberately theological, working from within the fundamental interests of Christian mystical writers to the articulation of those interests in distinctively theological forms, in order, finally, to permit a critical theological engagement with them for today. Divided into four parts, the first section introduces the approach to mystical theology and offers a historical overview. Part II attends to the concrete context of sources and practices of mystical theology. Part III moves to the fundamental conceptualities of mystical thought. The final section presents the central contributions of mystical teaching to theology and metaphysics. Students and scholars with a variety of interests will find different pathways through the Handbook.

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List of Contributors
Introduction

Excerpt: Mystical theology is central to Christianity. It has been present from the earliest times as a way of participating in and reflecting upon God's hidden presence—as Christians have come to understand that in the light of their beliefs about the inclusion of creation in Christ's intimacy with the Father through the power of the Spirit. Over time, the practices, texts, and teachings that seem to foster inclusion in this intimacy have all become the material of mystical theology. While pointing to the mending and perfecting of creation that God seeks, mystical theology also considers the further Christian belief in the fontal breakthrough of the divine source into human experience, and the new possibilities of meaning and action that arise in the subject and the community as a result.

Yet potential readers of this volume may be curious about the significance of its title: why 'mystical theology' and not 'mysticism'? Some readers could be concerned that this volume might impose theological dogma upon what they may see as a more universal religious experience, or, conversely, that it might substitute abstract theoretical interpretation for a lived reality whose meaning is unique to each individual. We do understand these concerns. We may not agree with their premises, but we believe there are good reasons why they may be allayed—and why a historically informed and critically generous understanding of mystical theology may be helpfully advanced.

First of all, we note that 'mysticism' is itself a modern term and one that few of the figures discussed in this volume would have recognized. It was coined in an era whose theory of the relationship between experience and interpretation has been interestingly problematized; so it sometimes carries presuppositions that can work against a thoughtful development of the hermeneutics of mystical texts (by tending to privilege an attempted reconstruction of putative mystical experiences 'behind' the text). As Bernard McGinn notes in the general introduction to his authoritative history of Western Christian mysticism:

> Mystical theology has often been understood in terms of misleading models of a simple distinction between experience and understanding that do justice neither to the texts of the mystics nor to the complexities of the relations between experience (p. 2) and understanding that modern epistemological and cognitional theories have presented to us. Mystical theology is not some form of epiphenomenon, a shell or covering that can be peeled off to reveal the 'real' thing. The interactions between conscious acts and their symbolic and theoretical thematizations are much more complex than that. … Rather than being something added on to mystical experience, mystical theory in most cases precedes and guides the mystic's whole way of life.

Mystical theology, as McGinn suggests, works attentively and intentionally at this always unfolding interplay between mystical insight and theory on the one hand and the embodied realities of mystical life on the other. So in calling this a handbook of mystical theology, the editors by no means intend to devalue religious experience (see Howells, Chapter 3, for a full consideration of this important topic). Rather we seek to engage with a very long-standing discipline, one that has not only played a crucial role in the theological life of the Christian community but which is also an increasingly significant topic in the academic study of theology and religion.

Like many forms of contextual and emancipatory theology, mystical theology is critically aware that there are no 'views from nowhere', and that all our experience is mediated and profoundly structured by the language and culture and community we share. Indeed mystical theology, also much like liberation theology, directly lives from and reflects upon the reciprocal relationship between Christianity's texts, practices, and beliefs, and on the other side, the community's sense of its ongoing encounter with God (see Williams, Chapter 1, for an account of this unfolding reciprocal relationship). In the 1960s the mystical theologian Thomas Merton offered a series of talks for the novices of his monastery; he explained his goal by highlighting exactly this reciprocal relationship between mystical consciousness and the church's beliefs and teachings:

> Without mysticism there is no real theology, and without theology there is no real mysticism. Hence the emphasis will be on mysticism as theology, to bring out clearly the mystical dimensions of our theology, hence to help us to do what we must really do: live our theology. Some think it is sufficient to come to the monastery to live the rule. More is required—we must live our theology, fully, deeply, in its totality. Without this, there is no sanctity. The separation of theology from 'spirituality' is a disaster.

While the editors of this volume would not of course wish to rule out the possibility that some readers might be helped to live their theology and be graced with sanctity, our explicit aims are mostly more pedestrianly academic than spiritually audacious: to help readers see, as Merton puts it, 'the mystical dimensions of our theology', and the profound contribution of mystical teachers to Christian theology.

Nonetheless, Merton's perspective is deeply informative, for it underscores two essential features of mystical theology across the rich variety of its expressions. First, mystical theology, far from being narrowly concerned with specialized spiritual experiences, engages with the whole range of Christian beliefs and teachings, theology 'in its totality' (p. 3) as Merton says; and second, mystical theology explores and interprets every doctrine to help believers find there a doorway into a living, transformative encounter with the divine reality to which, Christians believe, their theological language is meant to point—allowing Christians, as Merton puts it, to live into their theology. As Aquinas observes (Summa Theologiae II-2.1.2), the faith of a believer by no means reaches its goal in the propositions of the church's teaching, but rather in the superabundant divine truth itself—which theology can only approach through the vitally necessary but always insufficient medium of human speech. It should not be surprising, then, that there is an expression of Christian theology, mystical theology, particularly focused on, so to speak, turning the creed into prayer, guiding believers into the 'more' of divine meaning beyond words—and this transforming contemplative consciousness then, reciprocally, permits the Christian community to understand more deeply what it believes and to clarify and critique the manner in which it expresses and lives its beliefs (see McIntosh, Chapter 2, for a theological rationale for mystical theology).

Mystical theology is mystical per se not because it deals with the experiential (though it sometimes does) but because it deals with what is 'hidden', beyond what mortal eyes can see and tongues can speak: the infinite superabundance of divine self-communication availing itself of creaturely modes of

expression, and present there as a hidden, or mystical, reality and depth of meaning. For Christians, of course, the most radically self-communicating advent of this divine speech in creation is Christ: the infinite divine meaning expressed through frail yet vindicated human flesh. The hypostatic union in Christ of true humanity and true divinity becomes the ground for mystical theology's attention to all the other forms of divine presence: in scripture, liturgy, the creation, historical struggles for justice, and in the lives of the marginalized. It is precisely because the mystical presence of God is an infinite reality that mystical theology draws the believing community into an encounter that must afford not only discursive knowledge, but transformative understanding and embodied wisdom.

So this volume provides a guide to the mystical element of Christianity as a theological phenomenon. In this respect it differs not only from psychological and anthropological studies of mysticism, but from other theological studies, such as more practical or pastorally oriented works that examine the patterns of spiritual progress and offer counsel for deeper understanding and spiritual development. It also differs from more explicitly historical studies tracing the theological and philosophical contexts and ideas of various key figures and schools, as well as from literary studies of the linguistic tropes and expressive forms in mystical texts. None of these perspectives is absent, but the method here is more deliberately theological, working from within the fundamental interests of Christian mystical writers to the articulation of those interests in distinctively theological forms, in order, finally, to permit a critical theological engagement with them for today.

This rationale is reflected in the structure of chapters. Part I introduces the approach to mystical theology (Chapters 1–3) and offers a historical overview (Chapters 4–5). Part II attends to the concrete context of sources and practices of mystical theology (Chapters 6–13). Part III then moves to the fundamental conceptualities of mystical (p. 4) thought (Chapters 14–21). And Part IV ends with the central contributions of mystical teaching to theology and metaphysics (Chapters 22–33).

Readers with a variety of interests will find different pathways through the book. The structure permits those with historical interests, for instance, to focus on the historical-intellectual emphasis of the chapters of Parts I and II. Spiritual practices are treated especially in Part II. Literary interests are served especially in Chapters 12 and 13. Those with theological interests may be attracted to the interplay between the mystical conceptualities explored in Part III and mystical contributions to theology and philosophy considered Part IV. Extensive exposition of individual mystical teachers is present throughout the book, and can be traced with the help of the index…

Finally, it is to Bernard McGinn that the editors would like to offer particular gratitude, not just for his two chapters in this volume, but for his towering contribution to the field, in his multi-volume history of mysticism and numerous monographs and articles. His work has shaped the field. As a professor at the University of Chicago, he launched perhaps not a thousand scholars of mystical theology, but many dozens, a good few of them authors here. Just some of the fruits of his work are on display to a degree, we hope, in the present endeavour.

It seems fitting to conclude this preface by giving the last word to a mystical theologian herself, indeed one of the greatest of the Middle Ages: Catherine of Siena. Even in this very brief excerpt from one of her letters, readers will find notable features that could prompt multiple lines of inquiry: for example, the nature of the epistolary form as a genre of mystical writing, the role of the mystical teacher as social agent, the important resonances with analogous teachings in the tradition (see e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius, Divine (p. 5) Names 4.13; Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I.37.2 ad 3), and the creative and sophisticated rhetorical interweaving of multiple Christian doctrines with unabashedly erotic and anthropomorphic imagery.

As you read Catherine's powerful and affirming words to her correspondent, written during a time of harrowing plague, when human life must have seemed not only terribly vulnerable but perhaps also of little use and without point, we hope you will feel encouraged to venture deep into the pages of this book, where you will find many colleagues ready and willing to join you in the search for deeper meaning and understanding.

> Love, then, love! Ponder the fact that you were loved before you ever loved. For God looked within himself and fell in love with the beauty of his creature and so created us. He was moved by the fire of his ineffable charity to one purpose only: that we should have eternal life and enjoy the infinite good God was enjoying in himself. (Catherine of Siena, Letter 28; Noffke, 2001: I. 132)

Abstracts of Contents

1 Understanding Mystical Theology
Mystical Theology and Christian Self-Understanding by Rowan Williams
The beginnings of a distinctive Christian theology lie in the conviction that human beings had been granted a new level of access to or presence to the God of Israel through the death and rising of Jesus: they were introduced into the heavenly sanctuary and accorded the dignity of priests and the intimacy of access to God as sons and daughters of the Father of Jesus. This prompts both doctrinal definition and definitional reserve: some new things must be said about God, but there is an intensified sense of what cannot be said of God, and of the truth that God cannot be an object among others. This becomes a central tension in the tradition of 'mystical' writing and reflection, but is congruent with central theological affirmations about the encounter of finite and infinite action in Christ and in Christ's people. In both individual and corporate prayer, this is understood as a present anticipation of eternal relatedness, so that the 'mystical' is essentially an eschatological category.

Mystical Theology at the Heart of Theology by Mark A. McIntosh
Believing that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, Christians have found themselves engaging in theology, conceived as faith in search of understanding, in order to reflect upon and better respond to God's initiative. This chapter offers a theological account of why mystical theology is at the heart of the Christian theological life. Understood in its ancient expansive sense, mystical theology is not a sub-discipline, attending to particular states of spiritual experience; rather it is the Christian theological mind itself whenever it seeks to recognize and understand more deeply the hidden (i.e. mystical) self-communication of God in all things, at work to achieve their reconciling, healing, and perfecting, their greatest possible participation in God. From among many possible theological rationales for the central role of mystical theology, the chapter offers one grounded in the theology of creation and another in soteriology.

Mystical Theology and Human Experience by Edward Howells
Human experience is central to mystical theology but it cannot define it, because, according to mystical theology, the experience is not merely human but divine. After an orientation in the current debate on mystical experience, the puzzling quality of the experience, as both fully human and more than anything human, is elaborated through an exposition of three historical examples, Augustine, Meister Eckhart, and Teresa of Avila. The dual, expansive character of the experience elicits growth into an enlarged capacity for seeing God as both immediately present and wholly other. An

increasing integration of key tensions—between divine presence and divine absence, inner and outer knowing, spirit and body, and contemplative and active—emerges in this transformative process. This perspective is finally reviewed with reference to the tradition of the 'spiritual senses'.

The Genealogy of Mystical Traditions by Bernard McGinn

This chapter is designed as a broad road map of the development of Christian mystical theology down to the Quietist Controversy at the end of the seventeenth century and the triumph of the Enlightenment, which took a generally negative attitude toward the mystical element in Christianity. It follows the main genealogies, or historically coherent traditions of mystical theology, from the patristic genealogies of east and west, through the medieval genealogies (monastic, Franciscan, German, Flemish, French and Italian, English), concluding with the early modern genealogies (Protestant and Reformed Catholic, especially of Spain and France).

Mystical Theology in Contemporary Perspective by Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer

The chapter examines the presence and visibility of spiritual and mystical experience in the secularized and plural contemporary world. Our historical moment puts into question the socio-political and cultural context of contemporary mystical life and thought. This allows us to trace the contours of present-day mystical experience in the southern hemisphere, where the experience of the Spirit is intertwined in distinctive ways with issues such as secular politics or interreligious dialogue and with the emergence of intra-ecclesial spiritualism. In doing so, we elaborate the new challenges that the experience of and reflection upon mysticism poses for Christian theology and its discourse about humanity. <>

II Sources, Contexts, and Practices

Living the Word by Kevin L. Hughes

This chapter traces the pattern of reading and relating to the scriptural that was intimately woven into the fabric of mystical theology for more than a millennium of Christian practice. While the 'spiritual interpretation of scripture' is usually considered as a technical method of biblical exegesis, Henri de Lubac argued that it was less a literary technique than a spiritual itinerary. But already by the later Middle Ages, the 'professionalization' of scripture in the schools gradually drove a wedge between scriptural understanding and the transformational encounter of the soul with God. 'Spiritual exegesis' came to be understood narrowly as the work of doctrinal exposition. The 'mystical' came to refer not to the wisdom deep in scripture but to the subjective experience of the soul, while 'allegory' became more and more a mode of literary criticism. The conclusion sketches a possible path of retrieval.

The Liturgical Mystery by Andrew Louth

This chapter argues that the heart of the 'mystical' in the Christian faith is inalienably liturgical. Despite the fact that modern use of the 'mystical', and especially 'mysticism', is concerned wholly with the experience of the individual, whether in the context of the sacramental life or outside it, the root meaning of the mystical in Christian understanding is bound up with the sacraments, and pre-eminently the eucharist, the divine liturgy. It is argued further that the eucharist is to be seen less as a text than an action, or movement, and an action performed by Christ: on the cross, eternally in heaven, and now in the eucharist. He is coming to draw the whole cosmos into unity with him and his offering himself to the Father. This is an act of reconciliation and love, with entailments, ascetical, ontological, metaphysical, and cosmic.

Mystics as Teachers by Joanne Maguire

Mystics who speak and write for others act as teachers in various ways. Studies of mysticism and religious experience have tended to consider a mystical quest as a highly individual and idiosyncratic venture, but it is apparent that many mystics wrote and spoke to instruct their followers. Teaching implies recipients of that teaching, both as individuals and in aggregate, and it implies superior knowledge, which is based in small part on the mystic's own experience but relies almost entirely on inspiration from God. Although there is no one mystical curriculum or pedagogical approach in Christian traditions, many mystics adhere to content and methods that are rooted firmly in traditional doctrines and practices. This chapter examines mystics as teachers primarily through the lenses of sources, authority, and methods, each of which is understood to be derived from and modelled on God and mediated through a teacher.

The Ascetic Life by Luke Dysinger

In classical antiquity the term asceticism described the training necessary to acquire a skill. In Christianity asceticism comprises the practices or exercises that Christians undertake as part of the quest for moral virtue and spiritual freedom. This, in turn, prepares the soul for both the contemplation of God in creation and the ineffable contemplation of God beyond words and images. Asceticism, thus understood, comprises a wide range of spiritual practices that must be constantly assessed and employed as needed in the maintenance of spiritual balance. Ascetical practices discussed in this chapter include: fasting, almsgiving, prayer, martyrdom, celibacy, simplification of life, biblical exegesis, watchfulness over thoughts, discernment, liturgical asceticism, penitential practices, pilgrimage, dispossession, labour, and the service of others.

Prayer by Peter Tyler

'Prayer is nothing but an intimate sharing between friends': so St Teresa of Avila describes the nature of Christian prayer from the perspective of the Western tradition of mystical theology. In this chapter two key aspects of this tradition are explored: the Neoplatonic and the Augustinian. The first, Neoplatonic tradition derives from the Platonic tradition of theosis which although never officially endorsed by the early church (and explicitly condemned in the writings of Origen) manages to survive in the Dionysian and Evagrian/monastic traditions. The second, deriving from St Augustine, develops the scriptural notion of the vision of the fallen soul in a broken world, subject to and entirely dependent upon God's grace. These perspectives are mapped onto later developments in the tradition, in particular in the work of Teresa of Avila. The chapter finishes with some brief reflections on twentieth-century developments of the tradition as exemplified in the work of Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta a Cruce) and Thomas Merton that bring the key aspects of mystical prayer up to our present time.

Lives and Visions by Patricia Zimmerman Beckman

Mystical writers of Lives and Visions employ distinct, explicit strategies to evoke mystical experience in their audiences. Beyond claims of historical meaning and truths, the texts focus on the process of knowing and encounter with the divine. After tracing biblical and early historical resources, three case studies on Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg, and Annie Dillard elucidate mystical writing techniques of visionary exegesis, narrative protagonist flexibility, and creative generative prose. This chapter interrogates how form works in authorizing claims, theological anthropology, and understanding of divine essence and encounter in the world. Embedded here is also an invitation to contemporary practitioners to carry on this artful work of mystical theology.

Mystical Texts by Rob Faesen and John Arblaster

The study of mysticism and mystical theology implies the study of texts, and the general principles of scientific literary analysis are applied here. Nevertheless, mystical literature contains a number of elements that are worthy of specific enquiry. The first is that as a linguistic form, these texts have a unique 'referent'—i.e. that the connection between the signifiant and the signifié is exceptional. Second, it is important to note that mystical literature consists of a wide variety of literary genres, which is partly related to the mystical authors' motives for writing, the concrete circumstances in which these texts were written, and the intended readers. Third, these texts often function(ed) in difficult (historical and theological) contexts, which is a determining factor in terms of intertextuality and reception history.

Mystical Poetics by Alexander J. B. Hampton

The development of Christian mysticism is deeply bound to poetics. This examination first considers Platonic poetry, Hebrew creation, and Christian kenosis as sources of poetic mysticism, before turning to an elaboration of the role of rhythm, language, and the poetic imagination. The appraisal then considers the historical development of mystical poetry, beginning with early Christian reflection on the figurative and lyrical use of scriptural language to express a deep personal relationship with God. The development of vernacular mysticism, and its adoption of this scriptural model, is then explored through a detailed consideration of four mystical poets (Dante, Jacopone, Hadewijch, and Angelus Silesius). The interaction of poetic form and spiritual content is elaborated throughout, with the aim of demonstrating how poetics allows the mystical writer to achieve a result for the reader otherwise not possible in discursive forms of communication.

III Key Patterns of Mystical Thought

The Image and Likeness of God by John Arblaster

This chapter examines the subject of humanity as created in the image and likeness of God, a central theme in the Christian mystical tradition. Indeed, the imago Dei forms the foundation of much if not all Christian theological anthropology, and questions of the 'nature' and 'structure' of the human person are evidently central to questions of the mystical encounter between human persons and God. This chapter first surveys the scriptural background of the imago Dei in both Genesis and the New Testament and then provides a brief survey of current systematic-theological and historical-theological approaches. After providing some background to patristic imago Dei theologies in both the East and West, the chapter focuses in-depth on three lesser-known medieval authors: John of Fécamp, William of St Thierry, and John of Ruusbroec, in an attempt to highlight the rich variation and theological sophistication of their mystical anthropologies.

Spiritual Itineraries by Boyd Taylor Coolman

This chapter argues that the overarching Christian conception of the human is that of 'pilgrim' or 'wayfarer'. But this notion has a particular history. Over the first fifteen centuries of Christianity, spiritual or mystical itinerancy emerged at the nexus of certain Judaeo-Christian assumptions about the world and its original, current, and final relationship with God, on one hand, and of certain strands of Graeco-Roman culture and philosophy, on the other. The confluence of these two streams produced the basic notion of spiritual journey in the pre-modern eras of Christianity. This chapter argues that mystical itinerancy tends to have one of two aspects, pre- or post-conversion; one of two trajectories, vertical-mystical or horizontal-historical; and one of two dominant modes, personal or communal. These combine to form three basic models: (1) individual, vertical-mystical ascent to contemplation; (2) individual, horizontal-historical peregrination to conversion/sanctification; (3) communal pilgrimage to the kingdom/city of God.

Depth, Ground, Abyss by Charlotte Radler

Christian mystics have used the topographical metaphors of depth, ground, and abyss to illuminate the continuity between God and creation. This chapter first proffers a brief survey of the biblical and early Christian usage of these metaphors. It then moves to a more extensive exploration of them in the writings of medieval, modern, and post-modern Christian thinkers Meister Eckhart (c.1260-1328), Thomas Merton (1915–68), and Dorothee Sölle (1929–2003). In the writings of Eckhart, Merton, and Sölle, the metaphors depth, ground, and abyss are used to depict an ever-expanding continuum of God and human, time and eternity, immanence and transcendence, challenging static identities and relationships. The spiritual and political implications of Eckhart's conceptual expansion of these metaphors continue to be appropriated and reworked in contemporary mysticism as illustrated in the writings of Merton and Sölle.

Erotic and Nuptial Imagery by Louise Nelstrop

This chapter explores the place of erotic and nuptial image within Christian mystical texts. It outlines a shift in later mystical texts in which human corporeality, especially in terms of sensation and emotion, is embraced as part of what it means to love God. It is noted that this development is accompanied by an increasingly Christological focus. It is argued that there is much that contemporary theology could learn for mystical accounts of love, not least the idea that the female body can be both pure and sexually responsive at the same time.

Cataphasis, Visualization, and Mystical Space by David Albertson

To grasp the legitimacy of cataphatic mystical theology, it is important to move beyond medieval binaries of power, gender, and literacy. Instead, cataphasis and visionary mysticism should be re-examined as practices of active spatial projection, navigation, and annotation. Historical instances from pre-modern Christianity and modern space theories suggest various ways to reconceive mystical theologies as fundamentally spatial, even geometrical, phenomena. This model is applied to Hildegard of Bingen's major works, Scivias and Liber divinorum operum. In both texts, Hildegard's images construct complex spaces of enclosure, from Mary's womb to the cosmic egg to God's unfathomable Wisdom. But where her images remain static allegories in the earlier work, in the later they manifest greater mobility and depth, demanding a more spatialized hermeneutics. The example of Hildegard's visionary mysticism suggests that space is a useful category for understanding the nature of cataphasis and the limits of apophasis today.

Theological Epistemology and Apophasis by Cyril O'regan

This chapter examines the epistemology of mystical theology. It begins with the 'intellectualist' line of thinking from Pseudo-Dionysius to Meister Eckhart, paying close attention both to the 'protocols' which are required to speak of God both as the ground of our language, beyond naming, and as one who can really be experienced. These epistemological protocols can also be identified in Augustine, and later in the more 'affective' line of mystical theology from Bernard of Clairvaux to Bonaventure, though in a rather different form. This renders mystical theology quite different from a quest for Jamesian 'peak' experiences and knowledge of them; rather, it entails disciplines of formation, involving regimes of discourse and practice, to learn a language and a subjectivity enabling a more intense relation with God.

Trinitarian Indwelling by Rik Van Nieuwenhove

This chapter discusses two models of the Trinity: the so-called social or interpersonal model, and the psychological or intrapersonal model. How we conceive of the indwelling of the Trinity will be determined by the extent to which we espouse one of these models. The chapter argues that the

social model, although rather fashionable in current theology, may not be as suitable as the intrapersonal model to account for the indwelling in the soul of the divine Persons and the Son in particular. The intrapersonal model, on the other hand, can account for a genuine indwelling of both the Son and Holy Spirit.

Mystical Union by Bernard McGinn

This chapter follows the evolution of the three main models of Christian understanding of mystical union from the biblical foundations down to the crisis of mysticism at the end of the seventeenth century. Although the technical term 'mystical union' was rarely used for most of this period, many Christian thinkers spoke about becoming one with God through grace. Three main models emerged. The first is unitas spiritus (union of spirit), based on 1 Corinthians 6: 17, according to which God and the person unite in spirit by willing the same thing. This was often expressed in erotic terms. The second model is Trinitarian—a union in which a human comes to share in the inner life of the three Persons of the Trinity. The final model is the union of indistinction in which union is understood as a merging with God that leaves all distinction behind, at least on some level.

IV Mysticism and Theology

Metaphysics, Theology, and the Mystical by David Tracy

Using the pluriform concept of the infinite to investigate the evolving relationships between theology, metaphysics, and mysticism, the chapter creates a heuristic conversation between crucial representative thinkers, among them: Plato, Plotinus, Gregory of Nyssa, Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Descartes, Pascal, Fénelon, and Jeanne Guyon. In doing so, the chapter asserts that the Christian God is both infinite-incomprehensible and radically hidden and argues that one should allow each naming of God—incomprehensible or hidden—its Christological emphasis (incarnation for incomprehensibility; cross for hiddenness). Each serves as a genuine Christian option—open to different cultures, situations, and temperaments. Exploring the implicit mystical dimension of the Infinite allows us to see that Western religious thought, including theology, would be greatly impoverished if either ethics or aesthetics, prophecy or mysticism, were eliminated from the ever-changing canon of Western religious thought, including mystical theology.

The Mystical—or What Theology can Show by Jean-Luc Marion and Kathleen McNutt

Access to the 'notion' of 'the mystical' is treated by many as problematic in an age of scepticism. For a tradition that reverences sacred mystery, and for a discipline like theology—that processes both from and toward this mystery—this scepticism issues an epistemological challenge to the credibility, even the possibility of the discipline itself. In a manner not unlike phenomenology, while unable to speak of the ineffable, theology can reveal that which shows itself whilst nevertheless remaining unsayable. While there are myriad reasons why these disciplines cannot simply be collapsed, there is nevertheless a kind of mutual relationship possible between phenomenology and mystical theology, in which both are increasingly opened to the phenomenality of the mystical, perhaps even to the point of redefining our notions of mystery.

The Trinity by Rik Van Nieuwenhove and William Crozier

This chapter considers mystical theology as a resource for theology of the Trinity today. It consists of two parts. The first part draws mainly on the Trinitarian theology of St Bonaventure to demonstrate that participation in the life of the Trinity is essential to begin to engage in theology of the Trinity: vision implies participation. The second part provides an example of how the writings of mystical theological authors, such as Hadewijch or Ruusbroec, can assist us in solving systematic

theological problems. More particularly, we argue that Ruusbroec's notion of regyratio (i.e. the Holy Spirit as the principle of the return of the divine Person into their shared unity) can circumvent the problem of 'Trinitarian inversion' (which refers to the problematic tension between accounts of the immanent processions, on the one hand, and the sequence of historical missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in the economic Trinity, on the other).

Christology by Amy Hollywood and Rachel Smith

This chapter examines the Christologies found not only among scholastic theologians but also in hagiography, vision books, didactic letters, poems, and spiritual guidebooks. At the forefront are male and female authors within the Western Christian tradition who claim that human beings might be so fully united with Christ as to be an alter Christus or, alternatively, who are claimed by others to have attained that state. The chapter begins with more recognizable Christological arguments before exploring how certain medieval texts and communities, through their claims about the possibility of being conformed to Christ, make theological arguments about Christ that stand in tension with his purported singularity.

Pneumatology by Brandon Gallaher

This chapter seeks to show that mysticism is not about the rarefied experience of certain spiritual athletes but the Holy Spirit's ordinary or common call to transformation of every Christian into a potentially extraordinary 'second Christ'. The author contends that in Christian teaching the Spirit hides himself but in this age is made known in the faces of transformed Christians—saints and mystics—as little 'christs'. The Spirit is said to be the author of the Body of Christ in which Christians are called to put on Christ, living lives headed by the Spirit, as 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1: 4). Examples are drawn from the mystical and liturgical tradition in Christian East and West: Symeon the New Theologian, Seraphim of Sarov, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, as well as in baptismal and eucharistic theology and especially in the work of Augustine.

Creation and Revelation by Douglas E. Christie

The Christian mystical tradition gives expression to a varied, ambiguous, and shifting understanding of creation. The dialectical tension between kataphatic and apophatic mysticism frames this complex attitude towards creation. On the one hand, mystics regularly affirm the sacramental character of the created world, its capacity to reveal and make present the reality of God. Central to this theological intuition is the presence of the logos, the very principle of creation that also becomes the deep source of sacramental spiritual experience. On the other hand, mystics show deep respect for all that cannot be known, especially all that remains hidden under the shroud of loss and suffering. The image of the crucified Christ and Christ dead in the tomb is not only an emblem of salvation, but also a call to pause, in humility, before all that can never be known or understood of God. Creation reveals. But it also conceals.

Anthropology by Philip Sheldrake

Theological anthropology explores Christian understandings of human identity. In mystical theology, this broadly takes three forms. First, 'positive' or kataphatic anthropology focuses on what we may affirm about the various dimensions of human identity. In this chapter, this is illustrated with reference to Julian of Norwich. Second, 'negative' or apophatic anthropology emphasizes that the human 'self', like the God with whom it is united, is ultimately beyond our capacity to define. Alongside further references to Julian, mention is made of Meister Eckhart and The Cloud of Unknowing. Finally, liberationist anthropology is a dimension of liberation theology which emerged during the last part of the twentieth century. Several exponents such as Segundo Galilea and Gustavo Gutiérrez draw upon Christian mysticism. Liberationist anthropology involves an essentially

collective understanding of human identity as well as a socially critical approach to how human existence is shaped by dominant cultural or political forces.

Theosis by Aristotle Papanikolaou

For certain Christians, the word theosis raises red flags. The very mentioning of theosis inevitably conjures up images of Zeus or Thor, as well as many other mythological themes and stories that blur the boundary between the divine and the human. A closer look at the history of Christian thought will reveal that theosis is very closely linked to the basic question that Jesus himself posed: 'who do you say that I am?' If Christianity begins with the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah, Christian thought throughout the centuries is a history of debate on the answer to this basic question. The Christian affirmation of theosis emerges as a particular response to this question, one that experiences the messianic message of Jesus as the presencing of the divine, both in the person of Jesus and in the human being. This Christian understanding of theosis thus constitutes one of the clearest examples of 'mystical theology' both in the sense of how the experience of Jesus as the Christ informed particular Christian expressions about God, and how, in turn, such theological articulations continued to shape the Christian experience of the presencing of the divine. This chapter will look to the past to demonstrate how theosis was at the heart of the amplification of the Christian understanding of God as Trinity and the Christian understanding of virtue.

Ecclesiology by Gemma Simmonds

Holiness is as crucial an element within the Church's authentication as union, universality, apostolic origin, and outward dynamism. This holiness originates not in the Church's members but in the holiness of the Spirit of God dwelling within the community. The tradition of holiness within the Church is essential to its very life and sustainability and must be viewed within an eschatological perspective that acknowledges the fallen nature of all believers and the reality of sin while affirming that all are called without exception to be faithful to the Spirit alive within the community. The mystical tradition, while including its noted proponents and practitioners, is part of the universal baptismal vocation to holiness. A tension between hierarchy and charism, holiness and authority, has existed since the Church's foundation. Despite this inevitable tension, where sin abounds universally within the Church so grace also abounds by God's mercy throughout its history.

Mysticism of the Social Life by Ann W. Astell

Famous for its contribution to ecclesiology, the 1943 encyclical of Pius XII, Mystici Corporis Christi also marks a landmark in mystical theology both by affirming spiritual developments in Catholic Action organizations, which fostered an ideal of holiness accessible to the laity, and by opposing the 'false mysticism' of the mass movements (Fascism, Communism, Nazism, nationalism, global capitalism) of the day. Taking up a favourite theme in the 'French School' of saints and mystics, the idea of the 'Mystical Body of Christ' inspired new communities and ecclesial movements (Focolare, Catholic Worker, Schoenstatt), whose founders anticipated, read, and responded to Mystici Corporis amidst wartime suffering, while taking an apophatic and resistant approach to dominant social formations.

Interreligious Dialogue by Michael Barnes

This chapter asks what the Church has to learn from, and what it can offer to, the contemplative turn in contemporary culture. It begins with one particular aspect of this phenomenon, namely the interreligious spirituality of persons who find themselves caught up 'between' the wisdom of established traditions and their pursuit of an authentic personal practice. Thomas Merton and Swami Abhishiktananda are presented as well-known interreligious mystics, two exemplary spiritual guides who seek to pass on their own deeply discerned wisdom about how to live a life of encounter with

'the other'. In raising some of the theological questions that emerge as they seek to negotiate their interreligious experience, the second part of the chapter leads into a brief exercise or 'case study' in Comparative Theology: a dialogue between two well-known mystical texts, the Zen Buddhist Mumonkan and the Christian Cloud of Unknowing.

Eschatology by Hugh Feiss

Mystical experience is a foretaste of heaven and so eschatology and mysticism are related. Five examples of this relationship are Gregory the Great's account of Benedict's final vision of the world in the light of God, the twelfth-century Victorines' explanation of how mystical union leads to configuration with Christ and so to compassionate care for others, Bernard of Clairvaux's theory that the souls of the blessed do not have full union with God until they are reunited with their bodies and their fellow Christians at the final resurrection, Julian of Norwich's struggle to understand how all can be well when there is sin, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's vision of the divine presence in matter and of the responsibility of humanity to evolve toward the fullness of Christ. These intersections of mysticism and eschatology are elucidated by Jean-Yves Lacoste's phenomenology of prayer. <>

THE COPERNICAN QUESTION: PROGNOSTICATION, SKEPTICISM, AND CELESTIAL ORDER by Robert S. Westman [University of California Press, 9780520254817]

Critical Appraisal

This reissue of a now universally respected monograph on how Copernicus changed his mind about how the heavens moved and created the conditions to led to the scientific and secular revolutions as the foundations of modernity also shows that such innovations of perspective still claim our attention. This historical work is richly engaging and absorbing reading.

In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus publicly defended his hypothesis that the earth is a planet and the sun a body resting near the center of a finite universe. But why did Copernicus make this bold proposal? And why did it matter? THE COPERNICAN QUESTION reframes this pivotal moment in the history of science, centering the story on a conflict over the credibility of astrology that erupted in Italy just as Copernicus arrived in 1496. Copernicus engendered enormous resistance when he sought to protect astrology by reconstituting its astronomical foundations. Robert S. Westman shows that efforts to answer the astrological skeptics became a crucial unifying theme of the early modern scientific movement. His interpretation of this "long sixteenth century," from the 1490s to the 1610s, offers a new framework for understanding the great transformations in natural philosophy in the century that followed.

Nicolaus Copernicus's reputation as a learned astronomer was established very quickly in the two decades after the appearance of the Narratio and DE REVOLUTIONIBUS. But DE REVOLUTIONIBUS was not the only resource for disseminating Copernicus's views. After Erasmus Reinhold's PRUTENIC TABLES appeared in 1551, Copernicus's renown within the literature of the heavens became firmly anchored to the domain of practical astronomy, even among constituencies unfamiliar directly with DE REVOLUTIONIBUS itself. From the perspective of the historical agents, there is a simple explanation for this state of affairs: the dominant preoccupation of those who

possessed techniques of celestial investigation was the making of knowledge about the future. And in the mid-sixteenth century, those concerns and competences were most powerfully located in the circle of students and scholars gathered around Philipp Melanchthon at Wittenberg. The dominant figures in this Wittenberg movement were Reinhold, Caspar Peucer, and Georg Joachim Rheticus. One significant force shaping the political space of the Melanchthon group was the patronage of the territorial prince, Albrecht Hohenzollern, margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach and duke of Prussia.

Reviews

"Now, more than forty years after [Westman] began work, twenty-five years after he announced the book as forthcoming, twenty years after he decided his first project was insufficiently ambitious, six years after he came to a sort of a stop – now, at long last, we have this vast (and beautifully produced and illustrated) book to hold in our hands." —**TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**

"[An] enormously erudite treatment." —**SCIENCE**

"A rich, multifaceted work." —**RENAISSANCE QUARTERLY**

"Westman proposes a radically new approach to his subject, which will surprise more than one specialist in Copernican studies." —**JOURNAL FOR THE HISTORY OF ASTRONOMY**

"This is a towering achievement. . . .Westman is a gifted writer who knows how to maintain the interest of the reader who is not an expert in astronomy." —**AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW**

"Westman takes readers back to the 15th century, showing the transformation of thought from mysticism and astrological predictions to the beginning of modern science, with the contributions of Galileo and Newton. - Recommended." —**CHOICE**

"This important work—massive, original, provocative, and potentially transformational—is the culmination of a lifetime's work." —**QUEST: HISTORY OF SPACEFLIGHT**

"This substantial book is magnificent in command of materials and in its clear presentation of them all. We see astrology giving way to astronomy. We understand the forces both progressive and regressive in the age of vast alteration beginning in the last decade of the fifteenth century. We grasp the movement toward the first decade of the seventeenth. . . . With extraordinary illustrations, this is a wonderful book." —**BIBLIOTHEQUE D'HUMANISME ET RENAISSANCE**

"An extraordinary book written by one of the finest historians of science." —**NEW BOOKS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY**

"[A] powerful, thoughtful reinterpretation of the entire period from around 1500 to around 1700. . .This is an important book. Get it and read it carefully. . . . Westman has made a major contribution to the new picture that is emerging of Copernicus's life and work." —**METASCIENCE**

Westman's profound understanding of his subject informs every page of this magisterial book. *The Copernican Question* provides a new road map to one of the central episodes in the history of science, in all its cultural, social, and philosophical complexity. —Peter Dear, author of **REVOLUTIONIZING THE SCIENCES: EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE AND ITS AMBITIONS, 1500-1700**

"**THE COPERNICAN QUESTION** is a truly astonishing work. Westman writes with the authority of someone who has really done his homework; he tells a fascinating story and tells it exceedingly well. —Ernan McMullin, editor of **THE CHURCH AND GALILEO**

"Robert Westman's engrossing book—the fruit of many years' research—offers the best answer given so far to the question of Copernicus. The Polish astronomer was an enigma to his contemporaries and to many who later struggled to understand his ideas. Westman shows that astrological prediction provides the missing key to his work and to its interpretation by astronomers in the subsequent decades. He sets the Copernican tradition against a backdrop of tumultuous religious conflict, apocalyptic prophecies, and the explosive growth of printed publications. This book is a magnificent scholarly achievement. Everyone who is seriously interested in the science and culture of early-modern Europe will want to read it." —Jan Golinski, author of **BRITISH WEATHER AND THE CLIMATE OF ENLIGHTENMENT**

Robert Westman's **THE COPERNICAN QUESTION** is a magnificent achievement. It is a comprehensive, nuanced, and fascinating reinterpretation of the Copernican century and the transformation of astronomy. This book will be of interest to anyone who wants a new understanding of the history of the heliocentric hypothesis and the complex problems facing Copernicus and his contemporaries and followers. —Carolyn Merchant, author of **THE DEATH OF NATURE: WOMEN, ECOLOGY, AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION**

"**THE COPERNICAN QUESTION** is a richly detailed, extensively researched, and engagingly written book that radically recontextualizes major figures in the "science of the stars" from Copernicus to Galileo, revealing new connections and motivations for their work and ideas. It will be required reading for historians and philosophers of science and for anyone interested in how and why we came to know what we do about the heavens." —Lawrence M. Principe, author of **THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION: A VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION**

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Excerpt: Divining the Unpredictable in the Regularities of the Heavens

Excerpt: Under what conditions do people change or give up beliefs to which they are most deeply committed? This general concern lay behind my original interest in the topic of this book: why and how Copernicus changed his own thinking about the organization of the heavens and what made his discovery persuasive to others after its publication in 1543. When I was first drawn to these historical questions in the late 1960s, they were central to the prevailing postwar narrative of the historiography of science, a story cast in the language of "scientific revolution" and "the origins of modern science." Although it is surely uncontroversial to say that there were many profound conceptual changes between 1500 and 1700, it is dubious whether revolution, a term normally used to designate a short-term political upheaval or rupture, is the right governing metaphor. Yet a

It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future.

—Attributed to YOGI BERRA (and, in a slightly different version, to Niels Bohr)

difficulty about origins still remains: what, after all, was the question that Copernicus was trying to answer? This book is as much about that question—and the problems it generated and left unresolved—as it is about the kinds of answers offered by Copernicus and those who followed him.

In the 1970s and '80s, what seemed to me missing from discussions of the Copernican episode was the strong connection between transformations of concepts and the communal dimension of scientific change that Thomas Kuhn's work had foregrounded theoretically in **THE STRUCTURE OF SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTIONS** but left unaddressed in his Copernican Revolution. Thus initially I sought to probe how Copernicus's work was read and sophisticated historiographical era that projected a preformed template of rationality and progress onto the past. Against such late-modernist confidence, a postmodernist, anthropologizing, and sociologizing sensibility had begun to

take hold, producing an opposing image of scientific knowledge as contingent, embedded practice. This perspective made rationality situational rather than universal and eschewed progress in favor of temporally circumscribed, "thick" treatments of knowledge-making practices.

In early 1991, my work took a new turn when Luce Giard arrived from Paris for her annual stint of teaching at the University of California, San Diego and suggested that I might show her an outline of the project—an outline that she quickly judged capable of yielding two books rather than one. Thanks in part to her generous willingness to read still more, I turned my entire attention to this book, a project that I estimated (as usual, incorrectly) would take about five years to complete. Once under way, the writing took on a life of its own as I found myself unexpectedly moving from my intended starting date of 1543 back into the fifteenth century. That redirection resulted in large measure from reading a remark-able group of astrological prognostications acquired by the British Museum in 1898 from the estate of an Italian prince and early historian of mathematics, Baldassarre Boncompagni (1821–94). This collection, first described by the indefatigable Lynn Thorndike in volume 5 of his **History of Magic and Experimental Science** (1941), contains several prognostications by Domenico Maria Novara, a master of astronomy with whom the young Copernicus lived and worked during his student days in Bologna. Eventually, I was able to find more than a dozen forecasts by Novara dispersed among several European libraries. Studying these

> How many people [who] are immersed in a discipline are used to reducing everything to it, and not because of a desire to explain everything by it, but because things really seem like that to them. What happens to them is like someone who walks immersed in snow and to whom everything ends up appearing white . . . like someone who loves in vain and sees the face of his beloved in everything…So he who is a theologian, and nothing but a theologian, takes everything back to divine causes; he who is a doctor takes everything back to corporal states, the physicist to the natural principles of things, the mathematician, like the Pythagoreans, to numbers and figures. In the same way, the Chaldeans were entirely occupied with the measurement of celestial movements and the observation of the positions of the stars… and all things were stars to them, and they willingly took everything back to the stars.
>
> —GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, Disputationes contra Astrologiam Divinatricem, 1496

prognostications caused me to re-think my entire approach and to see a way for-ward to a new kind of big picture—although this narrative makes no claims to finality...

The Historical Problematic

There were two motivations for entertaining such alternative possibilities. The first arose from natural philosophers answering theological worries about threats to God's unlimited, absolute power: for example, could God not make several worlds, if he so wished? But the second source of alternatives was already built into Aristotle's argumentational and rhetorical practices. Aristotle

frequently reported the claims of his predecessors only to reject them in favor of his own positions. One such view was that of the Pythagoreans, who "affirm[ed] that the center is occupied by fire, and that the earth is one of the stars, and creates night and day as it travels in a circle about the center." From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, Aristotle's description of the Pythagorean view became a standard part of the argument that students learned—and then learned to reject—in support of the Earth's centrality and immobility. It was only sometime in the last years of the fifteenth and the first decade of the sixteenth century that a Polish church iv canon and sometime astronomical practitioner named Nicolaus Copernicus posed the Pythagorean idea to himself in a new way. He did so not in the thirteenth-century-philosophical style, as an alternative to be rejected, but rather as a mathematical assumption in the style of Claudius Ptolemy, reinterpreting the old Pythagorean idea as an astronomical explanation for two perplexing problems: first, the Sun's apparent motion as mirrored in the planets' motions, and second, the disputed ordering of Venus and Mercury. Yet not until 1543 did Copernicus finally publish a full-dress defense of this explanation and mobilize it as a vehicle for persuading others.

TEOFILO: Coming back to Nundinio, at this point he started to show his teeth, gape his jaws, squint his eyes, wrinkle his eyebrows, flare his nostrils and utter a capon's crow from his windpipe, in order to make the people present understand by that laughter that he understood well, that he was right while the other was saying ridiculous things.

FRULLA: Is not the truth of what the Nolan said proven by the fact that Nundinio laughed at it so much?

—GIORDANO BRUNO, La cena de le ceneri, 1584

The Copernican Question opens with a paradox of historical context. Why ever did Copernicus concern himself about the order of the planets when the burgeoning late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century heavenly print literature, directed to learned elites and ordinary people alike, was overwhelmingly preoccupied with astrologically driven anticipations of the future, sometimes coupled with powerful apocalyptic fantasies that the world would soon come to an end? For those who read Copernicus's book, **DE REVOLUTIONIBUS ORBIUM COELESTIUM (ON THE REVOLUTIONS OF THE HEAVENLY SPHERES)**, what did getting the structure of the heavens right have to do with more accurately predicting the future? And with printing technology making possible the production, circulation, and comparison of an increasing number of prophetic schemes, which prophecies or which combination of prophetic authorities—biblical, extrabiblical, astrological—were to be trusted? Indeed, could heavenly knowledge support prophecy? During the Great Schism of 1378–1414, when the theologian Pierre d'Ailly worried that three men all claiming to be pope betokened the imminent arrival of the Antichrist, he turned for assistance to conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter and slow, long-term motions of the sphere just beyond the fixed stars—seeking reassurance in a "concordance" of the Bible with astrology and ultimately concluding that the Antichrist's coming would not occur before 1789.

Among those immersed in such categories and authorities was Copernicus's early contemporary, Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), who regarded his "Enterprise of the Indies" as but a step toward the fulfillment of his own guiding fantasy in the service of the Spanish crown: the liberation and reconquest of Jerusalem. Steeped in the astrological and biblical prophecies of Pierre d'Ailly and

following Saint Augustine's figure of seven thousand years for the world's duration, Columbus believed that the world had entered its last 155 years. He regarded himself (invoking the meaning of his name as "Christ- bearer" [Christoferens]) as a major participant in the enactment of this drama: "God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth of which he spoke in the Apocalypse of St. John after having spoken of it through the mouth of Isaiah; and he showed me the spot where to find it."

Columbus was by no means the last discoverer to represent himself as a divine messenger heralding a new world, and he was far from the only one of Copernicus's contemporaries to be preoccupied with prophetic knowledge. Andreas Osiander, the influential Lutheran pastor who shepherded Copernicus's book through the press at Nuremberg, published in 1527 a prophecy "not in words, but in pictures alone," from materials appropriated from a much earlier prophecy—all meant to show the papacy's decline into tyranny, moral decay, and secular power as a powerful symptom of the end times. And indeed, even as Galileo, Kepler, and others began to move the Copernican arrangement into the modernizing currents of the seventeenth century's first decade, they and other heavenly practitioners retained an intense preoccupation with the future.

Who, then, could be trusted to speak about the future in an age when the heavens were a major theater of cultural and political anxieties? And who decided which methods of prognostication were acceptable? Those were the major questions of the Copernican moment. But if so granted, then why did **DE REVOLUTIONIBUS** not make explicit a connection between planetary order and the success of astrological prognostication? In this book, I argue that Copernicus himself did see them as related even as early as his student days in Krakow and Bologna during the 1490s. Claudius Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, the fundamental astrological text of antiquity, assigned to the planets certain essential capacities and differential powers to produce specific physical effects on Earth that were directly tied to the order of the planets. Because astrology depended on astronomy to deliver reliable positions for the planets, if astronomy's principles were called into doubt, then the relationship with the companion discipline was also imperiled. And indeed, the iconoclastic Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) undermined these very relations in his sharp, far-reaching assault on astrology, posthumously published in 1496. Uncertainty about astral powers and planetary order would become one of the problems—perhaps even the crucial one—to which Copernicus's reordering of the planets was a proposed, if unannounced, solution.

Historians—including myself—have not generally regarded the new Sun-centered ordering of Copernicus and his followers to involve a response to contemporary concerns about astral powers. With the exception of the prescient suggestions of John North and Richard Lemay, mental innovation in the relatively narrow technical specialty of astronomy "transformed neighboring sciences and, more slowly, the worlds of the philosopher and the educated layman." It was in this sense, rather than in the paradigm-changing rupture of his later work, that Kuhn regarded the entire development as a revolution that Copernicus initiated and of which he was a necessary and central part.

Talk of "deep" revolution or long-term upheaval at the level of both scientific concepts and standards no longer comes as easily as it did at the time of Kuhn's original writing in those historiographically optimistic, if not quite innocent, years following the end of World War II. Nostalgia for so-called big-picture history still exists, but for many it is strongly resisted by a sense that only something like an anthropological immersion in local sites of knowledge making—seeing things "from the native's point of view"—can yield real insight about the actual practices of science. Yet, as revealing as such concentrated localist probings may be, the anthropological tool kit does not provide the methods needed to study change over long periods. Quite the contrary: this approach

leaves open the task of explaining how, across time, specific readings, meanings and evaluative judgments made in one cultural setting circulated, metamorphosed, persuaded, or dropped away in others. The present study takes seriously the elements of both sorts of projects—meanings formed at local sites as well as the long-term movement of standards, reasons, and theoretical commitments—seeking a treacherous middle course between the Scylla of internalist conceptualism and the Charybdis of the localist turn.

By way of introduction, consider the specific questions and difficulties that Copernicus's work raised for sixteenth-century readers. First, if the main problem faced by sixteenth-century heavenly practitioners was how to shut down, or at least limit, doubts about predicting the future— whether the occurrence of celestial events, human happenings in the near term, or the end of the world— after 1543, they had to consider whether reordering the planets would help in those efforts. Yet Copernicus's reordering was far from the only strategy that might be used to make astrology's predictions persuasive; indeed, as rap-idly became clear, some saw his planetary models rather than his planetary arrangement as truths? Was the subject matter of the biblical text always conveyed by the literal or historical meaning of its words? And who had the ultimate authority to decide on the mode of interpretation appropriate to a given passage? Finally, when the subject matters of two different kinds of texts were seen to coincide—for example, astronomical/astrological with biblical, or astronomical with natural-philosophical—who had the authority to decide which standards of meaning, and truth should govern their assessment? Questions of this sort were inextricably interwoven into issues faced by Copernicus's sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century followers.

Beyond scriptural and physical criteria, there were other, more strictly logical standards for judging claims about heavenly motions. But, again, who was taken to have the authority to decide which standard should prevail? For celestial prognosticators, tables of mean motions and observations were the principal standard. Yet from the observational evidence alone, long available since antiquity—daily risings and settings of heavenly bodies, retrograde motions, changes in speed, the occurrence of eclipses, and so forth—Copernicus could not deduce a theory uniquely founded on the Earth's motion. Worse still, if Copernicus aspired to make even stronger claims about the nature of reality, then he would have to satisfy a logical ideal widely held among philosophers. Aristotle's standard of scientific demonstration—never itself a logic of discovery—raised the bar impossibly high: it demanded a syllogism called apodictic, in which from a true, necessary, and incontrovertible major premise, a true conclusion was inferred. Yet the logic of Copernicus's central claim did not fit that stringent argument-form because, like Ptolemy in his Almagest, Copernicus used the less robust conditional syllogism as his preferred pattern of reasoning— starting with the Earth's motion as an assumed, rather than incontrovertibly true, premise. In that sense, it was a supposition or hypothesis that might or might not be true, yet from which true consequences could be deduced.

To add to such logical considerations, Copernicus had opened a question that had been glimpsed in antiquity but which previously had not been seen to possess far-reaching consequences: how to choose between different models of heavenly motion supported indifferently by the same observational evidence. A simple version of his main argument, Copernicus played on such deceptions of the visual imago. But the boat analogy addresses only one motion. The Earth was not just "floating calmly along." It was describing a more complex motion, some in comparable language, known to Copernicus, Peurbach had already called attention to this same peculiar phenomenon with reference to the Sun: "It is evident that each of the six planets shares something with the sun in their motions and that the motion of the sun is like some common mirror and rule of measurement to their motions." Had Copernicus drawn explicit attention to this passage in Peurbach's book, widely taught in the universities, it might have helped to highlight this problem, if not to persuade otherwise

skeptical readers that he offered a viable solution to it. But Copernicus makes no references to Peurbach and, for that matter, few to other contemporaries. Good humanist that he was, Copernicus represented himself as though in an exclusive dialogue with the ancients. Meanwhile, other observational consequences, such as the variation of the Moon's apparent diameter, in which Copernicus claimed "greater certainty" than Ptolemy, in no way depended on the new ordering of the planets. Modern reconstructions of the mutual advantages and disadvantages of the Copernican and Ptolemaic arrangements have made these considerations much easier to grasp; yet, as a consequence, they have unwittingly made the situation faced by contemporaries seem more obvious than it really was.

Hindsight may also intrude in another way. The heliostatic theory, taken as a timeless entity all of whose entailments are known, predicts certain effects that were not immediately observed. The historical question is, when did those effects become real questions for the agents? And further, when and how were those effects seen to be implications of the Sun-centered theory rather than of its alternative? For example, if the Earth moves, you ought to be able to detect a slight parallactic effect in a distant star; over a period of six months or a year, the star should appear to shift its position. Also, Mars at opposition should have a diurnal parallax greater than the Sun and hence should be closer than the Sun to the Earth. Or yet again, if Venus is revolving around the Sun, then it ought to display a complete set of phases, like the Earth's moon. And finally, if the

I see some who study and comment on their almanacs and cite their authority in current events. With all they say, they necessarily tell both truth and falsehood. For who is there who, shooting all day, will not sometime hit the mark? [Cicero] . . . Besides, no one keeps a record of their mistakes, inasmuch as these are ordinary and numberless; and their correct divinations are made much of because they are rare, incredible, and prodigious.

—MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE, "Of Prognostications," in Essays, 1580

Earth is set in motion, the resulting distances create serious problems regarding the plenum of nesting eccentric spheres that many believed transported the planets themselves. In 1543, Copernicus himself recognized that the Earth's motion entailed the appearance of an annual parallactic effect in the fixed stars, and he acknowledged that the stars exhibited no such appearance; however, he did not allude to the possibility of Venusian phases; and, as he was hardly a systematic natural philosopher, he did not comment unambiguously on the ontology of the heavenly spheres. Copernicus explained the absence of parallax as a consequence of the universe's large, hitherto-underappreciated size. However, his first disciple, Georg Joachim Rheticus (1514–74), stated quite bluntly that "Mars unquestionably admits a parallax sometimes greater than the sun's" and then proceeded to infer that "therefore, it seems impossible that the earth should occupy the center of the universe." The question of measuring stellar— or planetary—parallax does not seem to have been grasped as approachable by anyone before Tycho Brahe in the 1580s and, yet more optimistically, by Galileo after 1610; and there was no stable consensus that the problem had been resolved until Wilhelm Gottfried Bessel produced measurements of stellar parallax in 1838.

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The Copernican Question: Closure and Proof

Twenty years after Galileo's first encounters with Rome, his trial dramatically transformed the Copernican question from a hypothesis about planetary ordering, known as a famous alternative to traditional astronomical schemes, into a European-wide controversy freighted with divisive confessional and disciplinary import. After 1633, identifying with the Copernicans was clearly associated with having decided for the modern way not just in astronomy but also in natural philosophy. To contemporaries, traditionalists and moderns alike, it seemed a very great controversy of longstanding in an age marked by a relentless stream of religious controversies—at a time when scientific revolution had not yet become the preferred trope of change that it would be for twentieth-century historians of science.

Yet in spite of the consolidation of arguments, the diversity already evident at the beginning of the century persisted among Copernicus's midcentury followers. To identify oneself publicly with the Copernican arrangement or to declare its truth did not entail allegiance to the uniform set of commitments in natural philosophy evoked by the nineteenth- and twentieth-century term Copernicanism. The Copernican question achieved closure—an end to questioning and criticism from competing alternatives—in different ways among different audiences. These endings occurred through no single proof and with audiences as variously overlapping as almanac readers, practicing astrologers, planetary table makers, extraterrestrializers, itinerant scientific lecturers, and, of course, philosophizing astronomers and high-end, new-style natural philosophers.

It is a "standard move," as Peter Dear cogently remarks, to end accounts of seventeenth-century natural philosophy with Newton; but what kind of closure did Newton provide to the Copernican question? For Thomas Kuhn, "Copernicanism" between Kep ler and Newton functioned as a positive heuristic, a theory-laden engine that motivated new and fruitful questions, like "What moves the planets?" or revitalized old doctrines, like the infinite universe and atomism, and recast them in a form amenable to "scientific" quantification. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this formulation—as there is in so much of Kuhn's writing—although he overestimated both the inevitability of the process and the extent to which Copernicans as a group were uniquely responsible for these developments. Moreover, because of the original exclusion of astrology from the conceptual scheme that Copernicus was said to have replaced, the relationship between planetary order and astral influence had no place in that narrative and, hence, as I have been at pains to emphasize, was not seen as part of the problem of closure. "The construction of Newton's corpuscular world machine completes the conceptual revolution that Copernicus had initiated a century and a half earlier. Within this new universe the questions raised by Copernicus's astronomical innovation were at last resolved and Copernican astronomy became for the first time physically and cosmologically plausible. . . . Only as Copernicanism became credible, through the dissemination and acceptance of this new conceptual framework, did the last significant opposition to the conception of a planetary earth disappear."

There is a further historical difficulty in Kuhn's concluding reflections that merits comment. Well before Newton, a good number of practitioners regarded Copernicus's ordering of the planets as not merely plausible but probable or the best of the available alternatives or even divinely revealed. Riccioli, the Church's most respected opponent of Copernicus after Galileo's trial, even among themselves. Worse still, the astrologers could be spectacularly wrong for reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with the accuracy of theoretical or practical astronomy, as in the infamous solar eclipse of March 29, 1652 ("Black Monday"), which did indeed temporarily darken the skies but still failed embarrassingly to produce the horrendous, eternal, millennial darkness that had been forecast. Moreover, the heyday of the philosophizing astronomer-astrologers was rapidly being superseded by

new-style natural philosophers like Descartes, Hobbes, and Gassendi, for whom the accuracy of the tables was less important than how celestial order fitted into the compass of their general epistemic principles, theologies, and political concerns. Further, most of these new philosophical systematizers maintained a distinct hostility to astrology. And there was an audience for the skeptics as much as for the prognosticators: Gassendi's Piconian attack on the "Superstitious Credulity" of the "Star-Prophets" easily found an English translator (an anonymous "Person of Quality") and a London printer willing to publish it in 1659.

Newton shared in the Restoration's general skepticism about astrology, which was already widespread among leading, modernizing natural philosophers—although not, it would seem, because he had read Pico but because astrology offended his theological convictions as much as those he held in natural philosophy. It is ironic that at just the moment that Newton withdrew the support of his system of the world from astrology, he was able to provide a new kind of closure to the problematic of theoretical astronomy raised by the Copernican question, supplying Keplerian astronomy with unprecedented physical foundations. The matter is complicated, as with many earlier thinkers, by what was put into print and what remained in manuscript. Recent commentators are in more solid agreement about Newton's public grounding of the Copernican system than about its relation to his private ruminations. The Principia publicly derived the Earth's motion around the Sun neither from the Kepler-Gilbert magnetic solar force nor from Kepler's trinitarian celestial theology, but rather from a novel congress of active and passive principles. Newton's gravity acted centripetally toward the Sun across a space devoid of all Cartesian matter, its power varying inversely as the distance was found to be squared. When acted upon by this inverse-square force, the Earth, passively resistant to changes of state, described Keplerian equal areas in equal times with respect to the Sun and was deflected into a stable elliptical orbit, that stability being effectively the outcome of a balance of gravitational and inertial forces.

Newton's presentation differed from Hooke's otherwise remarkably similar model in that gravity was, for the first time, accessible—indeed, operationally defined—as a quantity, measurable only through its effects. The much-celebrated achievement was unprecedented both in its extraordinary unification of diverse phenomena and also in its generality: the same laws unified the planets, the tides, subvisible particles, and comets while also predicting the interactions between bodies still undiscovered. As with Descartes, the planetary ordering was seen to be simply a deductive outcome of the corpus of laws that informed the whole project. "The Copernican system is proved a priori," wrote Newton; "for if the common center of gravity is calculated for any position of the planets it either falls in the body of the Sun or will always be very close to it." As for comets, like Kepler and Descartes, Newton took them out of the extraordinary realm; but, unlike them, he produced a model that for the first time made one class of these entities predictable and recurrent; and for good measure he produced an explanation of why they were necessary to the.general economy of the universe. This was quite the reverse of what had occurred in the previous century, when prognosticators of all kinds had simply failed to predict the appearances of comets. Newton's new analysis of comets allowed him to collapse heavenly influence and catastrophic import into a very small class of predictable, periodic events. Comets could cause physical effects, now including collisions with the Earth: for Newton's followers Edmund Halley and William Whiston, they carried much the kind of millennialist import ascribed in the previous century to planetary conjunctions. But importantly, in this new accounting, the planets were entirely stripped of both astrological influence and apocalyptic meaning.

Yet, if the remarkable unification of diverse phenomena was compelling to Newton's dedicated followers, it did not end debate about alternatives in natural philosophy, because the account

notoriously still left vulnerable to Cartesian criticism the nature of gravity's cause. It was evidently this intractable problem that led Kuhn to assess Newton's conceptual achievement as (descriptively) credible rather than (demonstratively) proved: "Though the achievements of Copernicus and Newton are permanent, the concepts that made those achievements possible are not. Only the list of explicable phenomena grows; there is no similar cumulative process for the explanations themselves." In this moderately continuist, Duhemian passage from The Copernican Revolution, the full bite of Kuhn's revolutionary paradigm shift is not yet evident.

But for contemporaries, the controversy went on in its own local registers. In seventeenth-century natural philosophy, to leave unaddressed a cause as fundamental as gravity was, at worst, to invite rejection under the charge of occult unintelligibility and, at best, to invite dispute. Not only was Newton aware of the difficulty, but, as J. E. McGuire and P. M. Rattansi showed in a classic paper, he engaged in a prolonged and intensely private effort to find a complementary grounding for his natural philosophy in ancient historical and theological sources. The question of what Newton chose to make public and what he withheld has since occasioned much discussion among commentators. In Rob Iliffe's apt formulation, "Newton initially envisaged a treatise quite different from the Principia as it eventually appeared." Important indications of what he intended for a subsequent edition leaked out through a small circle of trusted friends and disciples. Essentially, Newton saw himself as recovering an ancient, prelapsarian wisdom that the moderns later defiled, distorted, and rendered idolatrous: the Egyptians already knew and taught the Copernican system in its Newtonian version, and it was passed down through Pythagoras, who concealed it in the form of mystical allegories. For Newton, the idolatry began when men started to worship the stars, to assign them human characteristics and powers: "To make this hypothesis the more plausible they feigned that ye stars by virtue of these souls were endued with the qualities of ye men ['& according to these qualities governed the world . . . ']. And by means of these fictions ye soules of ye dead men grew into veneration wth ye stars and by as many as received this kind of theology were taken for ye Gods wch governed the world."

> The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable
>
> —JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

From Ricciolian angels to Cartesian matter to planetary influences, Newton would have no truck with entities mediating between God and the universe. Throughout his writings, he worked to make divine activity in nature preeminent. "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being," he famously wrote in the General Scholium to the 1713 edition of the Principia, where, more explicitly than in the first edition, he tried to manage that work's natural-theological aims. In Newton's private rendering of the ancient wisdom, this celestial order was explicitly divorced from the idolatrous order of astral influences. In its public rendering, he achieved by silence the erasure of traditionalist astrology as well as of the reformed astrology of Kepler and his many English acolytes. Some late-seventeenth-century moderns who followed Newton in natural philosophy produced refutations of astrology's premises that differed little from those articulated by Pico in 1496. Long before it became philosophically tenable, following Duhem and Quine, to justify salvaging refuted scientific hypotheses by making pragmatic adjustments to them, practicing astronomer-astrologers diluted, or altogether evaded, Piconian refutations of their predictions and theories by seeking to improve their planetary tables and change their astronomical theories. Unlike their predecessors in the long sixteenth century, however, late-seventeenth-century high-end reformers of natural philosophy simply stopped

trying to fix the astrological division of the science of the stars. And when the moderns ceased to provide theoretical explanations for astrology's chronic predictive difficulties, they deprived astrology of new resources and credibility to compete with emergent projects, such as social mathematics, that privileged proximate causes and calculable probabilities in the study of human uncertainty about the future. <>

BURN IT DOWN! FEMINIST MANIFESTOS FOR THE REVOLUTION edited with Introductions by Breanne Fahs [Verso, 9781788735384]

The most comprehensive collection of feminist manifestos, chronicling our rage and dreams from the nineteenth century to today

In this landmark collection spanning three centuries and four waves of feminist activism and writing, *Burn It Down!* is a testament to what is possible when women are driven to the edge. The manifesto—raging and wanting, quarreling and provoking—has always played a central role in feminism, and it's the angry, brash feminism we need now.

Collecting over seventy-five manifestos from around the world, **BURN IT DOWN!** is a rallying cry and a call to action. Among this confrontational sisterhood, you'll find

- "Dyke Manifesto" by the Lesbian Avengers
- "The Ax Tampax Poem Feministo" by the Bloodsisters Project
- "The Manifesto of Apocalyptic Witchcraft" by Peter Grey
- "Simone de Beauvoir's pro-abortion Manifesto of the 343
- "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" by Frances M. Beal
- "The Futurist Manifesto of Lust" by Valentine de Saint-Point
- "Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Laws"
- "Riot Grrrl Manifesto" by Bikini Kill
- "Anarchy and the Sex Question" by Emma Goldman

Breanne Fahs argues that we need manifestos in all their urgent rawness—their insistence that we have to act now, that we must face this, that the bleeding edge of rage and defiance ignites new and revolutionary possibilities is where new ideas are born.

Reviews

"An invaluable reminder of feminism's radical and revolutionary visions. It's also, to those least inclined to read it but most in need of doing so, a powerful threat."
—Soraya Chemaly, author of *Rage Becomes Her*

"This exhilarating work of love and scholarship is a radiant gift to all who value liberation and justice. Reading it filled me with hope, inspiration and an electric connection to the angry, dissatisfied comrades who have come before me—as well my outraged contemporaries. A must-read, an antidote to powerlessness, a literary companion for the ages."
—Michelle Tea, author of *Against Memoir*

"In an age of platitudes and etsy-fied feminist empowerment products, Breanne Fahs gives us the uncompromising, the unruly, the ungovernable, the unpalatable. This book is a fiery reminder that the world does not change, we change the world."

—Jessa Crispin, author of *The Dead Ladies Project*

"This text is important historically and as a handbook for understanding and organizing today. Fahs has put together a collection that runs from the immediate and practical to the futuristic and abstract. In doing so, she reminds us that radical feminism is both utopian vision and practical argument."
—Ron Jacobs, *Counterpunch*

"Any Gender Studies professor who isn't teaching this book is missing something important in their curriculum … This book is a true feminism buffet, no matter what angle is of interest to you."
—Megan Volpert, *PopMatters*

"Learned and impassioned … irreverent, scabrous and enraged, these manifestos also happen to be full of contradictions, written in the heat of the moment and without a cool eye to posterity. But it's this rough-hewn immediacy that makes some of them so bracing to read, especially now."
—Jennifer Szalai, *New York Times Book Review*

Contents

Excerpt: The Bleeding Edge: On the Necessity of Feminist Manifestos

Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the male sex.

So begins Valerie Solanas's 1967 SCUM Manifesto, with one of the all-time great declarations of war against the patriarchal status quo. Solanas imagined not only an entirely new world—where men no longer defined Great Art, Money, Government, and Culture—but also one populated by thrill-seeking females: "dominant, secure, self-confident, nasty, violent, selfish, independent, proud, thrill-seeking, free-wheeling, arrogant females, who consider themselves fit to rule the universe, who have freewheeled to the limits of this `society, and are ready to wheel on to something far beyond what it has to offer."'

She wrote the manifesto for those in the gutter—"whores, dykes, criminals, and homicidal maniacs"—wholly refusing to pander to "nice, passive, accepting, `cultivated; polite, dignified, subdued, dependent, scared, mindless, insecure, approval-seeking Daddy's Girls."'

Feminist manifestos exploded onto the scene from 1967 to 1971, a period marked by rampant sexism, emerging feminist resistance, consciousness-raising, and collective organizing. Building on the momentum of the civil rights movement, the feminist revolts of the late 1960s paved the way for decades of feminist activism that followed. The validation of women's anger in the late 1960s—a

cultural zeitgeist moment that recognized women as, finally, fed up and truly enraged—made it possible for women to push back against cultural pressures for politeness and respectability. Instead, they fumed and ranted, scuffled and shouted, locked arms and marched. The sort of feminism found in early manifestos featured a starkly different brand of feminism from the more likeable, friendly, and benign one we have come to know today in institutions like education, government, and corporate leadership. Second-wave feminist manifestos honored a sweaty, frothing, high-stakes feminist anger that swept through the writing. Their words burn and simmer even today, giving them an unexpected freshness.

And so feminism and its explosive anger have borne many fruits, owed in large part to feminism's politics of disruption.' Women today have access to domestic violence shelters and federally supported (albeit often unpaid) family leave time. Women have far more financial rights than previous generations, particularly with regard to loans, inheritances, and owning businesses. Women's studies programs, though dwindling in numbers, offer an abundance of courses on a wide range of topics such as gender, race, class, sexuality, identity, politics, bodies, technology, communication, and human rights. As of this writing (Fall 2019), abortion is still legal (though in jeopardy) in the United States, and abortion rights have expanded throughout the world. Women have more control than previous generations over their reproductive decisions and parenting options. A huge shift toward gender equality for domestic work and parenting labor has begun. Increasing numbers of museum exhibitions and cultural events feature feminist politics and ideologies. Sexual freedoms have expanded, even as new challenges present themselves. Record numbers of women now represent us in both state-level and federal-level governmental offices. The percentage of women in the workforce and in higher education consistently has increased.

And yet, as if living out in real time Jeanette Winterson's claim that "I seem to have run in a great circle, and met myself again on the starting line," we have returned again to a period of cultural reckoning. On the one hand, we better understand the necessity of collective movements and intermovement solidarity; people march side by side with those who have different stakes in the game and have vastly different perspectives and reasons for anger. Within universities, we now study all sorts of social identities and bodies in academic fields—queer studies, ethnic studies, women and gender studies, American studies, disability studies, and fat studies are becoming more firmly entrenched within the academy. People who once stood on the sidelines are jumping into the fray, escorting women into Planned Parenthood clinics, organizing with their neighbors against police brutality, reading anarchist and anticapitalist books, fighting back against transphobic policies and politics, seeking political office or new positions of power, and making revolutionary art in their basements. Many of the oppressive conditions faced by second-wave feminist activists now seem laughably outdated and happily "in the past" On the other hand, the reinvigoration of misogyny and racism as institutionalized practices has sounded new alarm bells. An eerily familiar set of conditions has now presented itself, dominated by financial precarity, tense gender relations, racialized violence, rampant homophobia, public and unapologetic victim blaming, and ever-worsening class inequalities. We have met ourselves again on the starting line, once again up against the behemoths of greedy capitalism, selfish conservativism, anti-intellectual masculinity, and increasingly dire conditions for nearly all oppressed people.

In many ways, I assembled this book not to entertain or to amuse, but because we need this kind of work in our lives. Feminist manifestos are a necessity in times of great social stress. How else are we to make sense of our own anger, our sense of confusion and implosion, our imminent feelings of doom and stifled possibilities? The urgency of manifestos—that clear sense that they sit right on the cutting edge—leaves a palpable feeling that the ink has yet to dry, that we are, as Julian Hanna

writes, on the "bleeding edge" of things.' Regardless of when they were written, manifestos pulsate with newness and freshness. They pry open the eyes we would rather shut, forcing us to reckon with the scummy, dirty, awful truths we would rather not face. And if ever there was a time for a collection of feminist manifestos, if ever it felt necessary to compile documents that celebrate women's rage, now is that time.

The Manifesto

Full of contradictions, ironies, and clashes, manifestos operate on unsteady ground. The genre combines the romantic quality of dreamers and artists imagining something new and whimsical together with the crushing power of a Mack truck bulldozing over established traditions, trashing accepted modes of thought, and eradicating the past. Manifestos do the transformative work of hoping and destroying, reflecting and violently ending things. As Hanna wrote, "Part of the attraction of the manifesto is that it remains a surprisingly complex and often paradoxical genre: flippant and sincere, prickly and smooth, logical and absurd, material and immaterial, shallow and profound." This complexity arises in part because manifestos have no reverence for the past, no homage to what has come before. They want only what is new, of the now, in the present tense, and they want it immediately.

This urgency of manifestos often veers into outright nihilism: In 1909, the Futurists expected the next generation to overthrow them: "Younger and stronger men will throw us in the wastebasket like useless manuscripts. We want it to happen!'" As many good manifestos do, the Futurists imagined their own demise and expected to be railroaded over by the next generation of writers and thinkers. Good manifestos know that others in the future will annihilate them, too. They do not claim to know things for all time; they only claim to know things for this moment. They trash and will be trashed.

Manifestos have constituted a notable part of Left History in this way, making room for something new through hot-headed, urgent, sweeping, radical, revolutionary thinking that marked major breaks with traditionalism and incremental, slow, steady change. Instead, manifestos inject forceful, dramatic claims that could feel strictly performative to the audience if not for the unabashed sincerity of the author's worldview. Manifestos are not merely performance art; the authors mean what they say. And, more importantly, who gets to say things also shifts and changes with manifestos. Manifestos are more often "found" than they are officially published, giving them an ephemeral, unedited, and immediate feel. Once mostly the domain of the art world, manifestos at their core want to radically upend and subvert public consciousness around disempowerment, giving voice to those stripped of social and political power.

Reading manifestos can feel like being on fire. We light up aflame and then are left raw and exposed. Manifestos operate as an infectious, contagious kind of document, one that purposefully ignites readers or listeners with its messages, making little room for disagreement or rational back-and-forth discourse. The manifesto author tells us how to think, assumes we agree with them, and imagines no possibility for refusal or resistance. They do not invite us to carefully piece apart the claims; rather, they want an emotional response. We should laugh, shout, or feel fear. We should imagine the world as the manifesto constructs it. As Charles Jencks wrote, "The genre demands blood: It is not unusual to read manifestos and imagine the imminent importance of one's own annihilation.

Traveling Through

BURN IT DOWN! focuses on a wide range of sources that span first, second, and third-wave feminisms (and beyond) that have shaped, moved, inspired, repelled, and forged new ground for

feminism and US feminist politics in particular. Drawing from sources often discarded as "crazy," "unpleasant," "out there," difficult, or contentious, the book embraces both well-known and obscure feminist manifestos, many of which have not been formally published before. The collection draws from a range of sources and subjects—postcolonial studies, radical youth movements, indigenous rights, women of color activisms, anarchism, unpublished and unknown authors publishing manifestos under pseudonyms, trans feminisms, radical psychiatry, folk music, fat studies, radical feminism, art history, technology studies, and long forgotten missives resuscitated from the early women's movement, among others. Not all of these documents are manifestos in the strictest sense, but they come from the radical tradition of feminist writing that is meant to provoke, unnerve, and break new ground. This assortment is meant to rekindle radical prescriptions from the past (distant and not-so-distant) and present in order to shape a vision for the future of feminisms on the margin.

Most existing collections focus heavily on art manifestos (primarily written by men) and revolutionary manifestos (also primarily written by men). (Some people seem to imagine The Communist Manifesto as the only manifesto ever written.) This collection, by contrast, foregrounds the voices of activists and agitators, troublemakers and complainers, most of whom are women. It is designed as a text that works against the highly gendered norms of respectability and, consequently, works both within and outside of the academy. Inside the academy it might serve as a documentary reader in feminist/women's/ gender studies courses or in women's history courses, while outside of the academy, it might work more as a cathartic text of resistance possibilities. In both cases, the collection works as a permanently and intentionally marginalized body of work. It exists to inspire rage and nurture activists, to remind fellow academics of who and what we too often forget, and it unites seemingly disparate bodies of knowledge into one collective body. If you're angry and fed up and need some company in the struggle, this book is for you. If you're wondering if you are enough of an activist, rebel, countercultural punk, radical, and so on to enjoy this book, my emphatic answer is: Yes.

BURN IT DOWN! approaches its content as sites of eruption, where knowledge is not assembled as a collection of facts but as a diverse set of affects, histories, styles, and ideologies that circulate through complex networks of oppression and dissent. These manifestos represent the patterns and paradoxes that have emerged—and continue to emerge—in the wake of radical social upheavals. Some of these texts will feel especially relevant and alive in this cultural moment, while others might feel out of place or even dated. Some will feel fresh while others won't; some speak directly to you while others invite you to consider new modes of feminist solidarity you had not previously considered. Some you might hate. The collection is designed to present bodies of work—individually and together—to think about radical social thought and its expression. It should, in one way or another, hit a nerve.

As such, I have chosen to organize **BURN IT DOWN!** thematically rather than chronologically, geographically, or disciplinarily. This thematic orientation invites readers to look at some of the most highly charged critical, aesthetic, political, and social topics that feminist manifestos take on, particularly as tensions and contradictions are highlighted. For example, we read Andrea Dworkin and pro-sex-work manifestos in tandem with one another; we look at anti-violence and pro-violence work in unison. The story is not clean or unified, and it is not designed to make you as the reader feel comfortable or calm. These pieces highlight the edges of feminism.

By juxtaposing manifestos from different time periods, authors, perspectives, and tones, the following eight sections leap across time periods and movements and move wildly through ideas that inspire, startle, and energize. Further, by incorporating manifestos that are short and long, visual and written, traditional and nontraditional, easy to understand and quite obscure, famous and absolutely

brand new, the collection challenges and upends knowledge-making practices that overvalue academic and nonemotional documents over those pulsating with fiery feelings. And while I have made some controversial choices—for example, keeping a sizeable amount of the women of color and indigenous work in one section—I have made these decisions to maximize the impact of reading a body of work together. The indigenous/women of color section is meant to allow readers to see the kinds of visionary solidarities that emerge between Chicana, Black, and indigenous feminist writings, with whiteness as a common target for anger and rage. The queer/trans section similarly allows for a collective body of work to emerge around queerness, envisioned from a wide range of voices across time, location, and identities. I believe this has a greater impact than presenting the work scattershot. Some readers may feel dismayed by my choice to include chunks of early second-wave radical feminist writing despite its notable blind spots, or they might find my embrace of totally unknown writers as problematic—to this I argue that a book of feminist manifestos is likely to be upsetting for many reasons and that it can and should provoke new thinking about the borders and boundaries for feminist politics. And while I welcome such critiques of my choices here of what to include, I do strongly encourage readers to sit with the work and let it draw you in.

The book's organization focuses on eight themes: Queer/Trans, Anticapitalist/Anarchist, Angry/Violent, Indigenous/Women of Color, Sex/Body, Hacker/Cyborg, Trashy/Punk, and Witchy/Bitchy. Each of these sections includes a diverse range of manifestos and encompasses both historical and contemporary manifestos (and some right in the middle). This design invites readers to see themselves reflected in this collection, often in surprising ways. As Audre Lorde argues:

> So we are working in a context of opposition and threat, the cause of which is certainly not the angers which lie between us, but rather that virulent hatred leveled against all women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, poor people—against all of us who are seeking to examine the particulars of our lives as we resist our oppressions, moving toward coalition and effective action. The ultimate goal of this collection of feminist manifestos is to direct our energies to the wide range of targets for our oppression, to shamelessly operate as both individuals and a collective body, to welcome into the fold new and forgotten voices of feminist resistance, and to express righteous anger loudly and forcefully, even with the weight of the world on our shoulders. Let's burn it down. <>

GOLEM: MODERN WARS AND THEIR MONSTERS by Maya Barzilai [New York University Press, 9781479848454]

2017 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in Jewish Literature and Linguistics

Honorable Mention, 2016 Baron Book Prize presented by AAJR

A monster tour of the Golem narrative across various cultural and historical landscapes

In the 1910s and 1920s, a "golem cult" swept across Europe and the U.S., later surfacing in Israel. Why did this story of a powerful clay monster molded and animated by a rabbi to protect his community become so popular and pervasive? The golem has appeared in a remarkable range of popular media: from the Yiddish theater to American comic books, from German silent film to Quentin Tarantino movies. This book showcases how the golem was remolded, throughout the war-torn twentieth century, as a muscular protector, injured combatant, and even murderous avenger.

This evolution of the golem narrative is made comprehensible by, and also helps us to better understand, one of the defining aspects of the last one hundred years: mass warfare and its ancillary technologies.

In the twentieth century the golem became a figure of war. It represented the chaos of warfare, the automation of war technologies, and the devastation wrought upon soldiers' bodies and psyches. **GOLEM: MODERN WARS AND THEIR MONSTERS** draws on some of the most popular and significant renditions of this story in order to unravel the paradoxical coincidence of wartime destruction and the fantasy of artificial creation. Due to its aggressive and rebellious sides, the golem became a means for reflection about how technological progress has altered human lives, as well as an avenue for experimentation with the media and art forms capable of expressing the monstrosity of war.

New Books Network interview with Maya Barzilai on Golem

This episode of New Books in Jewish Studies features Maya Barzilai, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Literature and Jewish Culture at the University of Michigan and the author of **GOLEM: MODERN WARS AND THEIR MONSTERS** (New York University Press, 2016). This timely book traces the evolution of the golem, a clay monster animated by a rabbi to serve and protect his community, from its presence in literature, drama, and cinema in the 1920s to its use as a reference in Israeli and American cultures during the second half of the 20th century.

Barzilai has also published a short article in *The Forward* last November, in which she has shown how the golem was used as a metaphor in the recent US presidential elections to describe Donald Trump as well as the media that "created" him.

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"[Barzilai] wisely decides to focus on . . . golem representations in response to war and other mass violence. Barzilais extensive research and clear, interesting style make this a fine work." (*Publishers Weekly*)

"Barzilai certainly puts her finger on a central paradox of European and Jewish culture coming out of the Great War: how can death and technological creativity coexist? The golem myth is a clever and successful way to probe that question. . . . Fascinating and intellectually venturesome." (Alan Mintz,Chana Kekst Professor of Jewish Literature, The Jewish Theological Seminary)

"In her wide-ranging Golem: Modern Wars and Their Monsters, Maya Barzilai argues that the myth of the golem tells us something about humanity more generally. It teaches us about what she calls 'the golem condition,' inwhich 'the fantasies of expanding our capacities and transgressing our natural boundaries are always curbed by the inborn limitations of human existence.'" (*Jewish Review of Books*)

"The multiple strands ofGolemare what constitute its great strength, presented not just chronologically but within themes that cross eras and borders Barzilai painstakingly analyses films, books and comics to reveal the Golems enduring cultural presence and influence. And the violence of this appealing creature, especially the idea of Jewish violence, is what makes it simultaneously so threatening." (*Jewish Chronicle*)

"Golem: Modern Wars and their Monstersis highly recommended to those with an interest in the intersection between Jewish tradition and pop culture, as well as anyone with a focus on monster and twentieth century cultural studies." (*The Journal of Religion and Culture*)

"Barzilai offers a fascinating analysis of how a legendary monster was appropriated in the last century as a way of understanding the baffling reality of war. . . . A creative and thoughtful approach, this book raises the deeper and unresolved questions of when, if ever, an act of violence justifies a violent response. Although Barzilai does not attempt to answer this question, she raises it as one of the unavoidable issues faced by an oppressed people who, in their fiction, have access to a protective monster." (*Reading Religion*)

"Barzilai makes a bold even brilliant connection between . . . the golem and . . . the soldier." (*Times Literary Supplement*)

"Savior, soldier, demon, oafa golem is all these and more, and Barzilai guides us a fascinating tour of its supple mythology through shifting cultural and historical contexts." (Jonathan Kellerman and Jesse Kellerman,authors of The Golem of Paris)

"As Barzilai notes that future wars will likely be characterized by growing dependence on golem-like entities—whether drones or cyborgs or robots equipped with artificial intelligence—her book provides a timely meditation on the human effects of remote and automated violence." (*Political and Legal Anthropology Review*)

"A thorough and suggestive review . . .with a wide array of 20th-century sources, including films and cartoon literature. It will be a useful resource for those interested in modern history and culture." (*Choice*)

A Brief User's Manual

The focus of this book on twentieth-century rewritings of the golem story and its metaphoric uses has led me to select texts that address the dilemmas of the "golem condition?' Through this specific lens, the book traces the golem's appearances both within particular national frameworks of cultural production and across cultures, revealing the golem to be a powerful means of transnational exchange regarding the monstrosity of war. To investigate this exchange, the book deals only with those works that cast the golem as a figure of war-related violence. By situating these texts, films, and productions in their respective historical and social contexts, and by uncovering unknown sources and suggesting fresh juxtapositions, my discussion offers new insights into the sheer

pervasiveness of the golem narrative. Since "the traditional division of high and popular cultural has been a political division rather than a defensible intellectual or aesthetic distinction," my aim has been to reveal the constant cross-fertilization between "highbrow" and "popular" works, both visual and literary.

If ever a monster was created perfect for the task of revisiting the very notion of the "popular," it is the golem, since, as Gelbin maintains, "modern Jewish popular culture ... reveals the heterogeneous nature of all popular culture, particularly because it is not tied to one particular language or national context." The golem not only became a highly transportable figure that traversed national, religious, and ethnic boundaries; it was also transformed by the emergence of new media and of modern publication and exhibition practices. The intense cultural work that the golem performed in the context of twentieth-century wars can be located in the works themselves, at their borderlines, through prologues and scores, and in reviews and advertisements. The reconstruction of the golem's diverse resignification as soldier and weapon can take place only through a comparative and intermedial approach that brings the more well-known works—Paul Wegener's The Golem, How He Came into the World, S. Y. Agnon's To This Day, H. Leivick's The Golem—into dialogue with the lesser-known but equally pervasive golem metaphors and texts of their day.

Chapter I concerns the popularization of the golem figure in World War I Germany through Wegener's three films of 1914, 1917, and 1920. With the help of Wegener's wartime diary and his unpublished letters and notes, I argue that his approach to the golem materials and their aesthetics underwent a pronounced shift after he returned from fighting on the front lines, where he came very close to death and experienced the killing and wounding of many others. If, in 1914, the cinematic golem is a ready-made object dug up, sold, and employed for mundane, familial purposes, Wegener's 1920 golem, a product of Jewish mystical and astrological practices, is a heroic figure used to teach the Christian emperor and his courtiers a lesson in empathy toward the Jews. The cinematic golem, however, is not merely a weapon that defends Jews from the threat of expulsion; it is also an animated, evolving being that ultimately attains a semblance of humanity. Drawing on early twentieth-century film theory by the Hungarian writer Béla Balázs, I show how Wegener and the architect Hans Poelzig designed expressive and animated cinematic spaces that enhanced the vivacious quality of cinema itself and pointed to the need for national recovery and reanimation.

In the summer and fall of 1921, Wegener's third golem film was screened in New York to much acclaim, accompanied by a new musical score and live theatrical prologue, orchestrated and performed by Jewish artists. These American framing devices, reconstructed for the first time in chapter 2, underscored the status of the Jews as a persecuted and expelled minority in Europe and posited the golem as a fantastical savior figure. In the context of the deteriorating status of German Jews around World War I and the violent pogroms against eastern European Jews during this period, the American golem "cult" addressed some of the pressing issues of the day: the quotas placed on Jewish immigration to the United States and the responses of Jews to anti-Semitic violence. Wegener's film sparked a wave of popular American golem performances, including Max Gabel's 1921 Yiddish production Der goylem: Muzikalisher legende in dray akten mit a prolog (The golem: A musical legend in three acts and a prologue). Gabel replicated Wegener's costume as the golem, but he also drew inspiration from the film's American prologue and, likewise, depicted the creation of the golem as a response to the condition of Jewish homelessness. This chapter juxtaposes Gabel's forgotten operetta with Wegener's famous film and Leivick's modernist poema, published in New York in the same year, to reveal that these works all contend with the contemporary issue of Jewish uprooting and immigration. "Permitted to shed blood" in defense of

the Jews, Leivick's golem is unique, however, as an utter outcast, a disposable defender and abject being that violently turns against the Jewish community.

In comparison to the American enthusiasm for the golem story, in both the pre-and post-World War II periods, its relative lack of popularity in Israel/Palestine is noteworthy. Chapter 3 shifts to this particular geopolitical arena, showing that while Zionist culture did not take up the golem story with the same "cultish" zeal as in Germany and the U.S., it nonetheless evoked the figure in the context of twentieth-century wars, both external and internal. The Hebrew-language press of the 1940s used the golem metaphor primarily with reference to the enemy other, whether Nazi or Arab. No longer bearing the name of God, these metaphoric golems were mere mechanical monsters (German pilotless airplanes) or else artificial creations (the Arab League), formed to deter the small Israeli army.

Only in post-1948 Hebrew literature was the golem story rewritten as a tale of war injury, in which the dichotomies of us and them, friend and foe, break down in the face of the overall devastation of war. In To This Day, the Israeli writer and Nobel Prize winner Agnon responded to the German golem "fad" in its various manifestations, recasting the clay being as a brain-injured German veteran. Through this apathetic soldier, Agnon criticizes the wartime desire—which he sees in World War I Germany just as in his own Israel—to produce an infallible military man and demand self-sacrifice for the sake of the nation. In the 1966 novel Himo, melekh yerushalyaim (Himmo, King of Jerusalem), the Israeli writer Yoram Kaniuk similarly uses the golem moniker to refer to a war-injured soldier, in this case one severely disabled in the battles of 1948. Setting this golem narrative in a makeshift military hospital in Jerusalem, Kaniuk focuses on the Israeli home front to reveal the internal tensions between Jews and Christians, as well as between local Sephardic Jews and recent Ashkenazi newcomers. Over and against the Zionist rejection of the (diasporic) association of Jews with the golem figure, these Israeli works convey the ongoing relevance of the golem for narratives related to the founding of Israel and its militarized society.

In contrast to the internally directed destruction of Leivick's golem and the bifurcation of Israeli golems into evil enemies and injured, living-dead soldiers, American popular culture of the post-World War II period provides us with full-fledged fantasies of Jewish retribution, particularly for Nazi persecution. Chapter 4 traces the motif of the golem as a violent avenger and deterrent weapon both in comic books of the 1970s and in millennial works of art and fiction. The latter include Michael Chabon's novel The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay, Quentin Tarantino's film Inglourious Basterds, and James Sturm's graphic narrative The Golem's Mighty Swing. This chapter shows that a Jewish revenge fantasy undergirds many of these popular American rewritings of the golem story, with the Holocaust serving as a common backdrop. The superheroic golem is no longer bound by any ghetto walls and, drawing on its imagined nuclear power, can beat Nazis to a pulp. Yet the link between Jewishness and vengeance was apparently too unsettling to be fully developed, even by Jewish cartoonists proficient in spinning popular lore. The American ambivalence toward the golem as an icon of retribution is evident in its typical portrayal as an inhuman, all-too-powerful figure, susceptible to transmogrifying into a destructive, even evil, monster. Only in the irreverent Inglourious Basterds does Tarantino give full rein to the fantasy of an unleashed Jewish power, linking his character of the murderous "Bear Jew" with the golem as an "avenging Jew angel:'

Chapter 5 takes the association of the golem with technology, war, and destruction into the Cold War age of cybernetics. It discusses how the golem was used to grapple with the ethics of new and intelligent computational machines put in the service of governments and their armed forces. The chapter pairs Norbert Wiener's philosophical God and Golem, Inc. (1964) with the Polish writer Stanislaw Lem's Golem XIV (198i), and Donna Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1983) with the

American writer Marge Piercy's He, She, and It (1991), to explore how the golem story became a heuristic device and a narrative tool used to address the military implications of cybernetics and computer technologies. In the aftermath of World War II, Wiener argued for the need to rein in the intelligence of "learning machines," warning of their ability to overcome their human creators in unpredictable ways. Following Wiener, Lem imagines a future in which computers of superior intelligence become independent, self-controlling interlocutors that turn pacifist because of the "illogical" nature of American war strategy and world domination. The name golem, intended to suggest the strategic powers of these computers, comes to symbolize their practical and philosophical rebellion. In contrast to Lem's dehumanization of the golemcomputer, Piercy portrays a cyborg that veers from its creator's plans not by becoming less violent but by desiring to participate in its society as a human and a Jew. In Piercy's dystopic work, set in a futurist world ravaged by nuclear warfare and environmental catastrophe, the golem embodies the fantasy of a steadfast cyberprotector for the isolated and embattled Jewish community. He ultimately rejects his own violent programming and destroys the capacity to re-create a "conscious weapon" akin to himself, the cyborg. In so doing, like Wegener's cinematic monster, Piercy's golem exhibits a divine spark, transforming from "it" to "he" and revealing its human face.

Singer aptly summarizes, "I am not exaggerating when I say that the golem story appears less obsolete today than it seemed one hundred year ago. What are the computers and robots of our time if not golems?" Although the comparison of the golem with an automated, unthinking weapon may be a more intuitive one, Singer's golem-computer analogy points to a historical shift: in the course of the twentieth century, the golem ceased to be a mute and unintelligent machine, incapable of de- velopment. On the contrary, the fictional and cinematic golems we will encounter in this book exhibit varying degrees of self-knowledge, with Piercy's cyborg marking one extreme as a golem capable even of wisdom and selfless love. World War I popularized the golem as an invincible fighter-machine, a vulnerable (if incontrollable) living-dead clay monster, and a potential redeemer, albeit a violent one. The theme of the golem's own suffering and desire for human connection was cemented already a century ago in German literature and film, calling into question the ethics of artificial creation in the service of modern warfare. The possibilities of the golem, and its value as a revealer of our cultural, preoccupations, have only grown since then. Part automatized soldier part nuclear weapon, and part interfacing cyborg, the golem continues to haunt the transnational imagination in our own day as we still con-tend with the bloodshed of the twentieth century and the repercussions of ongoing global wars. <>

Broken Faith: Inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, One of America's Most Dangerous Cults by Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr [Hanover Square Press, 9781335145239]

A PopSugar Best True Crime Book of 2020

"I can't imagine a more important book."—Jeff Guinn, New York Times bestselling author

An explosive investigation into Word of Faith Fellowship, a secretive evangelical cult whose charismatic female leader is a master of manipulation

In 1979, a fiery preacher named Jane Whaley attracted a small group of followers with a promise that she could turn their lives around.

In the years since, Whaley's following has expanded to include thousands of congregants across three continents. In their eyes she's a prophet. And to disobey her means eternal damnation.

The control Whaley exerts is absolute: she decides what her followers study, where they work, whom they can marry—even when they can have sex.

Based on hundreds of interviews, secretly recorded conversations, and thousands of pages of documents, Pulitzer Prize winner Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr's **BROKEN FAITH** is a terrifying portrait of life inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, and the harrowing account of one family who escaped after two decades.

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"**BROKEN FAITH** is a gripping, meticulously reported account of a cult leader's grip on a small southern community. It is also a prescient story of systemic abuse where the victims seek—and fail to find—justice from the very institutions that were meant to protect them." —**Ethan Brown, New York Times bestselling author of Murder in The Bayou: Who Killed the Women Known as the Jeff Davis 8?**

"A tour de force of investigative journalism and storytelling. This is the kind of book that inspires the next generation of journalists and reminds working reporters why they do the job."—**Kevin Maurer, #1 New York Times bestselling co-author of No Easy Day**

"In light of current events, I can't imagine a more important book than **BROKEN FAITH** by outstanding investigative journalists Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr. Their chilling description of North Carolina's Word of Faith Fellowship and professed Christianity gone horribly awry is unsettlingly parallel to events involving Peoples Temple and its demagogic leader Jim Jones. Much credit is due to the courageous former Word of Faith members who share their shattering stories in *Broken Faith*. If you care at all about religious abuse and the destructive means by which charismatic leaders exert despotic control of their well-meaning followers' lives, *read this book*."—**Jeff Guinn, New York Times bestselling author of Manson and The Road To Jonestown**

"…Fascinating and deeply researched… Compelling in its evidence, this shocking narrative examines the bonds of family, the limits of endurance, and how far people will go to save their souls." —**Booklist STARRED review**

"A compelling examination of a Christianist cabal whose crimes are evident but whose power seems, for the moment, unbreakable."—**Kirkus Reviews**

"A fast-paced, harrowing exposé…transfixing."—**Publishers Weekly**

A page-turner for any fans of the *Wild Wild Country* Netflix series… will leave a lasting impression on readers for years to come."—**PopSugar**

"Those interested in cults and true crime will be enthralled by this account."—**Library Journal**

"A harrowing picture of faith gone horribly astray…*Broken Faith* makes for compelling drama, with a vision of healing and renewal at the end."—**StarNews**

"An important and carefully sourced rendering of how founders of religious sects can become tyrants, ruling by fear and threats of eternal hellfire for those who disobey… reads like a thriller." —**Associated Press**

This is the troubling story of the Word of Faith Fellowship and the lives destroyed by the secretive church in the foothills of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. The events depicted in this book come from extensive interviews with more than one hundred former members of the sect, their relatives, advocates, current and retired law enforcement officials, and others. We spent years researching and reporting this story, reviewing thousands of pages of documents ranging from child custody cases to police reports. We reviewed more than one hundred hours of video and audio

recordings, many of which were secretly recorded by former congregants. We listened to dozens of tape-recorded sermons by Jane Whaley and other key church leaders from the mid-1990s.

Much of the documentation chronicling the earliest allegations of abuse in the church is based on a damning, 315-page report prepared by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation in 1995. Never publicly released, most of the information in the report is being revealed for the first time.

Information on Word of Faith Fellowship leader Jane Whaley and other ministers is based on dozens of interviews, legal documents, bankruptcy filings, court cases, published material, and a 208-page sworn deposition of Whaley on April 27, 2017. Part of a contentious child custody case, Whaley's deposition has never been released to the public.

Biographical information on many of the current members and church leaders is based on their own words. Shortly after the Associated Press published its first in a series of articles about the Word of Faith Fellowship in February 2017, some congregants posted videos online to challenge what the church called "media lies."

And beginning in December 2017, the Word of Faith Fellowship purchased airtime on WCAB, a Rutherfordton, North Carolina—based radio station, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Nearly two hundred members of the Word of Faith Fellowship have used the broadcast to deny allegations made against their church, criticize former members and their advocates, or give glowing "testimonies" about their experiences in the congregation. Videos of the radio programs have been posted on YouTube.com under a channel titled "WFF Speaks Out" as well as on the church's website.

Church leaders categorically deny that any abuse takes place at the Word of Faith Fellowship. The survivors stand by their stories. <>

MERLEAU-PONTY AT THE GALLERY: QUESTIONING ART BEYOND HIS REACH by Véronique M. Fóti [SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy, SUNY, State University of New York Press, 9781438478036]

A study of the significance of the visual arts in Merleau-Ponty's aesthetics in relation to the work of five artists not known or discussed by him.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological ontology engages deeply with visual art, and this aspect of his work remains significant not only to philosophers, but also to artists, art theorists, and critics. Until recently, scholarly attention has been focused on the artists he himself was inspired by and wrote about, chiefly Cézanne, Klee, Matisse, and Rodin. MERLEAU-PONTY AT THE GALLERY expands and shifts the focus to address a range of artists (Giorgio Morandi, Kiki Smith, Cy Twombly, Joan Mitchell, and Ellsworth Kelly) whose work came to prominence in the second half of the twentieth century and thus primarily after the philosopher's death. Véronique M. Fóti does not confine her analyses to Merleau-Ponty's texts (which now importantly include his late lecture courses), but also engages directly with the art. Of particular concern to her is the art's ethical bearing, especially as related to animal and vegetal life. The book's concluding chapter addresses the still-widespread rejection of beauty as an aesthetic value.

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Introduction: A Plethora of Issues

A Plethora of Issues

The transcendence of the thing obliges us to say that it is plenitude only in being inexhaustible, which is to say, in not being fully actual under the look.... The senses are apparatus for making concretions in the inexhaustible ... there is a precipitation or crystallization of the inexhaustible, of the imaginary, of symbolic matrices. —Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Transcendence of the Thing and Transcendence of the Phantasm"

Merleau-Ponty's sudden death, in May 1961, not only deprived philosophy of a thinker whose work was incisive and profound as well as wide-ranging in the scope of its intellectual engagements, but it also foreclosed any continuation of his intensive studies of nineteenth- and twentieth-century visual art, and of the challenges it posed to philosophy. Just the summer before his death, he had written L'oeil et l'esprit ("Eye and Mind") at Le Tholonet in Provence, and he was intensely engaged in writing The Visible and the Invisible, now extant only in its fragmentary form. The art that, due to his death, remained immediately beyond Merleau-Ponty's reach was that of roughly the second half of the twentieth century, a century whose artistic innovation and complexity remain, so far, unrivaled. This foreclosure of Merleau-Ponty's own access to recent and contemporary art has given rise to a widespread and somewhat unfortunate tendency among scholarly commentators to focus predominantly on the very same artists or artistic movements with which he himself engaged: prominently Cézanne, followed by Klee, Matisse, Rodin, and the challenges faced and posed by postimpressionism and cubism. His own focus may also have been somewhat culturally restricted, in that he did not consider contemporary movements in Italian art, such as Futurism, arte povera (poor art), or pittura metafisica (metaphysical painting), nor yet German Expressionism or, finally, the postwar rise and quick ascendancy to international fame of American abstract painting. The scholarly tendency just criticized has further been paired with a proclivity to concentrate on the issues that the philosopher himself discusses in his aesthetic writings, rather than engaging directly with artworks and the practices of artmaking, bringing them into dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology.

Fortunately, however, some recent scholarship has, to a significant extent, overcome these scholarly restrictions. In The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking Through Merleau-Ponty's Aesthetics, Galen A. Johnson carries out in-depth analyses of Cézanne, Rodin, and Klee, in relation to Merleau-Ponty, linking them critically with a discussion of Barnett Newman's rejection of beauty in favor of sublimity, and further with Jean-François Lyotard's exaltation of the sheer event.' In Art, Language, and Figure

in Merleau-Ponty: Excursions in Hyper-Dialectic,2 Rajiv Kaushik explores Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "autofigure" in the context of his understanding of a "figured philosophy." He situates Cy Twombly's art (particularly his early "graffiti" pieces) at the site of an intersection between figuration and erasure, and between interiority and exteriority, which he also studies in relation to Klee's graphism. Mauro Carbone, in The Flesh of Images: Merleau-Ponty between Painting and Cinema,' and in many of his other writings, has investigated the philosophical import of Merleau-Ponty's sustained interest in film. Anna Caterina Dalmasso's recent work, Le corps, c'est l'écran: La philosophie du visuel de Merleau-Ponty, offers not only a rich discussion of the philosophy of cinema and of the technologies involved in contemporary visual culture, but also an in-depth analysis of Merleau-Ponty's 1953 lecture course at the Collège de France, "Le monde sensible et le monde de l'expression" (The sensible world and the world of expression),5 showing that it initiates his late ontology. In 2012, Saara Hacklin defended a doctoral dissertation at the University of Helsinki titled "Divergencies of Perception: The Possibilities of Merleau-Pontian Phenomenology in Analyses of Contemporary Art," in which she focused chiefly on contemporary Finnish artists.' Finally, although David Morris's profound and challenging new book, Merleau-Ponty's Developmental Ontology, does not directly address Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of art, but rather the emergence of sense or meaning within material and energetic nature itself, it establishes a standard and frame of reference with respect to which phenomenological studies of artistic practices and visuality will need to situate themselves.

Taking part in this scholarly conversation with a clear focus on visual art, this book seeks to interpret the work of a selection of artists in dialogue with Merleau-Ponty's thought. Although these artists (who are American, with the exception of Morandi, but also introduce a more international perspective in that Mitchell and Twombly were expatriates, with Twombly being also a restless and intercontinental traveler) can roughly be dated to the second half of the twentieth century, no exact temporal delimitations can be established. Thus, for instance, Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) outlived Merleau-Ponty by just three years, but Cy Twombly and Ellsworth Kelly lived and worked into the twenty-first century, and Kiki Smith is a living artist whose future work cannot be foreseen.

Given that no guiding principle of selection interlinks the chosen artists (or, to put it autobiographically, this book took its start from the writer's fascination with certain artistic practices and issues, rather than from a philosophical agenda to which art would be subservient), a measure of heterogeneity prevailed. Heterogeneity is of course a key characteristic of twentieth-century art, and the artists discussed here have often embraced it and integrated it into their work, along with contingency (this is strikingly true of Smith, Twombly, Mitchell, and Kelly). Morris, moreover, points out the radical contingency of philosophy itself, particularly of phenomenology, which, he writes, "can be rigorously empirical only to the degree that it understands its very own concepts and sense as radically contingent on radically contingent being." Nonetheless, to allow heterogeneity and a certain contingency to inform the very structure of a philosophical work is to risk a lack of theoretical coherence that, as the writing of this book took shape, was a concern.

Somewhat surprisingly and utterly refreshingly, however, it quickly became clear that practices of artmaking as heterogeneous as Morandi's still lifes, Smith's complex and sculpturally informed installations, Twombly's graphism, Mitchell's gestural abstraction, or Kelly's plant drawings entered on their own into quasi-dialogical interchanges that were often inspired (though without explicit reference) by Merleau-Ponty's probing analyses of art (thus showing that their relevance extends tacitly far beyond the art that they explicitly address. These interchanges, however, did not simply confirm the philosopher's analyses but also, at times, deepened or complicated them or introduced

critical perspectives. This introduction will explore some of these convergences explicitly, so as not to leave them dispersed and partly concealed within the details of the individual chapters.

Interweaving Dualities

Merleau-Ponty's insistence that there is no genuine duality between figuration and abstraction is based not so much on art-theoretical analysis, but rather on his ontological understanding of visuality, or of what Mauro Carbone highlights as the notion of voyance, characterizing it as equivalent to the Merleau-Pontyan notion of Flesh, understood as a diacritically differential dynamic involving the expressive reciprocity of seer and seen. There is nowhere within this dynamic any primacy of the supposedly "real," as positively and normatively given, over its expressive configurations (the more so since perception, in Merleau-Ponty's understanding, is already primordially expressive). This dynamic, however, is concealed by ordinary or "profane" vision in its quest for familiarity and identification. This quest is, nonetheless, challenged importantly by the painter's or other visual artist's vision," for which the created image is in no way reproductive or secondary to a pregiven reality.

Morandi and Kelly, in particular, echo and amplify Merleau-Ponty's insights not only in their art, but also in reflective statements. Far from treating everyday objects—the protagonists of his still lifes—as displaying an incontestable and univocal material reality fully offered to sight, Morandi finds their visual presencing to be alien and incomparably surreal. Kelly stresses the need to do justice to "what the eye sees."u Doing so, however, does not invite mimetic adequation or reproductive fidelity (which caters only to Merleau-Pontyan "profane vision") but requires, to the contrary, an autonomous visual articulation. To do justice to what is truly seen is to engage with the event of coming to appearance or presencing itself, which everywhere involves the invisibles of the visible and which may, ontologically speaking, preclude the recognition of an ultimate self-withdrawing source akin to Heidegger's Being of beings. To recognize such a source would reaffirm duality (even though Being is always the Being of beings from which it can in no way dissociate itself). It would legitimate the binary and exclusionary conceptuality proper to metaphysical discourse rather than allowing it to be genuinely overcome. In refusing to recognize or to be bound by conventionally recognized as well as ultimate duality, visual art acknowledges the pervasively enigmatic character of presencing or coming to appearance; and it calls it insistently to the viewer's attention.

Materiality is no less enigmatic in its visual presencing than are felt or oneiric qualities, as well as spatiality (or emplacement) conjoined with temporality. It is striking that, for both Morandi and Kelly, forms often tend to become desolidified (and thus, in a conventional sense, dematerialized) in favor of process and of the powers of light. They thus render explicit, in advance of intellectual thematization, their participation in the play and the eventfulness of coming to appearance.

Image and Writ

One conventionally recognized duality is that between image and writing or text, even though, outside the context of Western art, this duality has long, and in various ways, been negated by the arts of Islamic calligraphy as well as of Chinese and Japanese brush writing. In the artistic practice of Cy Twombly, however, replete as it is with erasures, dysgraphy, and pseudo-writing, or in Klee's "pictorial writing," Basquiat's graffitilike inscriptions and near-erasures, or Mark Tobey's "white writing" (which borrows from the Near and Far Eastern calligraphies just mentioned), the image and writ are more often in tension than forming a unitary whole. Whether they foreground their differences through an emphasis on complementarity or on dissonance, neither image nor writ enjoy integrity or purity. The text may in fact be only a semblance or a ghost of writing (a ghost that has long haunted the cultures of the three religions "of the book," Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) by

refusing decipherable meaning or by being reduced, by means of erasures, to the status of a trace. Twombly, moreover, subverts the integrity of his text (often taken from lyric poetry) by actively fragmenting and reconfiguring it. Even—or perhaps all the more—when reconfigured, the text contaminates the image and deprives it of any assured self-containment. The artworks thus understood attest to a certain devastation or inability, on their part, to communicate univocally a fully shareable meaning. Meaning instead presents itself as withdrawn into the obliterated past or else as promised and thus future, and therefore as always on the threshold an being interminably withheld. Image and text thus not only call attention to but also complicate Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the invisibles of the visible while also calling into question any straightforward complementarity or harmony between eye and mind. Where inscription, moreover, finds itself reduced to the (scribbled) invocation of mythical or historical ancient names, or to the attributes and associations of ancient Greek, Egyptian, or Roman deities and historical figures (such as Virgil), these names are from the outset placed under the sign of irretrievable loss. The artworks that they inspire hence cannot lay claim to the power ascribed to them by Heidegger of setting up an exemplary and compelling human historical lifeworld while also setting it back into its tensional relationship or strife against unconstrained presencing or presencing's equally unconstrained, and thus inexplicable, refusal. Artworks can hence neither univocally formulate or interpret, nor yet support, a historical mandate issuing from a quasi--Heideggerian perspective on the "history of Being" (Seinsgeschichte). Their reticence and their affinity to the trace carry ethical import through their determined resistance to becoming subservient to ideology, authoritarianism, and totalization.

Artworks and Things

In "The Origin of the Work of Art" (in its final version of 1936), Heidegger poses the question of how to understand the undeniable, if sometimes uncomfortable, kinship between artworks and things. He finds that the humble "mere thing" of nature, such as a block of granite, is characterized by an unconstrained and enigmatic self-containment, or resting-within-itself, whereas the artwork no less enigmatically confronts the viewer with its causally inexplicable and unforeseeable createdness. Notwithstanding its striving to communicate, the artwork is thus more closely akin, for Heidegger, to the mere thing than to the familiar things of use or utensils, even though these, like the work, are humanly created. They are, however, commonly encountered, not in their mysteriousness, but straightforwardly in their serviceability (Dienlichkeit), which Heidegger goes on to think at a deeper level as reliability (Verlässlichkeit), in that humans can entrust or even abandon themselves to the ways in which things of use configure their lifeworld. He elaborates this by the example of his figure of a Black Forest peasant woman's reliance on the shoes that carry her through her arduous workday, as well as on the ancestral implements that allow her home to be a place of care and nurturance as well as of the events of birth and death. Her implements (probably mostly handmade) are meaningful through their connection with the traditional rhythms of life; but outside of such a connection, things of use for Heidegger degenerate readily into mere usefulness and boring everydayness (to say nothing of sheer detritus or consumer waste, which he does not address).

In contrast to Heidegger's hesitations as to things of use in their ordinariness, together with his contempt for banality, Kiki Smith's art exalts the things of daily use without depriving them of their enigmatic aspects. She is also sensitive to the fact that, within the historical parameters of women's life situations, their artistic creativity has often expressed itself through craft-based work embellishing things of use. These creations often quite extravagantly imbue home and family life with aesthetic delight and richness of meaning.

Smith also considers the historical implements of daily life (now often collected by museums) to have "memories," and thus to be capable of calling up, and initiating the viewer, into modes of life remote

in time, culture, or geography. Since Smith herself is accomplished in a wide range of media, including both electronic and traditional craft techniques, things of use, whether historical or contemporary, often form part of her installations. It is also significant that she associates a meditative dwelling with things of use with offering resistance to the violence pervasive in contemporary culture.

When Heidegger resumes his meditation on things in his essay "Das Ding" (The thing) of 1950, he no longer seeks to set apart simple things of nature from works of art and from things of use, but rather he endeavors to understand the very thing-being of things. Contrary to the ordinary understanding of things as exemplary of solid material reality, he now thinks the thing in terms of its fundamental insubstantiality, in that it configures itself out of emptiness (die Leere). The thing is thus deprived of substantive identity and thought rather in relation to the dimensions of the Fourfold of earth, heaven, divinities, and mortals, which it gathers (while nonetheless safeguarding their distances) into the proximity of an event of presencing. The thing thus gathers the free or unconstrained "mirror play," or the "ring" of the Fourfold, into a world that may hold sway, and it brings the world close.

Although Merleau-Ponty does not explicitly address the thing-being of things (nor engage with the echoes of Daoist thought prominent in Heidegger's essay), he grants to things a fundamental insubstantiality in affirming that, being mutable and, in their mutability, inexhaustible, they are never given in full presence or actuality. It is perhaps the nonpositivity of things in their presencing that underlies his rejection, with respect to visual art, of the duality of figuration and abstraction. The work of art, thing though it may be, is privileged in that it not only participates in but reveals and highlights this nonpositivity. The work of the artists discussed here, particularly those of Morandi and Mitchell, attest to their recognition of the nonpositivity of presencing. Although Morandi's art espouses the classical and figurative formats of still life and landscape, it is haunted by the insubstantiality of forms that are, for him, interpenetrated by space, as well as attesting to the plasticity of space and the corrosive powers of light. Mitchell, in her gestural abstraction, is in quest of essentiality and truth while repudiating the classical conception of truth as a conformity of mental representation to commonsensical "reality," and also as capable of linguistic explanation. Art thus shows itself to be more fundamentally attuned, in a challenging way, to the ontological understanding that both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty seek, in different ways, to develop in their late thought.

The Artist within Her or His Time
In "Eye and Mind," Merleau-Ponty reflects that "the painter is alone in having the right to look at all things without the duty of evaluation." The statement echoes his view, voiced in "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," that painting inhabits "a dreaming eternity" detached from knowledge and action." Although in "Eye and Mind" he speaks only about painting's "right" to withdrawal, rather than of its actual or inevitable practice thereof, even this late statement is questionable."

At the time of this writing, visual art is often preoccupied with the issues of colonialism, race, sexuality, gender, and politics; but even in the recent past, when it still cultivated the reticence of minimalism, if not, to use Merleau-Ponty's phrase, ever "since Lascaux," it has engaged with the experience and exigencies of its time. The creation of meditative or contemplative and thus silent work is no less a response by the artist's particular sensibility (formed by factors such as temperament and life history) to the ambitions, exaltations, or traumas of the time. It is thus, as a response, individual and finite and cannot absolutize itself, even though the quest for meaning and the call to responsibility, which it heeds, are not finitized.

Of the artists discussed in this book, Smith and Kelly stand out most clearly for their engagement with aspects of contemporary life, although Twombly's concern with war, vengeance, and violence,

approached through ancient Mediterranean history or mythology, must not be marginalized. Smith's focus, in much of her art, is on "being alive here in the body," whether human or animal, and on both the body's expressivity and exposure and vulnerability to trauma and violation. Given her sense of the contemporary urgency of the threat of ecological devastation, her art has also, since the mid-1990s, importantly addressed animal bodies and the human interbeing with animality, and ultimately with the elemental and cosmic dimensions of nature.

Kelly's career-long practice of drawing plant forms from life, as well as making them the basis of lithographic works (and ultimately of his distinctive "way of seeing," whatever the medium) goes beyond human interbeing with animality to reach into the still philosophically neglected understanding of vegetal life's modalities of perception and of world articulation, drawing here on Jakob von Uexküll's pathbreaking researches into the lifeworlds (Umwelten) of animals who were, within the parameters of his own research, mostly primitive invertebrates (and thus hardly at a significant remove from plants). Given that von Uexküll's lifework was well known to Heidegger and influenced his conception of human world articulation (that is, of Da-sein's Umwelt), one needs to recognize its prefiguration within animality but also to move beyond this zoological focus to recognize the importance of addressing plant-being (concerning which Merleau-Ponty maintains an unbroken silence).

Kelly's devotion, from an early age, to studying the appearance of life forms, such as insects, fish, and importantly birds, together with his almost career-long studies of plants, makes for a practice that served to discourage an understanding of artistic creation in terms of the artist's pure subjectivity, juxtaposed to an objectification of natural life. Objectification encourages uncaring indifference and thus supports ecological devastation, whereas an artist's attentiveness to the aesthetic creativity and refinement of natural life serves to bring home its preciousness and the compelling need to safeguard it.

Notable within the complexities of Kelly's art is, furthermore, his full integration of painting with architecture. In his numerous public commissions, which included a wall of the UNESCO building and the LVMA Forum Auditorium, both in Paris, as well as the Boston panels that transformed a previously dull courthouse into an energized and engaging space full of visual surprises, he realized his ambition of creating large, content-specific public works. The component panels of such works, painted on surfaces such as wood or aluminum, maintain a fine-tuned balance between being integral to the architecture and constituting autonomous works of art.

Before painting came to be understood largely in terms of oil or acrylic discrete works on canvas, it often adorned architectural spaces in the form of murals or frescoes, painted ceilings, or, in more remote times, the painted interiors of the rock-hewn caves of Ajanta, Ellora, or Dunhuang. Painting that is integral to architecture and thus to the configuration of public (or ceremonial) spaces visually and even viscerally communicates the ideas and ideals preeminent in its time. It has the ability to shape the comportment and interrelations of individuals that pass through or linger within these spaces. Painting thus shows itself, as Kelly appreciated, to contribute actively to shaping the public domain as the arena of thought and action.

The Question of Beauty

Merleau-Ponty credits animals with inventing visibles (inventer du visible),' but they also invent sonorities as well as forms of aesthetic expression that might be likened to dance, choreography, architecture (as in bower birds), or athletic performances that constitute an aesthetic display. In The Evolution of Beauty, ornithologist Richard O. Prum defends and further develops Darwin's contested as well as neglected theory, in his The Descent of Man, that evolution driven by natural selection is

complemented by a drive toward aesthetic pleasure in excess of adaptive advantage. Adolf Portmann already discussed the fact that the elaboration of sheer appearance and display can counteract and compromise utility. Prum's example of such a preeminence of aesthetic desire and delight over survival advantage is that of the male club-winged manakin, a bird that uses its wings for extraordinary musical sound production to the detriment of efficient flight. Due to the peculiarities of avian embryonic development, this detriment also afflicts females (to whom, nonetheless, the performance is offered).

In Prum's view, female mate choice is the impetus for animal (particularly avian) aesthetic creativity and accomplishment. The avian female is an exacting judge of her suitors' appearance and aesthetic achievements, but her species-specific criteria are fundamentally arbitrary rather than embodying ideals of beauty that could be universalized. If aesthetic creativity governs mate choice and thus species survival, Portmann's "unaddressed appearances" (which are elaborated in the absence of any possible eye to appreciate them) point to the excess of aesthetic creativity in organismic nature over utility in any form. Beauty, however it is elaborated, seems to constitute a vital need for organisms ranging from invertebrates, and even primitive microscopic organisms, to higher animals.

The vital importance of beauty renders its eclipse in twentieth- and early twenty-first-century art and art theoretical discourse problematic and challenging. Of the artists discussed in this book, none rejected beauty; but perhaps especially Mitchell and Smith explicitly recognized it. Although Mitchell expressed her fundamental and professed commitment to beauty in the powerful beauty achieved by her best work, such as To the Harbormaster (1957), Morning (1971), or, as discussed in chapter 4, her suite of paintings known as La Grande Vallée (The Great Valley), her realization of beauty is persistently achieved at an extreme of tension (fundamentally between chaos and order) offering no harmonious resolution. Smith, who also values beauty, finds it chiefly realized in works that have a "cut" in them in that they do not reject, but rather acknowledge and transmute, ugliness. Agnes Martin (discussed briefly in chapter 6), understands beauty as ideal perfection; but perfection for her is essentially insubstantial, lacking plenitude and self-sufficiency. It thus repudiates any effort at dominance or totalization that would validate of hierarchies of perfection. Kelly's art similarly withdraws beauty from what Merleau-Ponty calls positivity by allowing chance at times to complement consummate form.

Such practices of artmaking constitute a salutary response to beauty's trivialization and abuses as well as to its willful withholding. If beauty is indeed a vital need, its abuse as an instrument of domination, or its rejection, are likely to bring about cynicism or desolation. However, much as one may sympathize with Prum's view that there is a need today for "a post-human aesthetic philosophy that places us, and our artworlds, in context with other animals," one also needs to acknowledge the surpassing, and perhaps unique, importance of the ethical dimension for human life. Art, as a consummate realization of the human quest for meaning and beauty, remains, in its import, indissociable from ethicality, which therefore provides the ultimate context for thinking philosophically about art. <>

ABY WARBURG UND DIE NATUR: EPISTEMIK, ÄSTHETIK, KULTURTHEORIE (German Edition) edited by Frank Fehrenbach and Cornelia Zumbusch [Naturbilder / Images of Nature, de Gruyter, 9783110374452]

Aby Warburgs Rede von der Lebendigkeit und dem Nachleben der Bilder zeugt von der Bedeutung, die Natürliches für seine Konzeptualisierung von Bildformeln hat: Die Natur tritt immer wieder als bildgenerierende Instanz auf.

Warburg identifiziert menschliche Bildproduktion vor dem Hintergrund naturmagischer, -philosophischer oder -wissenschaftlicher Vorstellungen und Beschreibungsweisen. Seine eigenwilligen Begriffsübernahmen und -prägungen wie etwa Mneme, kinetische/potentielle Energie oder Dynamogramm verweisen auf ein enges Verhältnis zu zeitgenössischen naturwissenschaftlichen Modellen. Die Beiträge des Bandes fragen nach der Bedeutung von Vererbungslehre und Evolutionsbiologie, Völker- und Affektpsychologie, aber auch von Physik und Mathematik für Warburgs Bilderdenken.

[translated:]

ABY WARBURG AND NATURE: EPISTEMICS, AESTHETICS, CULTURAL THEORY edited by Frank Fehrenbach and Cornelia Zumbusch [Naturbilder / Images of Nature, de Gruyter, 9783110374452]

From the wind and the moving accessory to the stars to the lightning, nature appears again and again in Warburg's texts as an image-generating instance. All the more astonishing that the significance of nature for Warburg's pictorial thinking has hardly been explored yet. The contributions of the volume examine the function of natural-magical, natural-philosophical and scientific ideas and methods of description in Warburg's pictorial thinking. Attention is also paid to Warburg's idiosyncratic acquisitions and coining of terms such as mneme, genetic material, hereditary matter, kinetic and potential energy, dynamogram or energetic engram, which have a close relationship to

contemporary scientific models. Warburg's reception of heredity and evolutionary biology, ethnic psychology and affect psychology, physics and mathematics is also illuminating for current movements between natural and cultural studies.

Contents Translated

Aby Warburg and Nature, By way of Introduction

Aby Warburg and Nature — this compilation might surprise at first glance, Warburg, as a collector of pathos formulas and theorists of an Occidental image memory, seems to have been more fixated on man, his sign language and the psychic energies that organize in it. Warburg's interest in the turbulent life of the ancient cults, the early modern festivals or parades and the resulting pictorial imprints actually leads him above all to the mimic and gestural expressions of the human body. The ancient Mänade and the Ninfa fiorentina, the dying Orpheus and the snake-encircled Laokoon, chase and kidnapping scenes all show dancing, striding, fighting or wrestling bodies. When Warburg refers to these pathos formulas as 'expression movements', which he wants to put together in the Mnemosyne Atlas for a grammar of sign language, then the focus of his interest is the human body and its possibilities of expression, which are to be combined into a cultural and pictorial history. Agon and fear of death, rapture, ecstasy and frenzy, paralysis and depression characterize the 'soul drama' of the West, which is shown in the visual arts from antiquity to modern times.

However, if you change the optics from the sharply defined contours of moving bodies to their surroundings, then other forms of movement come into view. Already in his dissertation on Botticelli's birth of Venus, published in 1893, Warburg shifts the view from the mythological figures to her hair and robes, which he describes as transmission belts of the affect movement. Georges Didi-Hubermann has seen here a shift in Freudian sense at work, in which the insight into the dynamis of the unconscious is at work. In order not to disturb the goddess's "beautiful indifference", Botticelli had shifted her affect to the "moving side work". But if you look further to the left, you will see in Botticelli's birth of Venus not only the moving hair and textiles, but the moving force itself. The wind Zephir blowing from full jaws is the natural cause of movement. Two points are remarkable about Warburg's interest in this pictorial detail, which come down to the question of images of nature in a double sense. First of all, nature images can be understood as the images that one makes of nature, whether on the path of artistic imitation of nature, or in the philosophical and scientific description. However, images of nature can also be regarded as images which, in their genesis, are oriented towards nature as a creative principle: images that create and eat the glow of

the living. Warburg's Botticelli interpretation can provide information about both readings of the relationship between image and nature.

Warburg's Botticelli study is based on the observation that the depiction of Venus rising from the sea follows the literary templates of Homer and Polizian. In these templates, the west wind Zephir also appears as the driving force that carries Venus' shell to the beach. Botticelli, with his anthropomorphizing depiction of the wind, not only adheres to the mythological narrative, but also follows a advice from Leon Battista Alberti (1435). If one wants to depict moving objects in the picture, then one has "to put in the painting the face of the west or the east wind, which blows in the middle of the clouds and makes the fabrics flutter". In the figure of the wind, a style-forming principle is thus embodied, to which the ornamental ornamental ornamental forms, which make up the specific appeal of the image, are due. What's more. If one follows Warburg's reasoning, then the image creates the appearance of the living with the effect of the wind, the 'moving accessory'. Warburg unfolds this reasoning not so much in his appeal to the art-theoretical treatise literature of the early Renaissance, but rather from his knowledge of contemporary scientific approaches.

In his appeal to the empathy-psychological theories of Robert and Friedrich Theodor Vischer, which develop the basic features of empirical perceptual psychology, Warburg describes Botticelli's imagery as a "compromise product between anthropomorphistic imagination and comparative reflection". Anthropomorphistic imagination is at work here in that a natural force is given human form. What is interesting now is Warburg's conclusion that the image emerges as a living one. The imagination, Warburg concludes, cannot be imagined other than the "will less accessory of organic life." According to the psychology of empathy consulted by Warburg here, there can be no meaningless forms within human perception. As soon as the imagination encounters abstract ornamental forms of jewelry, it finds them to be atmospheric and thus meaningful. Friedrich Theodor Vischer derives this automatism from animism, which has been preserved in aesthetic perception: "It is the involuntary yet free, unconscious and in a sense conscious natural sealing, the borrowing act by which we inferior our soul and its moods to the uninitiated." The semantically suggestive perception of the inanimate here, as it were, animates the actually dead form. By projecting his own emotional processes, the viewer perceives the image as if it were a living being. This process of invigoration can be derived from so-called 'primitive' behaviors. According to Robert Vischer, the beginning of the empathy is the "individualization of nature" in the form of personified gods. The personification of natural forces thus precedes the aesthetic revival of the inanimate. Warburg traces both stages in Botticelli's birth of Venus: on the one hand the anthropomorphic representation of the wind, on the other hand the ornamental frills, which we perceive as a trace of the organically or vividly moving. Botticelli's image, for example, is a aesthetically productive animism that transports its source, thus animism itself, as a residual form.

The second part of Warburg's formula of "compromise product between anthropomorphistic imagination and comparative reflection" is revealing. "For Alberti advises precisely read only for the personifying figuration of a natural force, because the ornamental frill of moving hair and robes works gracefully, but these substances are "inherently heavy and constantly fall downwards", as Warburg quotes from Albertis. To make them flutter and fly would be contrary to the experience of nature. In order to make the lifting of gravity plausible, a counterforce must be induced. At Botticelli, this is done not only in the form of a face with inflated jaws, but also in a whitish drawn airflow. In this way, Botticelli's pictorial discovery combines animism and natural law, fantasy and physics. Here, too, Alberti's treatise has set the rules. According to Alberti, it is permissible, if not necessary, to give human faces and figures to the invisible causes of the movement completely against the everyday experience. At the same time, however, the presentation of their effects should strictly follow the

well-known laws of nature. As Alberti demands: "[...] In this blowing of a wind the painter shall take care that he does not lay any cloths against the wind. ' Botticelli has complied with this requirement. As fantastic and naive as the paunchy embodiment of the wind may come from, the motion vectors of the hair and robes he set in motion nevertheless lie on the exact geometric parallel to the visible air flow.

In Warburg's formula of the image as a "compromise product between anthropomorphistic imagination and comparative reflection" there is a complex of problems that he orbits in his early notes and aphorisms into expressiveness and tries to summarize three years after the dissertation in the approximately 20-page conglomerate symbol as a circumference determination. Under the heading "the new physics", Warburg tailors the problem of symbolism to the relationship between the self and the world: "The lability of the feeling of self through the things of physical behavior to the physical outside world". The body of man is confronted here with the body world, i.e. the physios or natura in the fundamental sense. When images help to bring stability to the ever-collapsing self by organizing the separation between inner and outer physics, they serve as mediators between man and nature. Almost all those involved seem to benefit from this mediation process: man who learns to distance himself from a frightening nature, as well as the image that can participate in the appearance of the living: "You live and thus nothing to me" — this motto of the basic fragments of expression testifies to the desire to get to grips with what is actually moving at least in the picture and, conversely, to give the image the appearance of the living.

The thesis that images regulate the relationship between man and nature is also primed by one of Warburg's last works. In 1929, Warburg dictated to his collaborator Gertud Bing a text about Manet's breakfast in the green, which he wanted to insert into the Mnemosyne Atlas as the last chapter. At first glance, this text seems quite untypical of Warburg's work. With Manet's 1863 painting, the time frame of the early modern antiquities' reception, which the Warburg Cultural Science Library actually set itself, is clearly exceeded. The interest in a calmly stored and quite harmonious looking rather than an extremely moving, agonal entangled group of figures is also untypical. Nevertheless, Warburg draws in this text in a way the sum of his work.

He devotes himself to an exemplary series of pictures in which Manet's breakfast company turns out to be a formal quotation of an ancient sarcophagus and an Italian historical image. Warburg follows a hint from Gustav Pauli, who had found the ancient model and the "Italian mediators" of the group of figures. It is an ancient depiction of the Paris verdict, which can be found in a painting by Raphael and a engraving by MarcAntonio Raimondi. Manet's figures, in outline and arrangement, correspond astonishingly exactly to the three figures in the right foreground, which Raffael and, after him, Raimondi, took over from an ancient sarcophagus. Warburg's interpretation of this sequence of images, however, goes beyond mere iconographic evidence. Warburg's particular sensitivity to fractures and anachronisms is characteristic, with which he can describe Manet's painting as both evolution and regression, as a "forward step" and "reverse turn". Above all, however, Warburg tells this meandering art history, which is interspersed with advance and backward steps, as a history of natural relations. It is not for nothing that the text is subtitled The pre-embossing function of pagan elemental deities for the development of modern feelings of nature and is the only text written by Warburg that explicitly bears the term nature in its title.

The argument is based on a series of composites in which nature enters into different relationships. We are talking about "natural mythology" and "natural demons", "natural power" and "natural events[n] ", "nature exploration" and "feeling of nature". The thesis is based on the thesis that the ancient pictorial imprints provide an "imaginative exploration of nature". They are, as Warburg puts it, nothing more than "interpretation of nature". In the case of the ancient formulas, therefore, one

has to deal in principle with 'nature pictures', which are used in modern art. But of course not without corrections, as Warburg puts it, it is always about the nuance of its transformation. The history of these reinterpretations deserves reconstruction.

As Warburg points out, the ancient sarcophagus is the model for Manet's picnic group in the context of a nature dominated by gods. Raffael and Raimondi reproduce this arrangement exactly. Also in their versions is dominated the upper image zone of Jupiter and Sol, which Warburg describes as "the territory of the angry and radiant light world". Jupiter appears as a "lightning god", "Sol" is shown "rushing on his sun car." "Lightning God" and Sun God are symbolic condensations of natural forces that directly affect man and on which he is fixated, half phobic and half revered. This attitude, at least, is taken by the group at the lower right edge of the image. Now Warburg adds another image to the argument. It is a Dutch landscape, which shows the camp group, but no longer the figures of the gods in the sky. For him, this image has the status of an 'intermediate jawbone', the decisive missing left, as Warburg puts it with a well-known reference to Goethe's morphology. The disappearance of the gods from the picture finally interprets Warburg as "a change in the doctrine of causation concerning the elementary natural events." The scientific explanation is that the sky empties itself. And because there is nothing left to look at in the sky, two of the three figures can now turn their heads and turn their gaze out of the image, as if the invigorating force had finally been delegated to the viewer. Manet no longer even shows the sky, but places the figures in an almost impenetrable green. In doing so, he puts it in front of the matrix of a living nature that opens onto a small piece of heaven at the extreme end of the perspective.

The world is disenchanted, the gods have gone. What remains are the images of nature, which gradually detach from the collective image memory in order to be regrouped. In the description of this process of remembrance, Warburg's metaphor unfolds its characteristic dynamics:

> Like reeds in the dormant waters, they rise themselves, and the question of where and where occurred on them in the design process that created them. The three bodies have washed up on land, as it were, without a sign of determination, and now take a seat in the ample space around them in casual lyses.

When image memory has become a water, from which the images appear to come to the surface uncalled, then the process of artistic design, i.e. the creation of images itself, is imagined as an excited force of nature. Warburg's interpretations highlight the extent to which western imagery not only carries expressive pathos formulas, but also images of nature. The present volume wants to investigate these relationships between image and nature, which Warburg hinted at. It is intended to show the hitherto underestimated context of nature in Warburg's interpretations and theories.

The main focus of the contributions is on the role that natural-scientific approaches play in the expression of Warburg's basic concepts. As has been shown in individual studies, Warburg develops his theory of images, which goes far beyond a mere pictorial history, in the committed examination of the (contemporary) natural sciences, such as morphology, empathy psychology, memory theory, evolutionary biology, thermodynamics or astronomy. This connection must be systematically worked out. Which methods and models of the natural sciences does Warburg take up? How does he incorporate the offerings from psychology, biology or physics? In his view, are these models of explanation that can be transferred to image- and art-theoretical contexts without any need, or does he treat them as conceptual metaphors that are more likely to be a 'beautiful parable' in the field of images? And how does Warburg design the relationship between the humanities and the natural sciences?

Warburg's references to scientific theories and discoveries of his time are far from systematic and often guided by the principle of serendipity. Kurt W. Forster traces his particular interest in the somatic foundations of individual and collective memory and thus in the physiological foundations of culture in the first essay of the volume. It shows how Warburg's orientation to Richard Semon's neurological theory of organic enrolment of sensory impressions remained movable enough precisely by the absence of an experimental biological elaboration to give greater weight to genuine psychological aspects of memory. In Warburg's "actively shaping mneme", a biological quantum is postulated, which at the same time carries the trace of emotional reactions to original stimuli and spontaneously pushes into consciousness. Warburg's pictorial concept only becomes comprehensible after these psychophysiological processes, which are autonomously aspired to a dynamic image of memory. The biogenetic mechanisms of the storage of stimuli were only systematically researched after Semons and Warburg's death and were finally put on a new basis by Eric Kandel. It is precisely in this chronological discrepancy between biological modelling and experimental verification that Forster sees a condition for Warburg's productive freedom over scientific research approaches.

Warburg's creative use of language refers to the scientific thrust of his theory formation. "Dynamo engrams", "perseverance", the doctrine of the "smallest measure of force", "vibration alimony" or the symbol as an "energetic transformer" — Warburg's terminology constantly raises the question of the metaphoricality of seemingly sciolistic word imprints. In the second article of the volume, Giovanna Targia reconstructs the heuristic significance of such acquisitions and reprints for Warburg's project of cultural anthropology. She sees in the corresponding formulaic compactions the regulating operations on the back of the historical carpet, on the front of which Warburg weaves the positive data of art history into large images. The insight-leading project aims at the convergence of natural sciences and humanities; a constant objection to the separation of the two branches of knowledge, as Wilhelm Dilthey postulated. The previously unpublished manuscript of a lecture given in 1936 by Niels Bohr at the invitation of Edgar Wind at the Warburg Institute focuses on the counter-model: complementarity, a quantum-physical principle that Bohr tries to outline as an epistemological category. In the peculiar limbo of Warburg's terminology, the search and longing for a complementary penetration of natural sciences and humanities becomes visible, which had already fueled the scientific and speculative approaches at the beginning of the 19th century.

How can Warburg's relationship to (natural) science be determined more precisely? Hans Christian Hones traces the traces of a way of thinking that leaves the linear model of cultural progress behind and replaces it with more complex epistemic concepts. Already the young Warburg provided a question mark around 1890 with a question mark for the directed development of human "orientation experiments" from religion to art to science and instead pleaded for a non-hierarchical polarity between art and science. Later, this model, which at the same time has been cultural-historical and individual psychological, mutated into a cycle. Hönes shows how the early examination of the theory of probability of Johannes von Kries and Wilhelm Windelband's philosophy of chance acted as a catalyst. Mathematics — apparently the culmination of scientific-rational access to the world as the creation of distance and "space of thought" — was not a suitable instrument for Warburg to bridge the precipice between experimental "game" and socio-cultural reality ("life"). The early modern attempt to design the future as a probability in astrological prognostics no longer seemed to Warburg as a "balancing formula" between abstraction and "cultically adoring linkage". Thus, a point of Hönes's essay, mathematics comes close to art, which in turn occupies a middle position between "life" and "abstraction". In his confrontation with diaper band's subjectivation of chance, Warburg perforates for life the possibility of collective and individual "attachments" in which the human ability to enroll in the chaos of reality is tested. This foundation of meaning in the face of

the sudden, disruptive — as a supposed "destiny" — is, of course, no longer accessible to science and thus to mathematics and instead operates with metaphors of religious discourse.

How does the cultural scientist Warburg manage to recognize the type-forming elements of cultural history, and how can the dynamics of their identity and their variability be plausible in the stream of time? Stefan Rieger contextualizes Warburg's cultural-theoretical search movements in a broad stream of cultural ethological approaches, whose series formation and pedigrees borrow on the one hand in evolutionary biology; on the other hand, Warburg likes to transfer concepts from the field of physics to cultural dynamics. The loss-freeness of energy and its quantitative consistency within a closed system proves to be a central figure of thought. But where physical and psychological impulses, shocks or shock movements continue indefinitely, an all-context arises, whose pan-psychic wave movements refer back to the oldest models of the remote effect. Rieger shows how high the price of a "holistic" culture is based on nature, or what ambivalences and contradictions have to be accepted. One of Warburg's most important reference authors, the anthropologist Tito Vignoli, bundles the corresponding approach in his concept of "causal virtuality" by postulating latent influences, non-detectable transmissions and a homeopathic effectiveness of anonymous "influences", which the highly sensitive researcher senses as a sensitive medium of the waves of cultural history of arousal. But Rieger also shows that the corresponding sympathetic approach has a lasting influence on modernity and is reminiscent of Sheldra's morphogenetic fields, Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis or the recent speculations about the coming mergers between computer and nature.

Michael Neumann's contribution reveals which unspoken premises and circular lines of reasoning are connected with Warburg's psychological-anthropological access to pictorial history. The naturalization of cultural dynamism, which lists images as "biologically necessary products", must be the contingency of the cultural or cultural The recent trace of art history can be traced back to psycho-physical constants and mediatize the role of artists, even the cultural scientist himself, as "seismographers" and "seers". Warburg's pictorial concept, in his "existential dramatization" (M. Neumann), rests on a vitalism that models dynamic transmissions on the mission statement of electricity, mechanics and biology and arranges them on scales of intensity. However, as Neumann shows, this dynamic of arousal transmission and conversion is oriented as a "image-wire" (Warburg) to economic circulation and exchange metaphors. The cycle of images therefore dissipates an invisible value (the primordial stimulus) that in Warburg's metaphor of coinage triggers unlimited conversions in derived images.

Movement has been the central concept of the new artistic currents and their discourses since the second half of the 19th century. But what significance does movement have as an interface category between physical kinesis and psychological affect, and how can the self-moving image become the outstanding medium of an intensified and at the same time distance-enabling perception of movement? Philipp Ekardt traces the origins of Warburg's "Pathosform" in the anthropology of Tito Vignolis, with whose work the young art historian came into memorable contact as a student in Bonn. Warburg adopted from Vignoli the thesis of a primordial phobic reaction of animals and humans towards formless and shapeless perceptions of movement. The spontaneous attribution of will and vibrancy in the chaos of perceptions enables a first distancing, which, however, only becomes culturally effective in the unmoved image. For Warburg, images rationalize an ever-present, threatening excess of movement by banning it as a sham movement and at the same time linking it to a figurative author. For Warburg, the energization of art does not consist of the apparent animation of the dead material, as in the classical art discourse, but in the embodiment and directionality of originally amorphous dynamics. Especially in its intensification of the kinetic and affective events, the orientation-creating effectiveness of the image proves again and again.

Warburg's theory of the image attributes to him a distancing from and at the same time a re-presentation of the original phobic reaction, which had spontaneously processed the amorphous threatening ness of the sensory stimuli with the image of a living body. The famous dictum "You live and don't give me anything!" sums up the corresponding paradox emblematic. Caroline van Eck again assumes this note, dated 1888, but sees Warburg's pictorial concept as shaped by the radical doubt about the "thinking space" of the pictures. In the perspective of current empathy psychology, Warburg's pictorial concept emphasizes not so much the "as if" of empathy and rather the projective identification (Melanie Klein), which unconsciously ascribes one's own feelings and vitality to the object of contemplation. However, van Eck also sees that warburg does not focus on the phobic and iconoclastic reactions of the contemporary audience in the paradigm of the contribution — Manets Déjeuner sur l'herbe — but rather Manet's distancing achievement, which models representatives of the modern bourgeoisie from gods and nymphs.

Warburg's examination of natural concepts and the natural sciences of his time focuses on his efforts to place the role of images in the cultural-historical dynamics on an affect-psychological basis with which anthropological constants are to be captured at the same time. Warburg's examination of the "primitive" culture of the Indians in the southwest of the USA is of central importance for the question of genetic connections between nature and image. In her contribution Barbara Lange analyses the famous Kreuzlingen lecture of 1923, in which Warburg, who suffers from anxiety, reports on his journey from 1895/96. Lange's essay goes equally far beyond the widespread interpretation of the lecture as (moderately successful) self-therapy and beyond the supposed debunking of the colonial clichés in Warburg's travelogue and the journey itself. Instead, Lange reconstructs the outlines of a cultural and image theory that Warburg tried to draw precisely in view of the complex cultural stratifications in the visited reserves. For Warburg, the rituals and images of the Pueblo and Hopi Indians show the origin of art from the impulses of an overpowering nature, to which the participants of the ceremonies are physically transformed. In doing so, they develop symbolic images of a high degree of anthropological generality, which on the one hand are to have a sympathetic effect on nature, but on the other hand have the power to deeply affect a visitor socialized culturally, religiously and economically, such as Aby Warburg. The emotional depth layer touched here breaks into Warburg's phobias in a way that makes it impossible for him to remain a neutral observer. The primordial images experienced in Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado and their polarity between distancing "handling" and transgressive "transformation" are evident at the interface between nature and culture — the body of producers as well as recipients.

In response to the somatic imprints of "reizen" and "impressions", the body for Warburg becomes the "lead fossil" of collective social memory; as the nucleus of the image, the moving body for Warburg stands between aesthetics and anthropology. But how does the imprinting of archaic gestures into the collective, body-bound memory happen? And how can artists bring these discarded forms to life and bring them back to life? Matthew Vollgraff shows how Warburg relies on the physician Theodor Piderit for the historicity of expression on Charles Darwin's expressiveness, but for the thesis of the work of art as a sedimentation of expressive movement; two authors, whose writings Warburg studied in Florence as early as 1888. With his thesis that the expression in the image does not "refer" to a concrete content (a specific emotion), but as a dynamic intensity of a high general ity affects the image as a whole, Warburg goes beyond Darwin. The pathos formula points back to a primal form that can be infinitely transformed by increasing, in analogy to plant metamorphosis in Goethe's botany. At the same time, images repeatedly bring back the past and the power of primordial passions to the present, embodying an "évolution régressive" as it were. Finally, the historian's recollection of older images and their expressive dynamics has been shot through. For

Vollgraff, Warburg's Mnemosyne project is also based on the acceptance of being able to think about images only with pictures.

How does the aesthetic paradigm of nature change in the face of the decline of its mimetic role model function at the end of the 19th century? In the final, most comprehensive contribution of the volume, Spyros Papapetros refers to the analogies between evolutionary models of art history and alternative concepts of evolution in biology and cultural history. Its key concept was "regression" at the fin de si'cle; their typological focus was on ornament and its transformations. Warburg's ambivalent attitude to ornament saw this as a natural departure from the mimesis in favor of a proliferating stylization, but at the same time an original distancing instrument that enabled a more intimate closeness to nature in the materials of clothing and jewelry. The regression, which is always given in the return of non-representational forms, combines Warburg's dialectical concept of image and culture with simultaneous approaches by Belgian and Italian authors and the older concept of an organic history of ornament. Papapetros finally leaves open the question whether Warburg's exploration of the afterlife of antiquity understands the fossil inclusions of history (e.g. in the art of Quattrocento) as irreversibly past precursors of artistic-cultural progress or as potential revenants. As a re-evolution, the reversibility of morphological developments is the focus of current evolutionary biology, but also at the center of the passionate debate about the reversibility of cultural progress as a whole. <>

MARTYRDOM: CANONISATION, CONTESTATION AND AFTERLIVES edited by Ihab Saloul and Jan Willem van Henten [Heritage and Memory Studies, Amsterdam University Press, 9789462988187]

The phenomenon of martyrdom is more than 2000 years old but, as contemporary events show, still very much alive. MARTYRDOM: CANONISATION, CONTESTATION AND AFTERLIVES examines the canonisation, contestation and afterlives of martyrdom and connects these with cross-cultural acts and practices of remembrance. Martyrdom appeals to the imagination of many because it is a highly ambiguous spectacle with thrilling deadly consequences. Imagination is thus a vital catalyst for martyrdom, for martyrs become martyrs only because others remember and honour them as such. This memorialisation occurs through rituals and documents that incorporate and re-interpret traditions deriving from canonical texts. The canonisation of martyrdom generally occurs in one of two ways: First, through ritual commemoration by communities of inside readers, listeners, viewers and participants, who create and recycle texts, re-interpreting them until the martyrs ultimately receive a canonical status, or second, through commemoration as a means of contestation by competing communities who perceive these same people as traitors or terrorists. By adopting an interdisciplinary orientation and a cross-cultural approach, this book goes beyond both the insider admiration of martyrs and the partisan rejection of martyrdoms and concisely synthesises key interpretive questions and themes that broach the canonised, unstable and contested representations of martyrdom as well as their analytical connections, divergences and afterlives in the present.

Afterlives of Martyrdoms

Our brief discussion of canonisation and contestation of martyrs reflects several ways in which the dividing line of finding a working definition for the concept of martyrdom is not only between what is martyrdom or not, nor is it between what is right and legitimate or illegitimate martyrdom. Instead the point which this book attempts to put forward is that definitions and legitimacy of martyrdom are mutually dependent. Moreover, the commemoration of martyrs entails a process of canonisation because many groups who remember their martyrs have established a more or less fixed group of martyrs and sometimes also canonised the documents about those martyrs. Yet, this canonisation of martyrs goes hand in hand with two other processes: First, the canonisation implies the inclusion and exclusion of martyrs and the writings connected with them; martyrs who are heroes for one group are flatly contested by another group; that is to say, canonisation usually emerges in a plural of diverse and conflicting canons. No matter how martyrs are configured during their commemoration, they function as heroes and models for the in-group, which designates them as idealised figures. And, second, the ways martyrs are remembered in documents, visual material and narrations, performances, and rituals build on and re-interpret older textual and pictorial traditions that are either connected with older martyrs or are interpreted in new settings through the lens of commemoration. The canons, lists, and cultural texts of martyrdom are open to later and various traditions; these are present and future-oriented practices which are not permanently closed.

Moreover, inasmuch as martyrdom involves actively opting for death rather than abandoning a belief, martyrs also publicly embrace political, ideological and religious positions that opposed powerful institutions and dominant discourses. The various chapters in this book address the issues discussed above through opening up an interdisciplinary space for the analysis of the remnants and narratives of martyrdom, as well as of the re-making and re-conceptualisation of these pasts in the present in order to facilitate a dynamic and transnational approach across several fields and cultural-political contexts. The contributions to this volume deal with various forms and contexts, from Late

Antiquity up to the present era, in which they examine how spaces of martyrdom are equally relevant for heritage and memory studies since most of these spaces have been recycled, remediated and musealized in art and cultural practices (reliefs, frescoes, paintings, illustrated manuscripts, etcetera). Many martyr shrines and reliquaries are still being venerated, and street names and graffiti keep the memory of recent martyrs alive. The cross-cultural approach and analyses make this book valuable for students and scholars of heritage and memory studies, religion and ancient history, literature and poetry, and media and public culture.

In his chapter, Tobias Nicklas focuses on the dynamic interconnections between what became the early Christian canon of the Holy Writings of the Bible and the identities resulting from the history of various Christian groups. The development of the canon was decisive for the beliefs of the Christians and their identity, but changes in the group identities led to changes of perspectives on the canon in various contexts. Thus, the 'canonical process' did not come to its end with the discontinuity of the closure especially of the canon. As a matter of fact, other writings that do not claim to be part of the canon, fulfil a function analogous to canonical writings, as the reception history of several so-called apocryphal writings and martyrdom passages implies. Building on Maurice Hallbwachs' concepts of 'social memories' (Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire), and 'collective memory' (La mémoire collective), Nicklas critically analyses the relationship between memory and martyrdom and argues that while most of the canonical texts have been largely forgotten the landscapes of memory which were created by these texts still exist. This argument highlights the contestation but also the non-fixation and exclusivity of canons.

Yair Furstenberg discusses the changing nature of canonisation of a cluster of martyrdom traditions about the ten rabbinic sages, who were executed by the Romans in the First or Second century CE. The canonical texts were transmitted as isolated stories in several rabbinic writings, which were only combined to a grand narrative in Late Antiquity or the early Medieval period. One indication of the major re-interpretation of martyrdom in this period is the fact that instead of idolatry or the transgression of a Roman decree or another reason that was obvious from a Roman perspective, the ten Rabbis were executed because the emperor found out that the Jews were never punished for the ancestral sin of selling Joseph to the Ishmaelite merchants (Gen. 37:23-37). This implies that their death was intended by God, which was confirmed by the heavenly journey of one of these Rabbis, Rabbi Ishmael, to inquire about their case. Furstenberg argues that the evolution of the Story of the Ten Martyrs from its Talmudic foundations in interaction with Christianity betrays a fundamental shift in Jewish martyrological discourse that reveals the strategy for confronting the religious claims of the political power through the act of martyrdom. Jennifer Knust surveys the gradual canonisation of the Maccabean martyrs within a collection of Christian sacred texts. The eventual adoption of these martyrs as proto-Christian models of faith was clearly the result of a complex but now lost process of reconfiguration and appropriation. This march forward of a Christian Maccabean cult also coincides with a postJulian consolidation of Christian ascendancy that began during Julian's reign and was then further advanced during the ramping up of Christianisation following his death. The introduction of the Christian cult of the Maccabean martyrs can be interpreted both as an anti-Jewish Christian response to changing circumstances under Julian and as evidence that the traditions associated with the Maccabees endured as a continuing site of Christian Jewish interaction even as these same martyrs were spiritualised. The fourth-century re-signification of these martyrs as Christian participated in what Andrew Jacobs describes as the 'historicisation' of the Jew, a process that renders living Jews merely 'historical' by transferring the Jew or the Jew's remains into an embodied, living Christian past. Once the martyrs were detached from earlier commemorative contexts, they served to buttress particular, disputed formulations of Christian rather than Jewish identity. According to Knust, the reverberations of this process reach beyond their initial settings

and Christian anti Judaism, rhetorical or real, and have persisted within ongoing and contested histories of difference.

Mieke Bal examines the first autobiographical text written by a woman which concerns the life of the Carthaginian martyr Perpetua. The analysis combines narratology, psychoanalysis, and deconstruction, in a voluntarily anachronistic appropriation of this unique document. Scenes of martyrdom are etched on our retina, because there are so many artworks that represent them. The case Bal analyses, however, is literary, although some of its metaphors and descriptions are vividly visual. Bal speculates that a contest shapes the one that informs Perpetua's choice for this particular martydom, the contest between male and female, or rather the contest for masculinity. Perpetua's move away from femininity would lead her, not so much to give up sex as to enjoy it in the only way she could have access to it, turns this story of victimhood into a story of victory: over gender-limitations and over narration.

Asghar Seyed-Gohrab analyses the concept of 'love' in the context of Islamic mystical martyrdom. As a concept, love was used increasingly in a religious and mystical context from the 10th century onward in the Islamic world in such a way that it was often hard to make a distinction between profane and spiritual love. A true lover was often a pious person who would offer everything including his life for the beloved or for love itself. Love was frequently connected with death or to be killed by the beloved either in a metaphorical or literal sense. There are several examples referring to love-death and how such a death is interpreted as martyrdom. After an analysis of the origin and the evolution of the concept of love-death to martyrdom in medieval texts, Seyed-Gohrab examines how love martyrdom was reactivated in Twentieth century Iranian political philosophy for a wide range of purposes. He focuses in particular on the cult of martyrdom, scrutinising how the concept was deployed during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) to propagate a militant ideology, to justify violence, and to convince soldiers that their fight was a spiritual quest to attain the immaterial beloved. Jan Willem van Henten takes a speech by the English Bishop Arthur Winnington Ingram from 1914 for the bereaved families of fallen soldiers as point of departure for a survey of the commemoration of soldiers who died in World War i as martyrs. Winnington Ingram characterises the soldiers whom he commemorates as martyrs and links them to Stephen, the protomartyr of the Church (Acts 7). Van Henten explores whether Winnington Ingram's speech is an isolated case or if others also commemorated soldiers who were killed during the Great War as martyrs, indirectly or explicitly. Van Henten concentrates on several case studies about German and British soldiers: a mosaic referring to the soldiers, a chapel at two German military cemeteries in Belgium (Hooglede and Menen), and a stained glass window and a table with names of the fallen at All Saints Church at Huntingdon (Cambridgeshire). This chapter discusses the particularities of these commemorations as well as how the soldiers are associated with martyrdom and the reward of martyrs with the help of Christian pictorial traditions and specific biblical passages.

Paul Middleton deals with the contested homosexual martyr Matthew Shepard. Matthew Shepard, a gay twenty-one year old political science student at the University of Wyoming, was robbed and brutally beaten by two other men on the night of Tuesday, 6 October 1998. The men tied him to a fence after the attack, while he was bleeding profusely in freezing temperatures. He died a few days later, on 12 October 1998, and was called a martyr in Time Magazine, just a week after his death. Middleton examines the popular martyr-making process in respect of Matthew Shepard, arguing that both the making of the martyr and the reaction it provoked reflect American 'culture wars', because martyrology is conflict literature, foremost about the conflict between the story-tellers and their opponents. Ironically, both LGBT activists and right-wing religious groups have in some ways sought to undermine Shepard's martyr status by focusing on his life rather than his death. Such efforts, as

Middleton argues, had a limited effect because in martyrologies any interest in the lives of their heroes is incidental, merely setting up the scene for a significant death.

Friederike Pannewick examines the public memorialisations of the martyrs of the Arab Spring in Egypt as expressed in graffiti and murals in Cairo. The state tried to censor and destroy them, but the memorial spaces were re-appropriated by the public and functioned as visual narratives of the history of the revolution. This artwork not only aimed at counteracting forgetfulness through public remembrance, but also enshrined the remembrance of more than once unpunished crimes and tragic events. The commemoration of these martyrs oscillates thus between personal efforts to cope with inescapable suffering and political strategy. From the perspective of previous commemorations of martyrs in Arab contexts the remembrance of the Arab Spring martyrs displays a major shift: this time the Arab citizens themselves engaged in self-empowerment and establishing and defending their own national history, instead of the political or religious institutions. In addition, a semantic transformation took place through a reconfiguration of religious ideas in the context of secularised modernity that transcends the particularities of specific groups and simultaneously builds on Muslim and Christian imageries.

Jeremy Punt argues that the canonisation of South Africa's anti-Apartheid heroes is an important component in the construction of a narrative of a country emerging from a violent, divisive past informed by racialist engineering and deliberate processes of exclusion and othering. The icon of the struggle against Apartheid and the one who most often springs to mindis, of course, Nelson Mandela, around whom quite a hero if not a martyr cult was erected. Heroes' discourse plays an important role in structuring memories about South Africa's past and negotiating identities in the present. Notwithstanding the ambiguities, the role of anti-Apartheid heroes and their veneration are important in underscoring new group values, restoring human dignity and self esteem while at the same time artiqulating identity and acknowledging leadership and achievement. But the commemoration of heroes is also time and place bound and therefore susceptible to constant critique and adjustments as is evident from recent events in South Africa.

Marcel Poorthuis discusses the radical re-interpretation of the story about seven boys who fall asleep for several centuries in a cave during the persecution by Emperor Decius. They refused to burn incense before 'idols made by hands' and fled into a cave, where God took their spirits and brought them to heaven. The story has been associated with martyrdom and has pre-Christian forerunners but it was transmitted in a Syriac-Christian version by Jacob of Serugh (451-521 CE). The Qur'an recycles this story, but its thrust is wholly different. Ironically, the story in Sura 18 has been transformed into an anti-Christian polemic. This story in turn has been re-created in the novel My Father's Notebook (Spykerschrift) by the Iranian-Dutch writer Kader Abdollah (translated in English as My Father's Notebook, 2006). The story symbolises the future return of happiness and beauty for the people, persecuted both under the Shah and under Khomeini.

Ihab Saloul investigates the phenomenon of 'female martyrdom operations' in relation to the issue of women's agency in society, particularly women's political participation and gender roles in contemporary Palestinian society. In the context of the conservative social climate promoted by the Islamists through their emphasis on the religious rather than the nationalist dimensions of martyrdom operations, female martyrs had nationalist motivations and aimed at restoring their position as politically active participants in Palestinian society. Three operations in 2002 (Wafa Idris, Dareen Abu Aysheh and Ayat Al Akhras) managed to open up new spaces for women's participation on the nationalist front and women were indeed accepted as active participants in the military struggle. On a religious level, these three female martyrdom operations represented a significant challenge to the interpreted religious notions of women's political participation in relation to

contemporary Islamic discourse of martyrdom and warfare. A fourth operation (Hanadi Jaradat, 2003) was carried out on behalf of the Islamic Jihad Movement, which justified her operation also from a religious point of view.

Finally, Laura Copier builds on Elizabeth Castelli, who characterises the discourse on martyrdom as highly ambivalent, yet persistent and powerful to this day and age, evaluating martyrdom as 'an idea without a precise origin' (Castelli, 2004, p. 35). Because it is both impossible and unproductive to pinpoint the exact historical moment in which martyrdom came into existence, Copier focuses, with Castelli, on the ongoing manifestations of martyrdom, in particular on the sustained investigation of contemporary, popular, and secular representations of martyrdom. The discourse of martyrdom is so powerful precisely because of its adaptability and, critically, the transformation of the object that it allows. It is not just the concept of martyrdom that is not fixed; it also causes related discourses to change. One of those discourses is Hollywood cinema, and its representations of gender and the body in female action heroes. Castelli's 'culture making' dimensions of martyrdom that 'depend upon repetition and dynamics of recognition' are played out, as Copier shows, in the female character of Imperator Furiosa (Charlize Theron) in the 2015 film Mad Max Fury Road. Through a close reading of the film's genre, narrative, and iconography, Copier argues that the female action hero Furiosa is able to transcend and destabilise the equation of martyrdom with death. <>

BHAGAVAD GITA: A NEW VERSE TRANSLATION by Stanley Lombardo. Introduction and Afterword by Richard H. Davis [Hackett Publishing Company, 9781624667886]

Stanley Lombardo's new verse translation of the most famous free-standing sequence from the great Indian epic *The Mahabharata* hews closely to the meaning, verse structure, and performative quality of the original and is invigorated by its judicious incorporation of key Sanskrit terms in transliteration, for which a glossary is also provided.

The translation is accompanied by Richard H. Davis' brilliant Introduction and Afterword. The latter, "Krishna on Modern Fields of Battle," offers a fascinating look at the illuminating role the poem has played in the lives and struggles of a few of the most accomplished figures in recent world history.

Review

"Lucid, detailed, and erupting with fearsome visions, the *Bhagavad Git*a has baffled English-language translators for 250 years. Stanley Lombardo is the first to recognize that at its root the Sanskrit *Gita* was oral performance. Beyond word and meaning, past nuance or doctrine, Lombardo restores the archaic tradition of voice and conch shell. When you read this edition aloud the hair on your neck will stand up. Add a drum and it's a performance. A grand old culture comes to life. Both essays by Richard Davis are superb, placing the *Gita* in historical context, back then, and more recently."
—Andrew Schelling, *Naropa University*. Author of *Love and the Turning Seasons: India's Poetry of Spiritual & Erotic Longing*

"Lombardo's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* is smooth, clear, and accurate with a keen poetic sensibility. Davis' Introduction fully places the *Gita* in its narrative context [and his] Afterword introduces fascinating contemporary applications of the *Gita*. This is truly a new state-of-the-art *Bhagavad Gita* version. Lombardo captures the colloquial quality of Barbara Stoler Miller's translation

while retaining key Sanskrit words (unlike Miller's version) which are glossed in the glossary. The low price makes this especially attractive as a version to adopt for university courses. [T]his version is a great contribution to the study of the *Bhagavad Gita*."
—H. Talat Halman, Department of Religion, Central Michigan University

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The popularity of the Bhagavad Gita has grown enormously in India over the past century and a half. In the early twentieth century,

leaders of the struggle against British colonial power like Aurobindo Ghosh, B. G. Tilak, and Mohandas Gandhi took the Gita as a key Sanskrit work and utilized it to present their own programs for gaining independence and forming a new nation of Indian citizens. Myriad translations into every modern vernacular language of India and inexpensive editions by popular presses like the aptly named Gita Press have made the work easily available to a mass readership far greater than was ever the case before. Public recitations and expositions of the Gita by religious teachers are regular events in cities and towns throughout India. Modern interpreters adopt Krishna's principles in modern fields of endeavor, such as sports, business, and management. Indian political figures regularly praise the work, and some have proposed that the Bhagavad Gita be declared the "national scripture" of India (forgetting the fact that India is a constitutionally secular republic). It is clear that Krishna's hope that his sacred dialogue with Arjuna on the battlefield at Kurukshetra would be studied and recited by others in later times has come to fruition.

Stanley Lombardo's new translation of the Bhagavad Gita continues Krishna's hope for twenty-first-century English-speaking readers. He follows a long legacy of transmitters reaching back to legendary Sanjaya and Vyasa, and of English-language Gita translators starting with Charles Wilkins and Kashinatha Bhattacharya. Through translations, Krishna is still speaking. As a classicist and a noted translator of Greek epics, Lombardo combines a scholar's concern for accurate fidelity with a poet's sensitivity to sound and rhythm. We cannot really know what Krishna and Arjuna would sound like if they were to be reincarnated on some modern American Kurukshetra. But this translation perhaps can give us some idea. The Bhagavad Gita is a poem embedded in a much larger poem, the Mahabharata, a war epic that is a distant Indo-European cousin to Homer's Iliad, a work central to my life as a poet-translator. When I began work on the Gita, I felt I was on familiar ground. The poem opens as the major battle of the Mahabharata is about to take place on Kurukshetra Field. It could as well be the plain of Troy, huge opposing armies drawn up for battle, with the heroes, each with their heroic epithets, lining up in their war chariots. And when Arjuna, the Gita's preeminent hero, refuses to fight, how can we not think of the great Achilles withdrawing from battle as the Iliad opens? But then of course each poem goes its own way. Achilles ignores all good counsel and fights again only to avenge the death of his beloved Patroclus. Arjuna, however, will return to do his duty in war after absorbing the lengthy moral teaching of his charioteer, Krishna, who gradually reveals himself to be the Supreme Being in all its awesome and terrifying splendor. A major part of the poetic genius of the Gita is that the urgent sense of high purpose, the epic strain that is given voice at the beginning of the poem, is sustained throughout the long and varied philosophical discourse that constitutes the poem's main body. Reproducing that voice in all its modulations has been my constant aim in this translation.

I have composed the translation in four-line stanzas that approximate the Sanskrit's quatrains' eight-syllable lines (shloka) and occasional eleven-syllable lines (trishtubh), keeping as close to the original text as I could given the differences in English and Sanskrit idiom and sentence structure. Along with accuracy, I have given close attention to readability, sensitivity to tonal range, and capturing some sense of the original's rhythmic movement. Above all I have tried to craft the verse to suit the needs of a performance text, whether as spoken word or in a musical setting.

My main departures from the text have been modification or omission of some of the numerous and often extravagant epithets of Krishna and Arjuna, which sometimes can create confusion and often serve as little more than metrical filler in the original text. As in my translations of Homeric epic,

As an illustration of some of the issues involved—versification, sentence structure, and epithets and proper names—consider shloka 2.10. Below I have provided a transliteration of the Sanskrit text with an interlinear gloss, followed by my translation.

tam uvāca hirhsikeshah
him spoke bristle-haired
þrahasann iva bhārata
about to laugh as if Bharata
senayor ubhayor madhye
of armies of both in the middle
visīdantam idam vacah
despondent this speech
Then, O Bharata, Lord Krishna,
a smile playing on his lips, spoke
to the despondent Arjuna
there between the opposing armies.

Versification: Sanskrit verse, like classical Greek and Latin verse, is based on syllable length rather than word accent as in standard English verse. A syllable is long if it contains a long vowel (marked by a macron in the sample above) or a vowel followed by two consonants. Although the syllable count is constant for each line, allowable metrical patterns vary considerably, though there is a tendency toward iambic rhythms. I have mingled trochaic and iambic tetrameter rhythms, staying close to natural English speech cadences, in my translation of the shloka quatrains, in which most of the Bhagavad Gita is composed (as well as almost all of the Mahabharata in which it is embedded). The eleven-syllable trishtubh lines, used in passages of heightened emotion and most notably in Arjuna's agitated reaction to Krishna's theophany in chapter II, are translated into loose eleven-syllable lines with alternate lines indented to indicate the shift to this verse form.

Sentence structure: Sanskrit, again like Latin and Greek, is a highly inflected language, word endings rather than word order marking grammatical functions and relationships. This allows the poet to separate, for instance, an adjective from the noun or pronoun that it modifies. In this quatrain the accusative-case adjective visidantam ("despondent") in the fourth line modifies the accusative-case pronoun tam ("him") in the first line, the delay of the adjective producing here a particular poignant effect that cannot be reproduced with natural English word order.

Epithets and proper names: Bharata (line 2) was an ancient king whose name is also applied to his descendants, including Arjuna and Dhritarashtra. Here it signifies the latter and is retained in the translation. "Bristle-haired" is an epithet of Krishna, whose proper name is used in the translation instead of the epithet for the sake of clarity.

Finally, the Bhagavad Gita contains a little over a hundred distinct proper nouns—names of heroes, deities, titles, places, and so forth. All these are identified and indexed in the Glossary. Also included in the Glossary are thirty-one technical terms (as distinct from proper names) that have been left in Sanskrit in the translation, where they are italicized: ahamkara, asat, atman, bhakti, Brahmin, buddhi, dharma, dhyana, guna, japa, jnana, kalpa, karma, kshatriya, nirvana, Om, prang, rajas, rishi, samsara, sat, sattva, shudra, soma, sutra, tamas, tat, vaishya, yoga, yogic, yuga. These terms have precise and in some cases multiple meanings that do not map neatly onto the English lexicon. Words such as yoga (which occurs over sixty times) and karma have come into English but with a narrower and somewhat different range of meanings than in the Bhagavad Gita. Leaving these terms in Sanskrit with explanations in the Glossary results in a more economical translation and an opportunity for the reader to engage with the original language. It also presents readers with a challenge. When encountering even familiar-looking italicized words in the translation, readers are thus urged to consult the Glossary and not to rely on their knowledge of how the loanword is used in everyday English. Of the Sanskrit terms retained in the translation, the most frequently occurring—and the ones readers will likely profit most from familiarizing themselves with prior to reading the poem—are dharma, guna, karma, rajas, sattva, tamas, yoga.

I would like to thank first Richard Davis for his generous and illuminating Introduction and Afterword, as well as for the many helpful suggestions to improve the translation he made as a reader for the press. I am in debt also to another, anonymous, reader for the press for encouraging comments. My thanks also to Anna Mayersohn for her help in compiling the Glossary and Index and for proofreading the entire translation. I am grateful to Mary Kirkendoll for helping me examine key passages of the translation with a close eye on the Sanskrit text, and for hosting a public reading. Brian Rak, my editor at Hackett, having seen me through many an epic as well as a few lyric productions, has my deep gratitude once again. As does my wise and patient wife, Judy Roitman, as ever.

Note on the Text
This translation is based on the Sanskrit text of Winthrop Sargeant's edition (**THE BHAGAVAD GIA**, Albany: SUNY, 1994). I have made use of this edition's lexical and grammatical notes, and I have also consulted the commentaries by R. C. Zaehner (**THE BHAGAVAD-GITA, WITH A COMMENTARY BASED ON THE ORIGINAL SOURCES**, London: Oxford University Press, 1969) and Robert Minor (**BHAGAVAD GITA: AN EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY**, New Delhi: Heritage, 1982). –Stanley Lombardo

HINDUISM BEFORE REFORM by Brian A. Hatcher [Harvard University Press, 978-0674988224]
A bold retelling of the origins of contemporary Hinduism, and an argument against the long-established notion of religious reform.
By the early eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire was in decline, and the East India Company was making inroads into the subcontinent. A century later Christian missionaries, Hindu teachers, Muslim saints, and Sikh rebels formed the colorful religious fabric of colonial India. Focusing on two early nineteenth-century Hindu communities, the Brahmo Samaj and the Swaminarayan Sampraday, and their charismatic figureheads—the "cosmopolitan" Rammohun Roy and the "parochial" Swami Narayan—Brian Hatcher explores how urban and rural people thought about faith, ritual, and gods. Along the way he sketches a radical new view of the origins of contemporary Hinduism and overturns the idea of religious reform.

HINDUISM BEFORE REFORM challenges the rigid structure of revelation-schism-reform-sect prevalent in much history of religion. Reform, in particular, plays an important role in how we think about influential Hindu movements and religious history at large. Through the lens of reform, one doctrine is inevitably backward-looking while another represents modernity. From this comparison flows a host of simplistic conclusions. Instead of presuming a clear dichotomy between backward and modern, Hatcher is interested in how religious authority is acquired and projected.

HINDUISM BEFORE REFORM asks how religious history would look if we eschewed the obfuscating binary of progress and tradition. There is another way to conceptualize the origins and significance of these two Hindu movements, one that does not trap them within the teleology of a predetermined modernity.

Review

"This ambitious book challenges some of our basic assumptions about the beginnings of modern Hinduism and our understandings of its present. Brian Hatcher bravely spans the Indian subcontinent, from Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal, to compare two foundational religious movements of the early nineteenth century. Working outside the usual framework of 'reform,' Hatcher explores the fundamental problems and possibilities of religion in early colonial modernity."—**Richard H. Davis, author of _The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography_**

"Brian Hatcher makes us radically rethink the master tropes of the study of religion. The alternatives he proposes and his delineation of the 'Empire of Reform' are of immense value to any project that has not already escaped the strictures imposed by the discourses of coloniality, modernity, and globalization."—**Leela Prasad, author of _Poetics of Conduct: Oral Narrative and Moral Being in a South Indian Town_**

"In _Hinduism Before Reform_, Hatcher engages with two important early colonial religious movements in India to argue that what we think of as 'Hinduism' is intricately involved in an 'empire of reform' bequeathed to us by the British Raj, the Enlightenment, Protestant missionaries, and Indian reformers. The result is at once radically plural, culturally provocative, and intellectually persuasive. Readers are in very good and very sure hands on every page of this sophisticated mind-bender."—**Jeffrey J. Kripal, author of _The Flip: Epiphanies of Mind and the Future of Knowledge_**

"In this major contribution to the discourse on religion and reform, Brian Hatcher spotlights two contemporaneous religious innovators in early colonial India: Rammohun Roy and Swaminarayan. The result is a splendid, nuanced reassessment of what we now call 'modern Hinduism.'"—**Paul B. Courtright, author of _Gaṇeśa: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings_**

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Excerpt: Here is a strange but telling fact: despite having emerged during the same historical moment, the histories of the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj have largely been told in isolation from each other. This is remarkable insofar as the founding figures of these two religious polities were nearly exact contemporaries: Sahajanand Swami (1781-1830) and Rammohun Roy (1772-1833). It is even more remarkable when one considers that the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj might easily lay claim to being among the most globally visible and politically consequential of Hindu organizations to have arisen during the colonial era. How is it, then, that these two contemporaneous and influential religious polities—each featuring innovative founders and striking histories—have so far been held apart in scholarship and critical reflection? Hinduism Before Reform is an attempt to answer this question.

As we shall see, the reasons for this strange oversight are anything but trivial. Instead they have to do with fundamental patterns in the developing discourse around Hinduism after the middle of the nineteenth century. Chief among these patterns were teleological constructions of religious reform and a kind of chronotopic imagining of religious progress in modern India. By this I mean to say that in the literature on religion in colonial South Asia, the Brahmo Samaj has not only been taken to represent the first and even quintessential expression of reformed Hinduism: more importantly, it has been figured as arising in the "here" of Bengal, which marks the triumphant "now" of empire in India. By contrast, the Swaminarayan Sampraday, even when it has been granted the status of a reform movement, typically falls short of the standard associated with the Brahmos; additionally, the Sampraday arose "out there" on the colonial fringe of Gujarat, a place necessarily redolent of the "back then" of medieval Hinduism.

This should make it all the more noteworthy that today there is a great deal of scholarly reflection on the "now" of a globally visible Swamina-rayan Sampraday, which is frequently taken to represent the face of confident, if not problematic, Hindu assertion. By contrast, today the Brahmo Samaj excites little critical discussion, the very invocation of its name hearkening to a bygone colonial "then," a moment around the end of the nineteenth century when it had been the Brahmos who held center stage in conversations about religion, modernity, and pluralism. Spatial and temporal contrasts such as these alert us to the operation of significant precritical judgments encoded in the chronotopes of here and now, there and then. As I hope to show, such judgments can be accepted neither as matters of fact nor as being of little import. They point instead to the persistent work of discursive constructions regarding Hinduism in modern South Asia, constructions whose work is concealed by subtle sleights of hand. The goal of Hinduism Before Reform is to argue that, once we pick up on the trick, we realize there is no good reason to continue treating the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj in isolation from each other. To the contrary, there are compelling reasons to examine them within a single analytical frame.

Surprisingly, efforts were made in this direction as early as the third decade of the nineteenth century, when colonial observers on the ground in western India—intrigued by the work of Sahajanand Swami—began to compare him with Rammohun Roy, whose name by that time was already widely known. When these early observers compared the two figures, they did so under the rubric of reform. Since that time, the term has borne immense—if unstable and precarious—weight in colonial discourse about Hinduism. In due course I plan to revisit these early conversations about

Sahajanand and Rammohun, since they can be used to highlight ambiguities that would come to plague thinking about religious reform in modern South Asia. What bears noting at present is that, in the particular context of early colonial Gujarat, it proved possible for Britons to view the Swaminarayan Sampraday as a model of viable religious reform. Only later, as the century progressed, would such a verdict become less obvious. Thanks to the increasingly Bengal-centric character of late-colonial literature on Hindu reform movements in India, early comparative conversations about Sahajanand and Ram-mohun would be forgotten, and it would be the Brahmo Samaj that came to epitomize progressive reform.

This pattern of shifting assessments is a reminder of how important it is for us to review the history of our own second-order reflection on religious change in colonial India and to then begin the task of developing new analytical frameworks to support other kinds of conclusions about the history of modern Hinduism. Hinduism Before Reform attempts this task by focusing on the period of the first constitution of the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj, a period I refer to as the era of the early colonial modern (ca. 1750-1850).2 Careful attention to the character of early colonial modernity allows us to decouple the story of these two polities from the dominant narratives about religious reform, empire, and even the Indian nation that were to coalesce during the late colonial moment.

Precisely to avoid repeating or ratifying those dominant narratives about modern Hinduism, I have chosen to treat the Swaminarayan Sam-praday and the Brahmo Samaj as religious polities rather than as religious reform movements. The category of the modern religious reform movement is too closely structured in terms of judgments about true and false religion; it presupposes a guiding narrative about modernity that makes it difficult for us to think anew about developments taking place during the early colonial moment. In the concept of religious polity we have a category that is both normatively neutral and yet also analytically precise enough to allow us to think anew about what figures like Saha-janand and Rammohun accomplished at the earliest juncture of the premodern and the modern.

That the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj were in time forcefully drawn into developing discourse about reform and modernity is undeniable. Indeed, one of the goals of Hinduism Before Reform is to suggest how this happened and with what ramifications. To do this I propose to speak of the empire of reform, my own shorthand for the steady imposition, under the conditions of late colonial modernity, of normative discourse about religion, especially as such discourse supported the interests of the British imperial project in South Asia. Once they were encompassed by the empire of reform, these two early colonial religious polities were to become exemplars of two contrasting historical trajectories—one that spoke to the tenacious grip of tradition and the other to the promise of reason, progress, and freedom. Lost in such late colonial figurings of the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj were opportunities for contemplating all that they shared at the time of their first emergence; and lost too were alternatives for thinking about the place of religion in modern and contemporary India. Hinduism Before Reform seeks to recover such opportunities and to propose some alternatives.

Rethinking Crisis

As an exercise in exiting from familiar narrative frameworks, the critical task undertaken in this book carries obvious risks, not least the possibility of distorting, oversimplifying, or misrepresenting matters. So much has been written about religion in modern India that to trace it all to the problem of reform could easily seem not just reductive but simply wrongheaded. After all, if we focus resolutely on the problem of reform, are we not likely to overlook countless other themes and fault

lines within the modern discourse around religion? Furthermore, if the goal is to rescue these two polities from the discursive clutches of reform, does success carry the risk that we might overlook meaningful dimensions of modern religious life highlighted within stories of religious progress and improvement? Finally, do we wish to turn a blind eye to the limitations or achievements of either polity merely to avoid invoking the values of reform? Are we prepared to topple Rammohun from his pedestal or to elevate Sahajanand to new heights in search of what might be a set of false equivalences?

These are all valid concerns and will need to be borne in mind as we proceed. I would say that the risks invoked here are mitigated in part by the sheer unlikelihood that we will succeed in disabusing ourselves from thinking in terms of reform. The roots go deep, not merely in South Asia but even more so in the structure of modern thought regarding religion. And we will surely find it useful in certain contexts and at certain times to invoke familiar narratives and the norms they enshrine; it is unlikely we will succeed in proving a new paternity for modern India. But if Rammohun and reform are likely to remain synonymous no matter what is accomplished here, it may be that by decoupling both his story and Sahajanand's from the yoke of reform we will gain new insights into the construction of religious worlds during a vital time in South Asian history. To bring the process of such world construction into view, however, we will need to strike at some of the load-bearing beams of reform-based discourse. This is just another way of saying we need to render Rammohun and Sahajanand homeless if we are to find in their work new ways to narrate religious modernity in South Asia.

Nussbaum's book reveals just how many load-bearing beams it takes to hold up the discourse of South Asian religious reform: progress, freedom, sect, cult, renaissance, and national awakening, to name but a few. Though it is signaled by the title of her book, one of the less visible supports in Nussbaum is the trope of crisis. One might even say that the story of reform has crisis built into it; its narrative arc presumes a reformer who confronts the challenge of getting over some cusp, overcoming a hurdle, or moving things forward against manifest resistance. Reform rests on the need for negotiating the precarious cusp. We have already seen how Sahajanand's legacy has fared when viewed in terms of the cusp of modernity. By many accounts he failed to weather the crisis of liberal faith, that inner battle for emancipation of the self that is supposed to be mirrored in an outer struggle to build forms of community that honor freedom and autonomy. But the liberal dream creates other kinds of crises, not least insofar as the desire for autonomy routinely runs afoul of the demand to honor difference. Both India and the United States struggle to find political solutions to address the proper place of religion in relation to the pursuit of public good. Nussbaum's answer is to offer Shantiniketan in place of Bartlett, but as we have seen, her decision to pry open the doors of one purported cult set the group's autonomy and the autonomy of its members at a discount.

Does Bartlett have to yield to Shantiniketan? Is there another way to approach this problem? My attempt is to develop the category of religious polity as tool for thinking about the early history of the Swaminarayan Sampraday and the Brahmo Samaj as a first step toward revisiting the larger crisis of reform. The key lies in approaching these two polities as types of association framed in relation to modes of ruling authority and guiding institutional norms—associations to which adherents subscribe out of choice and which themselves remain always open to negotiating a new kind of standing within a larger scale of religious forms. I hope to demonstrate that, approaching along these lines, we can find important new ways to compare the first emergence of these polities. I also believe that making a new beginning in this way—thinking about these polities before invoking reform—may direct us toward new paths for confronting challenges around the place of religion in India today, even if that task ultimately exceeds the scope of the present book. For now it is enough to signal how, from

within the logic of reform, it must always appear as if the worlds of the Swaminarayanis and Brahmos are at odds with each other, as the ethnic challenges the universal, the communal resists the public, the world of ritual contends with a higher kind of wisdom. But is it right that such normative antinomies as these should continue to frame thinking about modern Hinduism? Is there no way out of this bind?

When operating in crisis mode, the custodians of modernity remain on the lookout for the kinds of trysts, covenants, or compacts that Hindus are led to make with political power. The threat of betrayal is always in the air. Nussbaum herself worries that the key "Tagorean capacities" of critical engagement, global imagination, and empathy tend to go up in smoke when confronted by the red-hot ideology of zealots in search of political power. But her own preference for Brahmo universalism blinds her to the fact that Brahmos have deployed and benefited from political power along their own path to cultural hegemony. This was already evident from David Kopf's early study of the Brahmo bourgeoisie and has only been amplified by a generation of scholars working in the wake of postcolonial and subaltern studies. The Brahmo role in shaping the modern liberal nation-state allowed that particular socioeconomic and cultural group to bypass significant engagement with the injustices and inequalities of caste, gender, and community.

Once we commit to approaching these two communities as religious polities, there will be no way to avoid addressing the dynamics of power and authority as they contributed to the earliest constitution of either the Swaminarayan Sampraday or the Brahmo Samaj. Instead of treating the latter as the baseline against which deviations from true Hindu thought and practice should be measured, by placing both within a comparative framework informed by an analytic of religious polity we equip ourselves to offer a more balanced assessment of both historical origin and contemporary legacy. To my mind, there is at least a small hope that by revising our scripts in this way—away from reliance on the logic of reform—we may provide a route for Hindus themselves to escape the constraints of modern characterizations of Hinduism.

By design, this book has more to say on the topic of historical origins than on the contemporary scene. When it comes to the question of origins, my strategy is to think in terms of what we notice before we begin invoking the logic and tropes of reform. Earlier I spoke of engaging in an act of critical postponement, and that is the goal of Hinduism Before Reform: to make sure we don't begin with a vision of the past that gestures toward a predetermined future, whether in terms of modern Hinduism or of the proper place of religion in contemporary India. For this reason, in what follows I plan to hunker down in the period between 1750 and 1850, paying closest attention to the critical period from 1780 to 1830 when Sahajanand and Rammohun projected their mastery over innovative new religious polities. Only in the final two chapters do I turn to the gradual rise of the empire of reform and its critical legacy in determining subsequent reflection on modern and contemporary Hinduism. <>

The Politics of Historical Thinking Series edited by Brigitta Bernet, Lutz Raphael, and Benjamin Zachariah

Historical thinking has a politics that shapes its ends. While at least two generations of scholars have been guided into their working lives with this axiom as central to their profession, it is somewhat of a paradox that historiography is so often nowadays seen as a matter of intellectual choices operating outside the imperatives of quotidian politics, even if the higher realms of ideological inclinations or historiographical traditions can be seen to have played a role. The politics of historical thinking, if acknowledged at all, is seen to belong to the realms of nonprofessional ways of the instrumentalisation of the past.

This series seeks to centre the politics inherent in historical thinking, professional and non-professional, promoted by states, political organisations, 'nationalities' or interest groups, and to explore the links between political (re-)education, historiography and mobilisation or (sectarian?) identity formation. We hope to bring into focus the politics inherent in historical thinking, professional, public or amateur, across the world today. <>

AFTER THE LAST POST: THE LIVES OF INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY by Benjamin Zachariah [The Politics of Historical Thinking, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 9783110638707]

This book is about the production and consumption of history, themes that have gained in importance since the discipline's attempts to disavow its own authority with the ascendancy of postmodern and postcolonial perspectives. Several parallel themes crosscut the book's central focus on the discipline of history: its intellectual history, its historiography, and its connection to memory, particularly in relation to the need to establish the collective identity of 'nation', 'community' or state through a memorialisation process that has much to do with history, or at least with claiming a historicity for collective memory. None of this can be undertaken without an understanding of the roles that history-writing and history-reading have been made to perform in public debates, or perhaps more accurately in public disputes. The book addresses a discomfort with postcolonial theories in and as history. Following are essays that examine the state of the discipline, the art of reading and using archives, practices of tracking the history of ideas, and the themes of history, memory and identity.

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Excerpt: Afterword: Is There a Discipline to This?

Our understanding of the lives and worlds of Indian historical thinking would be pretty poorly served if it did not include material on the social, political and institutional landscapes in which historians operate, and the demands made upon them and the histories they write. This would require an account of the complexities of Indian historiographical production, the vicissitudes of the historical profession in a wider sense, and at the same time the meanings of history in the public domain in India and outside, and the (diminished?) role of professional historians or histories in public arguments.

Historiography is usually written about as an internal tale of approaches, of intellectual choices or political commitments. An externalist and contextual approach would have to include the politics of the spaces and zones of engagement it inhabited. That would of course need to account for the

banality of everyday academic life, an Alltagsgeschichte of machinations, of the awarding and sustaining of professorial chairs at universities, rigged jobs, collusive funding and collusive footnoting, the selective inclusion of subservient minorities and many other such unsavoury episodes that are systemic problems of academic life. If we have indeed adopted a power/knowledge approach (whose discursive hegemony must seem at least partly ironic to the Foucauldians among us), the workings of institutions, their evolution, their functioning and their histories, as well as the collective biographies of historians working in them, should be up for scrutiny. This, I think, is both in opposition to and a logical continuation of the identitarian arguments made for and against the speaking or writing voices of historians that this book has concerned itself with in large measure; for if we are not to reduce public utterances to the identitarian (or youdentitarian) identifications of the speaker or writer, a more contextualised understanding of how disciplines and institutions work is required. This understanding has to be more than a game of guessing victimhood affiliations from names or assumed origins of individuals.

For now, however, this is a programmatic statement rather than a history that has been or is being written. Academic disciplines claim the right of a self-regulating corporation, and the claiming of that autonomy is based on the right to self-regulate, itself derived from the feudal idea of being "judged by one's peers". Historians, to take our current disciplinary example, are a corporation for itself, though not in itself. Therefore, they are less and less accountable to anyone outside. That was perhaps precisely the point once, when universities emerged as distinctive institutions in the twelfth century — the need to maintain autonomy from the domains of feudalism (even as universities were largely modelled in their internal organisation on feudal hierarchies), or from absolute monarchs and arbitrary laws; however, the need therefore to maintain robust self-criticism systems, not in some diluted Maoist sense, but in a better and more honest fashion, is ever greater and has not been observed, seriously reducing the weight the profession of historians can have as a body operating in the public domain. The social capital of historians is shrinking in value. In an analogy that we can draw from the world of companies and shares, the expectation of future value is seriously damaged by a perception that mismanagement of its own affairs has damaged a corporate entity. And in the world of markets and futures, this is what has become crucial for the profession of historians.

In the world outside academia, claims to history remain crucial in the public domain. Present day Indian situations such as the vanishing of characters of historical importance from textbooks,' or the engineering of mob action around the alleged "historical" misrepresentation in a film of a character that was fictional in the first place,' or of Indian editions of "controversial" books being edited, censored or banned, might be more obviously a caricature of history (and it is true that every time the Hindu right has had a smell of power they have attempted to edit or censor historical texts), but the profession as a whole, which is a far larger entity than "historians of India", no longer has any common standards to which to hold its own members, let alone to explain themselves to members of the public.

Meanwhile, historical framing and public controversy appear to collude over the necessity of avoiding "insults to groups". Groups seek legitimation by asking to be represented as part of the "freedom struggle" or "national movement" or even the "Great Revolt of 1857" — "we were there too" becomes a model for political legitimation through history, with the "we" projected back in time. History has a purpose as direct justification for present day problems or solutions. States can base their actions on events allegedly associated with Vedic or Mughal or Maratha times and seek retrospective revenge or justification, on the basis of the assumption that the past is a guide to the future, and of course the present. The counterarguments do not for the most part attack this basic principle of arguing from historical (instrumentalised) narrative to present day political imperative,

arguing instead (from counter-instrumentalised "history") that the past was not quite as depicted, and therefore the present and future were different too.

A persistent question lingers on about the role of history in the public domain and the role of historians as "experts" who "tell the truth"; another is the question of whether and when it was important for the right to attack this more or less widely held view of "objectivity" as much as it was for the identitarian "left" to do so. The right in India, being from a former colony and therefore able to claim victimhood generically, was of course able to draw on versions of PoCo and PoMo as they emerged (long before the "white" identitarianism of the 2000s and 2010s), and even more so as it became an obligatory language of academic legitimacy that had resonances in the public domain outside academia. PoMo was useful to destabilise truth-claims, and PoCo was useful to sustain or to invent an indigenist narrative, versions of which were already available.

None of this challenged the dominance of an undifferentiated idea of nationalism in Indian historiographical production — the assumption that history would serve the "nation-building" (or more accurately state-building) process remained untouched, because there has not been an anti-state or non-statist historiography of India. Historical thinking can therefore only provide different versions of nationalism and different fantasies of state power.

How does one historicise the present in historiographical terms? How does one look at the uses of history in the present? Does one examine the truth-claims of those uses? Does one instead or additionally look at what claims are being made with history? And does one intervene by destabilising the truth-claims of the public uses of history, and/or by examining each claim for its mechanisms of exclusion, its political potential for danger? Have we to fight back against thirty-odd years of resolute opposition to truth-as-"closure" and celebration of subjectivities as "postcolonial" self-assertion? Who is this "self" anyway?

Are we surprised then that we cannot hold a "public" in general to standards of historical thinking that are recognisable in the profession, when the profession cannot recognise or agree on such standards? What is our view of whether or how we communicate with an audience outside of the profession itself? And given our own fragmentation into specialisations, interest groups, self-perpetuating cliques, however you wish to describe it, can we even talk to one another?

To what extent does one take one's public duties seriously? Does one stand forth (or pose) as "public intellectual" or retreat to a quietism that protects self, income and family? How do we deal with self-censorship by intellectuals — what should we stop saying so as not to endanger ourselves — before the law, before the regime and its organisations of violence? How far does that go — do we start examining our names themselves to ask whether we can "pass" as the mainstream (in India, appearance is an unreliable guide to religion or caste, but it serves as a shortcut: beards can be dispensed with, but what does someone from Shillong or Kohima who allegedly does not fit the general idea of what an "Indian" looks like do as a defence mechanism)? There used to be an old adage, or perhaps a slogan: demand democracy where there is none, point out its limitations where democracy exists and point out the democratic critiques of forms of actually existing democracy. How would that translate into historical thinking when hard or soft teleologies of "Mera Bharat Mahaan" (My India is Great") dominate public debates and silence other voices? And how would the accommodation of those other voices happen without descending into victimhood narratives that are allegedly empowering?

But perhaps the larger, and prior, question is: have we anything to say at all? As professionals? As we flail around with analogies, teleologies, genealogies and slogans, perhaps we should figure out that

the creation of appropriate and appropriable histories for often very instrumental political purposes will take place regardless of whether it is endorsed or not by "the profession", which of course is an idealised creature that does not exist. The answer to the question of how far we resist this or collude in it might be the last remaining way of not abandoning our posts. <>

KNOWING GOD: IBN 'ARABI AND ABD AL-RAZZAQ AL-QASHANI'S METAPHYSICS OF THE DIVINE by Ismail Lala [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Brill, 9789004400511]

"Can we know God or does he reside beyond our ken? In Ibn 'Arabi and 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani's Metaphysics of the Divine, Ismail Lala conducts a forensic analysis of the nature of God and His interaction with creation. Looking mainly at the exegetical works of the influential mystic, Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), and one of his chief disseminators, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani (d. 736/1335?), Lala employs the term huwiyya, literally "He-ness," as an aperture into the metaphysical worldview of both mystics. Does Al-Qashani agree with Ibn 'Arabi's conception of God? Does he agree with Ibn 'Arabi on how God relates to us and how we relate to Him? Or is this where Sufi master and his disciple part ways?"

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1 Introduction

"Is God apophatic or kataphatic, according to Mu?yi al-Din ibn `Arabi?" This was the first question I was asked at a medical ethics conference by a complete stranger who had discovered my doctoral study was to do with the ubiquitous Sufi. Notwithstanding the abrupt nature of the enquiry, or perhaps because of it, I felt vindicated, for my research addressed this very issue through analysis of the term huwiyya (literally, He-ness or ipseity). But, in so doing, it also followed advice I was given during my first lecture: "Most of you will not make it in academia," our professor announced rather matter-of-factly, "for those of you who do, pick a guy." A question and a guy—these, then, are the twin pillars upon which is constructed the edifice of my research. My question: What is the true nature of God? My guy: `Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani (d. 736/1335?), a disciple of the enigmatic Sufi theorist, Mu?yi al-Din ibn `Arabi (d. 638/1240). So, technically, there are two guys, but one has to go through the master to get to the disciple.

This work is about the Sufism of Ibn `Arabi and one of the chief disseminators of his thought, al-Qashani, specifically. But it is also about mysticism, generally, and the way we perceive God, and the manner in which He interacts with us and we with Him. With articles devoted to him numbering in the thousands, commentaries on the Fu?u? al-?ikam alone in the hundreds, and translations in the scores, Ibn `Arabi surely is, and has been, one of the most widely read and studied mystics of all time. His style is so tightly honeycombed with preciosity and involutions that it has at once enamoured and beguiled all who have had the good fortune, and bad luck, to stumble upon it.

So what sets this work apart from its precursors? For the answer, we must reconnect with our two acquaintances: the idea—a detailed analysis conducted from primary texts on a single term that is conspicuously emblematic of his "monism," and which is scrupulously contextualized in Ibn `Arabi's two most enduringly popular works, the Fu?u? and the Futu?at; and the guy—al-Qashani,who Toshihiko Iztusu inhis seminal work, Sufism and Taoism, relies on more than Ibn `Arabi himself to elucidate his Sufi Weltanschauung. The former adheres to the Joycian maxim that in the particular is contained the universal, and is a window that no one has yet peeked through; the latter a lacuna that no one has yet filled.

The Meeting

He asked me, "Yes?" I replied, "Yes." His satisfaction with me grew on account of my comprehending him. Then, when I became cognizant of his being delighted by that, I disclosed to him, "No." Crestfallen, his color changed. He began to doubt what he had learned. He inquired, "How have you found the matter to be through spiritual unveiling (kashf) and divine outpouring (al-fay? al-ilahi), is it the same as what we have been bequeathed by speculative thought (na?ar)?" "Yes-no," I answered, "and between yes and no, spirits take flight from their matter and necks from their bodies." He grew pale, a tremor seized him. "There is no strength nor power but in God," (la ?awla wa la quwwa illa bi-Allah) he spluttered, sitting down. He understood to what I was alluding by that.

A decisive meeting: the renowned philosopher—Abu?l-Walid Mu?ammad ibn A?mad ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198)—and the young upstart mystic—Mu?yi al-Din ibn `Arabi, speculative thought and spiritual unveiling, yes and no. Yes, perhaps there is no better place to start our journey on knowing God than with this anecdote. No, the journey will not be smooth. After all, the liminal topography we seek to navigate compels spirits to "take flight from their matter and necks from their bodies." The reason this passage—one of the most well-known and oft-cited of the Futu?at—furnishes us with a most apposite point of departure is that in it Ibn `Arabi confronts the dichotomy of the innate human need for knowledge of God and His ultimate apophasis, the path that can be traversed but

the destination that cannot be reached. This is the distance between yes and no. This, according to Ibn `Arabi, is truly knowing God.

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> Kalam ... called itself: ?ilm u?ul ad-din. As with the disputatio of medieval Scholasticism, the muna?ara was one of the chief techniques of learning and research for the kalam (as for the filth too); and it is this, again as in the case of Scholasticism, that gave it its characteristic form of expression.

But al-Qashani, it seems, was less interested in his students learning via disputation and more in their possessing the "skill and speed of reaction" required to triumph. This being the case, his works needed to be easy to learn; comprehensible, even to those not well-acquainted with Ibn ?Arabi's thought; and concise enough to deal a devastating blow in a public disputation.

The first of these, memorization, was "pervasive in all fields." However, though "memorization involved great quantities of materials, their understanding, and their retention through frequent repetition at close intervals of time," a multi-volume work like the Futu?at would overwhelm even the most assiduous student. Works had to be reasonable in length, as the lexicons of al-Qashani and the Ta?wilat are, with texts that could be recalled in battle promptly, as Makdisi explains:

The "Art of the humanist secretary" was as impregnated with it as was the "Art of the scholastic disputant;" that is to say that both humanism and scholasticism were based on the ability of memorizing great stores of materials, so classified, ordered and disposed in the memory as to enable their adepts, in the moment of need, to retrieve them instantly.

Al-Qashani, in his introduction to the Ta?wilat, may be insinuating that, among other things, he intends his work to be learned and retrieved in such a scenario. He writes,

> I began to draft on these pages that which may allow (yasma?) the mind (al-kha?ir) to [proceed to] the path of agreement (sabil al-ittifaq), without roaming thirstily for the rest of the commentary, nor plunging into the abyss of the look-out points which are too vast to be determined, while respecting the organization and arrangement of the book. [I have also] not returned to that which is repeated in it or that which is similar in approach. And I have essentially not mentioned everything that, in my opinion, does not accept, or does not need a ta'wil.

His purpose in authoring the Ta'wilat, remarks al-Qashani, is that it would allow people to reach "the path of agreement (sabil al-ittifaq)" without the need to roam "thirstily for the rest of the commentary," perhaps because the sample given during the disputation would be enough. The propitiative motive for this work is emblematic of al-Qashani's personality generally, which was so conciliatory that he did not even retaliate when al-Simnani hastily proclaimed him to be an apostate for believing in oneness of being (wahdat al-wujud) before confessing he had not researched the concept in much detail. Indeed, he was known to be the epitome of gentle grace, and was polite to a fault, even to his most inveterate opponents.

Al-Qashani makes the work concise intentionally, without "plunging into the sibly so that it would be easy to memorize and understand. Length not being the only determining factor in such works, the Fusus, though shorter than the Ta'wilat, would—one imagines—have been far less effective in a disputation than the works of al-Qashani. This is because it is convoluted and extremely erudite so that even if the student understood it, the opponent may not, and even if he did, it is not succinct enough to defeat the adversary in a limited time.

This brings us to the second factor: comprehensibility, for if there is one aspect of al-Qashani's work that almost everyone seems to agree on, it is that it is simpler and much more intelligible than that of his master. The primary reason for this is naturally to facilitate the comprehension of students, for "memorization, not meant to be unreasoning rote learning, was reinforced with intelligence and understanding,"108 and al-Qashani fostered this understanding through his numerous lexicons and uncomplicated style. But it may also be because the comprehension of the rival is required as a decisive victory cannot be claimed unless and until the competitor understands they have lost. This could be why al-Qashani does not include in the Ta?wilat everything he knows; rather, he restricts himself to what the student, or perhaps the disputant, needs. In his words,

> I do not claim that I have reached the limit [of meanings] in what I mentioned. Nay, for the facets of comprehension are not restricted to what I have understood, and the knowledge of God is not confined to what I know. Nevertheless, my understanding is not restricted to what I have mentioned in it.

Al-Qashani comments that, not only is there much more to the mystical exegesis of the Qur?an than he knows, but that he has not even included everything he knows for the sake of brevity and concision. Another reason al-Qashani may have omitted so much, as we have noted, is because he only included what was required by his audience, the neophytes and uninitiated. He concedes that, in trying to weed out repetition, he may have favored some verses over others, but maintains that he has kept clear of far-fetched interpretations, as this would be antithetical to the ethos of the school. Or as he puts it,

> And that which could not be esoterically interpreted of the exoteric ordinances, intended to be exoteric, I did not interpret esoterically except a little so that it may be known that they may be understood thus and [the meaning of] analogous verses could be thus inferred for one who goes beyond the exoteric. There is no escape from arbitrariness, and the mark of virtue is forsaking farfetched [esoteric meanings].

Here he intimates that in his work there are lessons on esoteric interpretation for those who attain a sufficient spiritual understanding so that they may conduct such an exegesis themselves. He continues in the same vein:

> Perhaps someone other than me following guidance will be directed to better aspects [of interpretation], for that is easy for those who are individual servants [of God]. And for each word of God, the Exalted, are [so many words] that seas would run dry before they are exhausted. So how can they be restricted and enumerated? But [this] is a sample (anmudhaj) for the people of spiritual tasting (dhawq) and ecstasy (wijdan) which they may imitate when they recite the Qur'an so that its hidden knowledge may be unveiled for them in accordance with their preparedness, and its secrets of the unseen may be revealed to them in accordance with their capacity.

Al-Qashani announces that the Ta?wilat is "a sample (anmudhaj) for the people of spiritual tasting (dhawq) and ecstasy (wijdan)." In other words, it is a sample for spiritual neophytes, one they can use as a point of departure for their own gnosis, and it is a sample for them through which they could potentially debate with the uninitiated and defend the school. Both of al-Qashani's aims are here declared: to teach mystical novices about Ibn `Arabi's metaphysics and to enable them to carry out a defense of his teachings.

Al-Qashani was simultaneously a propagator of Ibn `Arabi's thought and a bulwark against the relentless vituperation that descended upon it, not just from exotericists, like Ibn Taymiyya, but from the powerful and politically connected Kubrawi order, of which the mighty al-Simnani was a prominent proponent, as well as the ?afawi order. The disciple of Ibn `Arabi seems to have fashioned himself as an anti-Simnani alternative. Al-Simnani, who saw the incipient threat of Ibn `Arabi's

monism as compromising divine transcendence, waged all out war against the doctrine of oneness of being. His idea of "varying degrees of divine self-manifestation ... through intermediaries" is pitted squarely against the Andalusian's monist thought. Al-Qashani seems to have taken al-Simnani's most influential work, his commentary on the Qur'an entitled Tafsir najm al-qur?an, and reversed the formula. Although both commentaries have a conspicuous pedagogical and didactic character, al-Simnani champions the primacy of direct master-disciple contact while al-Qashani seems to instruct the autodidact in absentia. Al-Simnani views the perfection of the subtle substance of I-ness (al-latifa al-ana'iyya) as the main result of mystical realization; al-Qashani regards I-ness as a main impediment to it. Al-Simnani sees oneness of being as a thoroughfare to and a conduit for antinomianism; al-Qashani considers it an invitation to focus on orthopraxy. Ta'wilat al-Qur'an may consequently be seen as the antithesis of and an antidote for Tafsir najm al-qur'an, which was commenced some 20 years before, though the exact completion date is unknown.

The foregoing attempts to explain why in al-Qashani's works his methodology, his style and his content vary so widely from his master; why he is so reticent to explore all the meanings of huwiyya even though he clearly subscribes to them; why he bowdlerizes and expurgates Ibn `Arabi's metaphysics; and why he modifies Ibn `Arabi's thought. It is because his audience was different, and because his purpose was different. This is not to suggest that all al-Qashani has achieved is the production of a sanitized and simplified conceptual outlook of Ibn `Arabi's thought. It is indeed sanitized and simplified, but in emphasizing the uncontroversial aspects of Ibn `Arabi's thought and accentuating the pedagogical facet of the Fusus and the Futuhat, al-Qashani forges a new worldview as well. This new conceptual outlook is the cumulative effect of all the small changes, additions and omissions al-Qashani makes to Ibn `Arabi's Weltanschauung, thereby creating a metaphysics that is not only faithful to his Sufi master, but also one more in keeping with the spirit of his time.

Al-Qashani's world, though one of more religious tolerance in general, appears more restrictive in terms of the acceptance of Ibn `Arabi's ideas. Indeed, we know that al-Qashani was fending off attacks, not only from exoteric scholars, some of whom anathematized him, but also from powerful Sufi orders generally, and prominent Sufis specifically. The Andalusian, conversely, enjoyed widespread celebrity and renown in his final years. Al-Suyuhi lists scores of masters in the traditional sciences of hadith, fiqh and tafsir who approved of Ibn `Arabi during this period in Damascus. Many of these traditional scholars even considered the Sufi to be the pole (qutb) of his era. Ibn `Arabi could therefore afford to be daring, vibrant and even a little reckless. He could afford to direct his works solely to the Sufi adepts and obscure it for everyone else.[This does not mean, of course, that Ibn `Arabi's impetus for the generation of the Fusus and Futuhat was not his spiritual unveiling. These works were the product of his gnosis, but their flagrant and intellectual articulation was the product of the celebrity and acceptance he enjoyed in his final years. (See Jalal al-Din al-Suyu?i, Tanbih al-ghabi.)] Al-Qashani had no such luxury. In a new world of suspicion and cynicism towards Ibn `Arabi's ideas, of many exoteric and Sufi detractors, and few allies, he had to assume the mantle of defender and educator. And it is around these two objectives that all his works orbit. This meant that his works had to be instructive and succinct, they had to be faithful to the school but uncontroversial, they had to encapsulate the major tenets of Ibn `Arabi's highly abstruse thought but be simple enough for a beginner. With all these demands, walking along the slenderest of tightropes, al-Qashani produced his lexicons and the Ta'wilat, and if it does not meet all the above criteria, it certainly comes close.

Of many exoteric and Sufi detractors, and few allies of Ibn `Arabi' may be gleaned fromal-Qashani's letter toal-Simnani. (See above.) Also, if al-Qashani was moved to defend al-An?ari against an attack by Ibn Taymiyya by the composition of a commentary on his work (see above), he would, afortiori,

defend Ibn `Arabi against an even more vicious and sustained attack by the same. (Wan Abdullah, "Herawi's Concept of taw?id," 98.) It must be stated that the dates of completion of the extant copies of al-Qashani's commentary of Manazil al-sairin are between 728/1328? and 731/1331? which would mean it was certainly written after Ibn Taymiyya's Kitab al-taw?id. (Al-Qashani, Manazil al-sa'irin, 35.)

Furthermore, we knowthat al-Qashani's conciliatory disposition moved him to defend many of his Sufi contemporaries against accusations hurled at them by the exoteric elite. (Hadizada, Majmuát, 103.) It is entirely consonant with his character, then, that he would defend a thinker who had exerted such a profound influence on him. It is worthy of mention, too, that Manazilal-sa'irin became somewhat of a focal point during al-Qashani's era, where both exotericists and Sufis converged in order to establish the legitimacy of their viewpoint. This they achieved through commentaries that were written in light of their theological proclivities. Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751/1350), the ardent disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, for instance, uses it to relentlessly attack al-Tilimsani and his "monist" (itti?adi) interpretation of the work. (Ovamir Anjum, "Sufism without Mysticism?," 166.) Al-Qashani, being an "interpreter and defender of Ibn `Arabi" also "interpreted al-An?ari in light of Ibn `Arabi." <>

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MULLā SADRā by Seyyed Khalil Toussi [Routledge Studies in Islamic Philosophy, Routledge, 9781138807341]

Providing a comprehensive and widely accessible investigation into Mullā Ṣadrā's works, this book establishes his political philosophy and instigates a dialogue on the relevance of Ṣadrā's philosophy to present day challenges.

Investigating Ṣadrā's primary sources, the book reveals that his discourse on politics cannot be interpreted as a discursive springboard for hierocracy and political authority of jurists, nor does the mystical attitude of his philosophy (with its emphasis on the inner aspects of religion) promote an idea of quietism or a fundamental separation of religion and politics. Laying the groundwork for further translations and interpretation, this volume is not just concerned with 'political philosophy' as yet another particular and limited facet of Ṣadrā's overall system. Rather, through unifying mystical, intellectual and political aspects of this singular philosopher, the volume is concerned with properly contextualizing and understanding the guiding intentions and inspirations that unify and underlie all of his creative philosophical endeavour.

This pioneering and provocative work of genuine reflection is a new contribution to the wider subject of political philosophy. It will be of interest to researchers of political philosophy, Islamic philosophy, mysticism, theology, history and Iranian studies.

Contents

Given that the introductions and concluding passages of virtually all of Mullā Sadrā's multiple philosophical writings, at every level from the most popular to the most technical, are focused on vehement political attacks and undisguised polemics against many of the leading religio-political tendencies of his own day, the generalized neglect of his political philosophy over the past century or more can only be explained by the familiar institutional processes of scholasticization in those centres of religious learning where the analysis of his works has long been focused on the sterile repetition of a familiar set of ontological doctrines and standard metaphysical interpretations. This recent neglect of Sadrā's political thought is all the more striking when seen against the background of the often central role his philosophical writings and tendencies had played in long-running religio-political polemics throughout the earlier Qajar period, involving both the Shaykhi and Bābi movements.

In any event, as Khalil Toussi's remarkable new survey of Sadrā's political philosophy makes abundantly clear, even a cursory examination of his philosophical writings quickly reveals the elaborate attention that he pays throughout each systematic work to every essential element of political philosophy: epistemology and eschatology; practical spiritual purification; prophetology and the interplay of spiritual authority and influence (wilāyalwalāya); and the careful integration of ultimate human ends within a wider earthly framework of justice, equally attentive to social-ethical and, more explicitly, political contexts and instrumentalities. Of course, these different elements of his political philosophy are carefully scattered throughout his major independent works — just as in the classical writings of both Ibn `Arabi and Farabi, and they are most often expressed in the guise of those technical Islamic and Imami Shi`ite vocabularies that by his time had become the standard vehicles for discussing more universal philosophical consideration of politically and religiously sensitive topics. But those key rhetorical methods of `scattering', like this complexly multivalent technical religio-philosophical vocabulary, were quite familiar to educated Iranian philosophical readers and writers in his time, and they remain so, to a great extent, down to the present day.

The core of Dr Toussi's carefully documented argument in this pioneering book turns on his understanding of Sadrā's political philosophy as a fruitful intellectual marriage between the disparate but ultimately complementary perspectives of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn `Arabi — whose interplay in framing his original metaphysical theses is almost universally acknowledged — together with a providentially rediscovered political focus and emphases that are clearly drawn from several key political writings of Farabi, the Second Teacher' (of philosophy, after Aristotle). Based on the arguments developed here, Mullā Sadrā's creative and far-reaching assimilation of Farabi's centrally political focus in philosophy should eventually lead to a wider rethinking of those standard accounts of Islamic philosophy that have portrayed Farabi's serious philosophical influence in the Muslim world as largely coming to an end with the classical political philosophy articulated by Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and his followers or with the later solitary genius of Ibn Khaldun.

Toussi's comprehensive account of Sadrā's political philosophy begins with a careful description and analysis of the complex ways that classical political issues were deeply exemplified, throughout his life, in the dramatic particulars of his tumultuous historical and personal setting. As his magisterial

opening chapter makes clear, the philosophical reflections and alternative political visions articulated throughout Sadrā's writings have their background in the contemporary Safavid rulers' striving to create and effectively institutionalize a more stable political and religio-ideological framework of acceptably `legitimate' authority and popular allegiance that would help to ensure their ongoing dynastic rule amidst their dynamic, constantly turbulent Iranian setting, vis-à-vis a daunting range of conflicting regional political claims and forces, military, social and economic. Besides the shifting `external' threats (and occasional trade and diplomatic alliances) of the Ottomans, Uzbeks, Timurid/Mogul claimants, Portuguese, Russians and others, those competing potential frameworks of internal political authority and legitimacy — each representing classical alternatives throughout earlier centuries, both in that region and across the wider Muslim world — included the following key alternatives: multiple regionalized tribal alliances; momentarily powerful (but highly fragile) charismatic, semi-messianic sacred figures, both Sunni and Shi`ite — often vaguely associated with existing 'Sufi' family lineages — leading particular tribal or ethnic coalitions (as with Shah Ismail and the establishment of the Safavids themselves); and politically influential religious scholars in the region's widely scattered urban centres of learning, here including various parties of local and imported Imami Shiite scholars suddenly (in alliance with their new Safavid sponsors) violently claiming sole legitimacy in relation to the competing influence of long established local lineages of scholars and urban Sufi brotherhoods in cities like Sadrā's own native Shiraz.

Against that unstable and perilous historical backdrop — one is immediately reminded of the times of a Plato, Shakespeare or Machiavelli — Dr Toussi highlights the uniqueness and political sensitivity of Sadrā's lifelong, courageous personal distancing from the intrigues and blandishments of the Safavid court, despite his fruitful personal relations with many other famous, politically and religiously influential philosopher-theologians of Isfahan in his day. Thus Sadrā's recurrent choice of a kind of "internal exile" (from the Safavid court), focusing on the potential longer-range influence of his prolific independent writing and teaching — combined with his passionately engaged, intentionally constructive reflection and judgement of contemporary (and future) political alternatives — suggests the stance of emblematic figures like Farabi or Plato rather than the direct personal political engagement more commonly typified by such key Islamic philosopher-viziers as Avicenna, Averroes, Ibn Khaldun and Nasir al-Din Tusi.

The remaining chapters of Dr Toussi's skilful synthesis of Sadrā's political philosophy follow an order and logic familiar to any student of Farabi's political philosophy, beginning with an account of the 'final cause' of human perfection, then moving on to the broad forms of justice and ethics needed to actualize that perfection, and finally turning to the prerequisites of the ideal state and to the more practical, indispensable forms of political and religious leadership that are always needed in order to bring that philosophical vision to more active fruition. It should be emphasised — especially for the many readers of this English volume who are likely to be quite unfamiliar with Sadrā's philosophical writings, given the paucity of translations to date − that the author has provided a masterful, readily assimilated summary of Sadrā's thought at each stage of this argument. Without exaggeration, each of these chapters could (and indeed one day should) be readily expanded into a complete book of its own, simply by translating a more complete selection of the many relevant passages that are scattered throughout this philosopher's major works.

The philosophical starting point of this study, as of Sadrā's own political philosophy, lies in his widely scattered accounts of epistemology and philosophical psychology, which are expressed — in different works and contexts, for differing audiences — both in philosophical language and in a highly technical religious symbolism already fully elaborated in the voluminous earlier writings of Ibn `Arabi and his subsequent interpreters. The author has pulled together this complex yet clearly developed

account of the human soul's development and gradual perfection, spanning life in this world and further stages of growth and transformation in the intermediate spiritual realms of the barzakh, while focusing on Sadrā's complex assimilation of the spiritual perspectives of Ibn `Arabi and an immense range of earlier Sufi and Shi`ite thinkers within the familiar philosophical language and epistemology grounded in the works of Avicenna. The range of processes and practices necessarily involved in translating this broad theoretical account of spiritual psychology and epistemology into actual spiritual realisation — which Sadrā usually discusses, following his many Sufi sources here, in terms of a spiritually focused account of individual `ethics' (akhlāq) — is so complex that the author has promised a separate forthcoming volume entirely devoted to this subject.

The following chapters here on the role of justice and the ideal state in the attainment of human perfection are those in which the author most directly highlights the inspiration of Farabi's political thought and writings. He clearly shows how they provided Sadrā an essentially clarifying, explicitly universal philosophical context for issues that had previously been raised only in broader, safely remote historical settings in the classical religious writings of both Sufi thinkers (again, pre-eminently in the works of Ibn `Arabi) and early Shi`ite sources, particularly the influential collection ofNahj al-Balāgha and other writings attributed to Imam Ali.

Finally, this study concludes with an illuminating summary of Sadrā's discussion of the complex demands and prerequisites of both lawgiving (including its just interpretation and proper application) and political leadership. These are perennially sensitive and unavoidably controversial issues that Mullā Sadrā normally presents, following the deeply influential example of Avicenna, in terms of a standard normative Islamic vocabulary that had long been capable (as all of Sadrā's readers were well aware) of an immense and intensely problematic spectrum of practical interpretation and application. Since history has curiously determined that these classical issues, interpretations and vocabulary now provide again the operative rhetorical language of practical political life in contemporary Iran, the author has presented Sadrā's discussions of these key political issues largely in the philosopher's own terms, while prudently leaving it to his astute readers to apply to these open-ended religious formulations the determinative universal philosophical insights and ethical perspectives that were more openly developed in the preceding chapters. In doing so, he follows Sadrā's own example.

To sum up, discerning readers will discover in Dr Toussi's pioneering account of Sadrā's political philosophy a remarkably direct, accessible and yet provocative work of genuine philosophical reflection, which is at the same time a thorough and reliable new contribution to the wider history of Islamic philosophy. We can only hope that this groundbreaking study will open the doors to the many further tasks of translation, communication and wide-ranging interpretation that are still needed to make the perspectives of this singular thinker — with his unique and persuasively unified synthesis of spiritual, intellectual, ethical and political perspectives — more accessible to the wider, global audiences that he deserves. For as we have indicated, this volume is not just about `political philosophy' as yet another particular and limited facet of Sadrā's overall system: rather, it is about properly contextualizing and understanding the guiding intentions and inspirations that in fact unify and underlie all of his creative philosophical endeavour. James W. Morris (Boston College) November 2019

An analytical review of Sadrā's major political themes

One of the most remarkable aspects of Sadrā's politics is his unique approach to mysticism, which supported a teleological form of knowledge, whereby the true mystic is considered someone who cannot remain indifferent to worldly life in society or political issues. We named this mysticism

`positive mysticism', as it courageously negates the long ascetic tradition in Islamic mysticism and precludes any conflict between spirituality and worldly engagement.

He disapproved of those Sufis who led a reclusive life with no involvement in society. This new view of Sadrā's mysticism is a response to those who consider him an apolitical mystic-philosopher from the school of Isfahan, whose views and arguments were addressed in Chapter 3. This vision of mysticism also appeared to validate the view that Sadrā's politics can convey to the Muslim world the idea that true mysticism (al- `irfan al-haqīqi) or spirituality is not something confined to the mosque or Sufi convent but is a fundamental element of effective governorship, which makes it vital to have a spiritually inclined political ideology with refined rulers who would be able to safeguard the basic human rights of their subjects in a corrupt world.

Looking at this issue from another angle, in our modern times `real' spirituality is too often seen as a personal interior matter. This widespread contemporary view lies in the assumption that spirituality is an inner connection that somehow conflicts with religious dogmatism. This in turn follows from the modern assumption that `faith' contrasts with `reason',' based on which spirituality and faith should be a private matter as much as possible. The more faith externalises itself in concrete actions and practices, the more we see it as an archaic and dangerous expression of religion, and this quickly leads to the contemporary categorisations of 'religion' and spirituality': religion is seen as a theocentric, legalistic and politicised dogma, while spirituality and mysticism are looked upon as part of a morally legitimate quest for individual self-development.

In examining the political dimensions of Sadrā's mystical philosophy, we showed that this self-developmental approach is certainly problematic in the case of Islamic mysticism. Sadrā's transcendent politics might be considered an academic attempt to reconcile spirituality and politics, a quest for a singular explanation of reality as unity in multiplicity within everyday, phenomenal experience. This vision thus contributes to the field of Islamic mysticism by showing that, contrary to what has been commonly understood by both Muslims and non-Muslims, this understanding of mysticism is part of the religious teachings and is a spiritual aspect of Islam that should in fact be integrated with politics and the worldly matters of society.

Given this understanding of mysticism, Sadrā's politics offered a vision to politicians that their purpose should not be just to promote good in this world and prohibit evil or to implement and reinforce existing laws, since the purpose of each person — including the politician — is to purify his soul in order to rise to the next level on the scale of existence. Hence, as discussed in Chapter 7, politicians are required to have a refined soul and a certain level of spirituality. In this intellectual-spiritual aspect of politics, wisdom (hikma) combines with virtue (fala). Professional politicians or any other individuals involved in politics who have not perfected their soul cannot bring happiness to the people. The root of all arrogance, disorder, war, injustice and conflict in our world is due to the divorce of intellectuality from spirituality and faith from reason. In his discourse on leadership, Sadrā has a clear message for those jurists (fuqahā) who think they can lead an Islamic society by mastering only the formalities of religion and the divine law. Sadrā's view was that most jurists in the Islamic tradition have not provided a basis for the construction of a systematic method based upon a comprehensive understanding of Islam, through which religion, philosophy, mysticism, ethics and politics are dealt with equally in order to be in harmony with the ontic realm and divine creation. We saw overwhelming evidence that Sadrā advocated a religious state necessarily governed by a Shi`i saint (wall), a person who, by following the teachings of the infallible Imams, had realised both the outer and inner aspects of the religion. In a number of places, he states that at all times there is at least one person qualified to be the political leader of the ideal state but that this person is usually

unknown. Through insisting upon this point, Sadrã's political system, like that of his predecessors such as Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī and Ibn Sīnā, seems to face the problem of a hiatus between theory and practice. This gap widens when the people cannot recognise the true saint (`ārif ), or when, for any reason, the `ārif does not actualise his authority and the wisdom invested in him. It could be argued that this faces an accusation of promoting dictatorship because the political authority of the walī, although resulting from his own spiritual effort, is nonetheless ultimately given to him by God, and as Sadrã says, it does not vanish if others fail to recognise the walī's position and do not follow him.

Concluding remarks on Sadrā's discourse on political authority and its implications in contemporary political philosophy

To resolve any accusation of autocracy, in one place Sadrā does suggest a solution. He says that in the event that a true leader is not apparent — which is often likely —there is no other choice but to elect any right person who is capable of managing worldly affairs: `During a time when a community has no perfect leader, the people can elect an ordinary governor to manage their affairs because it is obvious that society cannot be left without leadership and management. But such a leader has no divine authority.'

Nevertheless, one might still criticise Mullā Sadrā on his principles of leadership by saying that the establishment of a state in accordance with his model would in fact be a sectarian theocracy, which, of course, would not be considered a perfect model for modern society. Its advocates may be able to legitimise justice and democracy by suggesting this kind of political leadership in a community (umma) consisting of people who all share the same belief, but this does not define society in the modern sense, which is likely to consist of people from Muslim (both Shi`a and Sunni), Christian, Jewish or other backgrounds, who might follow different versions of divine law or who may not believe in any sacred law or religion at all. This is a vital point that most contemporary Muslim political philosophers have overlooked. The reason for this is that, at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (the seventh century), there was no such thing as a `society' in the modern sense. What existed was the umma as a community of Muslims. In a modern society, the emphasis is on 'the right of the people' to elect a leader who has responsibilities towards all citizens of all ethnicities and beliefs, rather than 'the right of the leader' as a representative of God with a sacred mission.

With this point in mind, as long as we speak of the political authority of the perfect man without election by the people, by modern standards the question of dictatorship might still remain. Nevertheless, on the basis of Sadrā's remarkable analysis, as discussed in this study, it seems fair to suggest that his attitude to the religious state and political leadership is a very refined version of the traditional one. This is probably why he remains faithful to the rational principle of implementing the divine law at a social and political level.

Sadrā is also consistent with his rational methodology when he supports an egalitarian view on the freedom of belief, justice and the human rights for those of other ethnicities, followers of other religions and even atheists. We also demonstrated how a kind of pluralism and political tolerance can be discerned when he referring to a prophetic hadith says: [S]urely Muslims have no right to kill any non-Muslim for their religion (din)' and says: 'The different beliefs among people in is a mercy from God to the people'.

These ideas on Sadrā's narrative of political justice and tolerance may seem comparable to modern political concepts in which the focus is on the equality of all people in their humanity and on the foundation of the equal `human rights' that they all share, whether male or female, black or white, rich or poor. Without endorsing these fundamental principles, one cannot provide a robust and cogent argument for political justice. All despotic, dictatorial, totalitarian, authoritarian and non-democratic regimes deny the principle of the equality of people's basic human rights, and in so doing deprive all those whom they regard as `other' of a necessary basis for material and spiritual development.

He also puts forth another tolerant attitude concerning Shi`a—Sunni relations and declares that knowing the Imams is essential only for the completion of the faith but is not necessary for those who have neither the ability nor the opportunity to know the Imams. As the Prophet said, the differences among the faiths of Muslims and other religions — like the differences in the ontic realm — are God's pattern in creation, and a Mercy from Him both in society and the cosmic realms. Consequently, he declares that the people of the ignorant city (al-madinat al jāhila) have no knowledge of the wisdom of God's Grace or the value and purpose entrusted in the very nature of His creation. They encourage each other 1 to do evil instead of serving others and bringing them happiness and goodness. They are usually intolerant and do nothing to help each other. According to Sadrā, such people follow their superstitions (awhām) and are enemies of God and His prophets.'

These clear statements provide confirmatory evidence that Sadrā's thought on the ideal state, the first leader and the nature of a Muslim society appears to be far from our contemporary notion of the theocratic Islamic state and its government, which sadly contributes to the slaughter of thousands of innocent people in Muslim regions. The ignorance of leaders and statesmen in both Muslim and Western countries is the greatest cause of the clash between people and nations across the world. They have no true understanding of God's wisdom, the truth behind His creation, or the real message of the religions that God has revealed to mankind in order to bring about a better world. People throughout the world express a strong desire for tolerance and peaceful coexistence, whilst ignorant leaders promote and fund both sectarian and political conflict, not only between Sunnis and Shi`a but also between Muslim and Western countries. <>

THE END OF OCTOBER: A NOVEL by Lawrence Wright [Knopf, 9780525658658]

"An eerily prescient novel about a devastating virus that begins in Asia before going global . . . A page-turner that has the earmarks of an instant bestseller." —New York Post

"Featuring accounts of past plagues and pandemics, descriptions of pathogens and how they work, and dark notes about global warming, the book produces deep shudders . . . A disturbing, eerily timed novel." —Kirkus Reviews

"A compelling read up to the last sentence. Wright has come up with a story worthy of Michael Crichton. In an eerily calm, matter-of-fact way, and backed by meticulous research, he imagines what the world would actually be like in the grip of a devastating new virus." — Richard Preston, author of The Hot Zone

"This timely literary page-turner shows Wright is on a par with the best writers in the genre." —Publishers Weekly (starred review)

In this riveting medical thriller--from the Pulitzer Prize winner and best-selling author--Dr. Henry Parsons, an unlikely but appealing hero, races to find the origins and cure of a mysterious new killer virus as it brings the world to its knees.

At an internment camp in Indonesia, forty-seven people are pronounced dead with acute hemorrhagic fever. When Henry Parsons--microbiologist, epidemiologist--travels there on behalf of the World Health Organization to investigate, what he finds will soon have staggering repercussions across the globe: an infected man is on his way to join the millions of worshippers in the annual Hajj to Mecca. Now, Henry joins forces with a Saudi prince and doctor in an attempt to quarantine the entire host of pilgrims in the holy city . . . A Russian émigré, a woman who has risen to deputy director of U.S. Homeland Security, scrambles to mount a response to what may be an act of biowarfare . . . Already-fraying global relations begin to snap, one by one, in the face of a pandemic . . . Henry's wife, Jill, and their children face diminishing odds of survival in Atlanta . . . And the disease slashes across the United States, dismantling institutions--scientific, religious, governmental--and decimating the population. As packed with suspense as it is with the fascinating history of viral diseases, Lawrence Wright has given us a full-tilt, electrifying, one-of-a-kind thriller.

The contagion despised all medicine; death raged in every corner; and had it gone on as it did then, a few weeks more would have cleared the town of all, and everything that had a soul. Men everywhere began to despair; every heart failed them for fear; people were made desperate through the anguish of their souls, and the terrors of death sat in the very faces and countenances of the people. — DANIEL DEFOE, A Journal of the Plague Year

"But what does it mean, the plague? It's life, that's all." — ALBERT CAMUS, The Plague

Contents

Excerpt: Geneva

In a large auditorium in Geneva, a parliament of health officials gathered for the final afternoon session on emergency infectious diseases. The audience was restless, worn out by the day- long meetings and worried about catching their flights. The terrorist attack in Rome had everyone on edge.

 "An unusual cluster of adolescent fatalities in a refugee camp in Indonesia," the next- to- last speaker of the conference was saying. Hans Somebody. Dutch. Tall, arrogant, well fed. An untrimmed fringe of gray- blond hair spilled over his collar, the lint on his shoulders sparkling in the projected light of the PowerPoint.

A map of Indonesia flashed on the screen. "Forty- seven death certificates were issued in the first week of March at the Kongoli Number Two Camp in West Java." Hans indicated the spot with his laser pointer, followed by slides of destitute refugees in horrible squalor. The world was awash in displaced people, millions pressed into hastily assembled camps and fenced off like prisoners, with inadequate rations and scarce medical facilities. Nothing surprising about an epidemic spilling out of such places. Cholera, diphtheria, dengue— the tropics were always cooking up something.

 "High fever, bloody discharges, rapid transmission, extreme lethality. But what really distinguishes this cluster," Hans said, as he posted a graph, "is the median age of the victims. Usually, infections randomly span the generations, but here the fatalities spike in the age group expected to be the most vigorous portion of the population."

In the large auditorium in Geneva, the parliament of health officials leaned forward to study the curious slide. Most mortal diseases kill off the very young and the very old, but instead of the usual U- shaped graph, this one resembled a crude W, with an average age of death of twenty- nine. "Based on sketchy reports from the initial outbreak, we estimate the overall lethality at 70 percent," Hans said.

 "Pediatric or natal . . . ?" Maria Savona, director of epidemiology at the World Health Organization, interrupted the puzzled silence.

 "Largely accounted for in the reported cohort," Hans replied. "Possible sexual transmission?" a Japanese doctor asked.

 "Unlikely," said Hans. He was enjoying himself. Now his face drifted into the projection, casting a bulky shadow over the next slide. "Reportable deaths stay consistent for the following weeks, but the overall total drops significantly."

 "A one- time event, in that case," the Japanese woman concluded. "With forty- seven bodies?" Hans said. "Quite an orgy!"

The Japanese doctor blushed and covered her mouth as she giggled.

 "Okay, Hans, you've kept us guessing long enough," Maria said impatiently.

Hans looked around the room triumphantly. "Shigella," he said, to groans of disbelief. "You would have got it but for the inverted mortality vector. That puzzled us as well. This is a common bacteria in poorer countries, the cause of innumerable cases of food poisoning. We queried the health authorities in Jakarta, and they concluded that, in a starving environment, the only people robust enough to seize the limited food resources are the young. In this case, strength proved to be their

undoing. Our team deduced that the probable source of the pathogen was raw milk. We offer this as a cautionary tale about how demographic stereotypes can blind us to facts that would otherwise be obvious."

Hans stepped down to perfunctory applause as Maria called the last presenter to the podium. "Campylobacter in Wisconsin—" the man began.

Suddenly, a commanding voice interrupted. "A raging hemorrhagic fever kills forty- seven people in a week and disappears without a trace?"

Two hundred heads turned to locate the source of that booming baritone. From the voice, you would have thought Henry Parsons was a big man. No. He was short and slight, bent by a childhood case of rickets that left him slightly deformed. His facial features and professorial voice seemed peculiarly outsized in such a modest figure, but he carried himself with the weight of a man who understood his value, despite his diminished appearance. Those who knew his legend spoke of him with a kind of amused awe, calling him Herr Doktor behind his back, or "the little martinet." He was capable of reducing interns to tears if they failed to prepare a sample correctly or missed a symptom that was, in fact, meaningful only to him, but it was Henry Parsons who led an international team in the Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa in 2014. He tracked down the first documented patient of the disease— the so- called index case— an eighteen- month- old boy from Guinea who had been infected by fruit bats. There were many such stories about him, and many more that could have been told, had he sought the credit. In the neverending war on emerging diseases, Henry Parsons was not a small man; he was a giant.

Hans Somebody squinted and located Henry in the gloom of the upper tiers. "Not so unusual, Dr. Parsons, if you consider the environmental causation."

"You used the word 'transmission.' "

Hans smiled, happy to resume the game. "The Indonesian authorities at first suspected a viral agent."

"What changed their minds?" Henry asked.

Maria had become intrigued. "You are thinking Ebola?"

"In which case we'd see likely migration to urban centers," Hans said. "Not shown. All it took was to eliminate the source of contamination and the infection disappeared."

"Did you actually go to the camp yourself?" Henry asked. "Take samples?"

"The Indonesian authorities have been fully cooperative," Hans said dismissively. "There is a team from Médecins Sans Frontières in place now, and we will receive confirmation shortly. Don't expect surprises."

Hans waited a moment, but Henry sat back, thoughtfully tapping a finger on his lips. The next presenter resumed. "A slaughterhouse in Milwaukee," he said, as a few conferees with an eye on the time ducked toward the exits. There was bound to be increased security at the airport.

"I hate when you do that," Maria said, when they got to her office. It was glassy and stylish, with a fine view of Mont Blanc. A flock of storks, having hurdled the alpine barrier, circled for a landing beside Lake Geneva, their first stop on the spring migration from the Nile Valley.

"Do what?"

Maria leaned back and tapped her finger on her lips, imitating Henry's gesture.

"Is that a habit of mine?" he asked, leaning his cane against her desk.

"When I see you do it, I know I should be worried. What makes you doubt Hans's study?"

"Acute hemorrhagic fever. Very likely viral. Weird mortality distribution, totally inappropriate for shigella. And why did it suddenly—"

"Just stop? I don't know, Henry, you tell me. Indonesia again?" "They hid the ball before."

"It doesn't look like another meningitis outbreak."

"Certainly not." Despite himself, Henry involuntarily began tapping his lips again. Maria waited. "I shouldn't tell you what to do," he finally said. "Maybe Hans is right."

"But . . . ?"

"The lethality. Stunning. The downside if he's wrong."

Maria went to the window. Clouds were settling in, masking the majestic peak. She was about to speak when Henry interrupted her thought. "I've got to go."

"That's exactly what I was thinking."

"I mean home."

Maria nodded in that way that meant she had heard him, but the worried expression in her Italian eyes sent a different message. "Give me two days. I know how much I'm asking. I should send a whole team, but I don't have anybody I can trust. Hans says MSF is there, so they can help. Just get slides and samples. In and out and on your way back to Atlanta."

"Maria . . ."

"Please, Henry."

In the manner of friends who have known each other a long time, Henry saw a flash of the worried young epidemiologist studying the African swine fever outbreak in Haiti. Maria had been part of the team that advocated the eradication of the indigenous pig that carried the disease. Nearly every family in Haiti kept pigs; in addition to being a major source of food, they functioned as currency, a bank for the peasantry. Within a year, thanks to the efforts of the international community and the dictator "Baby Doc" Duvalier, the entire population of Creole pigs was extinct, a great success, almost unprecedented. The eradication stopped an incurable disease. But the peasants, already poor, were reduced to famine. The corrupt elite appropriated most of the replacement pigs the Americans provided, which were in any case too delicate for the environment and too expensive to feed. With no other resources, people turned to making charcoal, which denuded the forests. Haiti never recovered. It's debatable whether the hogs should have been slaughtered in the first place. We were such confident idealists back then, Henry thought.

"Two days, maximum," he said. "I promised Jill I'd be home for Teddy's birthday."

"I'll have Rinaldo book you on the red-eye to Jakarta." Maria

assured him that she would call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in Atlanta, where Henry was deputy director for infectious diseases, and beg forgiveness; it was an emergency request on her part.

  "By the way," he said as he was leaving, "any word from Rome? Your family is safe?"

  "We don't know," Maria said despairingly.

The Rome attack had been planned for Carnevale, the eight- day festival that takes place all over Italy before Lent. The Piazza del Popolo was packed for the costume parade and the famous dancing horses. The news that morning was filled with images of the torn carcasses of the beautiful animals, strewn among the dead celebrants and the rubble of the twin churches. "Hundreds dead in Rome, the counting still going on," the Fox host was saying. "What's Italy's response going to be?"

The youthful prime minister was a nationalist, with his hair closely trimmed on the sides and long on top, the fashion for the neofascists taking over Europe. Predictably, he proposed mass expulsions of Muslims.

Jill Parsons switched off the TV when she heard the kids thundering downstairs, an argument already under way. They were bickering over whether Helen would be allowed to go to Legoland with Teddy and his friends. Helen wasn't even interested in Legos.

  "Who wants waffles?" Jill asked cheerily. Neither child responded; they were still captivated by their pointless argument. Peepers, a rescue dog of mixed heritage, with black patches around his eyes like a panda, stirred from his corner and shambled over to referee the quarrel.

  "It's my birthday," Teddy said indignantly.

  "I let you come to Six Flags on mine," Helen replied.

  "Mom, she stole my waffle!" Teddy wailed.

  "I just took a bite."

  "You touched it!"

  "Helen, eat your cereal," Jill said mechanically.

  "It's soggy."

Helen coolly took another bite of Teddy's waffle. He shouted in outrage. Peepers barked in support. Jill sighed. The household always took a turn toward chaos when Henry was out of town. But just as she was rebuking him in her mind, her iPad buzzed, and there was Henry, calling on FaceTime.

  "Did you read my mind?" she asked. "I was telepathically summoning you."

  "I can't imagine why," Henry said, hearing the argument and the barking in the background.

  "I was going to cuss you out for not being here."

  "Let me talk to them."

Immediately Teddy and Helen subsided into adorableness. It was a kind of magic trick, Jill thought, a spell that Henry cast over them. Peepers wagged his tail in adoration.

"Daddy, when are you coming home?" Teddy demanded. "Tuesday night, very late," Henry said.

"Mom said you'd be here tomorrow."

"I thought I would, but my plans suddenly changed. But don't worry. I'll be back in time for your birthday."

Teddy cheered, and Helen clapped her hands. It was impressive. Jill could never calm the waters like Henry. Maybe I'm too ironic, she thought. It must be Henry's total sincerity when he speaks to the children that subdues them. Somehow, they know they are safe. Jill felt that way, too.

"I made a robot," Teddy reported, holding up the iPad to display the conglomeration of plastic parts, electrical circuitry, and an old cell phone that he had put together for the science fair. The skeletal face had a pair of camera lenses for eyes. Jill thought it looked like a Day of the Dead doll.

"You did this by yourself?" said Henry.
Teddy nodded, his face radiant with pride.
"What do you call him?"
Teddy turned to the robot. "Robot, what is your name?"
The robot's head tilted slightly. "Master, my name is Albert," he said. "I belong to Teddy."
"Holy smoke! That's amazing!" Henry said. "He calls you 'Master'?"
Teddy giggled and tucked his chin the way he did when he was really happy.
"My turn!" Helen said, grabbing the iPad.
"Hello, my beautiful girl," said Henry. "You must have a game today."
Helen was on the sixth- grade girls' soccer team. "They want me to play goalie," she said.
"That's great, right?"
"It's boring. You just stand there. They only want me to do it because I'm tall."
"But you get to be the hero every time you save a goal."
"They all hate me if I don't."
This was typical Helen, Jill thought. Where Teddy was sunny, Helen was dark. Pessimism oozed out of her, giving her an odd kind of power. Jill had observed that her classmates were a little fearful of her judgment. That quality, along with her fine features, made her an object of adoration among the girls and a troubling beacon to the pubescent boys.

"I heard the part about not coming home," Jill said, when she had the chance to talk again. Henry looked tired. In the chiaroscuro of the iPad, he resembled a portrait of a nineteenth- century Austrian nobleman, with his penetrating gaze behind round spectacles. In the background she could hear flights being called.

"It's probably nothing, but it's one of those things," Henry said. "Where this time?"

"Indonesia."

"Oh, Lord," Jill said, letting the worry get ahead of her. "Kids, finish up, the bus is coming." Then to Henry: "You haven't been sleeping, have you? I wish you would take some Ambien and just conk out properly for a night. Have you got some? You should take it as soon as you get on the plane." She was annoyed that, for a doctor, Henry was so resistant to taking medications.

"I will sleep again when I feel you next to me," he said, in one of those maddening endearments that would ring in her ears until he came home.

"Don't take chances," Jill said pointlessly.

"I never do." <>

THE MADNESS OF CROWDS: GENDER, RACE AND IDENTITY by Douglas Murray [Bloomsbury Continuum, 9781635579987]

The challenging and brilliantly-argued new book from the bestselling author of The Strange Death of Europe.

In his devastating new book **THE MADNESS OF CROWDS**, Douglas Murray examines the twenty-first century's most divisive issues: sexuality, gender, technology and race. He reveals the astonishing new culture wars playing out in our workplaces, universities, schools and homes in the names of social justice, identity politics and intersectionality.

We are living through a postmodern era in which the grand narratives of religion and political ideology have collapsed. In their place have emerged a crusading desire to right perceived wrongs and a weaponization of identity, both accelerated by the new forms of social and news media. Narrow sets of interests now dominate the agenda as society becomes more and more tribal--and, as Murray shows, the casualties are mounting.

Readers of all political persuasions cannot afford to ignore Murray's masterfully argued and fiercely provocative book, in which he seeks to inject some sense into the discussion around this generation's most complicated issues. He ends with an impassioned call for free speech, shared common values and sanity in an age of mass hysteria.

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Excerpt: We are going through a great crowd derangement. In public and in private, both online and off, people are behaving in ways that are increasingly irrational, feverish, herd-like and simply unpleasant. The daily news cycle is filled with the consequences. Yet while we see the symptoms everywhere, we do not see the causes.

Various explanations have been given. These tend to suggest that any and all madnesses are the consequence of a Presidential election, or a referendum. But none of these explanations gets to the root of what is happening. For far beneath these day-to-day events are much greater movements and much bigger events. It is time we began to confront the true causes of what is going wrong.

Even the origin of this condition is rarely acknowledged. This is the simple fact that we have been living through a period of more than a quarter of a century in which all our grand narratives have collapsed. One by one the narratives we had were refuted, became unpopular to defend or impossible to sustain. The explanations for our existence that used to be provided by religion went first, falling away from the nineteenth century onwards. Then over the last century the secular hopes held out by all political ideologies began to follow in religion's wake. In the latter part of the twentieth century we entered the postmodern era. An era which defined itself, and was defined, by its suspicion towards all grand narratives.' However, as all schoolchildren learn, nature abhors a vacuum, and into the postmodern vacuum new ideas began to creep, with the intention of providing explanations and meanings of their own.

It was inevitable that some pitch would be made for the deserted ground. People in wealthy Western democracies today could not simply remain the first people in recorded history to have absolutely no explanation for what we are doing here, and no story to give life purpose.

Whatever else they lacked, the grand narratives of the past at least gave life meaning. The question of what exactly we are meant to do now — other than get rich where we can and have whatever fun is on offer — was going to have to be answered by something.

The answer that has presented itself in recent years is to engage in new battles, ever fiercer campaigns and ever more niche demands. To find meaning by waging a constant war against anybody who seems to be on the wrong side of a question which may itself have just been reframed and the answer to which has only just been altered. The unbelievable speed of this process has been principally caused by the fact that a handful of businesses in Silicon Valley (notably Google, Twitter and Facebook) now have the power not just to direct what most people in the world know, think and say, but have a business model which has accurately been described as relying on finding `customers ready to pay to modify someone else's behaviour' Yet although we are being aggravated by a tech world which is running faster than our legs are able to carry us to keep up with it, these wars are not being fought aimlessly. They are consistently being fought in a particular direction. And that direction has a purpose that is vast. The purpose — unknowing in some people, deliberate in others — is to embed a new metaphysics into our societies: a new religion, if you will.

Although the foundations had been laid for several decades, it is only since the financial crash of 2008 that there has been a march into the mainstream of ideas that were previously known solely on the obscurest fringes of academia. The attractions of this new set of beliefs are obvious enough. It is not clear why a generation which can't accumulate capital should have any great love of capitalism. And it isn't hard to work out why a generation who believe they may never own a home could be attracted to an ideological world view which promises to sort out every inequity not just in their own lives but every inequity on earth. The interpretation of the world through the lens of `social justice, `identity group politics' and `intersectionalism' is probably the most audacious and comprehensive effort since the end of the Cold War at creating a new ideology.

To date `social justice' has run the furthest because it sounds — and in some versions is — attractive. Even the term itself is set up to be anti-oppositional. `You're opposed to social justice? What do you want, social injustice?'

`Identity politics', meanwhile, has become the place where social justice finds its caucuses. It atomizes society into different interest groups according to sex (or gender), race, sexual preference and more. It presumes that such characteristics are the main, or only, relevant attributes of their holders and that they bring with them some added bonus. For example (as the American writer

Coleman Hughes has put it), the assumption that there is 'a heightened moral knowledge' that comes with being black or female or gay. It is the cause of the propensity of people to start questions or statements with `Speaking as a ..:. And it is something that people both living and dead need to be on the right side of. It is why there are calls to pull down the statues of historical figures viewed as being on the wrong side and it is why the past needs to be rewritten for anyone you wish to save. It is why it has become perfectly normal for a Sinn Fein senator to claim that the IRA hunger strikers in 1981 were striking for gay rights. Identity politics is where minority groups are encouraged to simultaneously atomize, organize and pronounce.

The least attractive-sounding of this trinity is the concept of `intersectionality' This is the invitation to spend the rest of our lives attempting to work out each and every identity and vulnerability claim in ourselves and others and then organize along whichever system of justice emerges from the perpetually moving hierarchy which we uncover. It is a system that is not just unworkable but dementing, making demands that are impossible towards ends that are unachievable. But today intersectionality has broken out from the social science departments of the liberal arts colleges from which it originated. It is now taken seriously by a generation of young people and — as we shall see — has become embedded via employment law (specifically through a `commitment to diversity') in all the major corporations and governments.

New heuristics have been required to force people to ingest the new presumptions. The speed at which they have been mainstreamed is staggering. As the mathematician and writer Eric Weinstein has pointed out (and as a Google Books search shows), phrases like `LGBTQ, `white privilege' and `transphobia' went from not being used at all to becoming mainstream. As he wrote about the graph that results from this, the 'woke stuff' that Millennials and others are presently using 'to tear apart millennia of oppression and /or civilization ... was all made up about 20 minutes ago' As he went on, while there is nothing wrong with trying out new ideas and phrases, 'you have to be pretty

damn reckless to be leaning this hard on so many untested heuristics your parents came up with in untested fields that aren't even 50 years old. Similarly, Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt have pointed out (in their 2018 book The Coddling of the American Mind) how new the means of policing and enforcing these new heuristics have become. Phrases like `triggered' and `feeling unsafe' and claims that words that do not fit the new religion cause `harm' only really started to spike in usage from 2013 onwards. It is as though, having worked out what it wanted, the new metaphysics took a further half-decade to work out how to intimidate its followers into the mainstream. But it has done so, with huge success.

The results can be seen in every day's news. It is behind the news that the American Psychological Association feels the need to advise its members on how to train harmful `traditional masculinity' out of boys and men. It is why a previously completely unknown programmer at Google - James Damore - can be sacked for writing a memo suggesting that some jobs in tech appeal more to men than they do to women. And it is why the number of Americans who view racism as a 'big problem' doubled between 2011 and 2017.

Having begun to view everything through the new lenses we have been provided with, everything is then weaponized, with consequences which are deranged as well as dementing. It is why The New York Times decides to run a piece by a black author with the title: 'Can my Children be Friends with White People?' And why even a piece about cycling deaths in London written by a woman can be framed through the headline: `Roads Designed by Men are Killing Women. Such rhetoric exacerbates any existing divisions and each time creates a number of new ones. And for what

purpose? Rather than showing how we can all get along better, the lessons of the last decade appear to be exacerbating a sense that in fact we aren't very good at living with each other.

For most people some awareness of this new system of values has become clear not so much by trial as by very public error. Because one thing that everybody has begun to at least sense in recent years is that a set of tripwires have been laid across the culture. Whether placed by individuals, collectives or some divine satirist, there they have been waiting for one person after another to walk into them. Sometimes a person's foot has unwittingly nicked the tripwire and they have been immediately blown up. On other occasions people have watched some brave madman walking straight into the no man's land, fully aware of what they were doing. After each resulting detonation there is some disputation (including the occasional 'coo' of admiration) and then the world moves on, accepting that another victim has been notched up to the odd, apparently improvisatory value system of our time.

It took a little while for the delineation of these tripwires to become clear, but they are clear now. Among the first was anything to do with homosexuality. In the latter half of the twentieth century there was a fight for gay equality which was tremendously successful, reversing terrible historic injustice. Then, the war having been won, it became clear that it wasn't stopping. Indeed it was morphing. GLB (Gay, Lesbian, Bi) became LGB so as not to diminish the visibility of lesbians. Then a T got added (of which much more anon). Then a Q and then some stars and asterisks. And as the gay alphabet grew, so something changed within the movement. It began to behave - in victory - as its opponents once did. When the boot was on the other foot something ugly happened. A decade ago almost nobody was supportive of gay marriage. Even gay rights groups like Stonewall weren't in favour of it.

A few years down the road and it has been made into a foundational value of modern liberalism. To fail the gay marriage issue - only years after almost everybody failed it (including gay rights groups) - was to put yourself beyond the pale. People may agree with that rights claim, or disagree, but to shift mores so fast needs to be done with extraordinary sensitivity and some deep thought. Yet we seem content to steam past, engaging in neither.

Instead, other issues followed a similar pattern. Women's rights had - like gay rights - been steadily accumulated throughout the twentieth century. They too appeared to be arriving at some sort of settlement.

Then just as the train appeared to be reaching its desired destination it suddenly picked up steam and went crashing off down the tracks and into the distance. What had been barely disputed until yesterday became a cause to destroy someone's life today. Whole careers were scattered and strewn as the train careered along its path.

Careers like that of the 72-year-old Nobel Prize-winning Professor Tim Hunt were destroyed after one lame joke, at a conference in South Korea, about men and women falling in love in the lab." Phrases such as `toxic masculinity' entered into common use. What was the virtue of making relations between the sexes so fraught that the male half of the species could be treated as though it was cancerous? Or the development of the idea that men had no right to talk about the female sex? Why, when women had broken through more glass ceilings than at any time in history, did talk of 'the patriarchy' and `mansplaining' seep out of the feminist fringes and into the heart of places like the Australian Senate?

In a similar fashion the civil rights movement in America, which had started in order to right the most appalling of all historic wrongs, looked like it was moving towards some hoped-for resolution.

But yet again, near the point of victory everything seemed to sour. Just as things appeared better than ever before, the rhetoric began to suggest that things had never been worse. Suddenly - after most of us had hoped it had become a non-issue - everything seemed to have become about race. As with all the other tripwire issues, only a fool or a madman would think of even speculating - let alone disputing - this turnaround of events.

Then finally we all stumbled, baffled, into the most unchartered territory of all. This was the claim that there lived among us a considerable number of people who were in the wrong bodies and that as a consequence what certainties remained in our societies (including certainties rooted in science and language) needed to be utterly reframed. In some ways the debate around the trans question is the most suggestive of all. Although the newest of the rights questions also affects by far the fewest number of people, it is nevertheless fought over with an almost unequalled ferocity and rage. Women who have got on the wrong side of the issue have been hounded by people who used to be men. Parents who voice what was common belief until yesterday have their fitness to be parents questioned. In the UK and elsewhere the police make calls on people who will not concede that men can be women (and vice versa).

Among the things these issues all have in common is that they have started as legitimate human rights campaigns. This is why they have come so far. But at some point all went through the crash barrier. Not content with being equal, they have started to settle on unsustainable positions such as `better'. Some might counter that the aim is simply to spend a certain amount of time on `better' in order to level the historical playing field. In the wake of the #MeToo movement it became common to hear such sentiments. As one CNN presenter said, `There might be an overcorrection, but that's OK. We're due for a correction: To date nobody has suggested when over-correction might have been achieved or who might be trusted to announce it.

What everyone does know are the things that people will be called if their foot even nicks against these freshly laid tripwires. `Bigot, `homophobe, `sexist, `misogynist, `racist' and `transphobe' are just for starters. The rights fights of our time have centred around these toxic and explosive issues. But in the process these rights issues have moved from being a product of a system to being the foundations of a new one. To demonstrate affiliation with the system people must prove their credentials and their commitment. How might somebody demonstrate virtue in this new world? By being 'anti-racist', clearly. By being an `ally' to LGBT people, obviously. By stressing how ardent your desire is - whether you are a man or a woman - to bring down the patriarchy.

And this creates an auditioning problem, where public avowals of loyalty to the system must be volubly made whether there is a need for them or not. It is an extension of a well-known problem in liberalism which has been recognized even among those who did once fight a noble fight. It is a tendency identified by the late Australian political philosopher Kenneth Minogue as 'St George in retirement' syndrome. After slaying the dragon the brave warrior finds himself stalking the land looking for still more glorious fights. He needs his dragons. Eventually, after tiring himself out in pursuit of ever-smaller dragons he may eventually even be found swinging his sword at thin air, imagining it to contain dragons.

If that is a temptation for an actual St George, imagine what a person might do who is no saint, owns no horse or lance and is being noticed by nobody. How might they try to persuade people that, given the historic chance, they too would without question have slain that dragon?

In the claims and supporting rhetoric quoted throughout this book there is a good deal of this in evidence. Our public life is now dense with people desperate to man the barricades long after the

revolution is over. Either because they mistake the barricades for home, or because they have no other home to go to. In each case a demonstration of virtue demands an overstating of the problem, which then causes an amplification of the problem.

But there is more trouble in all of this, and it is the reason why I take each of the bases of these new metaphysics not just seriously but one by one. With each of these issues an increasing number of people, having the law on their side, pretend that both their issue and indeed all these issues are shut down and agreed upon. The case is very much otherwise. The nature of what is meant to be agreed upon cannot in fact be agreed upon. Each of these issues is infinitely more complex and unstable than our societies are currently willing to admit. Which is why, put together as the foundation blocks of a new morality and metaphysics, they form the basis for a general madness. Indeed a more unstable basis for social-harmony could hardly be imagined.

For while racial equality, minority rights and women's rights are among the best products of liberalism, they make the most destabilizing foundations. Attempting to make them the foundation is like turning a bar stool upside down and then trying to balance on top of it. The products of the system cannot reproduce the stability of the system that produced them. If for no other reason than that each of these issues is a deeply unstable component in itself. We present each as agreed upon and settled. Yet while the endless contradictions, fabrications and fantasies within each are visible to all, identifying them is not just discouraged but literally policed. And so we are asked to agree to things which we cannot believe.

It is the central cause of the ugliness of both online and real-life discussion. For we are being asked to perform a set of leaps and jumps which we cannot, and are perhaps ill-advised to make. We are asked to believe things that are unbelievable and being told not to object to things (such as giving children drugs to stop them going through puberty) which most people feel a strong objection to. The pain that comes from being expected to remain silent on some important matters and perform impossible leaps on others is tremendous, not least because the problems (including the internal contradictions) are so evident. As anyone who has lived under totalitarianism can attest, there is something demeaning and eventually soul-destroying about being expected to go along with claims you do not believe to be true and cannot hold to be true. If the belief is that all people should be regarded as having equal value and be accorded equal dignity, then that may be all well and good. If you are asked to believe that there are no differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality, men and women, racism and anti-racism, then this will in time drive you to distraction. That distraction - or crowd madness - is something we are in the middle of and something we need to try to find our way out from.

If we fail, then the direction of travel is already clear. We face not just a future of ever-greater atomization, rage and violence, but a future in which the possibility of a backlash against all rights advances - including the good ones - grows more likely. A future in which racism is responded to with racism, denigration based on gender is responded to with denigration based on gender. At some stage of humiliation there is simply no reason for majority groups not to play games back that have worked so well on themselves.

This book suggests a number of ways out of this. But the best way to start is not just to understand the basis of what is going on at the moment but to be free to discuss it. While writing this book, I discovered that the British Army has a mine-clearing device now named 'The Python', but in an earlier design it was known as 'The Giant Viper'. When this trailer-mounted system is fired at a minefield it unleashes a rocket, behind which unfurls a hose-like trail hundreds of metres long and all packed with explosives. Once the whole thing is lying across the minefield (and like everything else

you can see videos of this online), it causes what is called `sympathetic detonation' That is, the whole thing explodes, setting off the mines within a significant radius of the rocket and its tail. Although it cannot clear the entire minefield, it can clear a path across the minefield, allowing other people, trucks and even tanks to travel safely across what was previously impassable terrain.

In my own modest way I think of this book as my Viper system. I do not aim to clear the whole minefield and could not, even if I wished to. But I hope that this book will help clear some terrain across which afterwards other people may more safely pass.

The identity groups that some people form don't even work within themselves. In 2017 a student group at Cornell University calling themselves `Black Students United' chose to issue the college authorities with a six-page list of demands. This included the obvious demands, namely that all faculty members should be trained in `systems of power and privilege' and that black people who had been `affected directly by the African Holocaust in America' and by `American fascism' should be invested in to a greater degree. But one demand was that their university should pay more attention to `Black Americans who have several generations (more than two) in this country'. This was to make them distinct from first-generation students from Africa or the Caribbean. The Black Students United group later apologized under pressure for making this demand. But the message was clear. There is a hierarchy of oppression and victimhood which exists even within each identifiable group. Not only are the rules unclear, but the prejudices that underly them aren't always clear either and can break out in extraordinary places and ways.

The Impossibility Problem

As a culture we have entered an area which is now mined with impossibility problems. From some of the most famous women on the planet we have heard the demand that women have the right to be sexy without being sexualized. Some of the most prominent cultural figures in the world have shown us that to oppose racism we must become a bit racist. Now a whole set of similar impossibilities are being demanded in an equally non-conciliatory manner.

There was a fine example on the BBC's This Week in October 2017 when an artist and writer going by the mononym `Scottee' appeared on the programme to discuss a short political film he had made. As a self-described 'big fat queer fem' he complained that he was a `victim of masculinity in a way because of the aggressions I put up with on a day-to-day basis'. Although he had no answers to this problem, he insisted that `queer, trans, non-binary people' shouldn't have to be the ones who have to disable "toxic masculinity"'. It has to come from within, he argued. Men 'have got to acknowledge their privilege, and I want them to hand over power, and also I want them to hand over some platform. I'm really up for like trying a matriarchy. We've done patriarchy for a long time. Hasn't really worked." Avoiding the nuclear presumption of `hasn't really worked' for a moment, there was one even larger fact staring any viewer in the face. This was that one of the main complaints that this flamboyantly dressed self-declared 'big fat queer fem' had made about the society he lived in was that he found himself so often ridiculed. So here is another paradoxical, impossible demand. A person who chooses to be ridiculous without being ridiculed.

Other impossible demands can be found everywhere - such as the one that was on display at Evergreen State College and Yale University and was highlighted by Mark Lilla on the panel at Rutgers (where the audience member insisted to Kmele Foster that he `didn't need no facts'). On that occasion Lilla provided an insight into one of the other central conundrums of our time. He said, 'You cannot tell people simultaneously "You must understand me" and "You cannot understand me": Evidently a whole lot of people can make those demands simultaneously. But they shouldn't, and if they do then they should realize that their contradictory demands cannot be granted.

Then of course there is the question of how the hierarchy of oppression is meant to be ordered, prioritized and then sorted out. Laith Ashley is one of the most prominent transgender models in the world today. The female-to-male transsexual has received prominent coverage and done prestigious fashion shoots for leading brands and magazines. In a 2016 television interview he was asked by Channel 4's Cathy Newman if in the two years he had been transitioning from a woman to a man he had encountered any discrimination. Ashley said that in fact he had not, but then alleviated his interviewer's disappointment by adding that transgender activists and others he knew from transgender rights movements had `told' him that he had in fact gained some male privilege. As he said, breaking it down for the viewers, `I have gained some male privilege. And although I am a person of colour I am fair skinned and I adhere to society's standard of aesthetic beauty in a sense. And for that reason I have not necessarily faced much discrimination.' So he had taken a couple of steps further into the hierarchy by becoming a man, had taken a couple of steps back by being a person of colour, but a step forward by being a light-skinned person of colour. And then he had hit the negative of being attractive. How can anyone work out where they are meant to be in the oppressor/oppressed stakes when they have so many competing privileges in their biography? No wonder Ashley looked concerned and self-effacing when going through this list. This is enough constant self-analysis to knock anybody's confidence. But a version of that impossible self-analysis is being suggested for many people today, when in fact there is no way of knowing how to perform this task fairly on another person let alone on yourself. What is the point of an exercise that cannot be done?

And where to next? One of the pleasures in recent years has been watching people who think they are being a good liberal boundary keeper discover that one of their feet has nicked one of the tripwires. One Saturday evening in 2018 Vox's David Roberts was spending his time happily auditioning for the committee for public virtue on Twitter. In one tweet he wrote, `Sometimes I think about America's sedentary, heart-diseased, fast-food gobbling, car-addicted suburbanites, sitting watching TV in their suburban castles, casually passing judgement on refugees who have walked 1000s of miles to escape oppression, and .. . well, it makes me mad: As he sent it off he must have thought `Sounds good. Attack Americans, defend migrants, what could go wrong?' A more cautious member of the new media might have wondered whether it was wise to sound quite so disdainful of people who live in the suburbs. But in fact it was not Roberts's suburbo-phobia that caused him to spend the rest of his Saturday evening frantically trying to save his career in dozens of remedy tweets. The thing that caused an instant backlash from the very crowd he was hoping to impress was that he had been 'fat-shaming' and this was `problematic'.

By his 17th tweet attempting to mop up his crime Roberts was reduced to begging: 'Fat-shaming is real, it's everywhere, it's unjust & unkind, and I want no part of it.' Soon he was apologizing sincerely for only being 'half woke', and blaming his upbringing. The potential for claims of offence, allegations of shaming and new positions in the grievance hierarchy based on ever-evolving criteria could go on indefinitely. But how would they be arranged? Is a fat white person equal to a skinny person of colour? Or are there different scales of oppression which everyone should know even if no one has explained the rules because the rules are made not by rational people but by mob stampedes.

Perhaps rather than derange ourselves by working out a puzzle that cannot be solved, we should instead try to find ways out of this impossible maze.

What If People Aren't Oppressed?
Perhaps instead of seeking out oppression and seeing oppression everywhere, we could start to exit the maze by noting the various `victim groups' that aren't oppressed or are even advantaged. For

instance, studies have shown that gay men and lesbian women consistently earn more on average than their heterosexual counterparts. There are a variety of possible reasons, not least the fact that most of them won't have children and can put in the extra hours at the office which benefits both them and their employer. Is this a gay advantage? At what stage can heterosexuals claim that they are unfairly disadvantaged in the workplace? Should there be a `stepping back' by gay people to allow their straight contemporaries a better run at work opportunities?

In recent years earning disparities between racial groups have consistently been weaponized. While it is often cited that the median income of Hispanic Americans is less than that of black Americans, and the earnings of black Americans lower than that of white Americans, there is never as much focus on the group which out-earns everybody. The median income of Asian men in America is consistently higher than any other group, including white Americans. Should there be some attempt to level this figure out by bringing Asian men down a few earning percentiles? Perhaps we could get out of this mania by treating people as individuals based on their abilities and not trying to impose equity quotas on every company and institution?

Because the most extreme claims keep getting heard, there is a tendency for people to believe them and their worst-case scenarios. For example, a poll carried out in 2018 for Sky found that most British people (seven in ten) believed that women are paid less than men for performing exactly the same job. The `gender pay gap' that does exist is between average earnings across a lifespan, taking into account differences in career, child-rearing and lifestyle choices made by men and women. But 'the pay gap' has become such a staple of discussion on the news and on social media that most people have interpreted it as evidence of a gap that does not exist as they have been led to believe it does. It has been illegal to pay women less for performing the same task as a man since 1970 in the UK, and since 1963 in the US. Just one result of this confusion is that even though seven in ten people in the poll thought women were paid less than men for performing precisely the same job, almost exactly the same percentage of the public (67 per cent) thought that feminism had either gone too far or as far as it should go. This finding might epitomize the confusion of our time. We see oppression where it doesn't exist and have no idea how to respond to it.

The Important Discussions We Avoid

Just one of the negatives of portraying life as this endless zero-sum game, between different groups vying for oppressed status, is that it robs us of time and energy for the conversations and thinking that we do need to do. For example, why is it, after all these decades, that feminists and others have been unable to more fully address the role of motherhood in feminism? As the feminist author Camille Paglia has been typically honest enough to admit, motherhood remains one of the big unresolved questions for feminists. And that isn't a small subject to miss or gloss over. As Paglia herself has written, `Feminist ideology has never dealt honestly with the role of the mother in human life. Its portrayal of history as male oppression and female victimage is a gross distortion of the facts

If asked to name her three great heroes of twentieth-century womanhood, Paglia says that she would select Amelia Earhart, Katharine Hepburn and Germaine Greer: three women who Paglia says `would symbolize the new twentieth-century woman. Yet as she points out, 'All these women were childless. Here is one of the great dilemmas facing women at the end of the century. Second-wave feminist rhetoric placed blame for the female condition entirely on men, or specifically on "patriarchy" ... The exclusive focus of feminism was on an external social mechanism that had to be smashed or reformed. It failed to take into account women's intricate connection with nature - that

is, with procreation' Or why, 'in this era of the career woman, there has been a denigration, or devaluing of the role of motherhood:

The ongoing dishonesty about this leads to presumption being piled on dishonesty, and ugly, misanthropic notions of the purpose of women becoming embedded in the culture. In January 2019 CNBC ran a piece flagged with the heading, 'You can save half a million dollars if you don't have kids'. As the piece went on: 'Your friends may tell you having kids made them happier. They're probably lying.' It then referenced all the outweighing problems of `extra responsibilities, housework and, of course, the costs'. Or here is how The Economist recently chose to write about what it called 'the roots of the gender pay gap', a gap which the magazine claimed has its roots in childhood. One of the main factors which is responsible for women on average earning less than men during the course of their working life is the fact that women are the ones who bear children. As The Economist put it, `Having children lowers women's lifetime earnings, an outcome known as the "child penalty"' It is hard to imagine who could read that phrase, let alone write it, without a shudder. If it is assumed that the primary purpose in life is to make as much money as possible, then it is indeed possible that having a child will constitute a `penalty' for a woman and thereby prevent her from having a larger sum of money in her bank account when she dies. On the other hand, if she chooses to pay that `penalty' she might be fortunate enough to engage in the most important and fulfilling role that a human being can have.

There is in that Economist viewpoint something which is widely shared and which has been spreading for decades. On the one hand women have - largely - been relieved of the need to have children if they do not want them, the better to pursue other forms of meaning and purpose in their lives. But it is not hard for this reorientation of purpose to make it look as though that original, defining human purpose is no purpose at all. The American agrarian writer Wendell Berry put his finger on this almost 40 years ago when there were already, as he put it, 'bad times for motherhood. The whole concept of motherhood had come to be viewed in a negative way: 'A kind of biological drudgery, some say, using up women who could do better things.' But then Berry hit on the central truth:

> We all have to be used up by something. And though I will never be a mother, I am glad to be used up by motherhood and what it leads to, just as - most of the time - I gladly belong to my wife, my children, and several head of cattle, sheep, and horses. What better way to be used up?

Is this not a better way to think about motherhood and life? In a spirit of love and forgiveness rather than the endless register of resentment and greed?

What Is Really Going On

Yet if the absence of serious discussion and the innate contradictions alone were enough to stop this new religion of social justice, it would hardly have got started. People looking for this movement to wind down because of its inherent contradictions will be waiting a long time. Firstly because they are ignoring the Marxist substructure of much of this movement, and the inherent willingness to rush towards contradiction rather than notice all these nightmarish crashes and wonder whether they aren't telling you something about your choice of journey.

But the other reason why contradiction is not enough is because nothing about the intersectional, social justice movement suggests that it is really interested in solving any of the problems that it claims to be interested in. The first clue lies in the partial, biased, unrepresentative and unfair depiction of our own societies. Few people think that a country cannot be improved on, but to present it as riddled with bigotry, hatred and oppression is at best a partial and at worst a nakedly

hostile prism through which to view society. It is an analysis expressed not in the manner of a critic hoping to improve, but as an enemy eager to destroy. There are signs of this intention everywhere we look.

Consider the example of trans. There was a reason to linger over the difficult and poorly discussed issue of people who are born intersex. It was not for prurience but to make a point. As Eric Weinstein has observed, anyone genuinely interested in addressing the stigmatization and unhappiness felt by people who are in the wrong bodies would have started addressing the question of intersex first. They would have seen there the clearest hardware issue of all, an issue which has been woefully under-represented. It would have raised awareness of the situation of such people, to get them better recognition as well as a better understanding of how to deal with an issue which really needs medical and psychological support. Social justice campaigners might have done this.

But they didn't. They decided instead to push vigorously on trans: to pick up the hardest part of the whole question (`I am who I say I am and you can't prove otherwise') and run with it: `Trans lives matter'; 'Some people are trans. Get over it'. Everywhere, with a wearying predictability, the people who always complain about every aspect of the patriarchal, hegemonic, cis-supremacist, homophobic, institutionally racist, sexist state, decided to run with the trans issue. They specifically claimed that yes, if a man said he was a woman and didn't do anything about it, then yes he was a woman and it was transphobic to suggest otherwise. The pattern is clear. Why in her first weeks in Congress did Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez do a fundraiser for the British trans-rights group `Mermaids' which advocates introducing hormone therapy to children? Why are these people willing to defend, organize and argue for the hardest possible part of the case?

In 2018 there was debate in the House of Commons about trans issues. During it the case of Karen White came up. This was a man who was a convicted rapist but who now identified as a woman. Although he had not had gender reassignment surgery he asked to be put in a women's prison, and (with his male body) proceeded to sexually assault four female inmates. During the debate one Liberal Democrat MP, Layla Moran, summed up the extreme of trans thinking perfectly. Asked whether she would be happy to share a changing room with somebody who had a male body, Moran replied, `If that person was a trans woman, I absolutely would. I just do not see the issue. As for whether they have a beard [a matter that had also been raised] I dare say that some women have beards. There are all sorts of reasons why our bodies react differently to hormones. There are many forms of the human body. I see someone in their soul and as a person. I do not really care whether they have a male body.

No sensible person or movement hoping to pull together a coalition to create a viable rights movement to defend trans people would make such a claim. They would not routinely claim that trans people are simply trans when they say they are. They would not say that a bearded man is no problem for them in the changing room because `I dare say that some women have beards'. And they would not claim to be able to see into someone's soul and there recognize whether that person is a man or a woman. These are deranged claims and — like so many claims in the trans debate — they go on to derange anyone who has to listen to them, let alone those pushed to go along with them or assume that they are true.

A movement that sought to advance trans claims would start with intersex and from there move with enormous care along the spectrum of trans assertions, analyzing them with scientific precision in the process. It would not go straight to the hardest part of the claim and insist it is true and that everyone else must believe it is true too. That is not what you do if you are trying to build a

coalition or a movement. It is what you do if you do not want to create a consensus. It is what you do if you are seeking to cause division.

Once you notice this counter-intuitive play you can see it going on with each issue. For instance, a number of wage gaps exist. There is, for example, as Jordan Peterson has pointed out, a pay gap that exists between people who are agreeable and people who are disagreeable. But this is a gap that exists across both men and women. A disagreeable woman will have a pay advantage over an agreeable man. And vice versa. So if anyone is worried about pay gaps why would that one not be something to linger on? Why would there not be an endless and retributive campaign calling for agreeable people to be paid more in the workplace and for disagreeable people to step back? Because that wouldn't fit the aim, which is not to advance women's rights or women's pay situation, but to use women as a wedge to do something else.

With each of the issues highlighted in this book the aim of the social justice campaigners has consistently been to take each one — gay, women, race, trans — that they can present as a rights grievance and make their case at its most inflammatory. Their desire is not to heal but to divide, not to placate but to inflame, not to dampen but to burn. In this again the last part of a Marxist substructure can be glimpsed. If you cannot rule a society — or pretend to rule it, or try to rule it and collapse everything then you can do something else. In a society that is alive to its faults, and though imperfect remains a better option than anything else on offer, you sow doubt, division, animosity and fear. Most effectively you can try to make people doubt absolutely everything. Make them doubt whether the society they live in is good at all. Make them doubt that people really are treated fairly. Make them doubt whether there are any such groupings as men or women. Make them doubt almost everything. And then present yourself as having the answers: the grand, overarching, interlocking set of answers that will bring everyone to some perfect place, the details of which will follow in the post.

Perhaps they will have their way. Perhaps the advocates of the new religion will use gays and women and those of a different skin colour and trans individuals as a set of battering rams to turn people against the society they have been brought up in. Perhaps they will succeed in turning everyone against the 'cis white male patriarchy' and they will do it before all of their interlocking `oppressed, victim groups' have torn each other apart. It is possible. But anyone interested in preventing that nightmarish scenario should search for solutions.

Solutions

Many people will have already found their way to deal with the current of the times and developed more or less clever ways to navigate it. There are options open to people. Whilst writing this book I learned about the behaviour of a type of cuttlefish which hides its intentions, thus making the mating game more complex even than it already is. The cuttlefish is among the creatures most adept at sexual mimicry. The giant Australian cuttlefish, Sepia apama, has a tricky male-to-female operational sex ratio, able to reach as high as eleven males to each female. Since female cuttlefish reject 70 per cent of male advances the competition among the males is especially high, and made higher by the trend of consort guarding. Consort males achieve around 64 per cent of the matings. For this reason the other male cuttlefish have a range of strategies at their disposal to have any chance of impregnating a female, and one of them is to mimic the behaviour of female cuttlefish. Smaller male cuttlefish hide their sexually dimorphic fourth arm, develop the skin pattern of their intended mate and even move their arms to imitate the pose of an egg-laying female. The strategy has been shown to be enormously effective. In one observed case, out of five male cuttlefish who used this method

only one was turned away. Another was caught in the act by the consort male cuttlefish. But the other three cuttlefish successfully had their way.

The cuttlefish prompted in me a flash of recognition, specifically about the many men who are adopting similar tactics. The day after the inauguration of President Trump in January 2017 there were large demonstrations in Washington, DC, and other cities. This `Women's March' focused on the president's past remarks about women and included large numbers of protestors who wore pink `pussy hats. Banners bore legends like `Don't DICKtate to my pussy. At one after-march party in Washington a journalist colleague noticed the behaviour of some of the men who were present. Amid the bands, beer and plastic cups the girls stood around talking excitedly about the Women's March and their role in it. The young men present all strongly stressed their support for the march and all explained that they were feminists too. One young man `nodded' gravely' as one attractive young woman recited all the correct beliefs of a modern feminist. After she briefly left he turned to his friend and whispered `Dude, this is awesome! All these drunk, emotional girls in one city!' Whether the tactic worked in his case is not known. But he cannot be the only young man developing a cuttlefish strategy in order to get through the period in which he finds himself. Yet cuttlefish strategies, among others, are ways to survive in a horrible natural environment. A better ambition would be to try to change that environment.

Ask `Compared To What'?

One way to start might be to ask more regularly and more assiduously, `Compared to what?' When people attempt to sum up our societies today as monstrous, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic patriarchies the question needs to be asked. If this hasn't worked or isn't working, what is the system that has worked or does work? To ask this is not to say that elements of our society cannot be improved, or that we should not address injustice and unfairness when we see them. But to talk about our societies in the hostile tone of judge, juror and executioner demands some questions to be asked of the accuser.

Very often dissection of our societal fall relies on the presumption of a prelapsarian age: an age before the invention of the machine, steam or the marketplace. These presumptions lie very deep, starting with the idea that we are born in a state of virtue from which the world has unfairly ripped us. Jean-Jacques Rousseau famously embodied this thinking in passages like this from Book II of *Emile, or On Education* (published in English in 1763) in which he writes: 'The first movements of human nature are always right. There is no original perversity in the human heart. There is not a single vice to be found in it of which it cannot be said how and whence it entered. In relation to others, he must respond only to what nature asks of him, and then he will do nothing but good. People who believe this strain of thought must find a culprit for their own failings and the failings of every other person around them, since they were born in such a state of grace. Inevitably such thinking spills out into a belief that simpler, older or earlier societies somehow provide an example of something worth going back to.

So, apart from reasons of historical guilt, many Western people today find themselves imbibing the idea that `primitive' societies had some special state of grace which we lack today — as though in a simpler time there would have been more female dominance, more peace and less homophobia, racism and transphobia. There are an awful lot of unsupported assumptions among these beliefs. It is true that it is hard to quantify how much homophobia or racism would have been evident in various tribes. And perhaps there would have been more harmony and trans rights than we would suspect. But the facts often suggest the contrary. In his book *War Before Civilisation: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*, L. H. Keeley goes through the percentages of male deaths in conflict among a range of South

American and New Guinean tribes. The violent deaths range from almost io to 6o per cent of males. By contrast the percentage of males killed in violent conflict in the US and Europe in the twentieth century is a single-digit blip. If there is evidence that past societies would have been infinitely more tolerant of sexual and biological differences than we are in the twenty-first-century West, then it is incumbent on those making these claims to provide it.

Of course it may be that it is not with any society in history but another society in the world today that the comparison is being made. There are people who act as apologists for the revolutionary regime in Tehran, who like to cite the levels of transsexualism in that country as a demonstration of the progressiveness of the regime. This of course requires the listener to be ignorant of the fact that this is a country where right up to the present in 2019 men found guilty of homosexual acts are publicly hanged — often from cranes so that the maximum number of people can see the killing. In which other countries today are human rights at a more advanced stage than in Britain and America? If they exist then there is no harm — and only gain for us all — in hearing

about them. Perhaps one reason why people — especially neo-Marxists — are coy about the precise comparisons they are making is that the comparisons they would cite (Venezuela, Cuba, Russia) would reveal the deeper underbelly of their ideology and the true reasons for the negative accounting of the West.

But most often the question `Compared to what?' will elicit only the fact that the utopia with which our society is being compared has not yet come about. If this is the case, and the monstrous claims about our societies are being made in comparison to a society that has not yet been created, then a certain amount of humility and a great deal of further questioning might be needed. Those who claim that our society is typified by bigotry but believe they know how to fix any and all societal ills better make sure that their route maps are well plotted. If they are not then there is reason for everyone else to be suspicious about a project whose earliest stages are being presented as rigorous science when they more closely resemble an advocacy of magic.

The Victim Is Not Always Right, Or Nice, Deserves No Praise - And May Not Be A Victim

In his biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt (woo), H. W. Brands makes a passing point about the 32nd president's polio. Men of Roosevelt's generation, he writes, 'were expected to meet misfortune with a stiff upper lip. Fate was more capricious then. When everyone was a victim at one point or another, no one won sympathy by wearing victimhood as a badge'36 Such reflections suggest the possibility that the extraordinary number of victimhood claims of recent years may not in fact indicate what the intersectionalists and social justice proponents think that they do. Rather than demonstrating an excess of oppression in our societies, the abundance of such claims may in fact be revealing a great shortage of it. If people were so oppressed would they have the time or inclination to listen to every person who felt the need to publicize that a talk by a novelist at a literary festival had upset them, or that it was intolerable to be sold a burrito by someone of the wrong ethnicity?

Victimhood rather than stoicism or heroism has become something eagerly publicized, even sought after, in our culture. To be a victim is in some way to have won, or at least to have got a head start in the great oppression race of life. At the root of this curious development is one of the most important and mistaken judgements of the social justice movements: that oppressed people (or people who can claim to be oppressed) are in some way better than others, that there is some decency, purity or goodness which comes from being part of such a group. In fact, suffering in and of itself does not make someone a better person. A gay, female, black or trans person may be as dishonest, deceitful and rude as anybody else.

There is a suggestion in the social justice movement that when intersectionality has done its job and the matrix of competing hierarchies has finally been nixed, then an era of universal brotherhood will ensue. But the most likely explanation of human motivations in the future is that people will broadly go on behaving as they have done throughout history, that they will continue exhibiting the same impulses, frailties, passions and envy that have propelled our species up till now. For example, there is no reason to assume that if all social injustices were ironed out and every employer finally had the correct diversity of people in their companies (as broken down by gender, sexual orientation and race) that all the Chief People Officers would stand down from their roles. It seems at least possible that six-figure salaries will be as hard to come by on that happy day as they are now and that those who have managed to get them by presenting a hostile interpretation of society will not volunteer up their own salaries even if their work is done. More likely is that a salaried class know that this puzzle is unsolvable and that they have got themselves jobs for life. They will remain in those roles for as long as they can until such a time as it is recognized that their solution to society's ills offers no solution at all, but only an invitation to madness on a vast and costly scale both to the individual and to society as a whole.

Can We Incline Towards Generosity?

When explaining the use of `KillAllMen' and `white people' in a derogatory way, Ezra Klein said that when reading such words he felt `inclined ... towards generosity. Hence he felt able to interpret `KillAllMen' as meaning 'it would be nice if the world sucked less for women' and interpreted the use of `CancelWhitePeople' as a criticism of 'the dominant power structure and culture. Why did he feel inclined towards generosity in such cases? It would seem - as we saw in the issue of 'the speaker not the speech' - that highly politicized people are willing to interpret even extreme remarks from their own political tribe in a generous and forgiving light while reading the remarks of those in any opposing camp in as negative and hostile a light as possible.

Can the spirit of generosity be extended any more widely? If people were able to feel some generosity in interpreting the remarks of others, even of those on an opposing side, then some lessening of the trench-digging might be possible. The problem is that social media does not encourage this. It encourages the precise opposite. Not being able to meet, and not having any need to meet, makes people double-down on positions (and attitudes) and ramp up their outrage. When someone is face to face with another person it is far harder to reduce them to one thing that they have said, or strip them of all characteristics except one.

On his travels in America in the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville noticed the significance of assembly in the United States - specifically that face-to-face meetings of the citizenry allowed them to remedy problems often before any other authority was needed. In Democracy in America he attributes a great power to this ability to assemble and observes that face-to-face contestation is not only the best way to get to a solution but that in such interactions `opinions are deployed with the force and heat that written thought can never attain'. Although everything in the development of the new media is pulling people away from face-to-face encounters, it remains the best available forum in which to build confidence in others. To incline towards generosity you have to have a baseline presumption that your generosity will not be abused, and the best if not the only way to work that out is by personal interaction. Without it life will increasingly resemble a catalogue of easily searchable and eminently revivable historic grudges. So an inclination towards generosity not just among allies, but towards ostensible opponents, may be one of the first steps out of the madness. I do not especially like (Dr) Michael Davidson's ideas about being gay, but if I decided that he and his `Voices of the Silenced' should be viewed only in the most negative possible light then I would not merely have no need to listen to him. I would not want to live in the same society as him. Yet we do

live in the same society, and we have to find some way to get along together. It is the only option we have because otherwise, if we have come to the conclusion that talking and listening respectfully are futile, the only tool left for us is violence.

Recognize Where We May Be Going

In 1967, just a year before his death, Martin Luther King Jr gave one of his greatest speeches in Atlanta, Georgia. Entitled `Where do we go from here?' it included a remarkable plea. `Let us be dissatisfied until that day when nobody will shout, "White Power!", when nobody will shout, "Black Power!", but everybody will talk about God's power and human power. Among the many depressing aspects of recent years, perhaps the most troubling is the ease with which race has returned as an issue - bandied about by people who either cannot possibly realize the danger of the game they are playing or who do know precisely what they are playing at, which is unforgivable. Some of the inevitable end-points have already emerged and should have presented the clearest possible warning signals.

For instance, who would have expected even a generation ago that it would be acceptable for a liberal magazine to pose the question, 'Are Jews white?' This wasn't National Geographic a century ago, but The Atlantic magazine in 2016. The question arose because of the dispute over where Jews might come in the oppression hierarchy that is being assembled. Should Jews be regarded as being high up in the oppression stakes, or can they be seen as benefiting from some privileges of their own? Do they benefit from white privilege or not? Once such questions start to get asked is it surprising that some people will come up with ugly answers? At the University of Illinois in Urbana some leaflets turned up on campus in 2017 which offered their own answer. They presented a hierarchical pyramid, at the bottom of which were the `99 per cent' who were oppressed by the alleged top i per cent. But the leaflets asked whether the top i per cent oppressing everyone else were `straight white men' or 'is the i per cent Jewish?' The authors seemed to know the answer, arguing that Jews were the primary holders of `privilege, concluding that `Ending white privilege starts with ending Jewish privilege. Are those who engage in endless assertions about `privilege' absolutely sure that their movement and analysis will not stampede in directions like this? Are they certain that after not just releasing resentment but encouraging it, such a basic human sentiment will not run free? What are their crash barriers to prevent this? And if they haven't got any such plans, perhaps we could return to Martin Luther King's vision. Perhaps we could aim to take race out of every and any debate and discussion and turn our increasing colour obsession back into an aspiration for colour-blindness.

Depoliticize Our Lives

The aim of identity politics would appear to be to politicize absolutely everything. To turn every aspect of human interaction into a matter of politics. To interpret every action and relationship in our lives along lines which are alleged to have been carved out by political actions. The calls to spend our time working out our own place and the places of others in the oppression hierarchy are invitations not just to an era of navel-gazing, but to turn every human relationship into a political power calibration. The new metaphysics includes a call to find meaning in this game: to struggle, and fight and campaign and `ally' ourselves with people in order to reach the promised land. In an era without purpose, and in a universe without clear meaning, this call to politicize everything and then fight for it has an undoubted attraction. It fills life with meaning, of a kind.

But of all the ways in which people can find meaning in their lives, politics - let alone politics on such a scale - is one of the unhappiest.

Politics may be an important aspect of our lives, but as a source of personal meaning it is disastrous. Not just because the ambitions it strives after nearly always go unachieved, but because finding purpose in politics laces politics with a passion - including a rage - that perverts the whole enterprise. If two people are in disagreement about something important, they may disagree as amicably as they like if it is just a matter of getting to the truth or the most amenable option. But if one party finds their whole purpose in life to reside in some aspect of that disagreement, then the chances of amicability fade vast and the likelihood of reaching any truth recedes.

One of the ways to distance ourselves from the madnesses of our times is to retain an interest in politics but not to rely on it as a source of meaning. The call should be for people to simplify their lives and not to mislead themselves by devoting their lives to a theory that answers no questions, makes no predictions and is easily falsifiable. Meaning can be found in all sorts of places. For most individuals it is found in the love of the people and places around them: in friends, family and loved ones, in culture, place and wonder. A sense of purpose is found in working out what is meaningful in our lives and then orientating ourselves over time as closely as possible to those centres of meaning. Using ourselves up on identity politics, social justice (in this manifestation) and intersectionality is a waste of a life.

We may certainly aim to live in a society in which nobody should be held back from what they can do because of some personal characteristic allotted to them by chance. If somebody has the competency to do something, and the desire to do something, then nothing about their race, sex or sexual orientation should hold them back. But minimizing difference is not the same as pretending difference does not exist. To assume that sex, sexuality and skin colour mean nothing would be ridiculous. But to assume that they mean everything will be fatal. <>

THE NARROW CORRIDOR: STATES, SOCIETIES, AND THE FATE OF LIBERTY by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson [Penguin Press, 9780735224384]

From the authors of the international bestseller *Why Nations Fail*, a crucial new big-picture framework that answers the question of how liberty flourishes in some states but falls to authoritarianism or anarchy in others--and explains how it can continue to thrive despite new threats.

In **WHY NATIONS FAIL**, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson argued that countries rise and fall based not on culture, geography, or chance, but on the power of their institutions. In their new book, they build a new theory about liberty and how to achieve it, drawing a wealth of evidence from both current affairs and disparate threads of world history.

Liberty is hardly the "natural" order of things. In most places and at most times, the strong have dominated the weak and human freedom has been quashed by force or by customs and norms. Either states have been too weak to protect individuals from these threats, or states have been too strong for people to protect themselves from despotism. Liberty emerges only when a delicate and precarious balance is struck between state and society.

There is a Western myth that political liberty is a durable construct, arrived at by a process of "enlightenment." This static view is a fantasy, the authors argue. In reality, the corridor to liberty is

narrow and stays open only via a fundamental and incessant struggle between state and society: The authors look to the American Civil Rights Movement, Europe's early and recent history, the Zapotec civilization circa 500 BCE, and Lagos's efforts to uproot corruption and institute government accountability to illustrate what it takes to get and stay in the corridor. But they also examine Chinese imperial history, colonialism in the Pacific, India's caste system, Saudi Arabia's suffocating cage of norms, and the "Paper Leviathan" of many Latin American and African nations to show how countries can drift away from it, and explain the feedback loops that make liberty harder to achieve.

Today we are in the midst of a time of wrenching destabilization. We need liberty more than ever, and yet the corridor to liberty is becoming narrower and more treacherous. The danger on the horizon is not "just" the loss of our political freedom, however grim that is in itself; it is also the disintegration of the prosperity and safety that critically depend on liberty. The opposite of the corridor of liberty is the road to ruin.

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Liberty is hardly the natural order of things. In most places and at most times, the strong have dominated the weak, and human freedom has been quashed by force or by customs and norms. Either states have been too weak to protect individuals from these threats, or they have been too strong for people to protect themselves from despotism. In their new book **THE NARROW CORRIDOR: STATES, SOCIETIES, AND THE FATE OF LIBERTY** (Penguin Press) Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson—economists and authors of the international bestseller Why Nations Fail—argue that liberty, defined as the freedom to choose your actions and the ability to exercise that freedom, is rare and emerges only when a delicate and precarious balance is struck between state and society. The narrow corridor is this balance, existing on a thin wedge between tyranny and anarchy, and in this corridor society is mobilized, actively participates in politics, and holds its own against the state and the elites. A rich historical study, **THE NARROW CORRIDOR** provides a big-picture framework that seeks to answer the question, never more important or timely than today: How does liberty develop and flourish despite new and ongoing threats?

There is a Western myth that political liberty is a durable construct, a steady state, arrived at by a process of enlightenment. Acemoglu and Robinson argue this static view is a fantasy; rather, the corridor to liberty is narrow and stays open only via a fundamental and incessant struggle between state and society. Both state and society need to be strong. A strong state is needed to control violence, enforce laws, and provide public services that are critical for a life in which people are empowered to make and pursue their choices. A strong mobilized populace is needed to exert control on the state and keep it and its rulers accountable. This struggle between state and society becomes self-reinforcing: both must develop a richer array of capacities just to keep moving forward along the corridor.

Yet this struggle also underscores the very fragile nature of liberty and explains why authoritarianism and anarchy remain risks. Acemoglu and Robinson take us around the world and through centuries to present day to understand how this balance between state and society, between economic, political, and social elites and citizens, and between institutions and norms has played out on the ground. Through an array of studies, the authors illustrate how the narrow corridor is a constant work in progress; if one side becomes too strong, as has often happened in history, liberty begins to wane. They examine, for example, the authoritarian state through the Chinese under the Communist Party; societal factions in Tajikistan overwhelming the state and causing a bloody clan-based civil war, untroubled by state intervention; and finally, illustrate states getting into and staying in the corridor through the lens of the American Civil Rights Movement, weakening corruption and increasing capacity in Lagos, and the development of the Swedish welfare state after World War II.

Today we are in the midst of a time of wrenching destabilization fueled by inequality, complex security threats, populist anger, and strongmen who are leading this new era of authoritarianism. The corridor to liberty is becoming narrower and more treacherous. The danger on the horizon is not just the loss of our political freedom; it is also the disintegration of the prosperity and safety that critically depend on liberty. The opposite of the corridor of liberty is the road to ruin.

What is the book about?

THE NARROW CORRIDOR is about liberty, and how and why human societies have achieved or failed to achieve it, and the consequences of this, especially for prosperity. At its fundamental level, liberty requires not just the abstract notion that you are free to choose your actions but also the ability to exercise that freedom. This ability is absent when a person, group, or organization has the power to threaten you or use social pressures to subjugate you. It cannot be present when conflicts are resolved by actual force or longstanding unequal power relations.

In their 2012 book Why Nations Fail, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson theorized that nations rise or fall on the strength of their institutions—not culture, geography, incompetent leaders, or chance. In **THE NARROW CORRIDOR**, they expand this framework, drawing a wealth of evidence from current events and the history of human civilization, to understand the emergence of liberty and why it has appeared in some parts of the world and flourished, but not others. Both state and society need to be strong. A strong state is needed to control violence, enforce laws, and provide public services that are critical for a life in which people are empowered to make and pursue their choices. A strong mobilized society is needed to control and shackle the strong state. But it is clear that liberty has been rare in history and is rare today. In most places and at most times, the strong have dominated the weak and human freedom has been quashed by force or by customs and norms.

What is the "narrow corridor"?

The narrow corridor is a delicate and precarious balance struck between state and society. Squeezed between the fear and repression wrought by despotic states and the violence and lawlessness that emerge in their absence is a narrow corridor to liberty. But the authors show this balance is not about a revolutionary moment. It's a constant, day-in, day-out struggle between the two. This struggle brings benefits. In the corridor the state and society do not just compete, they also cooperate. The state and its elites must learn to live with the shackles society puts on them, and different segments of society have to learn to work together despite their differences. This cooperation engenders greater capacity for the state to deliver the things that society wants and foments greater societal mobilization to monitor this capacity.

The reasons why the corridor is narrow are many. How can you contain a state that has a huge bureaucracy, a powerful military, and the freedom to decide what the law is? How can you ensure that as the state is called on to take on more responsibilities in a complex world, it will remain tame and under control? How can you keep society working together rather than turning against itself, riven with differences and divisions? How can you prevent this all from flipping into a zero-sum contest? As the book demonstrates, entering into and staying in the narrow corridor is, historically, remarkably difficult.

The heart of **THE NARROW CORRIDOR** lies in a process the authors call the "Red Queen Effect," which demonstrates how the mutual strengths of the state and society in the narrow corridor reinforce each other and evolve over time. Harnessing the Red Queen engenders liberty, but by its nature, it is always a struggle to maintain and societies enter and depart from it with far-reaching consequences.

Chapter 1: How Does History End?

- Acemoglu and Robinson extend the Hobbesian critique of the Leviathan, or the state, and offer a distinction between Despotic, Absent, and Shackled Leviathans:
  - **Despotic Leviathan**: An authoritarian state that is unrestrained by and unaccountable to society. Its people may have protection and experience economic prosperity, but it also is fearsome: it silences citizens, is impervious to their wishes, dominates them, imprisons them, and murders them. It steals the fruits of their labor or helps others to do so. Some societies, like the Germans under the Third Reich or the Chinese under the Communist Party, live with a Despotic Leviathan. They suffer dominance, but this time at the hand of the state and those controlling the state's power. The defining characteristic of the Despotic Leviathan isn't that it represses and murders its citizens, but that it provides no means for society and the regular people to have a say in how its power and capacity are used.
  - **Absent Leviathan**: A stateless society. Norms are critical when the Leviathan is absent because they provide the only way for society to avoid anarchy. However, these same norms also create a tighter, possibly more stifling cage, imposing different but no less disempowering sort of dominance on people. Once traditions and customs become so deeply ingrained, they start regulating many aspects of people's lives. It's then inevitable that they will start favoring those with a little more say in society, at the expense of others. Even when norms have evolved over centuries, they get interpreted and enforced by these more powerful individuals. Why shouldn't they tilt the board in their favor and cement their power in the community a little more?

- o **Shackled Leviathan**: A powerful state, but it coexists with and listens to a society that is vigilant and willing to get involved in politics and contest power. Though there is nothing automatic about the emergence of liberty, and it hasn't been easy to achieve in human history, there is room for liberty in human affairs and this critically depends on the emergence of states and state institutions: a shackled state. We need a state that has the capacity to enforce laws, control violence, resolve conflicts, and provide public services, but is still tamed and controlled by an assertive, well-organized society. It has become distinctive in creating broad-based economic opportunities and incentives and promoting a sustained rise in economic prosperity. But the Shackled Leviathan arrived on the scene relatively late in history, and its rise has been contested and contentious.

Chapter 2: The Red Queen

- The heart of book's theory, which is the evolution of state-society relations over time. The authors explain why the emergence of powerful states is often resisted (because people are afraid of despotism) and how societies use their norms, not just to mitigate the possibility of anarchy, but also to counter and control state power. The **Shackled Leviathan** emerges in a narrow corridor where society's involvement in politics creates a balance of power with the state. The book illustrates this possibility with the early history of the Greek city-state Athens and the founding of the U.S. Republic. The authors draw out some of the implications of this theory, emphasizing how different historical configurations lead to the Absent, Despotic, and Shackled Leviathans. They further shows it's the Shackled Leviathan, not the despotic sort, that develops the most and deepest state capacity.

Chapter 3: The Will to Power

- Why **Absent Leviathans** may be unstable and yield to political hierarchy in the face of the "will to power"—the desires of some actors to reshape society and accumulate greater political and economic power. These transitions away from stateless societies are a mixed bag for liberty. On one hand, they bring order and may relax the cage of norms; on the other hand, they introduce unrestrained despotism.

Chapter 4: Economics Outside the Corridor

- Examines the consequences of the **Absent and Despotic Leviathans** for the economic and social lives of citizens. It explains why economic prosperity is more likely to emerge under the Despotic Leviathan than under either the anarchic conditions of Hobbesian Warre or in the cramped space created by the cage of norms. But the prosperity created by the Despotic Leviathan is both limited and strife with inequities.

Chapter 5: Allegory of Good Government

- Contrasts the workings of the economy under the **Absent and Despotic Leviathans** to life in the corridor. The Shackled Leviathan creates very different types of economic incentives and opportunities and permits a much greater degree of experimentation and social mobility. The authors look at the Italian city-states and the ancient Zapotec civilization in the Americas to communicate these ideas. They also highlight that there is nothing uniquely European about Shackled Leviathans, yet ask the question: why do most examples come from Europe?

Chapter 6: The European Scissors

- Explains why several European countries have managed to build broadly participatory societies with capable but still shackled states. The answer focuses on the factors that led much of Europe toward the corridor during the early Middle Ages as Germanic tribes, especially the Franks, came to invade the lands dominated by the Western Roman Empire after its collapse. The marriage of the bottom-up, participatory institutions and norms of Germanic tribes and the centralizing bureaucratic and legal traditions of the Roman Empire forged a unique balance of power between state and society, enabling the rise of Shackled Leviathan. Underscoring the importance of this marriage, very different types of states emerged in parts of Europe where either the Roman tradition or the bottom-up politics of Germanic tribes were absent, such as Iceland. The chapter then traces the path of liberty and the Shackled Leviathan, which had considerable ups and downs and veered out of the corridor on several occasions.

Chapter 7: The Mandate of Heaven

- Contrasts the European experience with Chinese history. Despite historic similarities, the early development of a powerful state in China completely removed societal mobilizations and political participation. Without these countervailing forces, the Chinese development path closely follows that of the Despotic Leviathan. The authors trace the economic consequences of this type of state-society relationship both in Chinese history and today and discuss whether the Shackled Leviathan can emerge in China anytime soon.

Chapter 8: The Broken Red Queen

- Looks at India. Unlike China, India has a long history of popular participation and accountability. But liberty has been no more successful in taking root in India. This is because of the powerful cage of norms in India, as epitomized by its caste system. Caste relations have not only inhibited liberty but also made it impossible for society to effectively contest power and monitor the state. The caste system has produced a society fragmented against itself and a state that lacks capacity, which is nonetheless unaccountable as the fragmented society remains immobilized and powerless.

Chapter 9: The Devil in the Details

- Studies why some parts of Europe and not others found their way into and stayed in the corridor. In the process of answering this question, the authors develop another central idea of the book: the conditional nature of how structural factors influence state-society relationships. They emphasize that the impact of various structural factors, such as economic conditions, demographic shocks, and war, on the development of the state and the economy depend on the prevailing balance between state and society. There are no unambiguous conclusions to be drawn about structural factors. They illustrate these ideas looking at why, starting with similar conditions and facing similar international problems, Switzerland developed a Shackled Leviathan, while Prussia fell under the dominance of the **Despotic Leviathan**. This is in contrast with Montenegro, where the state did not play much of a role in either conflict resolution or in organizing economic activity. These same ideas can be used to explain why Costa Rica and Guatemala diverged sharply in the face of the nineteenth-century economic globalization, and why the Soviet Union's collapse led to a diverse set of political paths.

Chapter 10: What's the Matter with Ferguson?

- The development of the American Leviathan. Acemoglu and Robinson emphasize that, although the U.S. managed to build a **Shackled Leviathan**, this was based on a Faustian bargain—the Federalists accepted a Constitution that kept the federal state too weak to both appease a society that was concerned about the threat of despotism, and to reassure Southern slaveholders who were worried about losing their slaves and assets. This compromise worked, and the U.S. is still in the corridor. But it also led to an unbalanced development of the American Leviathan which, even as it has become a veritable international sea monster, still has only limited capacity in several important domains. This is most visible in the inability or unwillingness of the American Leviathan to protect its citizens from violence. This unbalanced development also led to the American Leviathan's patchy record in structuring economic policy to ensure equitable gains from economic growth. Uneven state development has caused a distorted evolution of the power and capabilities of society, and paradoxically, it created room for the state's power to evolve in unmonitored and unaccountable ways in some domains, such as national security.

Chapter 11: The Paper Leviathan

- States in many developing countries may act as despots but lack the capacity of the **Despotic Leviathan**. The chapter explains how these **"Paper" Leviathans** have come about and why they make so little attempt to build capacity. They are a bureaucratic machine favoring the privileged class, serving as both a political and economic brake on development, mainly because they are afraid of mobilizing society and thereby destabilizing their control over it. One origin of these Paper Leviathans lies in the indirect rule of colonial powers, which set up modern-looking administrative structures but at the same time empowered local elites to rule with few constraints and little participation from society.

Chapter 12: Wahhab's Children

- The Middle East. Though state builders will often loosen the cage of norms as it limits their ability to mold society, there are circumstances under which despotic states may find it beneficial to strengthen or even refashion the cage. This tendency has characterized Middle Eastern politics, the historical and social circumstances that have made it an attractive strategy for would-be despots, and the implications of this development path for liberty, violence, and instability.

Chapter 13: Red Queen out of Control

- How the Shackled Leviathan may get out of control when the race between state and society turns "zero-sum," with each side trying to undercut and destroy the other for survival. The authors emphasize how this outcome is more likely when institutions are not up to the task of impartially resolving conflicts and lose the trust of some segments of the public. They look at the collapse of the Weimar Republic in Germany, Chilean democracy in the 1970s, and the Italian communes to illustrate these dynamics and identify the structural factors making this type of zero-sum competition more likely and link them to the rise of modern-day populist movements.

Chapter 14: Into the Corridor

- How societies move into the corridor and whether anything can be done to facilitate such a move. The authors examine important structural factors, focusing on what makes the corridor wider and thus easier to move into. They explain the role of broad coalitions in such transitions and discuss a number of cases of successful transitions, such as Japan

following its defeat in World War II, as well as some failed ones, such as Turkey, which had a window of opportunity to move into the corridor in the early 2000s.

Chapter 15: Living with the Leviathan

- The challenges facing nations in the corridor. The main argument is that as the world changes, the state must expand and take on new responsibilities, but this in turn requires society to become more capable and vigilant, lest it find itself spinning out of the corridor. New coalitions are critical for the state to gain greater capacity while keeping its shackles—a possibility illustrated by Sweden's response to the economic and social exigencies created by the Great Depression and how this led to the emergence of social democracy. It is no different today, when we are facing many new challenges, ranging from inequality, joblessness, and slow economic growth to complex security threats. We need the state to develop additional capabilities and shoulder fresh responsibilities, but only if we can find new ways of keeping it shackled, mobilizing society and protecting our liberties.

  Many of us living in democratic countries with assertive societies and high-capacity states are immensely fortunate compared to those suffering under the yoke of an authoritarian state or making their existence under fear, violence, and dominance without any state institutions to protect them. Nevertheless, living with the (shackled) Leviathan is a work in progress. The authors' argument has been that the key to making nations more stable and less likely to spin out of the corridor is to seek to create and to re-create the balance of power between state and society, between those who are powerful and those who are not. The narrow corridor is there to help us, but ultimately society's power is about society's organization and mobilization. Human progress depends on the expansion of the state's capacity to meet new challenges and combat all dominances, old and new, but that won't happen unless society demands it and mobilizes to defend everyone's rights. There is nothing easy or automatic about that, but it can and does happen.

Liberty

This book is about liberty, and how and why human societies have achieved or failed to achieve it. It is also about the consequences of this, especially for prosperity. Our definition follows the English philosopher John Locke, who argued that people have liberty when they have perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons, as they think fit ... without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.

Liberty in this sense is a basic aspiration of all human beings. Locke emphasized that no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.

Yet it is clear that liberty has been rare in history and is rare today. Every year millions of people in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Central America flee their homes and risk life and limb in the process, not because they are seeking higher incomes or greater material comfort, but because they are trying to protect themselves and their families from violence and fear.

Philosophers have proposed many definitions of liberty. But at the most fundamental level, as Locke recognized, liberty must start with people being free from violence, intimidation, and other demeaning acts. People must be able to make free choices about their lives and have the means to carry them out without the menace of unreasonable punishment or draconian social sanctions.

All the Evil in the World

In January 2011 in the Hareeqa market in the old city of Damascus, Syria, a spontaneous protest took place against the despotic regime of Bashar al-Assad. Soon afterward in the southern city of

Daraa some children wrote "The people want the fall of the government" on a wall. They were arrested and tortured. A crowd gathered to demand their release, and two people were killed by the police. A mass demonstration erupted that soon spread throughout the country. A lot of the people, it turned out, did want the government to fall. A civil war soon broke out. The state, its military, and its security forces duly disappeared from much of the country. But instead of liberty, Syrians ended up with civil war and uncontrolled violence.

Adam, a media organizer in Latakia, reflected on what happened next:

> We thought we'd get a present, and what we got was all the evil in the world.

Husayn, a playwright from Aleppo, summed it up:

> We never expected that these dark groups would come into Syria—the ones that have taken over the game now.

Foremost among these "dark groups" was the so-called Islamic State, or what was then known as ISIS, which aimed to create a new "Islamic caliphate." In 2014, ISIS took control of the major Syrian city of Raqqa. On the other side of the border in Iraq, they captured the cities of Fallujah, Ramadi, and the historic city of Mosul with its 1.5 million inhabitants. ISIS and many other armed groups filled the stateless void left by the collapse of the Syrian and Iraqi governments with unimaginable cruelty. Beatings, beheadings, and mutilations became commonplace. Abu Firas, a fighter with the Free Syrian Army, described the "new normal" in Syria: It's been so long since I heard that someone died from natural causes. In the beginning, one or two people would get killed. Then twenty. Then fifty. Then it became normal. If we lost fifty people, we thought, "Thank God, it's only fifty!" I can't sleep without the sound of bombs or bullets. It's like something is missing.

Amin, a physical therapist from Aleppo, remembered:

> One of the other guys called his girlfriend and said "Sweetheart, I'm out of minutes on my phone. I'll call you back on Amin's phone." After a while she called asking about him, and I told her he'd been killed. She cried and my friends said, "Why did you tell her that?" I said, "Because that's what happened. It's normal. He died." ... I'd open my phone and look at my contacts and only one or two were still alive. They told us, "If someone dies, don't delete his number. Just change his name to Martyr." ... So I'd open my contact list and it was all Martyr, Martyr, Martyr.

The collapse of the Syrian state created a humanitarian disaster of enormous proportions. Out of a population of about 18 million before the war, as many as 500,000 Syrians are estimated to have lost their lives. Over 6 million have been internally displaced and 5 million have fled the country and are currently living as refugees.

The Gilgamesh Problem

The calamity unleashed by the collapse of the Syrian state is not surprising. Philosophers and social scientists have long maintained that you need a state to resolve conflicts, enforce laws, and contain violence. As Locke puts it:

> Where there is no law there is no freedom.

Yet Syrians had started protesting to gain some freedoms from Assad's autocratic regime. As Adam ruefully recalled:

> Ironically, we went out in demonstrations to eradicate corruption and criminal behavior and evil and hurting people. And we've ended up with results that hurt many more people.

Syrians like Adam were grappling with a problem so endemic to human society that it is a theme of one of the oldest surviving pieces of written text, the 4,200-year-old Sumerian tablets that record

the Epic of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh was the king of Uruk, perhaps the world's first city, situated on a now dried-up channel of the Euphrates River in the south of modern-day Iraq. The epic tells us that Gilgamesh created a remarkable city, flourishing with commerce and public services for its inhabitants:

> See how its ramparts gleam like copper in the sun. Climb the stone staircase ... walk on the wall of Uruk, follow its course around the city, inspect its mighty foundations, examine its brickwork, how masterfully it is built, observe the land it encloses ... the glorious palaces and temples, the shops and marketplaces, the houses, the public squares.

But there was a hitch:

> Who is like Gilgamesh? ... The city is his possession, he struts through it, arrogant, his head raised high, trampling its citizens like a wild bull. He is king, he does whatever he wants, takes the son from his father and crushes him, takes the girl from her mother and uses her ... no one dares to oppose him.

Gilgamesh was out of control. A bit like Assad in Syria. In despair the people "cried out to heaven" to Anu, the god of the sky and the chief deity in the Sumerian pantheon of gods. They pleaded:

> Heavenly father, Gilgamesh ... has exceeded all bounds. The people suffer from his tyranny ... Is this how you want your king to rule? Should a shepherd savage his own flock?

Anu paid attention and asked Aruru, mother of creation, to create a double for Gilgamesh, his second self, a man who equals his strength and courage, a man who equals his stormy heart. Create a new hero, let them balance each other perfectly, so that Uruk has peace.

Anu thus came up with a solution to what we'll call the "Gilgamesh problem"—controlling the authority and the power of a state so that you get the good things and not the bad. Anú s was the doppelgänger solution, similar to what people today call "checks and balances." Gilgamesh's double Enkidu would contain him. James Madison, one of the founding fathers of the U.S. system of government, would have sympathized. He would argue 4,000 years later that constitutions must be designed so that "ambition must be made to counteract ambition."

Gilgamesh's first encounter with his double came when he was about to ravish a new bride. Enkidu blocked the doorway. They fought. Although Gilgamesh ultimately prevailed, his unrivaled, despotic power was gone. The seeds of liberty in Uruk?

Unfortunately not. Checks and balances parachuted from above don't work in general, and they didn't in Uruk. Soon Gilgamesh and Enkidu started to conspire. As the epic records it:

> They embraced and kissed. They held hands like brothers. They walked side by side. They became true friends.

They subsequently colluded to kill the monster Humbaba, the guardian of the great cedar forest of Lebanon. When the gods sent the Bull of Heaven to punish them, they combined forces to kill it. The prospect for liberty vanished along with the checks and balances.

If not from a state hemmed in by doppelgängers and checks and balances, where does liberty come from? Not from Assad's regime. Clearly not from the anarchy that followed the collapse of the Syrian state.

Our answer is simple: Liberty needs the state and the laws. But it is not given by the state or the elites controlling it. It is taken by regular people, by society. Society needs to control the state so that it protects and promotes people's liberty rather than quashing it like Assad did in Syria before 2011. Liberty needs a mobilized society that participates in politics, protests when it's necessary, and votes the government out of power when it can.

The Narrow Corridor to Liberty

Our argument in this book is that for liberty to emerge and flourish, both state and society must be strong. A strong state is needed to control violence, enforce laws, and provide public services that are critical for a life in which people are empowered to make and pursue their choices. A strong, mobilized society is needed to control and shackle the strong state. Doppelgänger solutions and checks and balances don't solve the Gilgamesh problem because, without society's vigilance, constitutions and guarantees are not worth much more than the parchment they are written on.

Squeezed between the fear and repression wrought by despotic states and the violence and lawlessness that emerge in their absence is a narrow corridor to liberty. It is in this corridor that the state and society balance each other out. This balance is not about a revolutionary moment. It's a constant, day-in, day-out struggle between the two. This struggle brings benefits. In the corridor the state and society do not just compete, they also cooperate. This cooperation engenders greater capacity for the state to deliver the things that society wants and foments greater societal mobilization to monitor this capacity.

What makes this a corridor, not a door, is that achieving liberty is a process; you have to travel a long way in the corridor before violence is brought under control, laws are written and enforced, and the state starts providing services to its citizens. It is a process because the state and its elites must learn to live with the shackles society puts on them and different segments of society have to learn to work together despite their differences.

What makes this corridor narrow is that this is no easy feat. How can you contain a state that has a huge bureaucracy, a powerful military, and the freedom to decide what the law is? How can you ensure that as the state is called on to take on more responsibilities in a complex world, it will remain tame and under control? How can you keep society working together rather than turning against itself, riven with divisions? How do you prevent all of this from flipping into a zero-sum contest? Not easy at all, and that's why the corridor is narrow, and societies enter and depart from it with far-reaching consequences.

You can't engineer any of this. Not that very many leaders, left to their own devices, would really try to engineer liberty. When the state and its elites are too powerful and society is meek, why would leaders grant people rights and liberty? And if they did, could you trust them to stick to their word?

You can see the origins of liberty in the history of women's liberation from the days of Gilgamesh right down to our own. How did society move from a situation where, as the epic has it, "every girl's hymen ... belonged to him," to one where women have rights (well, in some places anyway)? Could it be that these rights were granted by men? The United Arab Emirates, for instance, has a Gender Balance Council formed in 2015 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice president and prime minister of the country and ruler of Dubai. It gives out gender equality awards every year for things like the "best government entity supporting gender balance," "best federal authority supporting gender balance," and "best gender balance initiative." The awards for 2018, given out by Sheikh Maktoum himself, all have one thing in common—every one went to a man! The problem with the United Arab Emirates' solution was that it was engineered by Sheikh Maktoum and imposed on society, without society's participation.

Contrast this with the more successful history of women's rights, for example, in Britain, where women's rights were not given but taken. Women formed a social movement and became known as the suffragettes. The suffragettes emerged out of the British Women's Social and Political Union, a women-only movement founded in 1903. They didn't wait for men to give them prizes for "best

gender balance initiative." They mobilized. They engaged in direct action and civil disobedience. They bombed the summer house of the then chancellor of the exchequer and later prime minister, David Lloyd George. They chained themselves to railings outside the Houses of Parliament. They refused to pay their taxes and when they were sent to prison, they went on hunger strikes and had to be force-fed.

Emily Davison was a prominent member of the suffragette movement. On June 4, 1913, at the famous Epsom Derby horse race, Davison ran onto the track in front of Anmer, a horse belonging to King George V. Davison, according to some reports holding the purple, white, and green flag of the suffragettes, was hit by Anmer. The horse fell and crushed her, as the photograph included in the photo insert shows. Four days later Davison died from her injuries. Five years later women could vote in parliamentary elections. Women didn't get rights in Britain because of magnanimous grants by some (male) leaders. Gaining rights was a consequence of their organization and empowerment.

The story of women's liberation isn't unique or exceptional. Liberty almost always depends on society's mobilization and ability to hold its own against the state and its elites. <>

THE TYRANNY OF VIRTUE: IDENTITY, THE ACADEMY, AND THE HUNT FOR POLITICAL HERESIES by Robert Boyers [Scribner, 9781982127183]

From public intellectual and professor Robert Boyers, a thought-provoking volume of nine essays that elegantly and fiercely addresses recent developments in American culture and argues for the tolerance of difference that is at the heart of the liberal tradition.

Written from the perspective of a liberal intellectual who has spent a lifetime as a writer, editor, and college professor, **THE TYRANNY OF VIRTUE** is a precise and nuanced insider's look at shifts in American culture—most especially in the American academy—that so many people find alarming. Part memoir and part polemic, an anatomy of important and dangerous ideas, and a *cri de coeur* lamenting the erosion of standard liberal values, Boyers's collection of essays is devoted to such subjects as tolerance, identity, privilege, appropriation, diversity, and ableism that have turned academic life into a minefield. Why, Robert Boyers asks, are a great many liberals, people who should know better, invested in the drawing up of enemies lists and driven by the conviction that on critical issues no dispute may be tolerated? In stories, anecdotes, and character profiles, a public intellectual and longtime professor takes on those in his own progressive cohort who labor in the grip of a poisonous and illiberal fundamentalism. The end result is a finely tuned work of cultural intervention from the front lines.

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What Is To Be Done?

The last mass trials were a great success. There are going to be fewer but better Russians. —Ernst Lubitsch, Ninotchka

The stories I have told in this book do not provide a strong empirical case for optimism. In several respects the tendencies that alarmed many of us on the liberal Left twenty-five or thirty years ago have grown more disturbing. Intolerance among young people and their academic sponsors in the university is more entrenched than it was before, and both administrators and a large proportion of the liberal professoriate are running scared, fearful that they will be accused of thought crimes if they speak out against even the most obvious abuses and absurdities. An Ivy League college senior, enrolled in my July 2018 New York State Summer Writers Institute, told me that in his workshop he was denounced by several other students for writing poems that draw on his experience working as a volunteer in Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama. How dare he write poems about lynching and the travails of oppressed people when it was obvious that he has no legitimate claim to that material? Was it not obvious that a "privileged" white male, who could afford to take off a year of college to work as a volunteer, really had no access to the sufferings of the people he hoped to study and evoke? It was not his poems that were intrinsically objectionable but his presumption in thinking himself entitled to write them. Though I assured the young man that his experience was not unusual, and that the students who attempted, in effect, to dictate to him the terms under which he might continue to write his poems belong to a powerful and deeply illiberal movement, he rightly observed that those students continue to think of themselves as social justice warriors, and believe that they are protecting people like their classmate from the ostracism and isolation that await him should he continue in his nefarious ways. The revolution of moral concern, driven by people in the grip of delusions I have attempted to anatomize throughout this book,* is clearly a bizarre phenomenon, fueled by convictions and passions that have the appearance of benevolence but are increasingly harnessed to create a surveillance culture in which strict adherence to irrational codes and "principles" is demanded.

It's tempting to speculate that liberalism has only itself to blame for the toxic environment that now permeates the liberal academy. After all, liberals like myself long supposed that our commitment to more or less unrestricted free speech, candor, and openness was underwritten by a consensually agreed-on set of natural constraints. We could celebrate the distribution of disturbing, even pornographic books because we believed that somehow society would provide common standards of decency and misgiving that would prevent disturbing works from too entirely having their way with us. We could indulge in confrontational political demonstrations, burn our draft cards, and work in resistance organizations while continuing to believe not only that our goals were legitimate but that liberalism itself underwrote the challenge to the established order. But it has gradually become clear to us that we took rather too much for granted. Society provides very little in the way of common standards of decency or constraint. The internet empowers vast numbers of people to enact their worst selves and to participate in grotesque campaigns of slander, vilification, and irrationality. Where the political Right has Fox News to purvey lies, misinformation, and sheer ignorance, the liberal Left has drifted far from what had once seemed its inveterate willingness to acknowledge contradiction and to honestly tackle problems and deceits of its own devising. In many

quarters we are now haunted by the specter of a liberalism increasingly drawn to denial and overt repression. Academic liberals who would have laughed thirty or forty years ago at the prospect of speech codes and draconian punishments for verbal indecorum or "presumption" are now not only compliant but enthusiastic about efforts to enforce standards many of them know to be intellectually indefensible. Those of us who are determined to call what is happening by its rightful name are astonished, again and again, by the virulence of efforts to deny what is now unmistakable.

It has never been so very easy for some of us to regard ourselves as liberals. When I was young I was drawn, like many others of my 1960s generation, to words like "revolution" and "liberation," and thought of liberals—Left liberals like myself included—as incorrigibly reasonable, well-meaning, and, even in our militancies, thoroughly uninspiring. Of course these sentiments were rooted in clichés and stereotypes, though we told ourselves that those very clichés were often accurate and had much besides to recommend them. Soon, however, I began to suspect

that, whatever the demerits, timidities, and mild decencies of liberals, there was one thing above all that conferred dignity on our kind. We were, after all, routinely subjected to caricature and attack by people on the right and on the left. Our capacity for self-interrogation was derided as a form of self-debasement, our inclination to a yes-but form of argument as a sign of timidity or irresolution. We were said often to want to remain out of the line of fire, to occupy a center that was ideologically neutral. And yet we came increasingly to understand that we were, at our best, by no means neutral, and that in fact there was no center to occupy. The so-called center was a fiction summoned by generations of radicals of the left and right to differentiate themselves from persons without their furious certainties and their willingness to strike fear into the hearts of their adversaries. "What so infuriates opponents on left and right," writes Jonathan Freedland, "is the insistence that two things, usually held to be in opposition, can both be true." Uneasy, to be sure, that insistence, not always perfectly defensible, and not always legitimate. Not all things "usually held to be in opposition" are both true. It is decidedly not true that academics mobilizing to punish dissident or "incorrect" voices on their own campuses are nevertheless operating with benevolent motives. It is not true that an ostensibly well-intentioned effort to prevent a young white poet from imagining the lives of black people is an expression of genuine concern for black people. There is no decent "center" where such issues are involved, no "both true," and it is part of the business of this book to argue precisely that. To be liberal is not to back down or back away. I so declare, even as a great many of those in my own cohort quietly, quiescently line up behind the cadres of those determined to create an environment largely populated by the cowed and compliant.

Of course there really are important things, "usually held to be in opposition," that "can both be true." And of course it has always been the work of intellectuals to identify opposing propositions or facts and to make the case for their "truth." In the course of this book I have tried to evoke such things. To argue that the idea of "privilege" has its important uses and is, at the same time, susceptible to misunderstanding and abuse. To demonstrate that the idea of "appropriation" was an understandable expression of legitimate and deep-seated fears held by people with a history of oppression and subordination, but that the idea soon came to be wielded by people ignorant of the ways of the imagination and the benefits of the very practices they resisted. To argue that "identity" is an important aspect of our ongoing efforts to understand ourselves, but that identity politics is based on a deep misunderstanding of the nature of race and ethnicity. To insist that policies like affirmative action are essential if we are ever to achieve the kind of social justice we aspire to but that there are costs and consequences we ought to acknowledge without pretending that those costs are negligible or incidental.

These and other such arguments, where apparently opposing ideas are shown to be "true," are bound to be attacked by proponents of the left and the right, and the environment thereby generated by such attacks will be vital or poisonous, depending on the range of factors cited in the pages of this book. Emile Zola, in his open letters to the youth of France, spoke of the "idiotic poison [that had] already overthrown their intellects." He was speaking of anti-Semitism and other features of the "sick moral atmosphere" gradually ascendant in the culture of late-nineteenth-century France. But Zola might well have been speaking instead of conditions now gradually ascendant in our own culture, where--in much of the academy—"no one dares say what he thinks for fear of being denounced" and public opinion, certainly as regards matters cultural and academic, is in the grip of a "somber obstinacy." Obstinacy in what sense? In the sense that what ought to be obvious is rigorously denied, and the consequence entailed in the creation of a campus culture marked by suspicion and intimidation is routinely dismissed as collateral damage.

I am aware that the words "no one dares say what he thinks for fear of being denounced" would seem to contradict the suggestion that intellectuals and students are vigorously marching in lockstep and fully at one with the nonsense peddled in seminars and in online forums. But this is another of those cases in which two apparently opposing things happen also both to be true. Many students and professors are in fact inflamed with the need to hunt out heretics and to extinguish all signs of "incorrect" or "uncomfortable" thinking. But even among the ideologically inflamed there are misgivings that they dare not acknowledge even to themselves. More important, though the majority of students and professors know very well that the present commitment to extinguish discomfort and to create an environment completely "safe" is not only hopeless but inimical to the goals of education, they also know very well that they had better not say what they think, while assuring themselves that their own misgivings are, after all, not terribly momentous.

Many of us are routinely moved by the dignity of our distress. Distress by no means limited to what confronts us in the course of an ordinary workday. We speak with undisguised outrage arid conviction of the flagrant dishonesty and corruption of Washington elites, and assure one another that if things continue to unfold the way they have in recent years—most especially since the election of Donald Trump in 2016—we'll pack up and move to another country. New events, as they are brought to our attention, routinely crystallize our sense that we are living in the worst of times. Rightly we rail against those who ignore what is going on and who allow others—especially the young—to feel that this too will pass. Indignation we direct most especially at those who seek to normalize the behavior of corrupt and ruthless political elites and their enablers in the right-wing news media. "Complacent" we say of those who do their best to remain optimistic even as the culture and the entire political order are torn apart. The disinclination to undertake, even to contemplate, fundamental changes has always seemed to liberals of an activist bent to be a failure not only of imagination but of character.

Of course the most ardent and intolerant culture warriors will tell you that they and they alone are moved to think about and to effect fundamental change. Their opponents, they say, are not only complacent but are enemies of the brave new order we are summoned to build. Speak to them about climate change and the evaporation of groundwater, about the wages of so-called technological progress and the replacement of workers by machines, and they will indicate concern of the kind we have come to expect from persons who are at least somewhat alert to the fate of the planet. Ask them about inequality and the defense of indigenous communities in a rapidly globalizing world and they will express interest. But their zeal is principally reserved for issues closer to home, issues they can prosecute with some secure sense that in doing so they will be striking a blow against persons whose steadfast refusal to be intimidated or moved to instant assent they find

infuriating. Culture warriors, in the academy especially, are in thrall to an ideal of solidarity. Anything less than complete submission and approval they regard as betrayal. Their instinct is to divide people into friends and enemies, with enemies figured as dispensable and hateful. Supposing themselves to be political, they have no patience for coalition building or for the difficult work of persuasion. What is to be done, they believe, is to drive away opponents and to avoid, so far as possible, self-examination. When they get together on home ground to discuss urgent matters of practical or theoretic import, the driving instinct is to learn how to speak with a single voice and to celebrate the virtues of unanimity.

The words "what is to be done?" have been sounded frequently over the last two centuries, most famously, perhaps, by the Russian writer Chernyshevsky, whose novel of that title was answered and attacked by Dostoyevsky and other nineteenth-century Russian intellectuals. Always, over the course of the debates stirred by that question, participants have differed about what was and was not possible. Some contemporary writers—including prominent writers on the left—warn against "fundamental" thinking and urge instead attention to "practical matters." Others are disdainful of "neither-liberal-nor-conservative radicalism" and efforts to stick with real-world questions that take into account what David Brooks calls the "low motivations of people as they actually are." It turns out that even persons who agree about major issues like climate change, inequality, and globalization are apt to differ about what is to be done. No less do people of goodwill who agree that intolerance is unfortunate share views about what we must do to deal with it.

In short, what is to be done will have to be decided by each of us, presumably in conversation—antagonistic or companionable—with other persons whose willingness to exchange views and proposals we can rely on. This is not the place for me to name the causes to which I contribute money or the organizations for which I volunteer my time. Suffice it to say the obvious: that I have my own view of what should be done and what I can beneficially support. I suppose I might add that for me, what is to be done is to be done with a moral intensity befitting our individual sense of what is genuinely at stake. But in bringing this book to a close I want to propose that there are also many things not to be done. In several respects this book has been driven by my sense that in the academy today a great many things that are not to be done are in fact done.

Not to be done:

- The promulgation of ideas entertained without seriousness, that is, without any corresponding consideration of what would be entailed were they actually to be effected.
- The use of ideas such as privilege, appropriation, ableism, and microaggression to sow hostility, persecute other members of a community, and make meaningful conversation impossible.
- The use of the classroom and the seminar to indoctrinate students and thus to send them off parroting views that they have not adequately thought through or mastered.
- The creation of an "us versus them" orientation, underwritten by enemies lists and fueled by a sense that on matters for which a consensus has been reached no dispute may be tolerated.
- The weaponization of "virtue" for what Marilynne Robinson calls "class advantage," with zealots adept mainly at trumpeting their own superior status and making "a fetish ... of indignation."
- Finale: What is to be done—all apart from the necessary forms of study, truth-telling, and civic engagement to which the best among us are committed? Answer: Fight with all one's heart against what is NOT TO BE DONE. <>

<>

Annotated Bibliography

The Oxford Handbook of Mystical Theology edited by Edward Howells and Mark A. McIntosh [Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press, 9780198722380]

This collection provides a guide to the mystical element of Christianity as a theological phenomenon. It differs not only from psychological and anthropological studies of mysticism, but from other theological studies, such as more practical or pastorally oriented works that examine the patterns of spiritual progress and offer counsel for deeper understanding and spiritual development. It also differs from more explicitly historical studies tracing the theological and philosophical contexts and ideas of various key figures and schools, as well as from literary studies of the linguistic tropes and expressive forms in mystical texts. None of these perspectives is absent, but the method here is more deliberately theological, working from within the fundamental interests of Christian mystical writers to the articulation of those interests in distinctively theological forms, in order, finally, to permit a critical theological engagement with them for today. Divided into four parts, the first section introduces the approach to mystical theology and offers a historical overview. Part II attends to the concrete context of sources and practices of mystical theology. Part III moves to the fundamental conceptualities of mystical thought. The final section presents the central contributions of mystical teaching to theology and metaphysics. Students and scholars with a variety of interests will find different pathways through the Handbook. <>

THE COPERNICAN QUESTION: Prognostication, Skepticism, and Celestial Order by Robert S. Westuran [University of California Press, 9780520254817]

In 1543, Nicolaus Copernicus publicly defended his hypothesis that the earth is a planet and the sun a body resting near the center of a finite universe. But why did Copernicus make this bold proposal? And why did it matter? **The Copernican Question** reframes this pivotal moment in the history of science, centering the story on a conflict over the credibility of astrology that erupted in Italy just as Copernicus arrived in 1496. Copernicus engendered enormous resistance when he sought to protect astrology by reconstituting its astronomical foundations. Robert S. Westman shows that efforts to answer the astrological skeptics became a crucial unifying theme of the early modern scientific movement. His interpretation of this "long sixteenth century," from the 1490s to the 1610s, offers a new framework for understanding the great transformations in natural philosophy in the century that followed. <>

Burn It Down! Feminist Manifestos for the Revolution edited with Introductions by Breanne Fahs [Verso, 9781788735384]

The most comprehensive collection of feminist manifestos, chronicling our rage and dreams from the nineteenth century to today
In this landmark collection spanning three centuries and four waves of feminist activism and writing, *Burn It Down!* is a testament to what is possible when women are driven to the edge. The manifesto—raging and wanting, quarreling and provoking—has always played a central role in feminism, and it's the angry, brash feminism we need now.

Collecting over seventy-five manifestos from around the world, **Burn It Down!** is a rallying cry and a call to action. Among this confrontational sisterhood, you'll find

- "Dyke Manifesto" by the Lesbian Avengers
- "The Ax Tampax Poem Feministo" by the Bloodsisters Project
- "The Manifesto of Apocalyptic Witchcraft" by Peter Grey
- "Simone de Beauvoir's pro-abortion Manifesto of the 343
- "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" by Frances M. Beal
- "The Futurist Manifesto of Lust" by Valentine de Saint-Point
- "Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Laws"
- "Riot Grrrl Manifesto" by Bikini Kill
- "Anarchy and the Sex Question" by Emma Goldman

Breanne Fahs argues that we need manifestos in all their urgent rawness—their insistence that we have to act now, that we must face this, that the bleeding edge of rage and defiance ignites new and revolutionary possibilities is where new ideas are born. <>

Aby Warburg Und Die Natur: Epistemik, Ästhetik, Kulturtheorie (German Edition) edited by Frank Fehrenbach and Cornelia Zumbusch [Naturbilder / Images of Nature, de Gruyter, 9783110374452]

Aby Warburgs Rede von der Lebendigkeit und dem Nachleben der Bilder zeugt von der Bedeutung, die Natürliches für seine Konzeptualisierung von Bildformeln hat: Die Natur tritt immer wieder als bildergenerierende Instanz auf.

Warburg identifiziert menschliche Bildproduktion vor dem Hintergrund naturmagischer, -philosophischer oder -wissenschaftlicher Vorstellungen und Beschreibungsweisen. Seine eigenwilligen Begriffsübernahmen und -prägungen wie etwa Mneme, kinetische/potentielle Energie oder Dynamogramm verweisen auf ein enges Verhältnis zu zeitgenössischen naturwissenschaftlichen Modellen. Die Beiträge des Bandes fragen nach der Bedeutung von Vererbungslehre und Evolutionsbiologie, Völker- und Affektpsychologie, aber auch von Physik und Mathematik für Warburgs Bilderdenken.

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> Kurt W. Forster: Warburgs Mneme nach einer langen Pause des Vergessens Giovanna
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> Barbara Lange: The Indian Connection. Aby Warburgs Kreuzlinger Vortrag
> Matthew Vollgraff: The Archaeology of Expression: Aby Warburg's Ausdruckskunde
> Spyros Papapetros: „Against Nature": Warburg and Regressive Evolution
> Gesamtbibliografie

Golem: Modern Wars and Their Monsters by Maya Barzilai [New York University Press, 9781479848454]

2017 Jordan Schnitzer Book Award in Jewish Literature and Linguistics
Honorable Mention, 2016 Baron Book Prize presented by AAJR

A monster tour of the Golem narrative across various cultural and historical landscapes

In the 1910s and 1920s, a "golem cult" swept across Europe and the U.S., later surfacing in Israel. Why did this story of a powerful clay monster molded and animated by a rabbi to protect his community become so popular and pervasive? The golem has appeared in a remarkable range of popular media: from the Yiddish theater to American comic books, from German silent film to Quentin Tarantino movies. This book showcases how the golem was remolded, throughout the war-torn twentieth century, as a muscular protector, injured combatant, and even murderous avenger. This evolution of the golem narrative is made comprehensible by, and also helps us to better understand, one of the defining aspects of the last one hundred years: mass warfare and its ancillary technologies.

In the twentieth century the golem became a figure of war. It represented the chaos of warfare, the automation of war technologies, and the devastation wrought upon soldiers' bodies and psyches. **Golem: Modern Wars and Their Monsters** draws on some of the most popular and significant renditions of this story in order to unravel the paradoxical coincidence of wartime destruction and the fantasy of artificial creation. Due to its aggressive and rebellious sides, the golem became a means for reflection about how technological progress has altered human lives, as well as an avenue for experimentation with the media and art forms capable of expressing the monstrosity of war. <>

Broken Faith: Inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, One of America's Most Dangerous Cults by Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr [Hanover Square Press, 9781335145239]

A PopSugar Best True Crime Book of 2020

"I can't imagine a more important book."—Jeff Guinn, New York Times bestselling author
An explosive investigation into Word of Faith Fellowship, a secretive evangelical cult whose charismatic female leader is a master of manipulation

In 1979, a fiery preacher named Jane Whaley attracted a small group of followers with a promise that she could turn their lives around.

In the years since, Whaley's following has expanded to include thousands of congregants across three continents. In their eyes she's a prophet. And to disobey her means eternal damnation.

The control Whaley exerts is absolute: she decides what her followers study, where they work, whom they can marry—even when they can have sex.

Based on hundreds of interviews, secretly recorded conversations, and thousands of pages of documents, Pulitzer Prize winner Mitch Weiss and Holbrook Mohr's **Broken Faith** is a terrifying portrait of life inside the Word of Faith Fellowship, and the harrowing account of one family who escaped after two decades. <>

Martyrdom: Canonisation, Contestation and Afterlives edited by Ihab Saloul and Jan Willem van Henten [Heritage and Memory Studies, Amsterdam University Press, 9789462988187]

The phenomenon of martyrdom is more than 2000 years old but, as contemporary events show, still very much alive. **Martyrdom: Canonisation, Contestation and Afterlives** examines the

canonisation, contestation and afterlives of martyrdom and connects these with cross-cultural acts and practices of remembrance. Martyrdom appeals to the imagination of many because it is a highly ambiguous spectacle with thrilling deadly consequences. Imagination is thus a vital catalyst for martyrdom, for martyrs become martyrs only because others remember and honour them as such. This memorialisation occurs through rituals and documents that incorporate and re-interpret traditions deriving from canonical texts. The canonisation of martyrdom generally occurs in one of two ways: First, through ritual commemoration by communities of inside readers, listeners, viewers and participants, who create and recycle texts, re-interpreting them until the martyrs ultimately receive a canonical status, or second, through commemoration as a means of contestation by competing communities who perceive these same people as traitors or terrorists. By adopting an interdisciplinary orientation and a cross-cultural approach, this book goes beyond both the insider admiration of martyrs and the partisan rejection of martyrdoms and concisely synthesises key interpretive questions and themes that broach the canonised, unstable and contested representations of martyrdom as well as their analytical connections, divergences and afterlives in the present. <>

Bhagavad Gita: A New Verse Translation by Stanley Lombardo. Introduction and Afterword by Richard H. Davis [Hackett Publishing Company, 9781624667886]

Stanley Lombardo's new verse translation of the most famous free-standing sequence from the great Indian epic *The Mahabharata* hews closely to the meaning, verse structure, and performative quality of the original and is invigorated by its judicious incorporation of key Sanskrit terms in transliteration, for which a glossary is also provided.

The translation is accompanied by Richard H. Davis' brilliant Introduction and Afterword. The latter, "Krishna on Modern Fields of Battle," offers a fascinating look at the illuminating role the poem has played in the lives and struggles of a few of the most accomplished figures in recent world history.

<>

Hinduism Before Reform by Brian A. Hatcher [Harvard University Press, 978-0674988224]

A bold retelling of the origins of contemporary Hinduism, and an argument against the long-established notion of religious reform.

By the early eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire was in decline, and the East India Company was making inroads into the subcontinent. A century later Christian missionaries, Hindu teachers, Muslim saints, and Sikh rebels formed the colorful religious fabric of colonial India. Focusing on two early nineteenth-century Hindu communities, the Brahmo Samaj and the Swaminarayan Sampraday, and their charismatic figureheads—the "cosmopolitan" Rammohun Roy and the "parochial" Swami Narayan—Brian Hatcher explores how urban and rural people thought about faith, ritual, and gods. Along the way he sketches a radical new view of the origins of contemporary Hinduism and overturns the idea of religious reform. <>

After The Last Post: The Lives of Indian Historiography by Benjamin Zachariah [The Politics of Historical Thinking, De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 9783110638707]

This book is about the production and consumption of history, themes that have gained in importance since the discipline's attempts to disavow its own authority with the ascendancy of postmodern and postcolonial perspectives. Several parallel themes crosscut the book's central focus on the discipline of history: its intellectual history, its historiography, and its connection to memory,

particularly in relation to the need to establish the collective identity of 'nation', 'community' or state through a memorialisation process that has much to do with history, or at least with claiming a historicity for collective memory. None of this can be undertaken without an understanding of the roles that history-writing and history-reading have been made to perform in public debates, or perhaps more accurately in public disputes. The book addresses a discomfort with postcolonial theories in and as history. Following are essays that examine the state of the discipline, the art of reading and using archives, practices of tracking the history of ideas, and the themes of history, memory and identity. <>

Knowing God: Ibn 'Arabi and Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani's Metaphysics of the Divine by Ismail Lala [Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science, Brill, 9789004400511]

"Can we know God or does he reside beyond our ken? In Ibn 'Arabi and 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani's Metaphysics of the Divine, Ismail Lala conducts a forensic analysis of the nature of God and His interaction with creation. Looking mainly at the exegetical works of the influential mystic, Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), and one of his chief disseminators, 'Abd al-Razzaq al-Qashani (d. 736/1335?), Lala employs the term huwiyya, literally "He-ness," as an aperture into the metaphysical worldview of both mystics. Does Al-Qashani agree with Ibn 'Arabi's conception of God? Does he agree with Ibn 'Arabi on how God relates to us and how we relate to Him? Or is this where Sufi master and his disciple part ways?" <>

The Political Philosophy of Mullā Sadrā by Seyyed Khalil Toussi [Routledge Studies in Islamic Philosophy, Routledge, 9781138807341]

Providing a comprehensive and widely accessible investigation into Mullā Ṣadrā's works, this book establishes his political philosophy and instigates a dialogue on the relevance of Ṣadrā's philosophy to present day challenges.

Investigating Ṣadrā's primary sources, the book reveals that his discourse on politics cannot be interpreted as a discursive springboard for hierocracy and political authority of jurists, nor does the mystical attitude of his philosophy (with its emphasis on the inner aspects of religion) promote an idea of quietism or a fundamental separation of religion and politics. Laying the groundwork for further translations and interpretation, this volume is not just concerned with 'political philosophy' as yet another particular and limited facet of Ṣadrā's overall system. Rather, through unifying mystical, intellectual and political aspects of this singular philosopher, the volume is concerned with properly contextualizing and understanding the guiding intentions and inspirations that unify and underlie all of his creative philosophical endeavour. <>

The Madness of Crowds: Gender, Race and Identity by Douglas Murray [Bloomsbury Continuum, 9781635579987]

The challenging and brilliantly-argued new book from the bestselling author of *The Strange Death of Europe.*

In his devastating new book **The Madness of Crowds**, Douglas Murray examines the twenty-first century's most divisive issues: sexuality, gender, technology and race. He reveals the astonishing new culture wars playing out in our workplaces, universities, schools and homes in the names of social justice, identity politics and intersectionality.

We are living through a postmodern era in which the grand narratives of religion and political ideology have collapsed. In their place have emerged a crusading desire to right perceived wrongs and a weaponization of identity, both accelerated by the new forms of social and news media.

Narrow sets of interests now dominate the agenda as society becomes more and more tribal--and, as Murray shows, the casualties are mounting.   <>

The End of October: A Novel by Lawrence Wright [Knopf, 9780525658658]

"An eerily prescient novel about a devastating virus that begins in Asia before going global . . . A page-turner that has the earmarks of an instant bestseller." —New York Post

"Featuring accounts of past plagues and pandemics, descriptions of pathogens and how they work, and dark notes about global warming, the book produces deep shudders . . . A disturbing, eerily timed novel." —Kirkus Reviews

"A compelling read up to the last sentence. Wright has come up with a story worthy of Michael Crichton. In an eerily calm, matter-of-fact way, and backed by meticulous research, he imagines what the world would actually be like in the grip of a devastating new virus." —Richard Preston, author of The Hot Zone

"This timely literary page-turner shows Wright is on a par with the best writers in the genre." —Publishers Weekly (starred review)

In this riveting medical thriller--from the Pulitzer Prize winner and best-selling author--Dr. Henry Parsons, an unlikely but appealing hero, races to find the origins and cure of a mysterious new killer virus as it brings the world to its knees.

At an internment camp in Indonesia, forty-seven people are pronounced dead with acute hemorrhagic fever. When Henry Parsons--microbiologist, epidemiologist--travels there on behalf of the World Health Organization to investigate, what he finds will soon have staggering repercussions across the globe: an infected man is on his way to join the millions of worshippers in the annual Hajj to Mecca. Now, Henry joins forces with a Saudi prince and doctor in an attempt to quarantine the entire host of pilgrims in the holy city . . . A Russian émigré, a woman who has risen to deputy director of U.S. Homeland Security, scrambles to mount a response to what may be an act of biowarfare . . . Already-fraying global relations begin to snap, one by one, in the face of a pandemic . . . Henry's wife, Jill, and their children face diminishing odds of survival in Atlanta . . . And the disease slashes across the United States, dismantling institutions--scientific, religious, governmental--and decimating the population. As packed with suspense as it is with the fascinating history of viral diseases, Lawrence Wright has given us a full-tilt, electrifying, one-of-a-kind thriller. <>

The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson [Penguin Press, 9780735224384]

From the authors of the international bestseller *Why Nations Fail*, a crucial new big-picture framework that answers the question of how liberty flourishes in some states but falls to authoritarianism or anarchy in others--and explains how it can continue to thrive despite new threats.

In **Why Nations Fail**, Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson argued that countries rise and fall based not on culture, geography, or chance, but on the power of their institutions. In their new book, they build a new theory about liberty and how to achieve it, drawing a wealth of evidence from both current affairs and disparate threads of world history.

Liberty is hardly the "natural" order of things. In most places and at most times, the strong have

dominated the weak and human freedom has been quashed by force or by customs and norms. Either states have been too weak to protect individuals from these threats, or states have been too strong for people to protect themselves from despotism. Liberty emerges only when a delicate and precarious balance is struck between state and society.

There is a Western myth that political liberty is a durable construct, arrived at by a process of "enlightenment." This static view is a fantasy, the authors argue. In reality, the corridor to liberty is narrow and stays open only via a fundamental and incessant struggle between state and society: The authors look to the American Civil Rights Movement, Europe's early and recent history, the Zapotec civilization circa 500 BCE, and Lagos's efforts to uproot corruption and institute government accountability to illustrate what it takes to get and stay in the corridor. But they also examine Chinese imperial history, colonialism in the Pacific, India's caste system, Saudi Arabia's suffocating cage of norms, and the "Paper Leviathan" of many Latin American and African nations to show how countries can drift away from it, and explain the feedback loops that make liberty harder to achieve. <>

The Tyranny of Virtue: Identity, the Academy, and the Hunt for Political Heresies by Robert Boyers [Scribner, 9781982127183]

From public intellectual and professor Robert Boyers, a thought-provoking volume of nine essays that elegantly and fiercely addresses recent developments in American culture and argues for the tolerance of difference that is at the heart of the liberal tradition.

Written from the perspective of a liberal intellectual who has spent a lifetime as a writer, editor, and college professor, **The Tyranny of Virtue** is a precise and nuanced insider's look at shifts in American culture—most especially in the American academy—that so many people find alarming. Part memoir and part polemic, an anatomy of important and dangerous ideas, and a *cri de coeur* lamenting the erosion of standard liberal values, Boyers's collection of essays is devoted to such subjects as tolerance, identity, privilege, appropriation, diversity, and ableism that have turned academic life into a minefield. Why, Robert Boyers asks, are a great many liberals, people who should know better, invested in the drawing up of enemies lists and driven by the conviction that on critical issues no dispute may be tolerated? In stories, anecdotes, and character profiles, a public intellectual and longtime professor takes on those in his own progressive cohort who labor in the grip of a poisonous and illiberal fundamentalism. The end result is a finely tuned work of cultural intervention from the front lines. <>