



Willowing Skywardly
Stories and Essays

Peter McMillan

Books Published by the Author

Flash! Fiction (2012) by Peter McMillan

Flash! Fiction 2 (2013) by Peter McMillan with Adam Mac

Flash! Fiction 3 (2014) by Peter McMillan with Adam Mac

Flash! Fiction 4 (2015) by Peter McMillan with Adam Mac

Flash! Fiction 5 (2017) by Peter McMillan with Adam Mac

An Anthology of Hardly 20/20 Flash! Fiction (2020) by Peter McMillan with Adam Mac

Missing Stories: An Anthology of Hardly 20/20 Flash! Fiction (2020) by Peter McMillan & Adam Mac, Maku Miran (ed.)

Collected Essays on Political Economy and Wartime Civil Liberties, 2002-2008 (2020) by Peter McMillan

Flash! Fiction: Around the Block (2022) by Peter McMillan

2022



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Peter McMillan, January 2022

Photographs: Peter McMillan, 2021

Dedication

For L & O and L2 & O2

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Introduction

Part One features short fiction written since *Anthology of Hardly 20/20 Flash! Fiction* and *Missing Stories: An Anthology of Hardly 20/20 Flash! Fiction*.

Part Two Non-Fiction includes two sections: the first comprises book reviews and essays from 2020 and 2021 and the second includes two papers from the 1990s and several essays and op-ed articles overlooked or otherwise omitted during compilation of the *Collected Essays on Political Economy and Wartime Civil Liberties*.

The fictional and the real are combined in this collection intentionally, partly because the collection would be too small with just one or the other but also to suggest the permeability of boundaries between perspectives.

Peter McMillan
Toronto
January 2022

The lunchroom is overstuffed with blue shirts (baby blue button-up style with the company logo on the pocket) and T-shirts (mostly faded dark blue) on bodies of all ages, colours, and genders. The former are one step closer to the 'B' shift, the afternoon shift. The latter are probationary meaning that they have 90 nights before they have to find another job.

Groups sit on the beige plastic chairs set around small square tables, also plastic, designed for four but able to accommodate eight ... with the corners. Some tables are anxiously subdued, others comfortably boisterous. There's no music in here, just the hum of the Coke and sandwich vending machines and the whooshing sound of the HVAC system, which are mostly drowned out by human voices. That will change in about 15 minutes and for the next 8 hours, give or take.

In the middle of the room sits Ram, the old guy, Grandpa, who could have started living off old-age benefits years ago. He wears a clean white T-shirt to work every day, even though he should have earned a blue shirt by now, but his probationary period has been extended multiple times. He takes it as its given, doesn't complain but doesn't kowtow. He limps as he walks. His round but muscular midsection doesn't help his mobility. His brown work-scarred forearms covered in white hair are as thick and powerful as any in the plant. Asked how he stays so healthy, he answers matter-of-factly, "Very, very good doctors. Son and daughter, and four grandchildren." No one takes him literally, but that's what he means.

On one side of Ram is the temp, the 20-something from the dying steel town 40 minutes away. He comes from a family of United Empire Loyalists. He's fond of saying that though nobody knows, or cares, what he's talking about—1776 and 1812 being unfamiliar

markers for most of his co-workers. And on the other side of Ram, is Mai, Vietnamese but from Japan. She often puts in her earbuds and listens to English pronunciation lessons during lunch break. Once that fact was discovered, it spread and has produced no end of jokes and laughter from the male voices in the lunchroom. Mac takes the fourth side of the table. He's a bookish, stand-offish sort, and during breaks he chain-smokes a foul-smelling unbranded cigarette that creates a comfortable space in the 'smokers' pen.'

On the corners of the table are three. The fourth is empty. Between Mac and Ram is Osman, a fastidious Blue Shirt with carefully pressed navy blue pants from Mark's Work Warehouse and the company blue shirt, always a long-sleeved style that stays buttoned at the wrists throughout the night. Oleg, another Blue Shirt on the 'C' shift, is on the opposite corner from Osman. He only talks about computers, though once he mentioned he'd been in the wars (which ones, nobody knows). He spends his breaks on his mobile researching refurbished servers for the database farm he maintains in his one-bedroom apartment. What he stores on these databases he never says. "Somebody's gonna lose their job," snaps Kathleen, the night supervisor, pointing to the empty chair as she works her way through the room brushing up against her preferred who respond admiringly. Edsel, on the third corner seat, wearing a T-shirt, like Ram (though not white) and Mac and David John (the UEL) mutter something after Kathleen passes. Mac nods. Though not as old as Ram, Edsel moves about like someone who is as old as Ram. His breath, bloodshot eyes, and splotchy-reddish-gray face give away what he had for breakfast, the meal daytimers call dinner. He's quiet but his eyes and manner betray an intense dislike of authority. He used to work construction year round in the north but quit after the accident. A steel beam had slipped and fallen six stories onto the supervisor's trailer during lunch break.

All around the lunchroom, there is a sudden silence as if some sound had commanded, interrupting conversations, breaking off interior monologues and stopping the anxious drumming of fingers. There had been no sound, but what follows is the scooching and clattering of chairs being pushed up to the tables. All stand watching the second hand of the large round clock posted above the lunchroom entrance make its last sweep. At 12, the bell rings, and out goes the night shift and in comes the afternoon shift. The Blue Shirts pass through the lunchroom to the showers. The few day-by-day temps rush out the door to catch the last bus. Soon afterwards, the Blue Shirts trickle out and amble to their cars or pickups. The fragrance of freshly-lit joints wafts through the parking lot of long shadows. Rival rock 'n' roll legends struggle to be heard over the revving engines. Once the stereos and high-torque motors are out of earshot, the great machines in the neighbouring factories lull the industrial park to sleep with their rhythmic white noise, only twice, at 2:30 and 4:45, pierced by the engineer's whistle and then the protracted clickety-clack of a locomotive and its train of empty, rattling boxcars.

November 1985. Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas.

Seven never-to-be officers of the USAF are waiting to be processed out and back to civilian life. Four hadn't checked out. People who knew them had said something innocently or otherwise, and these guys no longer measured up. Another had medical issues, and one just wanted out. One wasn't talking.

The first step in the process was to remove them from the general population. Fear of contamination—against regulations to mix as the propagation of values and beliefs must conform to military codes of thought and conduct. The lepers were sequestered in a separate administrative building restricted from access to base facilities except the mess hall. Three times daily, they were escorted by a staff sergeant, unarmed and not exactly custodial but then not one to shoot the breeze with either. The decommissioned recruits were allowed in the mess only after everyone else had been served and had left. The mess hall—large enough to accommodate several hundred men—was empty but the colony cluster sat together around the same table, as if accepting the reality that they were bound together by a mark that designated them untouchable. Their voices echoed in the vast hall.

Except for meal times, the seven stayed in their barracks, a small square room with freshly painted pale blue walls ... about the size of a motel room fitted with four bunk beds and a one-person wash-room with a shower. No personal electronic gadgets were permitted, but then the times antedated the electronic communication revolution that made these devices as common as the wallet. The only phone was a public phone in the hallway, and there was no TV or radio. Stationery (blank paper for the Xerox machine) and BIC pens were allotted to the group to divide as they chose.

Massachusetts was a tall, blond-headed guy with patrician manners. He'd got caught lying about his marijuana use, but he was very cavalier about it all. Idaho was a Stanford-educated electrical engineer who wanted to fly Phantom jets before he worked with one of the big military contractors, but that wasn't going to happen with that DUI in British Columbia nobody was supposed to have known about. Alabama was the only guy—yes, they were all guys and yes, again, they were all white guys—who had initiated the separation on his own, not that he was proud of the fact given that he had nothing to go back to except a Walmart job. Nevertheless, with some self-satisfaction he maintained he was better off than if he were continuing his employment with a government that commits war crimes, referring to Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Dresden, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki before that. His was no great loss; his AFQT score of 74—acceptable but far below the scores reported by anyone else in the colony. Massachusetts and Idaho were in the 99th percentile. Missouri, the one with the heart murmur, was the only one who was profoundly disappointed. He had dreamed of a 20-year stint in the Air Force, then early retirement houseboating on the Mississippi River and writing about river people for the rest of his life. He'd already been published in a couple of Midwestern literary journals, though his biggest achievement thus far was a personal note that accompanied the rejection of one of his submissions to *The New Yorker*. Utah, one of those who hadn't checked out (he was vague on the particulars), was reading *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, periodically offering his unsolicited commentary on Phaedrus' odyssey. North Carolina was reading the Bible and mumbling to himself from the top bunk farthest from the door. The last guy just lay there, not moving, not sleeping, just there. All that was known about him was that he spoke Russian and German fluently. At least, that's what Massachusetts said. Alabama confirmed the Russian, which he also spoke, sort of, albeit with a drawling Dixie accent.

All were expected to be shipped home by Thanksgiving, but no one was particularly keen about being back with the family during the holidays under these conditions. For Massachusetts, this had been a lark. He talked Oxford or Cambridge. By his own account, he should've been nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship. He was a classicalist and though he'd never imagined himself being on or even near a motorcycle, he found himself mildly entertained by his discussions with Utah about the Zen references to Plato and Aristotle. As for the Air Force, he didn't need the government salary and pension plan, and his family had never approved of his decision to become a soldier anyway. Idaho, looking over in Alabama's direction, boasted of the offers he'd declined with venture capital-financed high tech firms in the Bay Area, but his enthusiasm seemed hollow, especially during his long periods of silent meditation. Missouri, just inside the upper age limit for Officer Candidate School, had three daughters, two in grade school and one preschooler, and he wasn't anticipating a successful homecoming after telling his wife that he would start writing full-time now, not later. Alabama had just got married and appeared to be leading the running in becoming the goat (as in laughingstock) in both families. Utah had just returned from a motorcycle road trip from Milford, a mile-high desert town in southwestern Utah, to the tropics of Nicaragua, where his passport denied him passage through on his journey to Patagonia—his youthful wanderlust effectively checked by geopolitics. The Bible guy was going straight to a New Age seminary in southern California. That came out during an out-of-the-blue fusillade of angry remarks he launched at the Zen guy who he labeled a cultist and a false prophet. And the Russian-speaking guy never said ... at least not in English.

Seven young men. All in their twenties. All intelligent ... nearly all, very intelligent. All unfit to defend the United States against the Evil Empire. All lepers for three weeks in November 1985. All unaware that the United States, in their lifetimes, would rewrite the history of

the Cold War and would find a new enemy in Asia to replace the Soviet/Russian nemesis of the post-World War II era.

Seven young men who were given reasons to find the United States unfit to defend, but did they? Did they come to see the United States as the leper in the community of nations? Did they, in their civilian lives, ever entertain doubts about the integrity of America's projection of military power? Or had it been just a career path that didn't work out?

Alabama may have found some personal vindication, but had he really or was he refusing to see himself as just another mercenary? Was there any hypocrisy in condemning a warlord while at the same time seeking economic advantage from him? And was that any different from what he found so offensive in America's behaviour in the community of nations? And, by the way, what of Walmart?

The baby is crying nonstop, and the mother strokes its head keeping attentive eyes on the two visitors. The coffee table tattooed with cigarette burns and streaked with a household cleaner whose fumes mix unpleasantly with the stale air is set up with a Mr. Coffee decanter and two plates with thin wedges of store-bought pecan pie. The older visitor, a corpulent and round figure, sips his coffee with a slight sucking sound as the younger one, bookish and intense, earnestly lays out the plan of salvation to the young mother.

"Jesus loves you, and he loves that little baby of yours, too. Won't you think about asking Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour? He's at the door of your heart, knocking. Won't you let him in?"

"But I'm not a bad person, and this ... my little boy is innocent. He ain't committed no sins."

The baby continues crying, red-faced and eyes tightly closed.

"But God saves us through His grace not through our good works. We have to come to Him and accept Him into our hearts, and when you do that you want to let the whole world know you've decided to follow Jesus. And that's why you want to be baptized. Have you been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?"

Beads of perspiration gather on the forehead of the young visitor as he speaks with passion.

"Uh, no. I grew in the country and we didn't have no church nearby nor no car to take us into town."

"You never went to church?"

"No sir."

The older visitor loosens his clip-on tie and wipes his brow with the back of his hand. He reaches down to dust off his black dress shoes but gives up with a grunt.

"Did your parents ever pray or talk to you about God."

"My mama used to say God's name a lot, but my daddy was on the road mostly. He drove trucks cross country."

The elder visitor raises the pie to his lips and in two bites it's disappeared.

"Well, this is your chance to give your baby a better life. We can even baptize—uh, sprinkle for now—your baby to prove that it's a child of God."

"Mister, I'm sorry but my little Billy here is real hungry, and I got to feed him. Can you just leave one of them little books behind? I promise I'll look at it.

The baby flails away with its chubby limbs trying to free itself.

"Well ... of course ... and share it with your, uh, husband and neighbours."

"We keep to ourselves mostly, me and Roger, but I'll read it."

The mother whispers to the baby and rubs its belly gently.

"And don't forget: life is short and the Rapture is coming near. You don't want to be left behind, do you?"

"No, sir ... but Billy here ... he needs to eat. Roger gets so mad when Billy cries."

The older visitor rises and puts the second empty dessert plate back on the table, while the younger one concludes a brief prayer.

"... in Jesus' name. Amen. You come see us now. Everybody's welcome to join our congregation. We don't discriminate. We're all God's children."

"Good day, ma'am," said the older visitor, as he steps sideways out the door.

The mother, still holding the baby in her arms, nods and reaches for the doorknob to close the door.

The younger visitor trips on the bottom step but catches himself before losing his balance.

The trailer park is in full sun, and it's hot and the air is still. The door handles on the Lincoln are scorching to the touch.

"Turn on the A/C, Hank. It's hotter than hell," said the older man.

Inside the trailer all is quiet.

He'd been a football star in high school—well, that's somewhat overstated. He was quarterback on the JV team. He was good ... and he was white. The coaches were happy with the prospect, but then one day, the kid quit the football team.

That didn't go over well ... not with the coaches, not with the school officials, and not with the townsfolk for whom Friday night football was one of the few exciting things that happened in town.

A concerted effort had been made to re-recruit the kid, but he wouldn't budge. His older brother said he'd wasted all his time grooming the kid brother to be the star he wasn't able to be as a defensive lineman. His uncle—the former mayor of the town—was persuaded (easily) to draw on his family connection to represent the boosters who wanted the kid on the roster for next season. None of this worked to change the stubborn mind of the kid who offered no explanation that anyone thought was credible.

It came down to the school. The head coach of the football team—a figure who could have been a double for Sergeant. Carter in the rural hit TV show, *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*—cut to the chase, telling the recalcitrant re-recruit that if he quit football, he'd be setting a precedent for the rest of his life. He'd be a quitter. That's it. He had to choose ... between rejoining the football team or consigning himself to a life of turning away from every challenge he encountered in the future. That didn't work either.

For the next three years the kid lived in a closed world, out of touch with the mainstream. He was a loner. The last memory anyone had of him was the speech he gave at graduation. Nothing special. Routine humbug about a new generation, confident and hopeful, as it accepted the charge of taking on the responsibilities of adulthood.

After that, he disappeared, and only bits of information were circulated around and then only when people reminisced out of the enduring boredom of small town life.

At high school reunions, where much of the dead past gets relived for a couple of hours, reports were shared about all those who were not attending. At the most recent get together, three-quarters of the White graduating class attended.

"Where's the class president?"

"He's too busy with his law practice. Doesn't like to mix with the hoi polloi."

"How about the guy that all the girls went wild over."

"Died in accident. He flew his crop duster into the power lines. Didn't pull up quick enough."

"How about that guy who quit football and went on to be the class valedictorian?"

"Don't really know. All I know is that the coach is still pissed after all these years."

"Wonder if he ever amounted to anything?"

"In school, he had a reputation for being a quitter—on account of the football thing—so I'd guess, probably not."

"Someone said he'd left the U.S. after quitting the military and a couple of jobs in Washington."

"Maybe. Some people think that he really wasn't that smart after all and that he just knew how to game the system."

"Well, that happened in the graduating class two years behind ours."

"Didn't seem to affect him long term. He's been promoted to VP at the bank. Fastest promotion to that level ever, I hear."

"What about that girl who adopted a couple of Chinese kids?"

"She's an eccentric ... always has been. She says she's a Democrat. That's all I need to know."

"She's real smart—made doctor."

"Really, where's her office?"

"Not a medical doctor. She has a Ph.D."

"Oh."

The music starts up again and couples form and move to the dance floor.

In the same small farming town a few months later the high school journalism class was given an assignment to conduct original journalistic research dealing with something from the town's past. Students were advised to ensure that sources were cited, attributions properly made, and great care taken to avoid defamation of any real people. The school worked out an arrangement so that the electronic archives of the local newspaper and statewide dailies

were made available as well as town records—marriages, births, divorces, deaths, property purchases, and voter registration.

Judy Grier-Thomas chose to research valedictorians from her parents' high school years in town. Upon learning that all valedictorian's from the 1990s were current town residents or had been until their decease—with one exception—she decided to find out what had happened to that one person—a boy.

No local records could be found later than the boy's graduation from high school. However, based on an exhaustive search on social media, she felt she had made a possible match. A male by the same last name and similar first name, and around the same age, whose social media posts mentioned specific people and events from the town's past. In addition, this man was an American living in Canada and that matched what her parents could tell her. He had not been well known to either of them, but they were able to confirm some of the gossip that had circulated shortly after high school—that he had quit a Peace Corps' assignment to Micronesia, had left the OCS program at Lackland, had walked away from a job with an economics think tank in D.C, and had emigrated to Canada.

According to her social media sources, this man from her parents' days in high school, appeared to have shown up to be living somewhere along the north shore of Lake Ontario where he taught ESL courses.

Realizing, after much inner turmoil, that releasing this as an authentic account of a real person—even for a high school course—would be irresponsible, she chose a less ambiguous story for her journalism paper. Years later, in a MFA creative writing program, she rewrote the story as fiction. It appeared in her first published book, a collection of short stories about her small hometown.

A distinguished-looking man with silver hair and silver rim spectacles sits in the middle of an out-of-the-way bench beneath the early morning watery green summer canopy as baby strollers, joggers, and university students criss-cross the park, some in a hurry, some not, many carrying on cell phone conversations. Beside the man is a handsome brown leather attaché case and a lidless banker's box with '18th SW' black magic-markered on the side. No one speaks to him. And he reciprocates.

Not attired for the season, he wears a navy blue business suit with long sleeves and cufflinks, and the tie knot has not been loosened a bit. Everyone else—men and women, young and old—wears what little they must for the near tropical heat, their flesh protected during the long, bitter winter months now out in full view. The man pays no attention, his eyes locked in place, looking past everyone and everything in his field of vision.

At noon, some of the office workers from nearby stroll through the park and fill up the benches, chatting non-stop except to dip into a yogurt cup or salad bowl. Students are splayed out in the plush green grass their backpacks, textbooks, and phones scattered about their bare feet, talking loudly and competitively about the class just finished. Each group is self-contained. No one sits over beside the silver-haired man with the silver-rimmed glasses. And from him, there are no sounds and or signs of his needing to be somewhere else. Like a statue but not quite like the others. Surrounded by metal barricades, they stand uniformly black, though one still has a few smeared streaks of red.

Traffic never slows until well after office hours, and the enclave of this elliptical park in the middle of the city is like an island cut off by a steady stream of vehicles, which keeps the glass and steel and

concrete at a distance. At the northern tip, the South African obelisk, a memory of a long ago and faraway war, landmarks the pedestrian crossings that connect the eastern and western campuses. On long summer days, the lighting is good for 16 hours a day, though crossing can be treacherous even in broad daylight.

By the end of the sun's day, the man has not moved. Has not spoken. Has not changed his focal point. A couple of the two-times-a-day joggers notice this, but dismiss it without a second thought. Millions of people in this city, and not all of them quite right. That's normal. And parks ... parks are magnets for those. This one ... just another statue really.

When Mao Came to Town (August 2021)

My mother-in-law told me that after the war Mao came to town. No one quite knew why. Rügen never had been a population centre, even when Charlemagne came to visit. So, where were the cheering crowds to come from?

In the mid-20th century Rügen had been returned to an earlier time. In the 12th century, The chalk-white cliffs of Rügen had been the site of Jaromarsburg, from where the Rani, a Slavic people controlled much of the eastern Baltic coast—their boats equally suited for commerce or war. The Christian Vikings, King Valdemar and Bishop Absalon of the Kingdom of Denmark, put an end to that. They burned the fortress and the temple to the pagan deity, Svanovit, to the ground. Now, nearly 800 years later, Germany was in ruins, and Rügen had returned to rule from the east, part of the new Slavic empire that spread westward after the Great Patriotic War under the terms of the post-war settlement between empires.

Through its new Slavic rulers, Rügen was now connected in international solidarity and brotherhood to the other side of the world. And so, the great leader from the new Chinese republic paid a visit. But why Rügen?

In Rügen, farms and fishing villages; no industrial base. So, again we ask, "Why would Mao have wanted to come to Rügen?" Could've been that the new empire in China had to accelerate its political and economic development and needed compelling stories of success from elsewhere and there weren't (m)any such places in the revolutionary world to be found at the time. Mao's new Communist government had to rapidly build an industrial economy from a fragmented rural agricultural economy. Could've been that China needed to unify an enormous and historically change-resistant population unaccustomed to the modern ideas of Marx and Ford,

and Mao wanted to see what ideological discipline would look like in the hinterland. Could've simply been that he needed good press back home.

Whatever the reasons, Chairman Mao and his wife came to Rügen, and Rügen welcomed them in the spirit of revolutionary friendliness and brotherhood. It was the children from the school mostly who came to the parade. They were let out early to line the parade route—two blocks of the village centre. Little blond boys and little blond girls in pigtails held miniature red flags—two in each hand—as they waited for the great leader from the far east.

They were late. Hours passed and no great leader arrived. Some of the children tried to slip away, but they were immediately caught by their teachers, reprimanded, and pushed or pulled back into position.

Fritzchen—there was always a Fritzchen—was down the road looking out for the motorcade, and suddenly he started running towards the other children waving both arms in the air, his cheeks as red as the flags in his hands, screeching "ZIL und ZIS" until hoarseness silenced him. Two limousines—one for the Chairman and one of Madame Mao and no one could tell which was which, as neither was tall enough to be seen in full profile. Two were necessary, because the Chinese didn't trust the bulletproof glass in these Russian-built vehicles.

All the children stood up straight and began to wave their flags excitedly—on cue as their teachers checked to make sure that all was in harmony. A small sea of agitated red from one end of town to the other was parted to give passage to the great leader. The teachers, duly satisfied, then turned to focus intently on the occupants of the approaching entourage.

The two black limousines, one of which carried the great leader, were moving with pace but then slowed as one might to allow farm animals to cross the road. The drive past ended just before the second block and the cars sped off into the distance, leaving clouds of dust in their wake.

As soon as the teachers gave the signal, the children scattered and ran off home not pausing to enjoy the moment. There were those at home who waited for them.

My mother-in-law said that on the way home all she could think about was how she would explain her lateness to Mutti.

Yaniel, a former colleague at Computer Associates—in the days before CA was caught manipulating stock prices—happened to be in Toronto last year, so we met for coffee in Yorkville. Mövenpick, where we'd often had Kaffee und Kuchen after work, had long back moved to the financial district and recently during the COVID-19 pandemic had gone bankrupt, so we had to find a last-minute alternative. It was silly that we said "meet you for Kaffee und Kuchen." Neither of us was German. The closest connection was Giselle, his girlfriend at the time, a young international student at the U of T from Switzerland.

After CA, we went our separate ways but kept in touch. He ended up with a cybersecurity firm in Albuquerque (his roots were in the American Southwest), while I bounced around here and there in English Canada and picked up writing gigs from time to time. The last I heard from him was that he was trying to get Spanish citizenship. He had mentioned it in passing, but I didn't follow up at the time—I was preoccupied with my own affairs, more than usual—but now I was looking forward to hearing more. Was he planning to move to Europe, I wondered.

As it turned out, he was on business in the 'East,' but it had nothing to do with Spain. Nevertheless, I had generated my own curiosity and made a point of getting him to tell me what was going on with Spain and citizenship. At the time, I happened to be at loose ends about where to go and what to do next and thought that his experience might give me some ideas. He was little hesitant until he heard how eager I was—rather how desperate I was.

Several years earlier, he'd heard about an offer from the Spanish government to grant citizenship to descendants of victims of the Spanish Inquisition. That came out of right field, and he had to have seen that in my expression. I certainly felt it. Then he proceeded to explain something of his family ancestry. His family had been Catholic for centuries going back to Spain—*pro forma*, he said. There was a family 'secret,' rarely spoken of. It had to do with a 'mass conversion' long ago. How far back and why he hadn't known until recently. As oral history, it had seemed too remote and vague to be either useful or threatening. But now, he had two kids—a boy of 8 and a girl of 6—and family had become important to him in more than just the obvious ways, especially with the waves of cultural awareness that periodically swept across North America, different waves affecting different groups in different ways. For Yaniel, it was a heightened need, almost a compulsion to discover his roots.

I was a product of the melting pot and knew not where I was from, but it really didn't matter. Could be that I don't feel obligated to own a past—good or bad—that I didn't create. And that could be because I'm white (privileged) and American (individualistic). I didn't say any of this to Yaniel, but I was having some difficulty understanding why and how he could see this so differently.

He tried to explain, and I tried to understand, that his present family situation had revealed to him that his identity was part of a continuum running through his family from the past to the future. I'd never thought of Yaniel as being an underdog. He was far too competitive and successful in his competitiveness for that, I thought. Yet, now here he was telling me that he was searching the past for an unknown wrong—committed against his family continuum—that needed to be righted. It would be trite to say that the history of our race demonstrates that we're a mix of the good and the bad and equally unenlightening to add that some are more wicked and dan-

gerous to others around them. I kept those thoughts to myself as well.

His transition therefrom sent my head reeling. He said that it was important for his kids to know themselves as part of a group—that family continuum thing again—so that they could hold themselves to a higher standard. That struck me as elitist in the extreme, but I listened to hear where he'd take this. For Yaniel, it was more than status—more than upper middle class lifestyle and values—but I couldn't help visualizing failure, whether in a moral or material sense, as something that would be highly disruptive to this family continuum. That, to me, was not just elitism; it was predestined elitism. Here again, I held my counsel and let him continue.

It was here that he related the findings of his genealogical research. Now, I've read enough Nietzsche to know the dangers of genealogies, so I wasn't too surprised with what I heard next.

He knew that he was Spanish, not just Spanish-speaking, that he was Native American as well, and that the two hadn't co-existed in harmony throughout their common history. What he hadn't known was that some of his ancestors had participated in the New Spain's military subjugation of indigenous peoples. He also hadn't known that his ancestors who had been given an ultimatum—leave or convert—were not Sephardic (Iberian) Jews. From the records he consulted, it appeared that there had been a Moorish ancestor who had been punished—though not burnt in an *auto-da-fé*—by the Spanish Inquisition and who had elected to convert and remain in Spain. A descendant of his later came to New Spain seeking wealth and power. He succeeded, and subsequent generations of soldiers, government officials, landowners, and priests participated in the repressive colonization of the indigenous people. Not all took part—there was Chiricahua blood in his veins, albeit a very low blood quantum.

By this point, it didn't even matter to Yaniel that Spain's 2015 act of restitution for the families of victims of the Spanish Inquisition did not apply to all victims ... including him as he had discovered. He never filed his papers. He never got that far, having realized he (Quijote) had been chasing an illusion. His wife, an anthropologist who consulted with Legal Aid on Indian land-use issues, was not displeased, and in her words, "Now, we can get back to OUR lives."

There was a long pause after he finished. It was awkward. We weren't as sympatico as we'd once been. My mind went blank.

Finally, I said, "How'd the kids take it?"

"Didn't skip a beat," he answered.

Tuesday morning, long before dawn, any year in the late '70s, Sam's truck zooms along U.S. Highway 27 en route to the IGA at Sawyer's Plaza on the south side of this small, Southwest Georgia town—a poor farming town in the middle of peanut country. Sam's been driving this route for more than five years—switched from cross-country hauling to short-distance routes in the lower Chattahoochee River Valley between Alaga and Eufala after his twin boys were born. Always quiet these days in these little towns, except when they have some crazy homicide, but that's usually either a family matter or a random killing in one of the Mom and Pop stores at some crossroads way out of town. Like the Mansfield murders in '75. He once got detained at one of those stops on Georgia Highway 39 just north of Fort Gaines and was questioned by the state police. Lost three hours waiting to give his statement. He's avoided those little pit stops along the way ever since.

It's 4:45 a.m. and he's early. As he backs his 18-wheeler up to the back door of the IGA, he sees the three figures he meets every week, same time, same place. They're all wearing their dingy white grocery aprons. Two cigarettes glowing brighter with each inhale are Tommy and Waymon sucking in the last milligrams of nicotine before the workout begins. Sam's always in a hurry, and he unloads a truck faster than three men can offload it, so it is a workout. The third figure doesn't smoke but he paces back and forth in front of the store. Kid's got a lot of nervous energy. Sam doesn't care for that kind. Too green and don't know how the world works yet. Still got some dream that doesn't end every Tuesday morning at 5:00 a.m. The others, himself too, over 40 wear their years like chains. In this part of the country, if you're a working man, your life can be read from your face—the wrinkles, the ridges, the folds, scars, moles, skin tags, the tough, sunburnt flesh. Two packs a day, out in the sun, in a place where God no longer sends rain, carrying gro-

ceries for little old ladies day in and day out takes its toll and leaves its traces.

Sam unlatches the back doors of the trailer and swings them wide and out of the way. There's a wall of cardboard boxes—976 boxes today according to the manifest that Sam passes to Tommy—uniformly brown boxes of all sizes, shapes, and brands with few crevices to get a foothold or handhold if you're short and need to reach to the top. It would be impossible for, say Tommy, to unload this truck, but Sam, who's a great black bear of a man and as grumpy as one just awakened from deep sleep stands flatfooted and easily slides the boxes at the top of the trailer and works down from there. Blue, yellow, and white Charmin toilet tissue, multiple cases of Le Sueur green peas in the silver cans (must be a 3/\$1 sale this week), cans of Campbell soup, tins of sardines, boxes of Betty Crocker cake mix, bottles of Aunt Jemima syrup, boxes filled with of ketchup bottles, jars of mustard, relish, and pickles, packages of Oreos and chocolate chip cookies, bales of 5-pound bags of flour and sugar, boxes of Tide, Cheer, and Gain. And every week something damaged. On a bad day, it's syrup or sugar. On a really bad day it's both or it's a big glass jug of apple cider vinegar breaking to pieces on the concrete floor and mixing in with a busted bag of Martha White flour. On a good day, it's a package of Chips Ahoy! cookies—perfect with a cup of coffee afterwards.

And once in the store, each and every one of those 976 boxes had to be opened—sliced open at the top with a box cutter leaving sharp edges and sometimes broken blades exposed to rip through the skin of the fingers and palms. Then every item inside the box had to be price stamped. This was long before small town America got bar code readers installed at every checkout, so all product had to be individually priced and whenever there were price changes—and these propagated through the supply chain frequently in the inflationary '70s—new prices had to be stamped on every can, bot-

tle, box, package, bag affected by the price markups. To keep costs down the same three guys who stocked the shelves also bagged the groceries (in thick paper bags not plastic bags) when it was busy, carried them out to the customers' cars, and ran the registers when the cashiers were overwhelmed, which was always between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. when the IGA deli served the only fast food in town at the time. They were constantly shifted between the aisles and the checkout and when at the checkout, they were in and out the front doors every 2-3 minutes, and between summer and winter the temperature differential could reach 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Tommy, a.k.a. the Red Baron—nicknamed that by one of the migrant bag boys that worked out front for short stints on account of his red hair and last name—was the store manager in all but title, for that rested with old Mr. Bob who seemed destined to live forever. Tommy'd probably never get a chance to manage the store and deep down he must've known it but he never let on. Tommy was the guy in charge, and even Sam deferred, and Sam wasn't the kind to show deference to just anybody. Tommy respected that and never pushed his luck. He wasn't a large man—stature-wise—not particularly muscular or fit, but he outworked everyone and did it for 70-plus hours a week (the store was only open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday - Saturday), week in and week out to support his family. His wife was an RN at the county hospital and they had two preschool boys, one with Down's Syndrome, and a mother-in-law (Tommy's) living in their home and minding the boys while the parents worked.

Waymon was a man with a thousand stories—a different one for every day of the week. Sundays no one worked, so there was no story. Even the Lord had one day off he liked to say. He'd been a bartender, a barber, a talent scout, a car salesman, and even a revival preacher in his early days. He'd talked about being a sniper in

Vietnam. He didn't have any pictures to show—said it brought back too many bad memories—but there was no doubting his accuracy with a gun. Back when the store was having a rat problem, Mr. Bob asked him to stay in the store overnight for several nights and take care of THAT problem. No one said RAT when Mr. Bob was around.

The rats were in the walls, so after the store closed, Waymon squeezed himself in the narrow lane between the freezer and refrigeration units and the exterior cinder block wall and lit up the alley with a flashlight. He did take care of the problem and had the proof—19 rat carcasses. All headshots with a .22 caliber rifle. Collected a hefty bonus check from Mr. Bob and spent it all in one weekend in Dothan. He was a ladies' man—of the country and western variety—had been divorced three times and wasn't looking for a fourth. Sounded like a Texas accent, but he never said one way or the other—just said he was from "well west of here." People in town were usually hesitant to ask a lot questions of newcomers. If someone moved here from out of town, you didn't really want to know why, or put another you were afraid of what you might find out. There had been cases. Waymon was always dressed in all black cowboy clothes from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head—not cowboy work clothes, more like Saturday night cowboy clothes, and he was normally full of wit—tending to the blasphemous and vulgar when in the company of men—but this early in the morning, just like every Tuesday morning past, after two days off, his eyes were bloodshot and sunken in shadow. He was best left alone until he'd worked his way back to something approaching sobriety, which for him was never complete. Mr. Bob liked him though. No one understood why.

Then, there was the kid—high school age—whose mother had gotten him the job. Saving for college he said. For what, he hadn't decided yet. Reserved at first and too eager to excel, but reliable ...

for a teenager. He'd been nicknamed Stan (short for Stakhanov) by one of the migrants who passed through town and stuck around for a few weeks or several months on their way to somewhere else. His name—King Roberts. Nobody understood King most of the time, and he liked it that way. He was a baby-faced, pear-shaped man in his late thirties—not the picture of a mystery man—who'd spent time in the Navy and was on his way back up North from Pensacola. There'd been lots of these. They weren't the usual migrants. These guys were all white and they didn't work in the fields. They were just as likely to be passing through in the winter as the summer. Anyway, the kid was often ragged—he was book-smart but life-stupid—and he was duly resented for two reasons. One, he was still young, and two, he had options in his future. For Tommy and Waymon and King and others like King who are too numerous to detail here, those forks in the road ahead had mostly dwindled to next to nothing, yet a fresh start stared them in the face when the kid was around. And though the kid's parents weren't hifalutin—just ordinary teachers in the public (integrated) schools—he wasn't one of them. To them, he was a privileged kid doing a man's job. Tough luck that he wasn't rural patrician.

Every week this happened from the hot, sizzling days of late July to the frigid (for the Deep South) days of January. The truck came and unloaded its cargo, filling the stockroom from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, and day by day, hour by hour, the piles of boxes grew smaller and smaller as the empty shelves were re-stocked. This was the way it had always been and would always be for the rest of their lives ... except maybe for the kid it would be different. That was the way it looked in the too dark and too quiet early hours of those ever recurring Tuesdays. But by Thursday afternoon, Tommy was already back in the aisles chatting with the regular customers as he surveyed the inventory and ticked off the next order for the Tuesday morning delivery. In the next aisle over, the zip of a box

cutter and the clickety-clack of a price stamper struggled to keep up.

Through the sheers of the picture window of a dark, old-fashioned southern living room, two eyes peer out into the sunny day beyond rusty fence and the old evergreen oaks in the unkempt front yard. Spanish moss dripping from the trees sways in the soft summer breeze adding to the obstructions that hide the identities of passersby. And just as what's happening outside can't be clearly seen, the view from the sunny sidewalk can't penetrate the darkness behind the opaque glass.

The lights inside are never on in the daytime, and this old two-storey house—closed off to the upper floor and attic on account of her living alone and not needing the space to use or keep clean and having problems ascending and descending the long staircase—looks the part of the town haunted house, though she thinks that's just ridiculous, childish imagination.

The faces on the sidewalk all look alike, pretty much. She has to go by color and figure and even then she can't be sure what she sees. None of the boys out front right now—there are three young white boys tossing a football across the street to one another as they head downtown past the Catholic Church—are tall enough to be teenagers, and it's hard to judge hair color because their heads are practically empty—on top, that is. Crew cuts—all the white men and boys have them.

Those boys look familiar. Must be the clothes—I seem to recognize that faded and oversized orange t-shirt on one of them, a hand-me-down for sure, and the long jeans shorts frayed at the knees of the other. Four white little legs and suntanned arms. The one on the other side of the street is taller and wearin' long pants and a long-sleeve shirt buttoned up at the collar. That's most uncommon dress

for a young boy durin' summer holidays. May be that he's the new preacher's son—one of 'em anyway. I hear he's got enough children to fill the front row in church every Sunday morning and every Sunday night. And if that is the preacher's boy, then the other two may be his next door neighbors, the Andrews boys. They're about the right ages.

The Andrews boys are pointin' at my house now. Probably tellin' tales about this decrepit, haunted mansion. Nobody's ever been murdered here—least as far as I know. My daughter died here of consumption, but no one else that I recollect. My husband, he never came back from the war (the first one). But kids, especially boys, they always need mystery and frightenin' stories, and this old house and property must look like the kind of place where people in horror movies get killed. Boys seem particularly fascinated with the gruesome and the ghoulish. I hear they even trade in their made-up versions of the car accidents on Highway 45 north of town where older teenagers are said to race their cars and play chicken. Of course, this comes third-hand from the young fella who delivers my groceries, and he's a first-rate embellisher himself.

Bein' situated next to the church's graveyard adds to the aura of the house as do the dark pine woods behind the house and church which extend south all the way to the Negro high school at the edge of town—the one that Rosa Lott had built after the war—the second one.

All that talk about desegregation in the South—I just can't imagine that's gonna end well. The say the First Baptist Church condemned the government's new law on public accommodations. Wonder if the new preacher is gonna stir up the pot. Suppose when I see black faces walkin' past my window on the way to school, I'll know that the wind has takin' to blowin' in a different direction.

Course, white folks don't like the idea of mixed up classrooms—black and white just don't mix well, they say— and then there's that talk about busin' children to a faraway school—probably that Negro high school—when they're used to walkin' to school. Don't see how the government's gonna force folks to do what they don't want to do. From what I hear, most of 'em on the other side of the tracks don't disagree. "If it ain't broke, don't mess with it, 'cause you only gonna make it worse." I'm inclined to believe most Negroes stay on the other side of the tracks by choice, though some say it's unwritten law. I can see their point. Might be a little of both.

That railroad that separates our town right down the vertical used to be somethin' positive for our town. Passenger trains brought vacationin' money in from the Midwest, mostly Chicago, which was the end of the line up North. There were seven hotels in town at one time. My momma worked in one of those fancy hotels where rich folks from up North came to take their treatments. We've got these mineral springs they say are like the health spas and resorts in Europe where people spend lots of money to sit around and get well. And the climate here is attractive if you're from up North. And bein' at a higher altitude than most towns near the coast, we get cooler summers.

We lived pretty well back then. When I wasn't helpin' my momma, I used to go to the train depot and wait for the trains from Mobile and Chicago. All those well-dressed ladies and gentlemen. Some of the ladies from Chicago, and gentlemen too, looked mighty disappointed on arrivin' as if they'd reached the edge of civilization. It hurt a little bit when I thought about it, but then someone else would come along, bend down, and ask me questions ... questions that I could answer with broad authority because I knew this town better than most adults. Once a lady asked me if I wanted to retrieve one of her luggage cases from the sleepin' compartment. She arranged with the porter to let me board the train. I was flabbergasted by the

richness and polish of everything ... so clean and fresh and so complete with everything you could possibly need to live on a train—or anywhere for that matter—includin' a dinin' car with white tablecloths, silverware, and two kinds of glasses for each place settin. When I returned with the case, the kind lady asked if I could direct her to the best hotel in town, and so I accompanied her to the one where my mother worked. I'd never been in any of the others. Never had reason to.

You'd never know it to look around our town now. No more wealthy visitors with sophisticated manners and tastes. Just a poor small town where most are just tryin' to get by. It ain't a ghost town, but it's a ghost of its former self. And like any small town, I guess, there's always a few well-to-do families who own most of what's worth ownin,' but they're in a different society from the rest of us. We're the hoi polloi, my 3rd grade teacher used to tell us. I reckoned then as I do now that it's meant to keep us apart, sorta like the railroad separates the coloreds and whites.

Our town suffered back durin' the Great Depression and the war years, and the town pretty much shrank and closed in on itself until we struck oil—purely by accident. That was the '50s, and it opened up a whole new industry which has since slowed to a trickle. It's only natural. There's gotta be limit to how much oil you can suck out of the ground. Not everyone got a share of the oil money though. Most of the land sittin' on top of the oil was already spoken for. So, there wasn't a lot of people gettin' rich, just a few people gettin' a whole lot richer.

Seems we get a boom every third generation or so, which peters out after several years and then we settle back into lean times again. Our Main Street next to the Mobile and Ohio Railroad grows a limited crop of businesses and most are like annuals, passin' with the season. But there's some perennials—the drug store, Rosen's

haberdashery, the Green Emporium (a junk store with cheap stuff from Japan), the barber shop, and the police station and the jail. The businesses that come and go are mostly Mobile folks who have big plans to sell the latest and the best to their backwoods cousins.

To this day, I'm not sure how I got lucky enough to live in this old house. It never was a fancy house, but it's a sturdy one and it's kept a roof over my head most of my life. My parents never could have afforded it—actually, I never knew my father, so it was just my mother and me. She rented it from the family who owned the hotel where she worked. They kept the rent very low on account of likin' or feelin' sorry for her. By the time the resort boom had collapsed, the house and hotel were worth practically nothin,' so the family sold up everything 'cept the house, which they let her have rent-free. My momma corresponded with 'em for years, and then when she passed, I kept in touch with the oldest daughter until my letters started comin' back marked 'undeliverable.' I figure they must be so rich they don't worry about this old, dilapidated house in a town of only 1,052 people way down in the Deep South.

But then there's Eric. How could I forget Eric? Unremarkable in many ways, he can be easy to overlook, but he's the only child who ever came to my door and that set him apart. The first occasion was Halloween ... many years ago. I do remember that he was very polite. But we couldn't really talk much since he couldn't hear me and I couldn't understand his speech. You see, Eric is a bit slow-witted and deaf-mute as well, but he can sign. I couldn't the first time I met him, but I've learned to sign pretty good since then, and now we communicate as much as we need to. He does odd jobs around the house for me, and we sometimes keep each other company just, sittin' and lookin' out the front window Not certain he understands, but I told him once that when I die, he can come live

in the house. He looked a little surprised, then sad. Maybe he understood.

It's 8:05 a.m., EDT and the writer is paused at the keyboard, fingers at the ready, waiting for that spark to ignite the creative process.

Elsewhere ...

A scruffy, curly-headed teenager scrambles out of a dirty sleeping bag under the Gardiner Expressway. Some have already packed up and left to search the city. The sun is up but not much of its light reaches the ground beneath the elevated highway. His shopping cart is empty, but that's because he's learned to keep his stuff in the bottom of his sleeping bag. There's only a half-bottle of water left and part of a candy bar saved from last night. He stuffs the sleeping bag in the cart, untethers the cart from his waist and heads off to Chinatown though he's probably too late. According to the calendar he updates in a pocket-sized Gideon Bible, it's garbage collection day and the trucks run early in that part of the city. The Snickers bar is melted and gooey but tastes real good. Doesn't stop his belly from rumbling though. Reluctantly, he takes a couple of sips of water. And he pays the price. Though the water is warm, it triggers a sharp pain from the cavity he's been picking at with his tongue.

"Tiff, dear. I've got one of my migraines today, and I won't be good company this morning. Have a nice brunch, and be a good girl. Don't say mean things about me. I'll phone later today. Bye." Cell phone switches to camera, she stands sideways in front of the full-length mirror in the walk-in. Absolutely flat. No trace of baby yet. Scanning her profile in the mirror, she smiles and feels a momentary shiver of anticipations as she imagines who she should call. "Another mouse in the pool? No, I want something special today. Oh, of course. The baby's room has to be done, and that interior designer—Ramón—he seemed very interested ... and eager. And I

loved his Chilean accent. Could take a few days to get things just right, but Bob will be so pleased when he gets back next week and finds the room all ready for baby."

Judy pulls the twins by their sleeves to get them out the door so she can drop them off at school before her shift starts. Their mother is still asleep in the back room, and probably won't be up until noon. "Those boys been misbehavin' ever since Momma had that spell and's been no time to do that article for tonight's class. Maybe if I'm lucky I'll get a seat on the EI and can finally take down some notes on my phone." This will be her first real test meeting an impossible writing deadline. "There are no rubber deadlines in the news business, folks," her journalism professor had said on the first day of class, adding that "This isn't the civil service." One good thing about COVID—night classes are all taught online.

A young Honduran girl holds her teddy bear close. One of the lady visitors gave her Espe yesterday. She was a nice lady. And she also brought a beautiful pink dress. Her parents would come soon, the lady said. The little girl sits on the edge of her bed, wearing her new pink dress and can't remember the last time one of the other girls' parents came to take them home. They say this is Georgia. "Qué?" She doesn't know where that is. From the window in the cafeteria all she sees are green pine trees, red dirt, blue sky, and the tall, silver chain-link fence. She wishes she were back home. She doesn't like this Dream that everybody at home had talked so much about. She just wants to wake up even if it means being hungry again.

A tax accountant waits nervously in the van as the driver hands the papers to the officer in the guardhouse. This wasn't the place his lawyer said he'd be going. This was a maximum security facility, not at all what he had been expecting. Minimum-security, campus-like environment—that wasn't this. "Hey officer! There's gotta be a mis-

take. I'm here for tax evasion—a white-collar crime. Besides my lawyer screwed up. It's not tax evasion—what I did—it's tax avoidance. Perfectly legal and by the book. Everybody does it." "Shut the f___ up back there!" was all he got back. "But you can't do this! You can't put me in here with murderers and rapists and ... freaks!" "Pipe down, Mac. If you're lucky you'll get transferred out in a couple of weeks. Paperwork, you know." The other guard tittered.

In the cool, dusky air, the forest stands as if arrested in its march across the rolling hills towards the sea. Aboveground tree roots, like so many splayed thick legs, keep the tall hemlocks vertical gripping where they can into the uneven lava rock floor. Aokigahara Jukai—it is quiet and peaceful just as Bao had read. This well-known forest in the shadow of the famous mountain—a good place to rest. That's why he had come. A choked scream snaps him out of his thoughts. Off in the distance he hears a struggle, the sounds muffled by the dense carpet of moss that fill in between the tree roots. With nothing at hand but a loosely coiled rope incompletely braided at one end, Bao leaps up and charges downhill, yelling "Hello" as he trips, stumbles, and catapults over the tangle of roots and vines. The voice, no longer obstructed, guides him in where he finds her wrapped in a long, black skirt crying and retching in between shrieks.

The large private room is full of people. It's against all hospital regulations especially in the middle of a pandemic. But who's going to say or do anything about it? Because he's Daddy, Grandfather, Mr. Wells Fargo, Hank, Henry, president, chairman of the board, and patron of the very institution where he lies dying. Masks are optional, too, except for hospital staff. Anyway, the old man's in an oxygen tent and it's just a matter of hours, the doctors say. Everyone's eyes are fixed on the other old man—the gentleman seated beside the bed—white-haired and bespectacled, his liver-spotted hands resting on the brushed nappa leather briefcase on his lap—

the face of a Patek Philippe gold pocket watch partially visible.
Waiting.

Meanwhile, it's 8:19 a.m. EDT, and the coffee is cold, the fingers a bit stiff, but the mind races on in fits and starts, finding no place to settle and nothing to tell.

The TV hasn't worked since nobody can recollect, but few can still hear well and those that can often have trouble with their vision or their vertigo or something, so the TV isn't really missed. The chairs are comfortable ... enough, and that's all that matters at this point. Some place to rest in between sleeping and eating.

The thickset man in the overalls was a farmer—small scale, 250 acres or so. He prefers things the way they were. Has no time for the 'innernet' or portable phones. Periodically interrupts conversations with folksy wisdom that only he apparently can hear. Once though, he told a visiting preacher that he believed in God—he couldn't really remember why other than that it seemed to be the best thing going. The preacher grimaced in disdain.

The tall, thin fellow with a closely trimmed mustache and beard and rimless, little, round eyeglasses is nearly always in the company of a thick book bearing an unfamiliar, sometimes unpronounceable, title. The books are no worse for wear and could have been bought yesterday or kept on a tidy bookshelf, its spine a clearly visible tribute to its owner's intellectual décor. But for talking, he's mostly 'a conversation facilitator'—at least that's what he calls the trivial annotations and corrections he makes whenever he's invited to join a group. He's not one for lengthy rhetorical flourishes. Rumor has it that he dropped out of college at 20.

The Senator—no one knows for sure what office he actually held or if in fact it was a public office. Actually, his manner is somewhat like that of the door-to-door encyclopedia salesman of years long gone, but curiously he is gregarious in a group but rarely seen in the company of just one other person. He can gab with any and everybody as long as there's an audience of three or more. And he has a gift—verbal dexterity that enables him to say one thing and then the

complete opposite within the span of 30 seconds without arousing the interest of his listeners.

Everyone has heard of her 17 grandchildren and has heard most of their names spoken day after day. She prides herself on knowing all their names, and every year she sends money envelopes in all their names by the relative appointed for the Christmas visit. She's told so many stories so many times that folks look startled when one of the stories doesn't sound quite right. "I thought he was a doctor," someone would pipe up and say, as if paying some attention to the old woman's storytelling, although when interjected often enough in the same conversation, it sounded as if the old woman had a full-fledged medical clinic in the family.

They called her 'Frau Director'—not to her face of course for she could command a penetrating stare when necessary. She doesn't look like she'd ever been more than a manager, maybe even just a supervisor. All the same to them. The Director wasn't particularly well-liked, just endured. She appeared to spend her time planning and strategizing how she could assign some task—anything really, it didn't matter what—to someone, but to her misfortune, once she hit on an idea, it was well nigh impossible to scare up a willing participant since she no longer wielded employment authority. Without a worker, she would have been lonely, but from years and years of experience she knew that she could always count on someone she could schmooze with. And so, she became the only person that the Senator would invite to a *tête-à-tête*. They made an amusing pair. But when it came time for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, all conversations paused, and the legs and walkers were brought into play to make the short-distance but time-consuming journey to the cafeteria. Within minutes all were in line eagerly but respectfully anticipating the taste of what they could smell—on days when there was a cooked meal—and from meal to meal and day to day, the order pretty much remained the same. Little conversation took

place at these times until the sounds of the cutlery on the plates were finally silenced.

Appetites sated, more or less, weariness came on rather suddenly, and before anyone could fall asleep at the table, all the residents were hustled back to their rooms for the nap that capped off every meal. The schedule to some may have appeared harsh and inflexible, but that's not how the residents saw it. For them, the regimented day gave them a solid structure for every day of the week and every week of the year, one that helped them to believe that there was a tomorrow that would invariably follow today. Occasionally, that belief was sternly challenged by someone's passing, but even death couldn't cheat them out of the internalized routine that assured them of a future up to the very end.

PART TWO — Non-Fiction (2020-2021)

Bolton's memoir covers his stint in the Trump Administration as National Security Advisor from April 2018 - September 2019. In the book, he recounts the discussion and determination of national security policy in nearly all the contemporaneous hotspots, devoting as much as a chapter to each of the following: Syria, North Korea, Iran, Turkey, China and Ukraine. In all of these spheres, Bolton is not sparing in his critique of how Trump makes decisions, vacillates and denies responsibility, all the while seeming to serve his own interests even at the expense of the national interest, yet Bolton seems charitable in his regard for Trump, as if the childlike behaviour of a solipsistic narcissist must be tolerated and shown deference on account of the 'Office of the President.'

While guiding the reader through the multidimensional labyrinths of international relations, Bolton is true to form with his hawkish views of how and why America must project its economic and military might around the world. The hubris and duplicity of Bolton's *realpolitik* foreign policy (political, economic and military) is actually not so foreign to Americans, even House Democrats. What's good for America is necessarily 'right.' For example, with respect to Ukraine, 'we can fork around in your elections, but you'd better not fork around in ours.' And then where Chinese economic policy is concerned, 'it simply isn't fair for the Chinese government to finance and employ Chinese corporations as if they are extensions of the state, because in America, we believe in competitive markets and *laissez-faire* economic policy, and state aid is not playing by the rules.' To his credit, Bolton pulls the veil back to reveal the forces that usually drive American foreign policy. However, dismayed, he demonstrates how Trump tosses *realpolitik* and national interests out the window, instead pursuing foreign policy outcomes that align with his personal objectives. Nevertheless, Bolton does not go so far as to propose 'regime change' in America as it might have

played out had the Senate convicted Trump of one or both of the articles of impeachment.

In the Epilogue, Bolton readily dispenses with the impeachment inquiry and trial, blaming the impeachment-obsessed Democrats in the House for committing impeachment malpractice (a stronger charge than merely saying the Democrats were incompetent in managing the inquiry process) and sabotaging their own impeachment plans. Furthermore, he charges that their motivations were as just as self-serving, politically expedient and flawed as were those they alleged governed Trump's decision making. To paraphrase Bolton, if the ends don't justify the means for Trump, then neither do they justify the means for the House Democrats.

Bolton considers that the first article of impeachment (abuse of power) was not compellingly demonstrated, because the House chose to telescope the impeachment inquiry both in duration and in scope. According to Bolton, the impeachment process should not have accommodated the presidential election campaign, and the investigation should have gone beyond Ukraine, possibly including the Turkish bank, Halkbank, and the Chinese telecommunications companies, ZTE and Huawei and the national security implications of Trump's policy making *vis-à-vis* these companies and their host countries. On the second article of impeachment (obstruction of Congress), Bolton was unequivocal in declaring it to be 'frivolous,' since the House chose not to litigate for its subpoena enforcement authority.

Seemingly regardless of the outcome of the impeachment process, Bolton maintains that the November presidential election is the most appropriate and meaningful venue for rendering a verdict on Trump. These takes on the impeachment process correspond closely to those expressed by Republican senators when they briefed the country after acquitting Trump.

In concluding his remarks on the impeachment process, Bolton states his curious belief that if re-elected, Trump will advance policies much more acceptable to Democrats as he, presumably, will be able to ignore his base and be 'presidential' for the history books. Now, Bolton only surveyed national security matters—his mandate—leaving domestic policy to others, so that's another 'out' for Bolton in making a final judgment on Trump's legitimacy.

In summary, Bolton's book is not a *coup de grâce* to Trump's presidency—it certainly can't be thought of as the straw that broke the camel—and it's far from the betrayal that Trump asserts. Trump comes out looking petulant and weak but not impeachable, and it's unlikely that Bolton's testimony would have changed the Senate vote. Bolton's view, as if projecting the assessment of some future historian, seems to be that Trump is unquestionably a bad president but not a catastrophic threat to the republic.

It is interesting that Bolton's ultimate decision to resign was triggered by a personal affront not a policy dispute or a conflict over defending America's national interests, such disputes and conflicts as he encountered multiple times during his 18-month tenure, often precipitating a strong inclination to resign abruptly. Trump questioned Bolton's loyalty and Bolton quit. That's it.

Right now, in the last third of July 2020, the most dangerous virus in the world is not COVID-19 with nearly 15 million confirmed cases and more than 600,000 confirmed deaths. No, the most dangerous virus in today's world is Trumpery—glitter-covered worthless nonsense and lies. It has infected approximately half the voting population in America. Trumpery is the essence of the present U.S. Government that continues to exert a disproportionate and negative influence on the rest of the world. Since very little good has come from the Trump Administration, very little can be expected in the future. Trumpery is the virus that the rest of the world shouldn't have to suffer. It must be contained within its borders and cured there.

We Americans 'may' have the opportunity to decide in a legitimate election whether to return the President to the White House, but if we refuse to re-elect him, there looms the possibility that he will continue as President anyway, probably under a substantially-modified constitutional regime. We Americans have the right of self-determination and sovereignty—historically denied to lesser nations (especially in the Western Hemisphere) and currently being denied to some of our fellow Americans in concerted efforts to suppress the vote through campaigns of voter disinformation and efforts to discredit mail-in voting in the time of the COVID-19 global pandemic where America leads the world in cases and deaths. Come November, we Americans will have another chance to choose what kind of country we want. However, as mentioned, do not expect the President to concede even if he loses the election, the increasing likelihood of which may oblige him to act pre-emptively: to either postpone or cancel the election.

The rest of the world will have to live with the consequences if the President is fraudulently re-elected, illegally cancels the election, or

refuses to comply with an unfavourable election result, and quite likely not just for four more years. (Expect a hereditary—not necessarily a bloodline—transfer of power upon the President's death).

The global consequences are often lost on many Americans as our perspective has historically been short-sighted, parochial and self-serving, not unlike that of other peoples whose governments have ruled large parts of the world. Perhaps a difference is the zealous self-righteousness and moral tyranny that the U.S. Government projects mendaciously among its citizens and residents and throughout the world, which non-Americans, and many of us Americans as well, recognize as out-and-out hypocrisy, deception and perversion of the ideals of charity, freedom and choice, which have been twisted and corrupted by our government's interpretations of a secular state, elected government and competitive markets.

The significance of America's 'actually adhered to values' as opposed to its liturgically-recited ideals is linked to the reality that America is still without question the dominant nation in the world. It has the world's largest and most powerful economy and military, which can project its advantage unilaterally and anti-competitively *vis-à-vis* other nations or other blocs of nations. It has a massive government infrastructure that is relatively well coordinated within its borders and across the globe. The vastness of the American bureaucratic state is intermingled with the nominally 'private' corporate world ('free enterprise' being an American oxymoron), which thrives on public grants, tax incentives, and market protections and develops public policy in between elections, leveraging its industrial and commercial wealth, connections and expertise.

Theoretically, the legitimacy of the U.S. Government's power derives from its charter to protect life, liberty and property (pursuit of happiness, really?) not of everyone in America (that was never the

intention if we are honest about American history, and since the public murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department we are, for a time, being more forthright in our self-assessment) and certainly not of the rest of the world's inhabitants, who represent merely a theological burden. Fundamentally though, America's power is coercive and therefore grounded in its authority, i.e., its ability to muster brute force to compel submission. Nevertheless, inside the borders, the military has traditionally been kept out of domestic affairs (though periodically ordered in to enforce federal desegregation law or invited in by State governors to keep the peace, e.g., after Rodney King's violent beating by the Los Angeles Police Department and the subsequent acquittal of the officers involved), but the world and even some of us Americans are realizing that the perpetuated myth of American goodwill will be mass-marketed as perfectly compatible with the continued slipping-off of the constraints of liberal (limited) government and the enabling of the idiosyncratic governance of its President, who has been able to dominate the administrative machinery of government, the Congress, the Supreme Court, the Federal Reserve Board, much of the armed services, the federal police—from the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and perhaps the State Department (CIA)—and State governments. This has been accomplished by a coup that too few Americans have acknowledged—some naively regarding these rollbacks as temporary and reversible and attributable to an anomalous president.

As the underlying power of the U.S. government rests with law enforcement and the military, with restraints removed, the policing of America will be facilitated by the dumb, sycophantic or non-confrontational pliancy of our American electorate who persist in the belief that America is the just leader of and shining light for the world—those ends justifying dubious means. Many in the American police and military establishments have no doubt been rehearsing the Nuremburg defense and are ready and willing to follow what-

ever orders the commander-in-chief gives. Then, there are the secret police that the world has seen in Portland, Oregon and the multitude of militias that stand waiting in the wings to be called into service by the President. That's all part of 'the [perverted] American way.' "We don't want a king—but we'll take a dictator—we do crave a leader to worship" as has been proven for all the world and history to see. Whatever the President wants done will be supported, or at least not opposed, by a frighteningly large number of Americans, and it will be enforced through the might and technological sophistication of the post-Eisenhower military-industrial complex, sometimes overtly as in Lafayette Square and cities across America, and sometimes covertly as in Portland, quelling the protests (one day perhaps giving no quarter) but raising the spectre of a police state wherein we may have our own *desaparacidos* (disappeared).

The U.S. Government has extraordinary political, economic and military influence around the world, and to the extent that a unified authoritarian nation remains entrenched in Washington, D.C., the world has good reason to be prepared to prevent the contagion of its illiberal and anti-humanitarian policies. Actually, the first question is what can the U.S. Government do to the world by means of exercising its unequalled global power? The answer: pretty much what it wants. The next question is what will the U.S. Government do to the world, i.e., will it lead the world and treat other nations with charity and fairness? The answer: don't bet on it.

American exceptionalism is a global problem, but American exceptionalism under the direction of a President, who may be variously described as an incorrigible mobster or child-brained, should frighten the daylights out of the world (and America), much more so than did the Cuban Missile Crisis in those long October days in 1962. Don't think that the President is inclined towards the calculus of proportionality and don't believe that the voice of reason and

wisdom will always have the ear of the President in a crisis. This President is capable of setting the world on fire to feed his vanity . . . and that includes America from Wall Street to Highway 101 and all the Main Streets in between.

While we Americans 'may' be able to decide for ourselves in November, what can other nations do? How can they protect themselves against the ever-aggrandizing American autocracy, which to some just means 'a whole lot more of the same as what we've been getting.' As we Americans may not be able (or willing) to deal with our own rogue president, nations around the world must have a contingency plan to protect themselves against this unchained monster.

This would be no modern version of the 19th century Concert of Europe. This time it must be a concert of the world—a global concert—committed to countervail the authoritarian, anti-charitable, anti-democratic and anticompetitive bulldozing of what exists solely for the purpose of developing a beautiful, brand-new, perfect world neighbourhood for the American elite and their hangers-on. Such a concerted global effort would not simply be a coalition of nation-states but a global consensus, uniting the sovereign and representative functions of the nation-state with the transnational missions of beneficent non-state actors to promote a multilateral, progressive agenda for the world instead of the retrograde, self-serving agenda of American exceptionalism and its asymmetric political economy embodied in the Washington Consensus.

But, this global concert cannot be led, directed, or controlled by any existing or nascent autocracies or blocs thereof. What would be the point of exchanging one autocracy for another?

Alas, who will sponsor such a new world order? The Concert of Europe, the League of Nations, the United Nations? What would be

the next evolutionary step? Does the UN Security Council have the remedy? No, it does not, as each of the five permanent members (three of whom are themselves arguably present-day hegemonic threats to the world), possesses the ultimate secret weapon—the veto of multilateral cooperation. So, what is to be done (And not à la Lenin)?

As a first step, the containment of monolithic world powers must be addressed, and the U.S. Government provides the immediate problem for which a solution must be found. Separation of powers, checks and balances . . . the world has listened to this *ad nauseum*. Forget the scraps of paper once called the U.S. Constitution. It's time for the rest of the world to step up and condemn American exceptionalism and dissuade other hegemony waiting in the wings. This is no time for the piously silent. The world must speak out.

The leadership of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea will enjoy the ironic turn of events and will easily be persuaded to join in. Let them, but for humanity's sake, remember that one or more of these countries would fill a power vacuum with alacrity and themselves emerge as a greater threat than America now is.

America must come around. We Americans must get rid of our dictator. America must join the rest of the world, and it must assume a leading role but not 'the' leading role. America's role must fit in the context of global power-sharing among nations who would eschew the dictatorship models of the Trump Administration or the governments of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea.

Is there a utopia on the horizon? No. So, does the world stand idly by waiting for the barbarians? No. Whatever can be devised will likely fail at some point. However, it's better to acknowledge our fallibility, and like Neurath's sailors out at sea, never cease making repairs to our unseaworthy vessel to stay afloat. And so, Americans

and the world's nations must do the best we can, respectively, to improve governance. We Americans must check the dictatorship in our midst, and the international community must check American exceptionalism. It's the best we can do for now.

It is to be hoped that by calling out and challenging the excessive abuses (criminal and unconstitutional) of the President, we Americans will rally and defeat him at the ballot box and force him to accept the verdict of America's citizenry. The world can help by calling out and challenging these abuses. It is unnecessary and undesirable for the world to intervene in the same way the U.S. Government has attempted and often achieved regime change during its storied history of American foreign policy. The means to the end are still important. Besides, there are millions of American patriots protesting in the streets, speaking through the media, in public spaces and among their friends, families, and neighbours—calling for universal basic human rights in America—and they must not be the innocent victims either of the President or the international community.

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In *The Time of the Magicians*, Wolfram Eilenberger writes a collective biography of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ernst Cassirer, Martin Heidegger and Walter Benjamin covering the Weimar Republic years from 1919-1929.

The Wittgenstein presented is from the *Tractatus*; Cassirer is the neo-Kantian, establishment academician and Weimar republican; Heidegger is from *Being and Time*; and Benjamin is the literary and cultural critic of 'Goethe's Elective Affinities' and the *Arcades Project*. Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Benjamin challenged the philosophical establishment of the day—Wittgenstein all but retired from the world, Cassirer continued in the neo-Kantian tradition, while Heidegger and Benjamin attempted to lay the groundwork for a new philosophy. Despite his withdrawal, Wittgenstein's influence spread to the Vienna Circle in Europe and Analytic Philosophy in the English-speaking world. Heidegger's work helped lay the foundation for 20th century Continental Philosophy—the archrival of Analytic Philosophy—and Benjamin's work contributed to the early years of the Frankfurt School and its critical theory approach (drawing from historical materialism) and inclination towards social change.

Of particular interest is Eilenberger's inclusion of portions of the 1929 Davos Debate between Cassirer and Heidegger. This debate is reminiscent of Settembrini and Naphta's contesting for Hans Castorp's soul at a sanatorium retreat in Davos, Switzerland in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* (1924). In Mann's novel, Settembrini represents the Italian-Mediterranean Enlightenment, Naphta the authoritarian side of the Jewish-Jesuit-Marxist tradition. Eilenberger writes that "indeed Cassirer and Heidegger mirror with almost uncanny precision the ideological struggle between Lodovico Settembrini and Leo Naphta." In the non-fiction Davos Debate,

Cassirer defends while Heidegger challenges what was then the Enlightenment-based Kantian idealism—both vying for the 'soul' of '20s German philosophy. Heidegger would, therefore, be situated in the counter-Enlightenment, along with Nietzsche.

The book is a somewhat difficult read owing to the complexity of the philosophies and this reviewer's limited prior familiarity with Cassirer and Benjamin. Nevertheless, the most significant takeaway from this exposition is how '20s German philosophical thought was conditioned by the world (its historical context) and by the personalities and their relationships (its biographical context). Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Benjamin introduced new philosophical approaches (either an end of the old ways or the beginning of new ways of doing philosophy), while Cassirer seemed to be a bridge between past and present philosophies. The times, 1919-1929, were themselves conditioned by the revolutions in physical theory—general relativity and quantum theory—and by the devastation to modernity brought about by World War I as well as by the freedom and confusion that ensued when nations were liberated from collapsed empires.

Wittgenstein's ladder—the *Tractatus* which elevates us to see the limits of our linguistic competence regarding the metaphysical and then ceases to be useful—and his assertion regarding the meaninglessness of metaphysical statements suggests that for him it was necessary to end the delusion of architecting grand philosophical structures, e.g., Kant and Hegel's castles. Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's 'inexpressible' is comparable to Kant's limitations on human understanding and the immanent method of Wittgenstein's critique of philosophical language is not dissimilar from Hegel's immanence of Reason.

Heidegger's Being constitutes the ultimate metaphysical reduction. Being replaces the subject—Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*—as fun-

damental, since for Heidegger existence must precede recognition of existence hence recognition of self and other. What is given is reducible beyond self and world. Existence is the prerequisite for any further classification of 'reality' as well as for any knowledge of it. As with Wittgenstein, according to Heidegger our knowledge and language of 'reality' proceeds immanently—from within—there being no external reference, e.g., forms, archetypes, noumena, ways of knowing, etc.

Heidegger's Being is genealogically related to the ancient Greek philosophy of Parmenides, two-and-a-half millennia ago whose concept of the 'One/Whole' is delimited, or made finite, by Nothingness. For both, Being is dimensional in terms of time and space, however neither dimension is an infinite 'container' for intervals of time and regions of space. For Heidegger neither time nor space exist prior to Being, which itself is the extent of space and time. The opposite of Being, Nothingness, has no existence and therefore has no extent in either time or place. In other words, for Parmenides and Heidegger, there is no eternity and there is no infinite space. Parmenides predates Christianity, but the conclusion that there is no eternity or infinite space undermines the traditional Christian theology of an eternal, omnipresent deity. Not only does Heidegger's Being threaten the foundations of his early Catholic upbringing, but he also sets out to undermine the preserve set apart for metaphysics by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. For Heidegger unlike Kant, there is no *a priori* way or means of apprehension that lies outside Being.

Heidegger's method of discovering Being and the awareness of Being is essentially revelation (immanent unfolding), akin to Descartes' introspection on one side of Western philosophy and Hegel's immanence of Spirit's self-knowledge on the other. Because of the metaphysical nature of the concepts of Being and Dasein, they cannot be deduced by means of logic. Furthermore,

logic is not apart from nor does it condition either our existence or our awareness of our existence. Existence, like the Parmenidean One/Whole, precedes logic and all other ways of knowing.

All four philosophers regard language as a limit to philosophical thought, which is not a particularly astounding discovery or realization. Wittgenstein goes further by maintaining that we cannot ask or answer questions about metaphysics, as we have no language for it. And Heidegger's neologisms (e.g., Dasein, anxiety, being-in-the-world, being-toward-death, present-at-hand, ready-at-hand) testify to our inability to explain the philosophy of Being without first stretching language to accommodate new ways of thinking. Cassirer's case is slightly different as he, "who [likely] spoke and understood more languages fluently" than anyone in the autumn of 1927, turned to developing a philosophy of culture that would encompass the multiple symbolic forms or languages—science, mathematics, art, and music, as well as new forms emerging, e.g., in quantum physics.

For both Wittgenstein and Heidegger, the '20s were more than just a test of their formal philosophies as both radically engaged the world in their personal choices—Wittgenstein with his almost Caudé-like return to the simplicity of the rustic Austrian mountains and Heidegger with his flirtation with National Socialism in the early '30s. Benjamin's biography resembles the unfinished collage of the 19th century Parisian arcades. In contrast, Cassirer's biography reflects the stability and continuity that characterized his philosophy.

The effect of these four individuals on 20th century philosophy has been profound, and the historical and biographical circumstances that provided the context for their various approaches and conclusions was in turn profoundly influenced by dogma-shattering revolutions in physics and radical breaks from empires leading to an expansion of nationalism and alternative political systems.

Eilenberger's underlying thesis could be that radical changes in the 'real world' or the physical theories of the 'real world' of 1920s Germany became the inevitable and inexorable catalyst for radical changes in the methods and roles of post-Kantian German philosophy in the modern world. This image conflicts sharply with that of the scholar/intellectual living and working in an ivory tower. In addition, the biographical and historical context also reveal a turn in philosophy to incorporate not just the world(s) of philosophy but the material and human conditions that determine how these worlds are discovered, understood, and communicated—an all too human enterprise.

On September 23rd, there were two more milestones on America's journey backwards and downwards. Trump announced that he would not commit to ensuring a peaceful transition if he loses the election, and a Kentucky grand jury agreed with the State's Attorney General and lead prosecutor not to indict any police officers for the murder of Breonna Taylor in her own home.

Did that sink in? A president said that? A prosecutor recommended that?

How is it conceivable that tens of millions of 'God-fearing' Americans and champions of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" cannot see the mockery of every ideal they proclaim?

* * *

In Canada, we still have a few Monarchists who are at least honest about their desire for king/queen worship. In the U.S., the Republicans seem to regard themselves as contemporary Cavaliers who want to restore absolute rule from the top, but shy away from monarchy as if it's a sacrilege.

Republicans—the party of the rich (and their servants) with aristocratic pretensions—would ideally like to return to something along the lines of the feudal class system (slavery is taboo at the moment) of Merry old England with the title king/queen replaced by president and Republican Party membership being a preliminary step towards nobility.

The Republicans are traitors to a man/woman and must be called out. Their wealth is built on lies, cheating, stealing, murdering—

making them perfect candidates to create a new American aristocracy, BUT they can be stopped.

America has dissidents. Many of them are on the streets and are dismissed as anti-fascists (lumpen America used to oppose fascism, too) and looters (but not on the scale of 'white-collar' looters).

Dissidents will never be popular at home. They wouldn't be dissidents then, would they? Americans do celebrate dissidents who expose injustices abroad—remember how America courted Solzhenitsyn who incidentally despised American simplemindedness and duplicity just not as much as Soviet terror—but Americans really don't tolerate internal dissent. Think ... just for a moment about how Blacks have sponsored authentic American dissent for centuries, only to be ignored by Whites. Blacks as dissenters on par with the brave anti-Soviet East Europeans—imagine that.

America needs to do more than wake up. It needs a shake-up to be rid of the class and race biases that permeate American society. Voter intimidation and suppression will never lead to 'one person, one vote' or are we back to the Dred Scott thinking that Blacks are non-citizens. And American capitalism is nothing short of government subsidization of corporations, railed against by 'free traders' when it occurs abroad but hailed as patriotic when it occurs at home. And welfare for the poor is decried as un-American while 'corporate welfare' is thoroughly American, inspiring all that is so wonderful about state-financed 'free enterprise:' low-wage job-creation, increasing asymmetries in income and wealth inequality, innovations in perpetuating growth for its own sake and negative and unmitigated externalities that endanger the environment, human rights and global peace. And then there's institutional Christianity—the state religion that expounds upon its virtues but in no way embodies them—which could very easily be substituted for

Catholicism in Dostoevsky's chapter on 'The Grand Inquisitor' in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

America needs a revolution of the spirit ('revolution' by itself arouses primal fear in the middle and upper classes and *The Purge* is not the catharsis America needs) if it's not going to become God's chosen third-rate tinpot dictatorship. Didn't American foreign policy and its flag-wavers and Bible-thumpers use to glory in overthrowing foreign dictators? Christians living through repression can be admirable, but Christians in power create 'bloody borders' to revise Professor Huntington.

America ... leader of the free world ... NO. The world doesn't believe that anymore, if it ever did, and many Americans are seeing through it for the first time. Being 'woke' isn't good enough though.

America, U R Trump ... do you like it? Or do you want to change your ways? If you weren't so wealthy, powerful and lethal, the world could pigeonhole you as another small fascist aberration, like Belarus, but you do too much harm to your neighbours and the world in which we live and you have the potential to do so much more harm. Can't you see *yet?*

Franny and Zooey, published in 1955, is vintage New Yorker fiction—fiction set in New York about New Yorkers and often found in the pages of *The New Yorker*. It's upper middle class literature for the cosmopolitan, the bright, and the beautiful, so it's no surprise that *Franny and Zooey* is a tale about an existential crisis in a young woman accustomed to a world within the world where wealth and privilege exceed most readers' experiences. To an outsider, its characters are bizarrely eccentric, and while their circumstances may be familiar, they are so only from a distance and to a limited extent. Given this separateness from a common reality, is it possible that *Franny and Zooey* contribute in any meaningful way to world literature?

Does the author give us anyone we can identify as deserving our empathy or even our interest? Could it be Franny, a captious 20-year-old, intelligent and attractive, attending a girls-only private college in the Northeast, who escapes back home to get her bearings with respect to what appears to be a profound, if not melodramatic, transition from childhood to the adult world ... unless she is indeed facing a truly adult crisis as her symptoms in the short story could suggest a pregnancy? Or could it be Zooey, her brother, also intelligent and handsome, an insolent 25-year old still living with his parents in the family's Manhattan apartment, daily asserting his independence and maturity with his excessive and swaggering indoor cigar-smoking habit and gratuitous overuse of 'god-damn' as an all-purpose adjective, verb, and noun to express his disdain for everything 'not him?'

Prodigies, the children of Glass, seven in number, all appeared on a radio quiz show when they were younger where they demonstrated their impressive book knowledge. The libraries in the family home are beyond the financial comprehension of most. As props,

they intimate an intellectual preserve where the precocious brood has been reared to demarcate and celebrate their superior knowledge and intelligence. That the children are both educated and gifted is repeatedly signified in the extensive name dropping intended to persuade the reader that this family and these children are indeed special, if not chosen to engage life through the accumulation of worldly wisdom, in print.

Not only are Franny and Zooey exceptionally endowed with mental acuity and the opportunities to develop that faculty, they are beautiful, attractive, handsome, and good-looking as the reader is reminded throughout. As mentioned, Franny is enrolled in an elite private college, and nowhere else is there any indication that the family is financially constrained—the surprise being that the two oldest sons were in World War II, although World War I gave rise to a privileged community who told the world all about the horrors of total war and the individual existential crises so engendered, so why wouldn't WWII?

In view of Franny and Zooey's being from a different set, one that most of us will only read about or experience indirectly through media and the arts, does their story have literary value for us, or is it just a curious, maybe envious, peek over at the other side?

On one hand, *Franny and Zooey* might be useful consolation for parents of bright, beautiful children who gradually and eventually disappoint their parents anguishing over the unfavourable comparisons with others' kids inasmuch as such parents can look for and hope for a 'soulful awakening,' a deep sensitivity, and an existential 'victory' that somewhat compensates for their progeny's failure to measure up. On that reading, *Franny and Zooey* would be more than just an ostentatious waste of space.

However, when Fanny curls up in her parents' bed to rest from her existential self-torment, opposite and clashing images come to mind. Where can the smart, good-looking inner city kid go to convalesce when the formative existential questions come? ... where the nearest library is a 16-block walk. ... where the indoor ambient temperature varies with the seasons from 60-85°F. Where can the clever, handsome kid in a rural mobile home park go? ... where the library comes and goes with the Wi-Fi. ... and where the weather indoors very closely approximates the weather outside.

The reader may concede that Franny and Zooey live among wealth but poorly, as the apartment must smell like a cheap motel room since years of incessant tobacco smoking would have thoroughly penetrated the entire living space and its furnishings and not just left its mark on the walls which unsurprisingly needed to be repainted. Then, too, the contents of the home being so thick throughout the apartment must have been a reminder that the family's material well-being, though quite comfortable, was far too modest to accommodate the depth and breadth of its aristocratic intellectual pretensions. So, perhaps the author has sufficiently detailed the surroundings to reveal possible constraints on the perfect world of Franny and Zooey's home. And then there's the mother imposing herself and her maternal conversation on her 25-year-old son while he is taking a bath. How can that not manifest a bizarre and unhealthy mother-son relationship?

As for Franny, why did she need to come back home? Was she still unfit to live on her own? Was she perpetrating a crisis to come home, because home was there ... always there? While Franny told her dorm roommate that she was doing her a favour by leaving, could Franny really have convinced herself that she was considering another's welfare even as she was enduring the solitude of an overwhelming and unrelenting anxiety?

Is Franny's the human condition or is it the upper middle New Yorker's condition? Is it a human existential crisis or is it just the self-indulgence of the privileged? ... of superior egos enthralled with their consciousness of their existence? No development of Franny's character is discernible from the short story to the novella. Had the author chosen to pursue the narrative of Franny's pregnancy, the Franny character could have been drawn to show the development of a girl into a woman, but the image the reader is left with is of an emotionally immature Franny hiding in the 'nest.'

Zooey, in contrast, is a character allowed to reveal himself in a much more positive light after having been introduced to the reader as a pretentious and self-important but shallow and insecure mama's boy. However, his Buddy-impersonated call and the ensuing conversation with Zooey revealed far more depth and sincerity than the reader could otherwise have imagined. Though Zooey doesn't experience a development along the lines of a protagonist in a *Bildungsroman*, the author does provide the character the opportunity to reveal himself more fully so that the reader can feel as though something worthwhile did emerge from Franny's overwrought performance.

Re-engaging the issue of whether New Yorker fiction can be considered great literature on account of the universality of its themes, it's relevant to recall from another genre that Hans Castorp was a privileged 23-year-old, albeit orphaned, character in Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, which is beyond doubt, great literature. As an example of the American opposite of New Yorker fiction, the reader might revisit Richard Wright's *Native Son*—and Bigger Thomas, its 20-year-old protagonist—an American literary classic in realism. The universality of Bigger's condition might be more obvious than Hans', but that depends on the reader. It shouldn't be forgotten though that privilege is relative as is the human condition, for there remain billions of human beings who haven't had, don't

have, and won't have the luxury of comparing or sharing their existential moments, leaving some to wonder whether they have them or are blessedly ignorant.

Salinger's Franny and Zooey might be dismissed as *faux* protagonists at first glance, but there is evidence that the author intended to reveal something about what he considered the human condition, however narrowly confined to the Glass microcosm. This 'something' the reader might still need to experience first-hand. Alternatively, the innate human faculty of imagination and ability to project might afford an imperfect but perfectly adequate substitute.

In 1842 Charles Dickens made an extended business trip to North America. For Dickens, a *littérateur* of satire and social reform, the New World promised to expand his stock of grievances as well as his stock among the burgeoning English-speaking world on the west side of the Atlantic. His travels inspired his 1842 *American Notes*, which in turn influenced the interpolation of his American experience into his 1843 *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*. Neither book was universally well-received in the New World as he appears to have overestimated the number of his friends in America "who, loving their country, can bear the truth when it is told good humouredly, and in a kind spirit."

From the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit* to the publication of the postscript, Dickens did not withdraw his harsh criticisms, but he did acknowledge American sensitivities and the injuries felt in response to his satire. In the famous postscript to *Martin Chuzzlewit*, he only went so far as to observe that the America of 1868 was vastly different and improved from 1840s America. The satire still stood, but Dickens located it far from the current reality, as if to suggest to those who might be suggestible that America could no longer be satirized. This was no recanting of *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

For a writer with Dickens' facility with language and its rhetorical uses and his unequivocal sense of what is just, one would not expect a humble admission of defeat. That would have been out of character.

It could be argued that Dickens' rapprochement was motivated by dramatic changes in the previous quarter century, although that's less believable than that America had evolved somewhat, at least insofar as the result of the Civil War marked the end of slavery some 30 years after it had been abolished throughout the British

Empire. However, Dickens being attentive to the reality of human conditions irrespective of their contradictions with temporal and spiritual laws could hardly be suspected of harbouring such naive views as that a new era of political equality had suddenly broken out in America. While it is true that Dickens' novels tend towards the simplistic victory of good over evil, it's not so easy to assign that sort of indefatigable optimism to the author. His realism is what carries his work, and his trademark end-of-story resolutions seem little more than trifles for the reader who has borne with him for so long.

It has been argued that Dickens' turnabout culminating in an apparent surrender in the postscript was a similar play to the audience in order to sway public opinion in his favour in his longstanding copyright battle with American publishers. It was patently ironic that while *Martin Chuzzlewit* was a thoroughgoing rebuke of selfishness, particularly regarding wealth, Dickens was perceived to be more intent on securing his pecuniary advantage in the American book market than in advancing issues of social justice for which he had been appreciated by part of the American citizenry. It appeared to many American that Dickens, the author, had been transmogrified into Dickens, the bookseller.

Whether this reading of Dickens is correct, it is preferable to the view the Dickens apologized for his satire having been merciless and unfair to America. In fact, so much of the general analysis is sufficiently accurate in characterizing American shortcomings that persist to this day. Boorish, ignorant, and priggish, the ugly Americans are swindlers and hypocrites in far larger numbers than might be normal for a given population. Unfortunately, it's not easy for an outsider to point out and recommend correction in manners and attitude, and as Bevan said at the end of Chapter 16, "If another Juvenal or Swift could rise up among us to-morrow, he would be hunted down." Bevan continues by adding that "where a native writer has ventured on the most harmless and good-humoured illus-

trations of our vices or defects, it has been found necessary to announce, that in a second edition the passage has been expunged, or altered, or explained away, or patched into praise," of which Dickens was undoubtedly reminded when he penned the postscript.

Dickens does not have to be defended here. What is to be defended is social criticism and not just of an era. American journalism has been worse, but it still shows a heavy bias to the sensational and the conjectural.

'Here's this morning's New York Sewer!' cried one. 'Here's this morning's New York Stabber! Here's the New York Family Spy! Here's the New York Private Listener! Here's the New York Peeper! Here's the New York Plunderer! Here's the New York Keyhole Reporter! Here's the New York Rowdy Journal!

And the sacrosanct words of the Founders—"all men are created equal," "unalienable Rights," and "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness"—have been repudiated in deed throughout American history in the treatment of Black people, an anomalous situation not easily missed ... by non-natives. On arriving in New York, Mark Tappley remarked to his gentleman, Martin, about the American perspective on Negro slaves:

they're so fond of Liberty in this part of the globe, that they buy her and sell her and carry her to market with 'em. They've such a passion for Liberty, that they can't help taking liberties with her.

In the third decade of the 21st century, human slavery is now illegal in America, but its legacy of violence against "Life, Liberty, and pursuit of Happiness" and complicit tolerance remain noticeably intact.

Then there was and is America's materialism, selfishness, and status consciousness, reflected in its pretense to aristocracy founded on "intelligence and virtue" as proclaimed by Colonel Diver, Editor of the *New York Rowdy Journal*. "And of their necessary consequence in this republic—dollars, sir."

And to the issue of copyrights—a divisive topic across the Atlantic in the 19th century—the American predilection towards native profits put the young American nation squarely in the pirates' camp—now occupied by China in 21st century trans-Pacific intellectual property disputes.

What is important today about the 150-year-old quarrel across the Atlantic is not which side was right ... which to a nonpartisan might seem much like the sins of the father. What's relevant and worth remembering is that America can profit—in a salutary and non-pecuniary way—from re-reading Dickens' satire. And Americans need not extend their beliefs to recognize the superiority of that author, his countrymen, or their nation. The ideals America espouses are sufficiently well articulated and should be well enough understood to place the standard of behaviour and governance above any individual or individual nation's practices. Nevertheless, Americans' over-reliance on *ad hominem* argumentation ever places inflexible limits on sound reasoning.

Based on the overwhelming evidence of Dickens' *oeuvre*, his statement in the 1867 preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit* can with good reason be accepted on its face, viz.:

As I had never, in writing fiction, had any disposition to soften what is ridiculous or wrong at home, so I then hoped that the good-humored people of the United States would not be generally disposed to quarrel with me for carrying the same usage abroad.

However, human nature is incorrigible in some ways as E. Rushmore Coglan, a sophisticated, widely-traveled man, demonstrated upon resorting to fisticuffs in defense of the honour of his hometown, Mattawamkeag, Maine, in O Henry's 1906 story, 'A Cosmopolite in a Café.' The cosmopolitan Coglan "wouldn't stand for no knockin' the place," said McCarthy, one of the French garçons in the New York café. It wouldn't stretch the imagination too far to consider the possibility of a foreign critic being treated to similar local hospitality in modern America not least if he/she happened to be Black.

France's Agent Orange Case (May 2021)

In 2014, Trần Tô Nga, filed a lawsuit for civil damages in the amount of \$360,000 against 26 chemical firms alleging that she was poisoned by Agent Orange[1] manufactured and sold by these companies and used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War between 1962-1971. Of the original defendants, only 14 companies survived to face the trial that finally commenced in January 2021. The two most prominent defendants were Dow Chemical and Bayer AG, the latter implicated through its 2018 acquisition of Monsanto. The inclusion of Bayer is *déjà vu* as Bayer was part of the giant chemical conglomerate IG Farben, one of Germany's corporate aiders and abettors during the Holocaust.

Nga, a dual Vietnamese-French citizen, was able to approach the court under France's recently resuscitated law of universal jurisdiction, which permits (but does not obligate) French courts to assume jurisdiction over cases beyond the traditional reach of national law provided that the alleged conduct is of an egregious nature that is offensive to humanity and not just to a particular society or nation.

On May 10, 2021, there was again no judgment in the courts of the West for the non-Western victims of America's use of chemical weapons during the Vietnam War. Neither Dow nor Bayer disputed the fact that they were responsible for the production and sale of Agent Orange used by the U.S. military in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos in the 1960s. Their argument was that there was nothing illegal in what they did as they were acting on orders from the sovereign nation of the U.S. The implication being that if culpability is to be established it must be demonstrated to rest with the state, which possesses the sovereign right to wage 'just war' for which there never has been an international arbiter. Bayer AG established its defense based on U.S. Government immunity in a statement claiming that "it has been well-established by courts [in the U.S.] for

many years that wartime contractors ... operating at the behest of the U.S. government, are not responsible for the alleged damage claims associated with the government's use of such product during wartime." [2] Dow Chemical's defense goes further and even questions the scientific conclusion that Agent Orange has caused the harm alleged by plaintiffs and adds that "historic wartime issues, including the use of Agent Orange, are appropriately a matter of resolution by the governments of the United States and Vietnam." [3]

Although the American Government did not use nuclear weapons during the war, the bomb tonnage dropped in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia far exceeded what America dropped in the European and Pacific theatres of WWII, evidencing a frustrated superpower intending to bomb a Third World agriculture-based society "back to the Stone Age." And this massive bombardment, on a scale larger than any in human history, didn't just destroy transportation, communications, and production infrastructure. It killed civilians as well. This was total war. John Hersey had already told us about the inhuman horrors of 'collateral damage' in his 1946 non-fiction book, *Hiroshima*, but a decade-and-a-half later we had forgotten that we waged war against whole nations not just armies, but women, children, the elderly, and the disabled. The same American general, Curtis LeMay, who used the "Stone Age" metaphor admitted with the matter-of-factness of extreme hubris that had the U.S. lost World War II in the Pacific, he would undoubtedly be charged with war crimes. But the U.S. didn't lose, and LeMay was back in action in Vietnam, and by the 1968 presidential election was the running mate of George Wallace of the American Independent Party, which garnered nearly 10 million votes or 13.5 percent of the popular vote.

At this point, it's worth conjecturing that Americans will never understand war until it reaches our shores and interior. The

September 11th suicide airplane attacks traumatized a nation of 300-plus million people, but 9/11 was a battle not a war. The wars that followed had to be moved far away—back to faraway Asia where the enemy lived, in other words, safely away from Wall Street, Main Street, and the industrial parks. We can only speculate on the emotions and responses of Americans if foreigners decided to bomb America back to the Stone Age.[4] One can imagine children—of all ages—crying out, wailing to God to not abandon his chosen people and to rise up and destroy the enemies of ... the new 'Israelite' nation.[5]

Returning to the French court case, the defendants drew their inspiration and legal claims from the U.S. courts, most recently in *Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange v. Dow Chemical*. In the final judgment in 2008, the U.S. Court of Appeals reaffirmed the 2005 U.S. District Court decision, and in 2009, the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal, which is tantamount to confirming the two lower courts' decisions.

In 2005, the District Court issued a summary judgment and dismissed the plaintiff's case.

On a motion from the defendants for summary judgment and dismissal of the case, the Court rejected all claims—claims ranging from tort liability to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity—advanced by the plaintiffs. The lawsuit was dismissed for lack of an actionable claim based on the Court's finding that the defendants were immunized by the government contractor defense from any civil liability under U.S. law and were not susceptible to prosecution under international law since there was none that specifically proscribed or criminalized the manufacture and use of Agent Orange and other chemical herbicides by the U.S. during the Vietnam War. This result of the Vietnamese case is not inconsistent with that of the earlier

U.S. cases, since the Vietnam veterans' cases were won in an out-of-court settlements and not in the courts. In the U.S., the Agent Orange manufacturers were willing to settle and bring an end to the negative publicity of the Agent Orange litigation, despite favourable prospects for their winning the class action lawsuit. Undoubtedly, the Vietnamese plaintiffs in VAVAO considered their out-of-court prospects to be advanced by the risk of negative international publicity for the chemical companies.[6]

Then, in what amounted to the decisive and closing 2008 judgment, the Court of Appeals concluded that:

The District Court made several rulings that were favorable to Plaintiffs, but it ultimately determined that Plaintiffs had failed to allege a violation of international law because Agent Orange was used to protect United States troops against ambush and not as a weapon of war against human populations. The District Court also determined that Plaintiffs' domestic tort law claims were barred by the government-contractor defense, which the court previously had found to bar similar claims brought by United States veterans against some of the same defendants named as defendants-appellees in the companion appeal decided herewith. Accordingly, the court denied Plaintiffs' claims for relief under both international and domestic law and granted Defendants' motion dismissing the Complaint. Because we agree with the conclusions reached by the District Court in this case, we affirm the judgment for the reasons set forth in this Opinion.[7]

The trial in France had been expected, or hoped, by supporters of Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange poisoning to be an historic opportunity for America, if not the government, at least its defense contractors, to be held accountable for crimes of war such as selling toxic, gene-modifying, and lethal chemical agents of mass

destruction affecting millions of people in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. To date the U.S. Government and U.S. courts have consistently protected the chemical industry from lawsuits on the grounds that the defense contractors are implicitly granted immunity when acting on behalf of a sovereign nation at war—when that sovereign nation is the U.S.—although under domestic public pressure, the U.S. has been compelled to pass legislation—the 1991 Agent Orange Act—to compensate U.S. victims of Agent Orange exposure.

The French court voluntarily waived its right to jurisdiction and accepted the American argument of sovereign immunity and its corollary that agents of the sovereign U.S. were beyond the reach of the French justice system.

The case is not over though. Nga has indicated that she will appeal as this is not simply a case of monetary compensation for her health care costs but a challenge to bring justice to Vietnamese (and all) victims of Agent Orange.[8] Therefore, the legal issue of defense contractor immunity with respect to America's use of Agent Orange as a chemical weapon of war has not necessarily been irrevocably decided. However, Nga is considered to be the last Vietnamese plaintiff with any chance of indicting the producers and sellers of Agent Orange. It is curious, as Nga's legal team has noted, that the French court allowed the trial to proceed even though the court ultimately concluded that it lacked jurisdiction.

While many of Nga's supporters likely shared the vision of implicating the U.S. Government of war crimes in Vietnam with a verdict of against the chemical manufacturers, there had to have been suspicion that political and commercial motives were at play, not to mention that France, itself, has a tarnished legacy in Southeast Asia. Commercial interests in Europe and North America would predictably respond negatively to any suggestion of product liability

in general and for making and selling the weapons of war in particular. France's actions in its own colonial wars in Africa and Asia would also draw increased scrutiny if a court trial in France could expose American wrongdoing in Vietnam, and so business and government leaders on both sides of the Atlantic would have little to gain from allowing a trial court to poke the American superpower in the eye. In addition, trans-Atlantic business relations would likely be strained if one trading partner were thought to be encouraging negative publicity against the other trading partner's corporations. It might be construed as an unfriendly act and even an anti-competitive act. Better to allow the lawsuit to fizzle out and fade from public memory.

Notes

[1] Agent Orange is an herbicide and defoliant—the most common of the Rainbow Herbicides that include Pink, Purple, Green, Blue, and White—whose purpose was twofold: to destroy agricultural crops and to remove the tree canopy in the dense jungles of Southeast Asia as part of America's total war on North Vietnam and its South Vietnamese allies, the Viet Cong. Earlier, the British had used Agent Orange during the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960 as a weapon against communist guerrillas. The chemical warfare had been introduced to destroy crops (enemy food sources) and defoliate the dense jungles (enemy's protection from aerial bombardment).

[2] According to a May 8th *Washington Post* story, 'French court to decide landmark case against the U.S. makers of Agent Orange,' Bayer issued this statement on May 7th.

[3] The full text of Dow Chemical's position vis-à-vis Agent Orange, reproduced below was downloaded May 12, 2021 from

<https://corporate.dow.com/en-us/about/legal/issues/agent-orange.html>.

Agent Orange

Description

As part of the United States and allied forces war efforts in the jungles of southern Vietnam, the U.S. military developed and used a number of military (tactical) herbicides, one of which was Agent Orange. Agent Orange was used to aid U.S. and allied troops by stripping away dense foliage that could conceal enemy combatants.

During the war, Dow, Monsanto and other companies were compelled by the U.S. government to produce Agent Orange under the U.S. Defense Production Act of 1950. The government strictly controlled the transport, storage, use, and the specifications to which Agent Orange was to be manufactured exclusively for the military.

The U.S. courts have consistently ruled that Dow and the other manufacturers bear no responsibility for the development and use of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, and have dismissed all legal claims to the contrary. Moreover, decades of study relating to Agent Orange have not established a causal link to any diseases, birth defects or other transgenerational effects. Notably, the extensive epidemiological study of veterans who were most exposed to Agent Orange does not show that such exposure causes cancer or other serious illnesses.

Dow's Position

Dow has great respect for the men and women who served in the Vietnam War and the others who were affected by it. The U.S. government bears the responsibility for its own military actions, including the development and use of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Dow also firmly believes that historic wartime issues, including the use of Agent Orange, are appropriately a matter of resolution by the governments of the United States and Vietnam. The U.S. government has committed resources to address this issue and collaboration between the U.S. and Vietnamese governments continues on a number of fronts.

[4] A more strategic war against America would be non-military. The infrastructure could be severely damaged, rendering the nation's electricity supply unpredictable, communications networks unreliable, and transportation options reduced to the local. The immediate and perhaps even lasting effects of this kind of widespread disruption would be to turn Americans against themselves before they could be unified to defend against the enemy and certainly before they could relocate the battlefield outside the continental U.S. No electricity during the hot summer months, traffic tie-ups frustrating commuters and interrupting the nation's supply chain, an end to overseas vacations, an inability to connect to national and global networks for entertainment, work, education, etc. would make Americans stir crazy and inclined to strike out at the nearest person or object in their way. It wouldn't be necessary to kill Americans. Americans would readily and handily do that on their own initiative. The weapons are already in place, 'locked and loaded' as they say in Hollywood war fantasies.

[5] In 1625, in the early years of the Thirty Years' War in Europe, the Dutch legal scholar, Hugo Grotius wrote his classic treatise on international law, *On the Law of War and Peace*. Although he argues that war is not always to be condemned as there are 'just wars,' he states in the preface:

There are persons who imagine that all laws lose their authority in wartime, but such a theory we should never accept. Rather we should declare it wrong to begin a war except for the enforcement of justice, and wrong to con-

tinue a war already begun, unless it is kept within the bounds of justice and good faith.

and

Throughout the Christian world I have seen a lawlessness in warfare that even barbarian races would think shameful.

These two quotes qualify the remark he makes in Chapter II that "If all people were Christians and lived like Christians, there would be no wars," when discussing the prophet Isaiah's prophecy of no more war, and they are relevant in conjunction with the discussion of America's use of chemical weapons in the Vietnam War and even in the discussion whether that war was a 'just war' and whether any single nation has the unilateral right to ascertain what is a 'just war' according to some divine law.

[6] 'VAVAO v. Dow Chemical' (March 2005) in *Collected Essays on Political Economy and Wartime Civil Liberties, 2002-2008*, by Peter McMillan, 2020.

[7] *Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin v. Dow Chemical Co.*, No. 05-1953 (2d Cir. 2008) https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/appellate-courts/ca2/05-1953/05-1953-cv_opn-2011-03-27.html.

[8] According to a May 11, 2021 Reuters story, 'Franco-Vietnamese Trâm Tô Nga continues her fight against Agent Orange,' Nga "refused to negotiate a financial arrangement with the companies she filed a complaint against. 'I might be a little rich but the victims would still have to wait (for reparations to be made) I don't know until when.'"

Like a poorly digested meal or tainted meal?

Many of us grew with the notion that the past was fixed and immutable. Rather, that the facts about the past were established and incontrovertible. But today—and long before today for many others—some of us are discovering that the facts have been incompletely and sometimes even falsely passed down and just as often put in an ill-fitting context that has led to flawed conclusions. The past with which many of us had become comfortable is beginning to disturb our digestion. We finally acknowledge what we didn't see or didn't want to see then, though the clear evidence school, neighbourhood, and church segregation had been ever present. History had before our very eyes and we weren't paying attention.

Take this line from Ralph Ellison's book, *The Invisible Man*, published three score and nine years ago:

All things, it is said, are duly recorded—all things of importance, that is. But not quite, for actually, it is only the known, the seen, the heard and only those events that the recorder regards as important that are put down, those lies his keepers keep their power by.

This was not a novel discovery. Nietzsche covered this ground in the late 19th century, and he had his predecessors, but we needn't get into that. What's important about Ellison's statement is that he was talking about a contemporary view of Black Americans, ignorant of its own double standards and duplicity. Ignorant because blind—willfully blind to the myths created and perpetuated to keep an entire people from being recognized and treated like ... people. These were inherited myths—they had a genealogy. If we look past their brilliant speculations, we see that the Scottish philosopher David Hume and the German philosopher Immanuel Kant of the

European Enlightenment—were themselves heirs to the myths, which they thoughtlessly accepted and propagated as a practical reality. Myths about the inferiority—even subhuman status—of Blacks. These myths had deep roots in Western societies—just how far back we don't need to worry with for our purposes—and they fed the preconceptions of the new inhabitants of the Americas and their descendants. 'White is right' has filtered through all layers of White North American society from the poor, dumb redneck to the philanthropic who purchase indulgences with their wealth of often dubious genealogy.

Ellison's invisible man is not just one man, but everyman, make that every Black man, or better still, every Black person. When Ellison says that Blacks are invisible he means that Blacks are regarded as being unworthy of consideration ... not in the present or the future and not in the past. Being invisible in the past means being omitted from history, not unlike removing all traces of existence—sealing historical records and bulldozing cemetery markers as the world has now witnessed in the case of Aboriginal peoples in Canada's reluctantly-disclosed residential schools, where 'cultural genocide' has been affirmed by Canada's own Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In his 2019 novel, *The Nickel Boys*, Colson Whitehead draws upon a similar past, the actual history of a notorious youth reform school in Florida, where, as in Canada, ground penetrating radar technology has made it possible to find the unmarked graves of children whose causes of death remain suspicious. The victims were disproportionately Black in the case of the Florida School for Boys and mostly Aboriginal in the church-run residential boarding schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Oral histories have been kept alive for generations and are now being confirmed by previously-secret records and forensic evidence.

Today voices ring out as they have before, telling the stories that have been hidden, ignored, whitewashed, or forgotten by mainstream history taught in our schools. Periodically, these stories rally broad public support for reforms but over time, the need for new distractions and freedom from collective guilt allow these stories to pass. Will this be another episode of social introspection to be moved offstage when we become bored again?

Maybe so, but so far there have always been those who don't let us forget and don't offer to absolve us of responsibility, however indirect. In China—out there or over there—where Westerners like to look to find examples of gross human rights violations, there are those like Liao Yiwu who tell us the stories of Chinese history that the Government and Party don't want their people to know. Stories preserved in an oral tradition that can find ways to defy censorship. Stories about people on the bottom rung who aren't supposed to be there and who are a modern inconvenience for the New China's quest to surpass Western materialism. Stories from the ugly side. Ugly people, miserable conditions, and worthless lives. An abomination to Mao's peasant revolution and detritus to be composted and kept out of sight in the New China. Among the oral histories presented in Liao's *Corpse Walker: Real Life Stories: China From the Bottom Up* are a professional mourner, a human trafficker, a public toilet manager, a leper, a grave robber, a peasant Emperor, a Falun Gong practitioner, a safe cracker, and a migrant worker. The book published in English in 2008 is banned in China.

What reading Liao does for us and what reading Ellison, Whitehead and others does for us in Anglo North America is challenge us to think about just how receptive we are when the dissident voices come from within—not from a Liao in China or a Solzhenitsyn in the USSR—especially when the messages we hear and read make us uncomfortable with the historical accounts we have always assumed to be thorough, objective, and truthful.

On Wounded Knee: Comparing *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* (August 2021)

This review will compare two heterodox histories of Native Americans* referred to as 'Indians' by the authors and herein as well. The first is *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*, now considered a classic, authored by Dee Brown, and published in 1970. The second is *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*, by David Treuer, published in 2019. Both accounts attempt to debunk the prevalent American myth of 'how the West was won,' by developing counter-narratives drawn from historical facts.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee presents the history of the West in the U.S. from 1860 to 1890—that is, from just before the Civil War through the Battle of Wounded Knee—and, in the author's words, is intended to

fashion a narrative of the conquest of the American West as the victims experienced it.... And Americans who have always looked westward when reading about this period should read this book facing eastward.

On the other hand, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* "tells the story of what Indians in the United States have been up to in the 128 years that have elapsed since the 1890 massacre." Treuer characterizes the Wounded Knee Massacre as "a touchstone of Indian suffering, a benchmark of American brutality, and a symbol of the end of Indian life, the end of the frontier, and the beginning of modern America. Wounded Knee, in other words, stands for an end, and a beginning."

What is clear from both histories is that the U.S. Government—not just a haphazard collection of violent and primitive Americans—attempted to destroy and very nearly did destroy the indigenous

peoples in America. It was a multi-generational campaign of the elected government of the U.S., often with the knowledge and tacit complicity of its citizenry, that bears responsibility for the atrocities, tragedies, and hypocrisies that created the transcontinental U.S. And, as both authors note, what culminated in the 1830 Indian Removal Act—the forced removal of Native Americans west of the Mississippi River—is essentially what the U.S. Government tried to do in the West, although by different means as west of the Pacific Coast, Native Americans could not be relocated. Treuer does not mince words when he says, "America did not conquer the West through superior technology, nor did it demonstrate the advantages of democracy. America "won" the West by blood, brutality, and terror." And these words are consistent with Brown's history.

The most important difference between these two histories is that Brown focuses on the end of Indian history, while Treuer develops the thesis that Wounded Knee was neither the end of Indian history nor just the beginning of a new chapter in American history but the continuation of a history of indigenous peoples' fight to survive after European discovery of the 'New World.' Another important difference is that Treuer places post-Wounded Knee American history in the context of broader American history, e.g., the world wars, the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, urbanization, emphasizing the bi-directional influence of Indian life on the world beyond the reservation. Brown, too, presents important external influences, viz. the Civil War, America's vision of a Manifest Destiny, and the continentalization of America by communication and transportation technologies, but for Brown, the world outside the Plains acts upon Indians and not so much vice-versa—hence, the presence of a fundamental theme of victimization. A third difference is that while Brown's characters are those of history, viz. the leaders of Indian tribes and leaders of the U.S. Government, especially military personnel, Treuer's protagonists, particularly in the years after 1890 also include numerous Native Americans who would not nec-

essarily figure prominently in textbooks. They provide anecdotal material that Treuer uses to tell more about individual Indians than we know about those, for example, who were killed at Wounded Knee, about whose lives we know very little.

What Brown reports in detail is what the U.S. Government did primarily to the Plains Indians after it had forced Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole from their lands in the Southeast to Oklahoma—The Trail of Tears, a signature achievement of President Andrew Jackson. The record of U.S. Government policy—economic and military—towards the Indigenous Peoples west of the Mississippi described by Brown amounts to genocide. Even though the collective consciousness of genocide in the 19th century was nowhere close to what it is today, the attempted eradication of indigenous peoples, the theft of their property, and deliberate destruction of their way of life and culture could in no way be squared with the religious and political ideals of the new republic, much as slavery in America demonstrates that American ideals were often empty of substance. In addition, the panorama of lawless war-making by the U.S. Government, through its elected officials and bureaucrats and by churchmen and civilians alike, reveal a brutality of warfare—rape, theft, murder, destruction, mistreatment of noncombatants and prisoners as documented in the Sand Creek and Wounded Knee massacres—give the lie to a nation sworn to uphold the rule of God and the rule of law. The timing of the publication of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* a year after the covered-up story of the My Lai Massacre broke couldn't have been worse for Americans with a conscience, displaying for all the world to see that something was fundamentally wrong with the way the U.S. conducts itself at war.

[T]he drama on the Plains between 1850 and 1890 threw the question of the young republic into stark relief: Was America a democratic country that respected the rights of individuals, or was it just another greedy power in dis-

guise? The Plains Wars raised the question because for the first time Anglo-Indian conflict was staged for all to see. European settlement also came late enough to connect with emergent print and photographic journalism: as with the Vietnam War, the Plains War was there to see in magazines and newspapers and illustrated weeklies.

Integral to Brown's story is the accumulation and presentation of evidence sufficient to indict America's economic and military policy, as it repeats the iterations of how a civilized nation lied, cheated, stole, and murdered to take over the land. America desired the lands in the West to support its expanding population of European immigrants and their descendants, to create a new economy for the West (farming, ranching, mining), and to construct railroads and communication to connect America from east to west. Then and since, the American the myth of America's Manifest Destiny explained and justified U.S. economic and military policy to each new American generation. Also fundamental to the myth was the belief that Native Americans were uncivilized, savage, and primitive such that they didn't warrant the privilege of living under the rule of law and explained. This part of the myth made it incumbent on America to liberate this barbarian race from its backward ways of life and misguided beliefs. And so, the stain of the Indian Wars was mostly hidden from generations of American students and minimized when mentioned. According to the myth, the Indian side of the story didn't need to be told—the treaties that were broken time and again, the buffalo herds that were wiped out as a source for food, clothing and shelter for the Plains Indians, the women and children who were murdered, the reservations that were starved of life's necessities during the harsh winters of the Plains, and the children who were taken from their families and taught to deny their Indian ancestry and culture. Brown tasks himself with re-balancing the historical record tilted one way for so long by the thousands of accounts of the same period that have facilitated the propagation of this part of America's creation myth.

America, a self-proclaimed nation of laws, did not recognize, let alone, honour the legal rights of Indians. By maintaining that Indians were savages, Americans arrogated the right to wage war lawlessly and inhumanely. In the early 17th century, the scope and scale of atrocities committed during the Thirty Years War led the Dutch jurist, Hugo Grotius to observe that "Throughout the Christian world I have seen a lawlessness in warfare that even barbarian races would think shameful." The ever-present reality of war in human society was such that Grotius felt compelled to write about the laws of war, i.e., the laws for making war and the laws for conducting war. Where was civilization and its laws of war when the Indian Wars were fought, when savage massacres provoked savage counter massacres? What truth is there in the words of Red Cloud of the Oglala Lakota (Teton Sioux) when he said, "When the white man comes in my country he leaves a trail of blood behind him," somewhat reminiscent of Professor Samuel P. Huntington's (in)famous remark that "Islam has bloody borders."

In *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee*, Treuer reviews the history of human life in North America dating back thousands of years, incorporating some of the latest thinking in archaeology and anthropology, which gives credibility to the possibility that the original migration of peoples from Asia to North America may have predated the familiar Bering land bridge of 10,000 years ago by upwards of 20,000 years. He moves through the history of the indigenous peoples in what is contemporary continental America, detailing the peoples, where they hadn't been exterminated, in the various parts of the country from Maine to Florida on the Atlantic coast to California and Washington on the Pacific coast and all parts in between. Treuer notes that the Indian remains, even in the Northeast and Southeast, where "total war" had not produced "total extinction." California, however, presents a different story as Indians fought to survive the Spanish, the Mexicans, the U.S. Government, and even the new government of the state of Califor-

nia, which at the height of the post-1849 gold rush paid militia to kill Indians. Treuer states that the Indian history of California is "among the most brutal and bloody treatment of any people anywhere on the globe played out in one of the most beautiful landscapes and Indian homelands ever to greet the eye."

And so by the end of 1890 it must have seemed that everything was over. In four hundred years, Indians had lost control of 100 percent of the United States and remained only in small clusters scattered like freckles over the face of the country. In 1891, the Indians who remained everywhere poked their heads aboveground and surveyed the desolation of their homelands and asked the question Indians had been asking since the beginning: What can we do next to survive?

From this point on, Treuer sets out to answer this question and to explain and support his thesis that Wounded Knee was not the end of the Indian but rather one of countless setbacks endured and overcome by Indians as they fought to survive displacement and annihilation by the emerging dominant society that had migrated from Europe.

Indians fought the government plan after plan, policy after policy, legislative act after legislative act, and they continued to fight. And they fought using their own governments, their own sensibilities, origin stories, legends, language, and creativity. And they fought to remain Indian just as much as they fought for and in order to be Americans, but Americans on their own terms.

Still, Indians remain, and their presence in American society has grown as Indians continue to fight—not on the battlefields—but from within the system—in politics, in the courts, and in peaceful protests—just as Blacks have done since slavery was abolished more than 150 years ago. Treuer refuses to accept Brown's victimi-

zation thesis and introduces numerous characters to flesh out the abstract picture we have of events like the Wounded Knee Massacre where extant historical sources gloss over the anonymity of those involved.

The struggle for Native American rights since Wounded Knee has not been easy. U.S. Government laws continued in force to erase Indian culture. Boarding schools, not unlike Canada's residential schools which they influenced, provided Indians with a Eurocentric education in English at the expense of Indian histories, languages, and religions. The goal was assimilation of Indians into the American melting pot. Similarly, the codification of Indian Offenses regarding ceremonial practices was intended to 'civilize the Indian.' Then, regarding the land, the U.S. Government introduced allotments to weaken the tribal system and introduce competition among reservation members by parceling out reservation land to members and allowing white settlers to buy reservation land allotments.

Then, after World War II, the U.S. Government moved to devolve administrative authority on Indian lands to State governments through the Termination Act and Public Law 280. This devolution of administrative control was a logical extension of a long-term policy to assimilate Indians into the general population so that they would be treated no differently than any other ethnic or racial group. Three decades earlier in 1924, Indians had been guaranteed U.S. citizenship, allowing for dual citizenship, thereby protecting Indian tribal status and existing treaty rights. Though Blacks had been granted citizenship as well as equal protection under the laws and due process in the 14th Amendment, Indians had been excluded. As Indians were now citizens, this actually helped the U.S. Government's case for delegating the administration of Indian affairs to the States. The tribal system was further challenged by demographic changes brought on by industrialization and migration of people to cities to

find employment as well as by relocation programs funded by the federal government.

Nevertheless, the tribes survived and the Native American rights movement continued the struggle and was given a boost by the Meriam Report of 1928, which found the federal government's Indian policy to be an abject failure—in health, education, and economics. But what was won and subsequently enshrined in law was not always so in practice as Blacks had discovered after emancipation. For example, although all Native Americans had the right to vote as U.S. citizens, this right was denied by several states as late as 1962 in the case of Utah.

Then, in 1970, President Nixon determined the Indian termination policy to be a failure and formally ended it. Termination, or devolution, had been a significant threat to tribal sovereignty, and the 1960s marked a shift in the power of the Native American rights movement to command public attention and litigate grievances through the courts. The Native American civil rights movement paralleled the civil rights movement for Blacks, and the emerging litigation capability of the Native American rights' movement in the 1960s and 1970s began to produce favourable court decisions, such as the 1976 Supreme Court decision that unanimously found that the States do not have the legal authority to regulate Native activities on reservations. Not only did this undo Public Law 280 from the early 1950s, but it also recognized Native sovereignty on the reservation. Most famously, it opened the door for tribal casino gambling. Also, in the 1970s, the Indian Education and Religious Freedom acts were passed bringing the U.S. Government policy of assimilation—e.g., boarding schools and the code of Indian Offenses—to an end. Today, Native Americans are at the forefront of the environmental movement as they litigate and protest against land-use violations by corporations in the energy and resource sector. Into the 21st century, Indian culture has resisted assimilation,

erasure, and post-colonial hegemony, so for Treuer, 1890 was not the end of the Indian. It was perhaps the nadir of Indian history post European contact and settlement, but what followed was a continuation of the Indian's fight to survive.

Brown's work is not so sanguine. In fact, he offers no future for the Indian. At the close of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* are these words from Black Elk of the Oglala Lakota:

I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream ... the nation's hoop is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead.

Bury Me at Wounded Knee is nevertheless valuable and relevant, as it clearly and effectively challenges the conventional account of Indian history, and it is important for Americans to have such non-conforming accounts to compare with the 'official history' so that some awareness can be provoked where before there has been too much ignorance and mendacity and that the history to be written in the future will correspond more closely to America's espoused ideals.

Treuer's history, which is both more hopeful—almost defiantly so—and more pragmatic, can be regarded as a logical development from the historical base laid in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*. Both books are needed for a better understanding and appreciation of Indian history. And as Treuer concludes, "To ignore the history of Indians in America is to miss how power itself works." Thus, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee* is a useful genealogy of power—the

power of the state and the power of the powerless as Havel might have put it. And this perspective is shared by Brown in his 2000 Preface to *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* where he writes, "Name a small nation, one whose people have a history of past injustices and oppression, and this book will likely be in print there."

*At some point in the future a better alternative to the term 'Native American' may be found—one that is more specific than 'Indigenous Peoples' and at the same time does not make reference to European contact. Following the example of David Treuer, who identifies as Ojibwe, the terms 'Indian,' 'Native American,' 'indigenous' and 'Native' will be used to refer to the indigenous peoples within the U.S.

The Afghanistan Papers: A Secret History of the War, by Craig Whitlock, journalist with *The Washington Post*, was published in 2021, 50 years after *The Pentagon Papers: The Secret History of the Vietnam War*. The similarity of the titles is intentional: the author's central thesis is that the U.S. government's duplicitous secrecy during the 20-year war in Afghanistan resembles the secrecy during the Vietnam War. In other words, in Afghanistan there was a cover-up just as there was in Vietnam. In both cases it was the federal courts, not Congress, who determined that the government was obligated to release documentation of the real wartime policymaking to the press on behalf of the American public—civilian and military.

In 1971, in a landmark ruling for freedom of the press, the Supreme Court voted 6-3 that the government could not prevent *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* from publishing the *Pentagon Papers*. In an epigraph to his current book, Whitlock quotes from Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black's concurring opinion in *New York Times v. U.S.*:

Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people and sending them off to distant lands to die of foreign fevers and foreign shot and shell.

While no Supreme Court decision was required in having *The Afghanistan Papers* released for publication, *The Washington Post* had to file lawsuits under the Freedom of Information Act in order to obtain previously withheld information from the Lessons Learned interviews conducted by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) between 2014 to 2018.

In both Vietnam and Afghanistan, the secret history of wartime policymaking had to be secured with the assistance of the federal judicial branch and, oddly enough, without the assistance of Congress, although Congress has oversight authority over the nation's war-making policy. Thus, the determination of what information the American public (and that includes those serving in the Armed Forces) had a right to see involved the federal judicial and the executive branches but excluded the people's representatives. Ironically, Congress abdicated its constitutionally-based wartime obligations in both wars. The 1973 War Powers Act, ostensibly passed to correct the excesses of the Vietnam War and curb the unilateral authority of the executive branch to wage war, has netted very little in the half-century since Vietnam. Congressional inability/unwillingness to challenge presidential war powers persists as a marked failure of the constitutional restraints on executive power.

What is particularly dangerous, especially for a democracy, is that the government's wartime secrecy veiled lies, deceptions, and miscalculations. The general public was deceived; the soldiers were deceived, though the upper echelons of the military were complicit with the executive branch, as Whitlock reports. And the same type of lies, deceptions, and miscalculations were propagated by the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations in Vietnam and by the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations in Afghanistan—in other words, America's presidents of both parties have failed to demonstrate loyalty to the truth about war. It is not without reason that the truth is said to be the first casualty in war. In Vietnam and in Afghanistan, misinformation, disingenuousness, and outright deceit and dishonesty about the progress of the wars required the dynamic redefining of the initial war rationale to justify fighting with more soldiers, more money, and over an longer (TBD) time frame.

Vietnam was always about the geopolitics of the Cold War—with the U.S. on one side and the USSR and China on the other. The war was sold by ignoring or falsely characterizing the Vietnamese nationalist aspirations, which were directed as much—if not more so—against foreign interference—be it Japanese, French, or American—as they were in favour of communist ideology. Yet, in America the war was marketed as the last in Southeast Asia against international communism. In Afghanistan, what started as a war to retaliate against al Qaeda for the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., eventually turned to an extraordinary commitment of human and material resources to build a new country modeled on American institutions—a country so desperately poor that in the 1970s before the Soviet Union moved in, the U.S. government created a public service TV ad (with Johnny Hart's BC characters) to recruit Peace Corps workers to go there.

Ultimately, the U.S. lost both wars. About that there should be no doubt. U.S. military and diplomatic personnel were forced to leave both countries. The expulsions were on live TV shown around the world—Saigon 1975 and Kabul 2021. Lessons learned? One stands out above all the others and that is that the countries that 'hosted' the wars suffered disproportionately in terms of the number of casualties as well as in total economic costs.

In the Acknowledgements section of *The Afghanistan Papers*, Whitlock writes:

Emblazoned on a wall in The Washington Post's newsroom is a quotation—"Journalism is the first rough draft of history"—from Philip L. Graham, who served as the newspaper's publisher from 1946 to 1961. To put it less succinctly, news reporting is an initial attempt to define and interpret noteworthy events: a preliminary step in a never-ending effort to understand and interpret the past.

This reminds the reader of the tentative nature of history, especially when the history is too close in time to the present to afford completeness and objectivity.

Nevertheless, the thesis that the U.S. government lied, deceived, and withheld the truth about the Afghanistan War just as it did the Vietnam War holds up pretty well, and if the 2003 Iraq War were considered, a pattern of deliberate deception by the U.S. government during wartime seems pretty well established. In Iraq, the entire world witnessed the fabrications and manipulations of the U.S. government as it prepared for war. And there, in Iraq, the perils and contradictions of a global economic and military superpower acting as a global moral leader continue in what may come to be America's longest war.

That U.S. government deception regarding its war rationale, conduct, and progress has been documented over generations should be a guarantee that the threat is an ever-present one. Other nations ignore this lesson at their own risk—with respect to their own governments as well as the U.S. government.

'We Won't Get Fooled Again, The Who, 1971

Gray sky, temperature just above freezing. City noises: traffic, sirens, crowds. Seemed just like any other Monday late in the long winter season. Around Queen's Park it was. To the west, the sprawling university campus; to the south, office buildings, hospitals, and consulates; to the north, museums and upscale shops; and to the east, a miscellany of vintage businesses—bars, strip joints, travel agencies, used bookstores, music stores, convenience stores, and so on.

At Queen's Park, the centre of government, it was not just another Monday. For one thing, the Legislature was scheduled to resume sitting after a brief recess.

Hundreds of police—dozens in full riot gear—faced off against thousands of protestors. It was a strike, a labour disruption targeting the government. All legal though. No traffic on nearby streets, police barricades permitting passage only to police and emergency vehicles. For their part, protestors were delaying—sometimes preventing—the people's representatives from entering their offices across the street from the House. This was the 4th Monday of the strike, and pickets continued to slow movement into all government buildings in particular the adjacent square of government high-rise offices.

Twelve storeys up was her office where her research work on education reform initiatives in the U.S., the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand was on hold ... indefinitely. Fifty yards away on Wellesley, the confrontation simmered. On one side, the picket line, three bodies thick on the sidewalk and in the gutter their backs to the legislative office building they were blocking. In their faces, dozens of black uniforms, helmets, visors, kevlar jackets, truncheons, shields, and pepper spray.

An escalation. For what seemed like half an hour or more, a steady drumbeat of batons beat against shields drowning out the chatter of the picket line and surrounding sounds from beyond the Park of this city of four million plus returning from lunch.

The assault. Black uniforms broke ranks and the units plunged into the picket line, truncheons waving, beating whatever flesh stood in the way, felling several, creating a wedge that pierced then pried open the picket line. On cue, three police vans zipped around the corner, coming to a screeching stop at the ramp leading down to the rear entrance of the building, and 'debussed' their cargo. Ten to 15 members of the legislature were hustled out of the vehicles and behind a cordon of police that stretched from door to door. Ducking their heads and raising their shoulders, the people's representatives, scurried down the ramp.

This was before smart phones but newspaper cameras flashed and TV cameras rolled capturing a part of the action which unfolded in no more than three minutes. From her cautious post, she saw a few bodies fall, but she was too far away and blocked by too many people to see the faces of either the protestors or the police behind the masks. Ambulance sirens replaced the drumbeat. Once the picket line had dispersed and the police had backed away, she approached close enough to witness the blood on the sidewalk, a clump of hair, a few strips of clothing from shirts and blouses, pieces of a watch, bent eyeglass frames, and fractured lenses all trampled by so many feet in retreat.

It came out later in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry that a city police officer had been beaten by state police truncheons as she attempted to intervene, literally putting herself between the batons of the riot police and the protestors. Otherwise, only among protestors were there injured in the beatdown.

This happened—not on TV, not from a police state 'over there,' and not even from the U.S.—here, in front of her disbelieving eyes 12 floors down from the office window she looked out of every day. Would her colleagues who were still inside understand how jarring these events were with their insulated and urbane lives as managers and policymakers in the civil service?

Likely not. The disturbing images—not as disturbing as when they're 'over there'—would be edited, editorialized, and rendered harmless or else they would be attributed to the dangerous aberrations of direct democracy. This would be an inoculation ... herd immunity being society's self-defense.

Beyond the Park, ripples were felt on campus to the west, but not so much in the chic stores to the north, the parlors to the east, or the foreign missions to the south.

They hadn't thought it could happen here. But it did, and some who know history didn't experience the sense of tragedy and betrayal that she did. But then living history is decidedly more impactful than reading it.

The Progress of Knowledge and Material Conditions in Asimov's Foundation Novels (December 2021)

Is human evolution on a secular path, i.e., is progress inevitable and ever-increasing? If so, is it because our evolution is naturally inclined that way or is it because we have the knowledge and ability to predict the future and intervene as necessary to control the future? Of course, by 'humans,' we can't mean 'everybody' for then there would be more chaos to project into the future than we have ever had to contemplate. Universal psychosocial freedom would fundamentally change the dynamics in human communities, which have heretofore been more or less accurately characterized in terms of who are the strongest, the fastest, the savviest, the richest—for these are not only the ones best fit to survive but also most likely to dominate.

In the Foundation novels,[1] Asimov appears optimistic about the future and about humanity's ability to anticipate and influence it. However, that does not mean the full unfolding of the future can be predicted and changed, rather that only significant states/conditions and trends can be managed. For example, the technology of the future and its impact on society and individuals cannot be predicted in detail, yet according to Asimov's psychohistory in the Foundation novels, periods of peace and civilization and trends towards advancing technologies and stable social systems can be. Hence the assessment that the Galactic Empire was doomed to fall and be replaced by 30,000 years of barbarism unless a psychohistorical plan were to be developed that could shorten the dark ages to a millennium. To put it in a more contemporary perspective, Hari Seldon, the chief protagonist in the Foundation series, develops a new science—mathematical sociology—which promises knowledge and control on a much larger scale and over a much longer time frame than, say, the reduction of a 10-year depression to a 6-month recession.

From a 21st century perspective with more than half a century's experience of complex mathematical economic models, we can barely imagine the depth and breadth of the futuristic modelling that Asimov writes about. Even though our econometric models are sparse compared to what Seldon and the psychohistorians are developing, they rest on an axiomatic base supplemented by a multitude of assumptions, many bound together in highly unrealistic *ceteris paribus* caveats, as does psychohistory. And while our econometric models are most accurate at the level of the nation-state, a fraction of a subset of Asimov's 25-million-world galaxy or even the 800-culture world of Trantor—the prototype for psychohistory—they always allow for the possibility of error due to exogenous shocks. In other words, it's virtually impossible to introduce and quantify a vast realm of possible disturbances that have never been factored in before but could upset the precarious balance of the model's known variables (actors' knowledge and expectations, initial conditions, current trends and historically recorded relationships). With regard to econometric models, we must be tentative because supply and demand shocks can be propagated throughout the system from exogenous variables such as climate, natural disasters, epidemics/pandemics, wars, etc. none of which have ever been fully reducible to accurate forecasts and control. So much more could exogenous shocks disturb the Seldon Plan. Asimov sets the stage for this at the conclusion of *Foundation and Earth*, when Trevize reflects:

Just outside the Galaxy are the Magellanic Clouds, where no human ship has ever penetrated. Beyond that are other small galaxies, and not very far away is the giant Andromeda Galaxy, larger than our own. Beyond that are galaxies by the billions.

Hyperspatially, the Galaxy is a point—and so is all the Universe. We have not visited any other galaxy, and, as far as we know, no intelligent species from another galaxy has

ever visited us—but that state of affairs may end someday.[2]

Asimov posits his own entertaining answer to the question, 'Can the future of a galaxy of 25 million human worlds be predicted using a mathematical model that encapsulates a thorough knowledge of present and historical conditions and trends and law-like relationships between and among the physical variables of the world?' And although he can't demonstrate a proof—this is, after all, science fiction—he writes as if the future can be known and can be deliberately altered so long as there is but one maestro. In other words, if each of the 25 million worlds had psychohistory, then each world would potentially be able to alter future conditions and trends and no effective psychohistory modelling could be conducted without adding immeasurable variable conditions introduced by countless maestros who would likely be following different scripts. Two maestros would be too many, assuming the two acted independently with perpetual options for conflict and cooperation. Even though Asimov restricts predictions to macro events or tendencies avoiding the unimaginably complex modelling that would be required to ascertain individual 'fates,' there are nevertheless more than enough system variables to be accounted for over expansive regions of space and time to overwhelm macro forecasting. Again, the comparison with macro and microeconomic models should sufficiently demonstrate the complexity of accurately forecasting economic conditions and trends for just a single economy in one world over a period no more than a few years.

Curiously, though on reflection reasonably, Asimov also restricts the universe of possible outcomes to the material world, i.e., the technological and sociological. Human nature is assumed constant and incorrigible. Anything otherwise would likely be incomprehensible. Even Gaia, which comes close to an alternative to human nature that we take to be universal and cross-cultural, is the product of robotic engineering which in turn is the product of human

engineering raising the question whether any 'life form' can create a higher order or superior 'life form.' The Zeroth Law of Robotics, which according to Daneel in the Foundation novels states, "A robot may not injure humanity or, through inaction, allow humanity to come to harm" provides but a hint of a human nature re-engineered. Certainly, an all-encompassing super-organism such as Gaia is radically different from existing human nature, but how well it can be described and understood in all its implications is unfathomable.

To illustrate, imagine a human community where egos didn't compete and where there was no asymmetric distribution of political power (inclusive of social, economic, cultural, religious, etc.) between leaders and followers, i.e., where power was not concentrated, secretive, self-serving and manipulative. While we may on occasion be critical of selfishness and authoritarianism (especially when it's 'over there' or 'back then,' e.g., the dictatorship of the proletariat of Marxist-Leninist communism) taken to extremes, where is the individual who does not experience the world independently? Don't we always reflect a perspective that is non-identical to any other human perspective? Can we even contemplate encountering the world as a super-organism like Gaia, where every part is also a whole? This would entail our being able to create and maintain multiple different perspectives of the same thing at the same point in time. Could I even talk about experiencing a sunrise from the perspective of me, the ground on which I stand, the air which I breathe, the flowers which I smell, the man who is just starting a day's work underground in the mines where he's worked for 40 years, the woman who is trying to nurse the stillborn child, the tram conductor who is punching tickets, the ocean which storms the rocky Japanese coastline and pacific calm on the southern California bikini-populated beaches, the snow-covered trees in the high altitudes and the burning forests of the parched lower slopes surrounding remote towns.

Beyond the issue of the immeasurable complexity of a psychohistory model of the Galactic Empire is the matter of the historical unanimity, i.e., is it conceivable from our world of competing views of history that humans could ever arrive a consensus regarding all of human history let alone a unanimous verdict? Without a shared understanding and interpretation of human history, wouldn't such a model be constructed of facts that would be endlessly disputed? And if so, wouldn't there end up being multiple models of the future competing against one another with no mutually agreed upon standard against which to judge them?

Then, too, there is the uncertainly principle which provides an analogy whereby the psychohistorians invariably alter the facts of history by studying them relative to some pre-defined criteria of importance. Even with universal assent to the story of history, there remains the problem of history tampering with its subject matter and making it conform to expectations, or criteria of significance, that are incommensurable.

But, Hari," said Dors, "mathematics is an orderly thing of human invention. One thing follows from another. There are definitions and axioms, all of which are known. It is ... it is ... all one piece. History is different. It is the unconscious working out of the deeds and thoughts of quadrillions of human beings. Historians must pick and choose."

"Exactly," said Seldon, "but I must know all of history if I am to work out the laws of psychohistory."

"In that case, you won't ever formulate the laws of psychohistory." [3]

Before yielding to despair in the face of such an enormous task as modelling a 25-million-world galaxy, it would be worth remembering that the purpose of the Second Foundation— comprised of men-

talics, i.e., mind readers/shapers—was to influence other minds, or stated less euphemistically, mind control. Psychohistorical predictions need not be absolutely comprehensive and accurate in predictive capability. Plausibility might suffice as long as those who author the predictions are able to convincingly articulate and disseminate the most highly probable and best of outcomes based on the best available theories and facts.

And it is here, that we introduce some ideas borrowed from the contemporary philosophy of science, e.g., the sociological basis for theory proposal, testing and acceptance. The theories need not be perfect as long as they conform to the larger body of relevant theory and account for the latest discovered anomalies. Our 'pictures' of subatomic structures, which we infer from theory and experiment in order make explanations intelligible to a larger community, have changed from particle to quantum descriptions and in another 100 years may change yet again when we have visual representations that better match our mathematical descriptions.

W.V.O. Quine in his famous paper 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' published the same year as *Foundation*, addresses these functional 'myths' of objects and forces in physics:

Epistemologically these are myths on the same footing with physical objects and gods, neither better nor worse except for differences in the degree to which they expedite our dealings with sense experiences....

Total science, mathematical and natural and human, is similarly but more extremely underdetermined by experience. The edge of the system must be kept squared with experience; the rest, with all its elaborate myths or fictions, has as its objective the simplicity of laws.[4]

Nevertheless, despite the ever-refining and correcting of our knowledge, we continue to be able to invent and manufacture new and innovative products that improve our material conditions. From simple machines (e.g., the lever, the wheel, the pulley) to faster than light speed travel and terraforming, we continue our upwards progress ... technologically speaking. Social progress, political progress, economic progress ... these have not historically moved along a consistently inclining trend line, and there are no such sanguine forecasts in Asimov's Foundation novels. Thirty thousand years of barbarism reduced to a millennium would indeed be an achievement if psychohistory were confirmed on this point; however, a regression of society for a span of 1,000 years does not speak to an ever-improving evolutionary path. In addition, sociopolitical and economic degradation can be accompanied by and even contribute to technological retrogression as Asimov notes in the case of the now-disappeared technology that created Daneel and other robots with mentalic powers.

Asimov concludes that the Promethean fire could go out and we could end up in the dark again—there being no assurance that apart from our own efforts the human condition will forever follow a secular incline technologically, socio-politically or socioeconomically. Presumably, the primary factor that breaks continuity in human progress in any of these areas is what appears to be beyond our control—our nature. The Foundation novels are not the place for considering whether and to what extent human nature can be revised and re-issued.

Endnotes

[1] In the order of publication: *Foundation* (1951), *Empire and Foundation* (1952), *Second Foundation* (1953), *Foundation's Edge* (1982), *Foundation and Earth* (1986), *Prelude to Foundation* (1988) and *Forward the Foundation* (1993).

[2] Isaac Asimov, *Foundation and Earth*, 1986.

[3] Isaac Asimov, *Prelude to Foundation*, 1988.

[4] Excerpted from W.V.O. Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism,'
The Philosophical Review, Vol. 60, No. 1. (Jan., 1951).

PART TWO — Non-Fiction (1995-2008)

Abstract

One of the most pervasive and radical trends in public education in countries around the world is the implementation of market-oriented education reform. Market-oriented education reform has been introduced in order to make the providers of education services more accountable to the consumers of education services. According to the theory behind market-oriented reform, the 'invisible hand' of the market is more efficient than and therefore should replace state bureaucracies in the regulation and allocation of education services. Competition among service providers gives the consumer choices where previously the monopoly power of the state limited consumer autonomy. Service providers in a competitive market environment are held accountable by the consumers' freedom to select among rival providers.

The purpose of this presentation is to increase awareness and discussion of market-oriented education. Instances of market-oriented reform throughout the English-speaking world will be described. The four major manifestations of this global movement, each of which will be discussed within the context of different countries, are: decentralization of education administration, e.g. school-based management; privatization of education services; preparation of teacher technicians; and the 'commodification' of students.

Introduction

The unifying theme of this presentation is 'market-oriented' education. This theme will be shown to be the common thread that runs through the most significant global trends in public education today. It has surfaced in school-based management reform in New Zea-

land, the U.S., England, Canada and Australia; it has shown up in the privatization of educational services in Canada, the U.S., England and New Zealand; it has appeared in the competency-based assessment of teachers in England, the U.S. and Australia; and it has been heard in the education-for-the-sake-of-the-economy rhetoric in Canada and in the U.S.

Before proceeding with this presentation, I wish to point out that the dimensions of 'market-oriented' education reform are far beyond what I can hope to be able to describe in this session. There are two brief points that I would like to make in this regard. First, in addition to the four previously-mentioned instances of 'market-oriented' education reform that I will be talking about today, there are at least four others that deserve mention. These are:

- a) year-round schooling, which is beginning to gain support in the U.S. and in Canada;
- b) integration of special needs students into regular classrooms, which is an emerging policy initiative in the U.S., in Canada and in Australia;
- c) increasing class sizes, which has become a serious issue in England and in Ontario; and
- d) alternative teacher certification schemes, which seem to have become a permanent route into the teaching profession in the U.S. and may soon be permanently incorporated in England and in Canada, as well.

All of these are trends that can be interpreted as 'market-oriented.' Year-round schools maximize use of facilities. Integration of special needs students paves the way for class size expansion, however charitable the explicit intentions of policy-makers may seem. In-

creasing class sizes mean that fewer teachers are required. And alternative teacher certification schemes expand the supply of potential teachers so that in the not too distant future, competition among prospective teachers may be expected to exert downward pressure on teachers' salaries and benefits.

The second point that I want to make is that the four reform trends that I have just listed have also received support from governments in non-English speaking countries. For instance, Japan, South Korea and Sweden have versions of school-based management and school choice. Other examples could no doubt be given, save for the fact that I am unilingual and the preponderance of comparative education research material that is available in North America is written in English and is almost exclusively devoted to education in the English-speaking world.

In the remainder of this presentation, I will describe and give instances of school-based management, privatization, competency-based teacher assessment and the education-economy connection. Owing to limited time, I will use one country example for each trend. For school-based management, New Zealand will be my example. For privatization, I will use Ontario. England will be my example for the trend towards competency-based teacher assessment. And Ontario will provide my example of education-for-the-sake-of-the-economy rhetoric. Finally, I will offer some critical thoughts which I hope will persuade you to consider carefully the implications of these global trends in public education.

School-Based Management

School-based management represents a decentralization of education management through the transfer of administrative authority to schools. The source from which this authority has been transferred is usually the intermediate layer of bureaucracy, that is school

boards or their equivalent. In England, they are called Local Education Authorities and in New Zealand, they were called Education Boards. Australia is the exception. It does not have an intermediate layer of bureaucracy between the schools and the State departments of education. School-based management, in its most extreme form, and not necessarily its most rare form, gives parents control of budgets and staffing. However, even in the most extreme school-based management arrangements, departments and ministries of education continue to control the curriculum, teacher training and funding.

School-based management has occurred in New Zealand, England, Australia, the U.S. and Canada. What school-based management in all of these countries has in common is the goal of making schools more accountable to the parents and communities that they serve. By transferring key administrative responsibilities away from middle-level bureaucracies, schools are thought to be made more responsive to the communities they serve, and parents and communities are considered to be empowered to hold schools accountable for education services through parental influence on school councils. Furthermore, where school-based management is coupled with school choice, parents are said to be truly empowered, provided of course that school choice is 'real' and not illusory. If parents do not have any other schools to choose from, then school choice really is an empty slogan. And if communities are expected to match government education grants with contributions coming from local fund-raising drives, as is the case in New Zealand, then the empowerment of parents is income-relative. In other words, school-based management and school choice become the means by which the middle class is empowered — the upper class already being fully empowered.

Government strategy behind the implementation of school-based management reform appears to be designed to consolidate its

power over education. Under the guise of introducing greater competition among 'retail' education providers, government eliminates the layer of bureaucracy between it and the schools. The government's regulatory control is augmented by the direct line of communication that is established between the ministry or department of education and the schools. Furthermore, the ministry or department of education continues to dictate education policy and to determine how education funding is distributed. One is reminded of the trend in corporate re-engineering where middle management gets eliminated in what is referred to as 'de-layering,' enabling executive management to have greater control over the 'real work' of their organizations.

New Zealand provides the best example of such a corporate strategy. In 1989, New Zealand eliminated its Education Boards, creating a direct line of communication and responsibility between the New Zealand Ministry of Education and schools. Under New Zealand's Education Act of 1989, boards of trustees were created for each school and given authority to hire and dismiss staff, including the principal, and to manage the school budget. Parents elected from the community constitute a majority on each board, and the school principal is the chair of the board and serves in the capacity of school manager for as long as s/he enjoys the support of the board of trustees.

In exchange for local autonomy, the New Zealand Ministry of Education holds boards of trustees accountable through a school charter which includes National Education Guidelines as well as specific objectives prepared by the boards of trustees on behalf of their communities. The Ministry of Education continues to regulate the education system through its policy and funding responsibilities. In addition, the Education Review Office performs quality assurance audits in schools, ensuring that legislation, charter agreements and education policy are being followed. And the New

Zealand Qualifications Authority establishes national education qualifications, calibrates these against international qualifications and administers national examinations to secondary school students and post-secondary students. The Education Review Office and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority were devolved from the Ministry of Education by 1990, and since then schools and their boards of trustees have been directly answerable to these two agencies for those matters that fall within their jurisdictions.

Privatization

Privatization refers not just to the transfer of public education services to the private sector but also the transfer of public education services to non-profit agencies. It is the latter form of privatization that I wish to pursue in this part of the presentation. I will describe the transfer of state control of teacher education to autonomous professional teacher standards boards as a variation of privatization, and then I will use Ontario to show how self-governing teacher agencies can fit into the privatization agenda. Autonomous professional teacher standards boards have been created in 11 U.S. States, in Scotland and in British Columbia, and the prospects are very good for Ontario to have one by 1996.

State and provincial governments have been willing to hand over control of regulatory functions in exchange for assurances that professional standards will not only not be sacrificed but will also be enhanced. State and provincial governments make *quid pro quo* arrangements with the teaching profession, such that in exchange for granting teachers control of their profession, teachers accept from the outset additional regulatory controls, which they must apply to themselves.

This *quid pro quo* arrangement is well documented in the case of proposals made public by the Ontario Royal Commission on Learn-

ing in February 1995. The commission's recommendation that a College of Teachers be established to govern the teaching profession was accompanied by a list of additional regulatory demands: a second year of post-graduate year of pre-service training consisting of an internship; a licensing examination; and mandatory re-certification every five years based upon professional development. One of the conditions of the creation of the College of Teachers will presumably be teacher acquiescence to the government's agenda for 'teacher professionalization.'

Not only does the Ontario government benefit from a self-governing teacher college that submits to the government's agenda for professionalizing teachers, but the government also reduces its payroll and operating costs. Positions in teacher education within government can be eliminated as can all other non-personnel costs. While the savings are far from large enough to balance the current provincial deficit of \$10 billion, when these savings are added to those resulting from other privatization moves from all government ministries, they do become significant.

The Education Quality and Accountability Office is one more example of the trend towards privatization in Ontario. This agency will be patterned after the New Zealand Qualifications Authority whose creation was driven by 'market-oriented' ideology, including the need to improve New Zealand student scores on international tests so that OECD rankings could offer authoritative testimony to both the New Zealand and the international business communities that the New Zealand workforce is willing and able to meet the demands of 21st century employers. The OECD, that is, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, is a 'club' for 'first world' countries, and the reports prepared by the OECD are to its member countries what the Nielson ratings are to television programs.

Teacher Competency

Competency- or performance-based standards for measuring teacher quality have been developed or are being developed across the world. The U.S. may arguably be the leader in this field, particularly in terms of the amount of energy and money that are going into this reform. But England and Australia have also adopted competency assessments as a quality control procedure for the teaching profession.

In England, the Teacher Training Agency was created by the 1994 Education Act to replace the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education. The Teacher Training Agency is separate from, but reports to, the Department for Education. It is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization or what in England is called a 'quango.' The Teacher Training Agency accredits and provides funding for all initial teacher training programs in England, both university initial teacher training programs and school-centred initial teacher training programs.

The Department for Education has developed performance- or outcome-based criteria which the Teacher Training Agency uses to accredit initial teacher training programs and to test for teacher competency. These criteria are equally applicable to university and school-centred initial teacher training programs. There are 27 separate competencies that secondary school teacher trainees must demonstrate before they can receive Quality Teacher Status — the government's stamp of approval that entitles the bearer to teach in the publicly-funded school system. There is a slightly longer list of competencies which primary school teacher trainees are expected to have 'demonstrated' before they can receive government approval to teach. These competency standards are similar to national and State performance- or outcome-based standards for

teacher education that have been and continue to be developed in the U.S. and in Canada.

Although performance- or outcome-based teacher assessment does not pre-date alternative teacher certification routes, it does serve the need to legitimize any such route that does not lead through the university system. The 'licensed teacher' scheme is such a route. In England the 1989 licensure requirements were relaxed to permit candidates who have completed at least two years of post-secondary studies to enter the teaching profession, provided they complete a special two-year on-the-job training program, designed and administered by the employing school or the Local Education Authority.

The 'licensed teacher' scheme, which allows candidates with some university training to obtain Quality Teacher Status, has for obvious reasons been unpopular with the universities. Nevertheless, the overriding rationale that led to the creation of the 'licensed teacher' scheme was economic — England had a shortage of teachers in the 1980s. Academic expectations were forced to take a back-seat to teacher supply and demand.

In concluding this section, there are two points to keep in mind with respect to performance- or outcome-based teacher assessment. First, if teacher certification requirements in the future are strictly performance- or outcome-based, then the current teacher certification requirement of an undergraduate university degree may become obsolete. This also would mean that all teacher training would rely on a practical rather than theoretical or balanced foundation. Second, alternative certification routes are designed to increase the potential pool of qualified teachers, and if an oversupply of teachers is the result, then competition will exert a downward pressure on teachers' salaries and benefits.

Education for the Economy

Education has become increasingly thought of as a means by which countries can enhance their global competitiveness. There is growing concern in the Australian university community about the government's capitulation to human capital theory and New Right politics. Human capital theory has been around for several decades, and in a nutshell it maintains that education is an investment in worker productivity, which produces benefits both for the individual in terms of higher income and for society in terms of greater output.

In order to demonstrate the economic commitment of government education policy, I have prepared a series of quotes from published Ontario Government documents.

The first quote is from a report prepared by George Radwanski for the Ministry of Treasury and Economics in 1986 entitled the *Ontario Study of the Service Sector*,

To compete effectively in a new knowledge-intensive global economy that relies primarily on human capital, excellence in educating our work force is our single most important strategic weapon. Education is as vitally fundamental an element of public infrastructure in the new knowledge-based economy as roads, railways, ports and power sources were in the previous [economy].

The next quote is from a 1987 report also prepared by George Radwanski, this time on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The report's title is the *Ontario Study of the Relevance of Education, and the Issue of Dropouts*. In a section entitled 'Education and the Economy,' Radwanski states that

Education has long been recognized as an important contributor to economic growth, of course — but now it has become the paramount ingredient for competitive success in the world economy.

The third quote is from a 1988 three-volume publication by the Premier's Council of Ontario, entitled *Competing in the New Global Economy*. In a chapter entitled 'Investing in People,' the authors state that

Developing a strong, dynamic human resource base is a precondition to achieving and sustaining economic growth.... One of the key competitive challenges Ontario faces is developing our most fundamental natural resource: the minds and skills of our workers.

While education and training are often seen as social programs, they are really investments in our economic future.... [P]eople expenditures are an essential complement to investments in facilities and equipment: both increase output and productivity.

The next quote comes from *An Industrial Policy Framework for Ontario* a 1992 publication of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology. The context of the industrial policy framework is the increasingly competitive and interdependent world economy, within which Ontario, a fairly small economy, is competing with multinational corporations and regional trading blocs. Part of the Socialist Government's industrial strategy included the development of human capital. The report states that

Ontario's future economic success depends upon its ability to compete through an educated, motivated and highly skilled workforce. Efforts to increase skill levels must be linked to social policies that promote equitable participation and fairness ... [because] poverty has long-term economic

costs. Structural unemployment can erode the quality of the labour force within a single generation.

The message from these quotes is clear. Education is subservient to the productive interests of society. And the productive interests of society are controlled from the private sector. The following quote suggests how not only the curriculum but also teacher education are targets of private sector influence. The quote, taken from a 1992 article that appears in the *British Journal of Education for Teaching*, states that:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to believe that current attacks on teacher education spring essentially from ignorance of the nature of teaching. It is becoming increasingly difficult not to believe that some aspects of teaching are only too well understood by politicians and their academic retainers. What they understand well enough is the potentially liberatory effects of effective teaching. They are haunted by the spectre of a truly professional teaching force committed to enhancing their pupils' ability to understand, interpret and to change the world.

Teachers and students, it seems, are not meant to think — they are meant to serve economic forces.

Conclusion

Despite my uninterrupted criticism of 'market-oriented' education reform, I concede that the surface rationale behind these reforms is very appealing. The appeal lies in the fact that government education bureaucracies are by no means democratic nor are they necessarily responsive to the needs of the public. If competition among numerous education providers, and here I am thinking about school-based management and school choice, can offer more democratic control over and more equitable responsiveness

from the providers, then perhaps not all 'market-oriented' education reform ought to be immediately tossed aside for ideological reasons.

However, you have just heard that the role of the state in education remains as strong as ever. Recall that the so-called 'residual' powers of the New Zealand Ministry of Education include control over the curriculum, teacher training and education funding, arguably the most important functions in an education system. Furthermore, if school-based management and school choice lead to widespread corporate ownership of schools, by organizations such as Education Alternative, Inc. and Public Strategies Group, then there is the danger that competition for greater profits will lead to concentrations of market share. In other words, the 'leanest and meanest' corporations may end up controlling entire school districts — a situation where monopoly power again controls the education system, only this time the stakes are profits. Finally, you have also heard the voice of government proclaiming its allegiance to economic growth and promising to prepare appropriately schooled human capital for the labour force of the new global economy. For these reasons, and in spite of the superficial appeal of 'consumer democracy,' I feel comfortable in stating that 'market-oriented' education reform still does not have the best interests of the students at heart.

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Introduction

'After Truth and Falsehood' should be understood in two important senses. First, 'after' refers to the fact that Nietzsche is responsible for having destroyed the foundations of absolute truth. Having challenged and defeated Western metaphysics by exposing the spuriousness of its claim to absolute knowledge and truth, Nietzsche does not rest. His next self-assigned task is to replace what he has destroyed. Therefore, the title should also be understood to refer to Nietzsche's search for new truths, including the criteria for determining the distinction between what is true and what is false.

Nietzsche's writings have been given very different interpretations — about this, there is no controversy. Some, such as the Nazis, have claimed the heritage of their ideas from Nietzsche in order to justify their domination over their 'inferiors.' More recently, Nietzsche's significance has been found to be in his contributions to the postmodern reaction against established views and beliefs. That Nietzsche has been read, on the one hand, as an advocate of racial supremacy, and on the other hand, as an anti-establishment rebel supports the contention of those who maintain that the Nietzschean text is not fixed but continues to live and change through its influence upon and interpretation by the reader. From Nietzsche's writings, one can construct different, and even contrary, views or perspectives of reality, and whether any of these views would correspond to Nietzsche's own self-understanding is impossible to say. Nevertheless, finding a perspective that is at least consistent with Nietzsche's thought and method, as expressed in his principal writings, is not only possible but also necessary for the development of the thesis of this essay.

In this essay, Nietzsche's thought will be described from a particular perspective, one which is not inconsistent with Nietzsche's writings and which is furthermore legitimated by Nietzsche's principle that truth is relative to a perspective. While the perspective informing this essay asserts itself as true, it does not claim to present the only true account of Nietzsche, nor does it insist on having fully comprehended the wide range of Nietzsche's thought. It incorporates what has become the traditional view of Nietzsche in his familiar roles as anti-foundationalist, critic and rebel, but more importantly it shows Nietzsche as a truth-seeker, one who seeks after something in which to believe and for something which can be completely and finally understood and known.

This essay develops the two different meanings suggested by the title, 'After Truth and Falsehood.' First, Nietzsche is described as an anti-metaphysician, as a challenger of established truths and beliefs and as a destroyer of certainty and authority. Second, the genealogical method that Nietzsche uses to bring down the entire Western system of philosophy is presented. Third, Nietzsche is portrayed as a truth-seeker, that is, as one who although doubting the existence of universal and absolute truth nevertheless proceeds, even through his nihilistic and anti-establishment stages, as if such truth does exist and can be found with enough perseverance and honesty. Finally, having found the truth that he sought, Nietzsche is viewed as the creator of new values and truths, thereby closing the circle which began with Nietzsche's having been depicted as an iconoclast. The thesis of this essay is that it is impossible to understand Nietzsche's anti-metaphysical position without recognizing that he was, from the beginning, on a quest for a truer account of truth and that everything from his assault on Western metaphysics through his revaluation of values may be interpreted as consistent with his search for Truth.

Nietzsche's Challenge—sounding out the idols

Nietzsche's philosophy with all of its richness, subtleties, contradictions and fictions is an attempt to step outside the tradition of Western metaphysical rationalism and to evaluate the product of its thought. One of the important currents running through Nietzsche's thought is a rejection and dismissal of the absolutist pretensions of Reason. For Nietzsche, Reason is just another variant of the human compulsion to dominate—religion and morality being other variants against which Nietzsche also deals decisive critiques. Against the traditional metaphysical position that the human mind can discover, through the faculty of Reason, those truths that exist universally and timelessly, Nietzsche mines and tunnels through the foundations of truth, destabilizing and undermining the very structure upon which these absolute truths rest.

For Nietzsche, there are no truths, whether ethical or epistemic, whose certainty is unconditional and beyond doubt. All truths require justification, and Nietzsche sets out to show that truths are the products of human invention and that their justification is contingent upon the results of their application. Justification is just another way of assigning values, and values are assigned according to human needs. Truths, then, are human constructions designed to promote and enhance human life. They are not true for all time, nor are they true for all human beings, not to mention other life forms. The following thought experiment metaphorically depicts the finitude and meagreness of human knowledge:

Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of 'world history,' but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had drawn a few breaths,

the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die.¹

Nietzsche wrote these lines in 1873 before *Zarathustra*, *Gay Science* and the notes which were later compiled and published posthumously as *Will to Power*. In these later works Nietzsche presents an affirmation of life emerging from the despair and doubt of nihilism. But in this essay, Nietzsche has neither reached the depths of nihilistic despair nor the heights of *amor fati*. The God's eye view of the extraterrestrial is an omniscient perspective of a reality that is unknowable to the 'clever beasts' but exists nonetheless. Although Nietzsche expresses his disdain and contempt for the pretensions of human understanding, he seems not to have yet lost faith in the existence of universal Truth. However, until he has fully experienced nihilism and has completely destroyed the old tables of true and false, of good and evil, he is neither ready to affirm life nor is he prepared to set out in discovery of Truth.

Nietzsche believed that truths are not discovered but that they are created to protect and promote the values and interests of those who make them. There are no truths 'out there' to be had. The standard against which truths are measured is not the 'real world' nor is it some principle of rationality. Truths and falsehoods are what they are because someone has placed these values upon them. The true and the false are nothing more than names for the good and the bad. Reason does not determine truth. It simply argues for what increases the will to power and against what decreases the will to power. The will to power is Nietzsche's metaphysical principle that reduces human activity to an instinct, not just

¹ Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,' trans., Daniel Breazeale in *Philosophy and Truth: Selections From Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979) 79.

for self-preservation, but to resist, to overcome and to expropriate. It is the will to power whose interests are served by Truth, and it is Reason that provides the justification for these truths. Thus, the will to power informs Reason with the destructive capacity to undermine Western metaphysics and compels Reason to construct a better perspective in which appearance is reality and in which perspectival truth is all that exists.

According to Nietzsche's perspectivism, there are no absolute truths, there is no permanent reality, and there are no facts. Where human knowledge is concerned, Nietzsche rejects all certainty. "The most strongly believed *a priori* 'truths' are for me—provisional assumptions"² All is flux, as Heraclitus had said more than 2000 years earlier. What really exist are only interpretations, and these interpretations are human creations. The essence of reality cannot be adequately expressed by static universal categories, because the world has "become infinite for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that it may include infinite interpretations."³ Knowledge remains possible, but what passes for knowledge "is interpretable otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings."⁴ That rational thought is nothing more than interpretation is the ultimate statement of the impossibility of fathoming the unfathomable.

Nietzsche's Method in Making the Challenge

Second, the genealogical method is the means by which Nietzsche discovers and uncovers the 'human nature' of knowledge, truth and

² Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 273.

³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 336.

⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 267.

morality. Instead of resorting to supernatural explanations of human values, beliefs and practices, Nietzsche traces the genealogy of human truths using a combination of historical and sociological analyses. Nietzsche's genealogy is an historical investigation into the origins of human truths. The methodology of genealogical analysis presumes the conditional nature of all things human whether material, cognitive or affective. "Everything human deserves to be viewed ironically so far as its origin is concerned"⁵

Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny. Such erroneous articles of faith, which were continually inherited, until they became almost part of the basic endowment of the species.⁶

Nietzsche sets out to uncover and exhibit the empirical conditions which give rise to the majestic structures of human morality and knowledge. His genealogy traces the historical development of human truths backwards through the generations until its complete ancestral line is discovered and brought to light. From the outset, Nietzsche is committed to a skeptical program, but not such a radical form of skepticism as would withhold judgment, evaluation and action, for his is a philosophy of action. The 'truthfulness' of moral and philosophical claims is suspect, and the genealogical method is the means that Nietzsche chooses to demonstrate his skeptical conclusion.

⁵ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human*, trans., R.J. Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 120.

⁶ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 169.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche declares good and evil to be human conventions, not absolute and eternal principles, and thereby provides himself passage 'beyond good and evil.' "We sail right over morality, we crush, we destroy perhaps the remains of our own morality by daring to make our voyage there...."⁷ If what are considered to be good and what are to be regarded evil are only so considered and regarded according to the interests of human beings living in a certain place in a certain time and under certain conditions, then moralities are human artifacts, intellectual and spiritual artifacts, created by finite human beings, and these moralities are no more universal and timeless than are the more mundane social practices that are unique to different peoples in different cultures in different times.

The weapons with which Nietzsche wages war on Western thought and values are those he finds ready-to-hand within the tradition, namely the genealogical method, and after having destroyed the old value system, he is free to create, no longer bound by the demands and constraints of the system which he has brought down. Nietzsche is free to ignore the laws of logical consistency, development and completeness, because he has repealed these laws. He is at liberty to maintain a double standard, one for destruction and one for creation. He has undermined the very system whose criteria would expose, challenge and threaten his own project, and with no competing valuing systems, his is unassailable. His method demonstrates in practice his metaphysical principle of the will to power.

Nietzsche demonstrates through the genealogical critique, itself grounded in reason, that the foundations of truth are 'human, all too human.' "The question of values is more fundamental than the

⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 31.

question of certainty: the latter becomes serious only by presupposing that the value question has already been answered."⁸ In the introduction to his *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche declares that

we need a critique of moral values, the value of these values themselves must first be called in question — and for that there is needed a knowledge of the condition and circumstances in which they grow, under which they evolved and changed (morality as consequence, as symptom, as mask, as tartufferie, as illness, as misunderstanding; but also morality as cause, as remedy, as stimulant, as restraint, as poison), a knowledge of a kind that has never yet existed or even been desired.⁹

Even Nietzsche's new morality is subject to the scrutiny and valuation from another perspective—this, a consequence of Nietzsche's perspectival account of truth and his experimental position. "I favor any skepsis to which I may reply: 'Let us try it!'"¹⁰ Nietzsche seems to be cognizant of the fact his own truths have no more privileged immunity from scrutiny than do the truths which he himself sets out to undermine. For Nietzsche all truths reveal an anthropocentric bias, even his own—the genealogy.

Nietzsche intended to search and examine the historical record in order to learn what were the socio-biological conditions from which our moral and philosophical systems developed. Nietzsche's genealogies are histories which attempt to uncover the empirical, as opposed to the transcendental, conditions from which current prac-

⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 322.

⁹ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans., Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House, 1967) 20.

¹⁰ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 115.

tices, thought and morality have emerged. Nietzsche maintains that what are commonly regarded as truths are found by genealogy to be rooted in adaptive behaviour in the human past and not to be indubitable first principles that have only to be apprehended.

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.¹¹

Nietzsche describes and explains the creation, domination, preservation and enhancement of truths in terms of power. Truths are established, not in accordance with the 'true method' of Reason but through conflict, for the 'true method' of Reason is a fiction concealing the valuation and struggle for pre-eminence that establishes the truth of the 'true method' of Reason. Power creates, conquers, maintains and defends kingdoms of truth, and the history of truth is the history of violence.

For Nietzsche truths are historically and culturally conditioned. They reflect definite and finite perspectives. Over time, they may acquire the status of unchallenged truth. Usefulness, usage and custom are responsible for the truths that we have inherited.

That which we now call the world is the outcome of a host of errors and fantasies which have gradually arisen and grown entwined with

¹¹ Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense' 84.

one another in the course of the overall evolution of the organic being, and are now inherited by us as the accumulated treasure of the entire past—as treasure: for the value of our humanity depends upon it.¹²

Working backwards through the family tree of Truth, what one finds is that truths have been accepted as expedients, honoured for their utility, legitimized over time as their ancestry has become a distant memory and raised to metaphysical status by the power of Reason. "Every tradition now continually grows more venerable the farther away its origin lies and the more this origin is forgotten; the respect paid to it increases from generation to generation, the tradition at last becomes holy and evokes awe and reverence."¹³

A morality, a mode of living tried and proved by long experience and testing, at length enters consciousness as a law, as dominating— And therewith the entire group of related values and states enters into it: it becomes venerable, unassailable, holy, true; it is part of its development that its origin should be forgotten.¹⁴

And so a new aristocratic family of truths is founded. New truths supersede and discredit old truths according to their ability to preserve and promote life. Those truths which promote life over the longest periods of history become accepted as unshakeable. Truth is not discovered by Reason, but on the contrary, it is enthroned by the non-rational Will to Power. Only later is Truth wrapped in the

¹² Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* 20.

¹³ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* 51-52.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 277-78.

royal garb of Reason. But in the beginning, these truths had to displace other truths, truths which had hitherto been faithfully accepted. Truth systems are not exchanged on the basis of rational evaluation of the competing truths. As Nietzsche says, "The so-called drive for knowledge can be traced back to a drive to appropriate and conquer."¹⁵

Nietzsche's Quest—Truth

A third important theme in Nietzsche's writings is the search for truth. Zarathustra and the 'subterranean man' are Nietzschean characters whose search for truth leads them away from humanity, into the mountains and down into the bowels of the earth, respectively. In each case, Nietzsche returns, in the persons of Zarathustra and the subterranean man, to the human fold to deliver his message, which incidentally he also does as an author.

These metaphorical 'truth seekers' are Nietzsche viewed through the eyes or from the perspective of Nietzsche himself. Nietzsche's self-portrayal as wandering prophet and excavator of 'old, useless structures' leaves no doubt that he understood himself to be on a quest for truth. [cf. seafaring analogies] In the preface of *Daybreak*, Nietzsche introduces himself as the 'subterranean man' and tells what he was doing in the depths.

I descended into the depths, I tunnelled into the foundations, I commenced an investigation and digging out of an ancient faith, one upon which we philosophers have for a couple of millennia been accustomed to build as if upon the firmest of all foundations—and have continued to do so even though every building hitherto erected on them has

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* 227.

fallen down: I commenced to undermine our faith in morality.¹⁶

This description of one who returns to humanity with 'truth' in hand bears a striking resemblance to Plato's allegory of the cave in which the prisoner who returns from the surface, having seen and become accustomed to the 'light of truth,' returns to his fellow prisoners in the cave with stories of his discoveries of a 'truer' reality above, on the surface. Nietzsche's selection of self-ascriptive metaphors such as the 'subterranean man,' Zarathustra and the Wanderer suggests that he considers himself to be a Prometheus figure, whose quest is to seek out 'truth' and to bring it back to his fellow mortals.

Nietzsche provides a non-rational basis for truth, and it is the genealogical method that Nietzsche uses to establish this 'truth.' But how does Nietzsche justify his methodological choice? Does Nietzsche 'know' that truth is a 'useful fiction' in advance, or is this something that he comes to know only after he has applied his genealogical method of inquiry?

Nietzsche does appear to make a distinction between truths and Truths, the former being historically and culturally-contextualized, and the latter being absolute, eternal and universal. Related to this differentiation of truth into absolute and contingent truths is Nietzsche's employment of Reason to deflate Reason. Nietzsche has been criticized for the arbitrary and contradictory way in which his inquiry proceeds. However, Nietzsche himself seemed to be aware of this tension in his revaluation when he asks the reader rhetorically

¹⁶ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Daybreak*, trans., R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) preface §2.

what do you know, what could you know, of how much cunning in self-preservation, how much reason and higher safeguarding, is contained in such self-deception—or of how much falsity I shall require if I am to continue to permit myself the luxury of my truthfulness?¹⁷

Nietzsche as Lawgiver

Nietzsche, not content to rest in nihilistic or skeptical oblivion, develops a positive philosophy, a philosophy of the future in which perspectivism and the revaluation of values are central.

'The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values'—in this formulation a countermovement finds expression, regarding both principle and task; a movement that in some future will take the place of this perfect nihilism—but presupposes it, logically and psychologically, and certainly can come only after and out of it.... [N]ihilism represents the ultimate logical conclusion of our great values and ideals—because we must experience nihilism before we can find out what value these 'values' really had.— We require, sometime, new values.¹⁸

Nietzsche's genealogy of truth prepares the way for his revaluation of values. Nietzsche having asserted truth to be value-laden and perspectival, he proceeds to elaborate the new values, from his perspective, and to substitute new truths for the old truths. The truths that he establishes include those which he has been using all along to debunk out-dated truths. His position is internally consistent, because his new truths not only explain how both the old and

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human* p6.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*, trans., Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967) 3-4.

the new truths emerged but also how it came to pass that a new regime of truth replaced the old.

The will to power, through the conflict of perspectives, seems to anticipate its own discovery as the ultimate principle of reality. The criterion of truth is an increase in the will to power, and the will to power is all that there is. Will to power is primary, and Reason is secondary. Reason serves the will to power and is informed by the will to power. Reason may build or destroy, but in either case, it is the will to power acting through Reason.

Nietzsche's will to power may be interpreted as an instance of reductionist metaphysics in which life is reduced to its lowest common denominator — the will to power, a metaphysical entity. Not only does the will to power remind one of the Western metaphysics under attack by Nietzsche, but also the object of the will to power, 'the life-preserving, life-enhancing,' is reminiscent of the Platonic form of the 'Good.' However, the will to power may also be read as a metaphor for the flux of reality, since Nietzsche's will to power is the principle of becoming. Given the rhetorical nature of Nietzsche's writings, the will to power as metaphor may be a legitimate interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power as entity. The will to power may be described one of the 'useful fictions' that Nietzsche uses to express himself beyond the limits of language and thought.

Nietzsche's principle of the will to power presupposes that what maintains and enhances life is good; and although the particulars may vary from one perspective to the next, the form of goodness is absolute and universal. Nietzsche opposes Plato and the metaphysical tradition of absolute truths and maintains that truths are relative to a perspective, a human perspective. If all perspectives are relatively equal, then the question of commensurability among perspectives arises for Nietzsche's perspectivism and his doctrine of will to power. But Nietzsche's 'anti-metaphysics,' his genealogy,

depends upon the principle of the will to power which, if taken literally, is the ultimate ontological reduction. If this is the case, then the will to power is a 'meta-perspective' and not just another perspective, and the will to power is the arbiter among perspectives, that is, it is the 'meta-principle.'

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According to the economist Frank Knight, co-founder of the Chicago School of Economics, uncertainty is the chief cause of the difference between profits under actual and perfect competition. His famous exposition of his thesis was published in 1921 as *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit*. Uncertainty engenders, the fundamental difference between the theory of perfect competition and competition manifest in actually-existing capitalist societies:

- Where, uncertainty and risk are distinguished—risk being measurable (actuarial) expectation and uncertainty being unmeasurable (stochastic) expectation.
- Where, perfect competition is a theoretical and necessarily abstract model intended to organize economic theory in order to describe economic facts but which deviates from reality considerably and in proportion to the level of abstraction.
- Where, perfect competition represents a scientific abstraction focused on economic relationships (exchange, production and distribution) to the exclusion of social relationships and thus devoid of moral/ethical values. Knight acknowledges the model's lack of other-mindedness, but also seems to regard the system as a product of human nature—skeptical about whether a better system, encompassing a broader range of human interests, e.g., material, social and environmental, could be dialectically evolved.
- Where, perfect competition not only does not exist in the real world but in fact tends towards its opposite—monopoly.

Knight argues that the difference between perfect competition and actual competition is attributable to uncertainty—risk being irrele-

vant since 'insurance' can be acquired and change or absence of change being irrelevant as an independent cause, since change can be pattern-like and non-change can generate inaccurate expectations. So, uncertainty is the key in that it alone accounts for the divergence between expectations and reality.

Through his brief digression into the theory of knowledge, Knight distinguishes three types of probabilistic reasoning regarding certainty and uncertainty:

1. *a priori* probability— mathematical, e.g., dice
2. statistical probability—inductive, e.g., sampling
3. estimated probability—not subject to measurability

Knight argues that 'estimated probabilistic' reasoning is what is lacking in economic theory, and he goes on to state that forward-looking expectations (with inherent uncertainty) does in fact direct most human conduct—this being contrary to the 'scientific view' that human conduct is guided by measurable probabilistic reasoning. Inherent uncertainty may be due to the indeterminate and/or undetermined nature of the future—the former relating to the nature of the future and the latter relating to the nature of human knowledge.

There are several methods used by human beings when dealing with uncertainty, all intended to increase knowledge and extend control:

1. consolidation—insurance, business combinations and producer-directed activity (Supply precedes Demand because risks of producing are mitigated by the potential market of many buyers, and because the risks of an individual in contracting in advance of production are comparatively less mitigated.)
2. specialization—speculation, niche marketing, etc.

3. diffusion—distribution of risks, e.g., limited liability; related to consolidation and specialization.

Essentially the above represent the transference of risk to others willing, able and prepared to assume risk with a price attached to the transfer.

According to Knight, the ubiquitous nature of uncertainty is a condition for the existence of information as one of the principal commodities of the actual economic organization. This is particularly relevant to what we describe nowadays as the 'knowledge economy.'

For Knight, the essence of free enterprise is the combining of decision-making authority and responsibility/accountability, i.e., risk (uncertainty-bearing) and responsible control cannot be separated. Knight argues that in the corporate system of governance risk and responsibility are not separated; however, they are considerably diffused through the corporate organization from the Board of Directors to the C-level executives, who in turn delegate risk and control to their subordinates. Supporting the centralized decision making is the fact that as a class, entrepreneurs are also motivated by non-monetary factors, e.g., power, independence, challenge, etc. Presumably, similar motivations apply to the hierarchy of managers as well in that monetary compensation is augmented by non-financial benefits like power, privilege, status, etc.

Knight provides a description and explanation of actual competition *vis-à-vis* the model of perfect competition and argues that uncertainty (as opposed to risk) is the principal condition that gives rise to the differences. His is not necessarily a justification of actual competition, but neither is it a critique in the vein that the Keynesian Joan Robinson, in her Depression-era *Economics of Imperfect Competition*, challenged the notion of perfect competition in existing

capitalist economies. Knight's uncertainty thesis provides the basis for a 'causal' link in explaining the tendency of a free enterprise system to move away from the model of perfect competition and towards monopolistic organization—an outcome indicative of market failure. However, Knight, unlike Robinson, does not repudiate free markets for their 'failures.' It is nevertheless of interest that Knight recognizes the value of non-economic factors, e.g., human living conditions and social relations. In other words, the free enterprise system is not adequate to express the full range of human interests and values—not an expected conclusion from the Chicago School, although there are apparently profound differences between the first Chicago School and the later, and more familiar, Chicago School of Milton Friedman and Robert Lucas. A final interesting thought from Knight is that while much human effort is committed to managing uncertainty, uncertainty is not something that the human race can do without, since to do so would reduce human beings to machines or automata. Obviously, a delicate balance between certainty and freedom is required—absolute certainty would reduce humanity to automatons and absolute freedom would remove our ability to function within society.

Killed (murdered (assassinated)) by the German army in 1919, Rosa Luxemburg left behind a revolutionary legacy that has outlasted the German Empire against which she fought and the Russian Revolution for which she fought.¹ Four score and five years after her death, European communism has failed, and capitalism appears to have conquered the world, having merged public and private sectors into a hybrid state-sponsored capitalism. However, a different moment, sometime in the future, may be as different from 2004 as the world of 2004 is different from the world of 1949, the beginning of the 40-year Cold War between the USSR and the U.S. and their respective allies. Nevertheless, for the time being, international socialism remains dormant, and international capitalism, in the form of capitalist-driven globalization, appears triumphant—a sort of end of history ... or so it seems.

In the current climate of exaggerated optimism and reckless conformity with the logic of business and economics, international socialism appears more dead than dormant. While this may be true, there may still be value in resurrecting Rosa Luxemburg, i.e., revisiting her legacy, for which, by the way, she would undoubtedly refuse intellectual property rights. In this essay, four of Luxemburg's works have been selected², each addressing an important issue from early 20th century revolutionary socialism but no less applicable to anti-establishment and nonconformist resistance in the early 21st century. First, from 'What is Economics?,' completed while Luxemburg was in prison during World War I, is the issue of intellectual integrity in the political domain. Second, from 'Reform or Revolution' (1900) is the issue of incremental versus radical change. Third, from the 'Junius Pamphlet' (1915), is the issue of conflicting causes. Fourth, from 'The Russian Revolution' (1918) is the issue of whether the ends can justify the means.

In the essay 'What is Economics?,' Luxemburg argues that economists are the intellectual defenders of the capitalist revolution against the feudal and mercantilist systems of the past and against the socialist, communist and anarchist threats of the future. All revolutions change the political and economic balance of power, and all revolutions therefore require an intellectual defense of both the change and the new status quo. This defense is best provided by a class of intellectuals who stand to benefit from the revolutionary change (a foreshadowing of the 'new class' literature of dissent, e.g., Milovan Djilas' *New Class*). In the case of the revolution that swept away feudalism and ushered in capitalism, classical economists, like Adam Smith and David Ricardo, and early neoclassical economists, like Alfred Marshall, were influential in describing, explaining and rationalizing the Industrial Revolution. The universal theme emerging from Luxemburg's critique is that knowledge serves power ... which suggests that a socialist revolution would also require its own intellectual class. What Luxemburg could not see is that 'actually existing socialism' would create and reward its own intelligentsia ... contradicting its own universal egalitarian principles.

In 'Reform or Revolution,' Luxemburg takes on the issue of whether socialism should be advanced by incremental reform measures or by revolutionary means. Luxemburg was a revolutionary socialist, and she was, therefore, extremely critical of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), the leader among socialist parties, for choosing self-interested trade unionism and timid parliamentarianism. In particular, she was critical of Eduard Bernstein's defeatist reformism according to which collective wage bargaining and parliamentary elections were judged to be the only realistic means by which socialists could win concessions from a capitalist system that appeared immanently adaptable and in no imminent danger of collapse. For Luxemburg, these isolated and short-term victories threatened to fragment the universal character of international so-

cialism. As if following Luxemburg's script, nearly a century later, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, a Social Democrat, is pursuing structural reforms usually associated with conservative political parties, such as Reagan's Republican Party or Thatcher's Conservative Party, intended to reverse some of the trade union privileges and social programs of the past. The universal theme emerging with respect to 'Reform or Revolution' is that socialism, like any social movement, is not invulnerable to powerful, self-serving interests, which themselves may betray the movement over time. It is yet another of the ironies of international socialism that Luxemburg's real-life alternative to the SPD, the Bolsheviks and their successors, proved even less egalitarian than the trade union-dominated SPD.

In the 'Junius Pamphlet: The Crisis in the German Social Democracy,' Luxemburg severely rebukes the SPD for rallying to the support of the German imperialist war effort and betraying the cause of international socialism, i.e., the common cause of workers against bourgeois capitalists. At issue was whether nationalism or the cause of international socialism was the more important cause commanding the loyalty of German workers and the SPD. Writing from prison in 1915, Luxemburg accurately assessed two of the principal causes of the 1st World War: first, the increasing conflicts among European nations for foreign markets, and second, the rigid interlocking alliance system that amplified regional disputes. It was particularly galling for Luxemburg that the SPD's support for the war was based on an illusory sense of national unity and an equally illusory fear of external aggression. What was clear to Luxemburg and a minority of other SPD members who split to form the Spartacus League (and ultimately the German Communist Party) was that the SPD had switched alliances, from the international society of workers to the German bourgeois capitalists. The universal theme, not Luxemburg's theme, extracted from the 'Junius Pamphlet,' is that alliances (e.g., international socialism, German

nationalism or other common causes and social groupings) reflect the instinct to band together to protect, and even expand, interests and that all alliances are therefore temporary. Luxemburg would likely have argued that international socialism transcended all other causes; however, the history of 'actually existing socialism' in the 20th century suggests otherwise.

In 'The Russian Revolution,' Luxemburg criticizes the hesitancy of Karl Kautsky and SPD as well as the Russian Mensheviks. In justifying the excesses of the Bolsheviks, she points to their necessity in view of the betrayal of the Russian Revolution by the international socialist movement in addition to the obvious and expected antagonism of German imperialism and the resistance of counter-revolutionary bourgeois forces. Notwithstanding her recognition of the context of the Bolshevik's departure from the socialist revolutionary path, she proceeds, at length, to criticize Lenin and the Bolsheviks regarding agrarian reform, nationalist self-determination, suspension of democracy and civil rights, use of terror and concentration of political power. In each of these cases, the Bolsheviks adopted means that were inconsistent with the goals of international socialism. Her prescient critique of the Bolshevik's dictatorship of the proletariat, a dictatorship by an elitist minority, exposed and challenged what was to become a permanent and fundamental internal contradiction of the Russian Revolution and Soviet system. While Luxemburg ultimately pardoned Lenin and the Bolsheviks for their abuses, she nonetheless strongly cautioned them to return to the use of revolutionary means that are consistent with the revolutionary ends of international socialism. The universal theme extracted from 'The Russian Revolution' is that when the ends are allowed to justify the means, the means may transform the ends.

International socialism may be dead or just dormant, but in any event, it is not active in any sense that threatens global capitalism.

Since Luxemburg was one of international socialism's most dedicated and articulate defenders, it might seem that her legacy is useless. However, upon resurrecting Rosa, it should be clear that her legacy remains alive and relevant insofar as it is part of the larger tradition of revolutionary/radical dissent. The issues culled from her selected writings were definitely of a specific time and place in history. Nevertheless, there is universality to these issues, which ensures the continuing relevance of Luxemburg's thought. Certainly, these issues and her contributions to them are relevant to modern phenomena of technocratic tyranny (specialization, expertise and the democratic deficit), trickle-down economics (the political economy of the wealthy and powerful interest groups), local bias (the priority of national interests over international concerns) and demanding financial expectations (the ends of private wealth accumulation as justification of the means).

1 It is ironic that had German soldiers not ended Luxemburg's life during the German government crackdown on the post-war communist revolt that either Lenin or Stalin would have done so in one of the many purges that characterized the Bolshevik consolidation of power.

2 All of the works referenced in this essay are from *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, edited by Mary-Alice Waters (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).

I was a missionary—a Protestant, evangelical Christian who was in possession of truth, afterlife security and the oppressive burden to recruit others. As if in a reverse road-to-Damascus experience, I rejected entirely and with finality the naive arrogance, powermongering hubris and self-serving mendacity of this all-too-human, imperialistic cult.

I became a mercenary—an information technology consultant, who was really just cannon fodder in globalization's war on waste, inefficiency and high fixed costs. Standardized outcomes, repeatable processes, management by bullets and vertical loyalty designed, packaged, marketed and implemented to rationalize economic costs reduced everything to the lowest common economic denominator. I rejected the life of a corporate mercenary only after a prolonged and agonizing introspection as if in a Western version of 'Darkness at Noon.'

I am now a migrant—a temporary unskilled labour input in manufacturing. As low wage, just-in-time, undifferentiated labour, I am part of the neoclassical economists' ideal flexible labour force. We are highly mechanized to perform endless routine operations with minimal variance, and we are easily controlled for quality and easily replaced. I am resigned to accept that the life of a migrant is slightly more bearable than that of either a missionary or a mercenary.

* * *

In the idle world of professional philosophy (a world to which I once delusionally aspired), reality is often only experienced imaginatively. Take for instance, Thomas Nagel's 1974 article 'What Is It Like to be a Bat?,' in which the philosopher considers the distinction between objective and subjective knowledge. Imagining being a bat

is a thought experiment in which Nagel asks whether it is possible to get into the head of a bat without literally being inside the head of the bat (i.e., being the bat). The bat, in the thought experiment, is of course a placeholder for another human being. The conclusion being that imagining being someone else is not altogether unlike imagining oneself to be a bat. It is impossible, unless one becomes the bat. Without the impressive decoration of technical philosophical jargon, this seems pretty commonplace. Perhaps it is, but then again, sometimes like the speculative philosopher, one has to meet reality head on as if walking absent-mindedly full square into a telephone pole.

Now, imagine being a missionary, a mercenary or a migrant. For now, just stick with the mental image of a migrant, moving from one temporary job to another, jumping on the first pickup that isn't already filled to overflowing with temporary hands. Imagine being this migrant (the neoclassical economists' vision of workers in a perfect world), who has no contractual rights; no guaranteed wages, benefits or duration of employment; and no protections against arbitrary dismissal, hence no real labour law protections at all. Then add to this image that of an industrial migrant, who moves from factory to factory, making widgets of all shapes, sizes and colours in accordance with the local customs and beliefs—all of which are variations on the one true production ideology of minimum cost, maximum efficiency, mechanized labour and mass product uniformity. What would it be like to be this 'bat?' As one of these 'bats,' I can fill out the picture somewhat; however, having been both a 'non-bat' as well as a 'bat,' I would add that to really know what it's like being a 'bat,' you have to become one. And for those who may be comfortably situated in their respective missionary or mercenary stages, it would do them some good to live (not visit) on the other side for awhile. The change in perspective is profound.

Truth and Tolerance is a collection of essays on Christian beliefs (truth) and world religions/philosophies (tolerance) that were written during the 1990s (with the exception of the first essay) by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger who is now Pope Benedict XVI. The book's title should be interpreted with an emphasis on the catholic (universal) truth of Christianity and its all-knowing and generous acceptance of inferior/incomplete views, not unlike Hegel's Spirit looking back over its own development and progression through its prior incomplete and contradictory stages.

The essays of primary interest for this article are from the second half of the collection whose focus is religion and truth. These essays are 'The New Questions That Arose in the Nineties: The Position of Faith and Theology Today,' 'Reflections Prompted by the *Encyclical Fides et Ratio*' and 'Freedom and Truth.' The common theme throughout is the defense of Christian absolutes, truth and certainty against cultural relativism and alternative religions (Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam), philosophical skepticism (Kantian phenomenalism and scientific positivism) and the politicization of spiritual governance (mass democracy and liberation theology). Cultural relativists deny Christianity's absolutist claims as the arrogant pretensions of xenophobes and religious imperialists. Philosophical skeptics deny the possibility of human access to universal (catholic) Christian truths. Democrats challenge the autocratic, hierarchical approach to God and demand a share of religious power—a sort of religious self-determination. Liberation theology, a variant of democratic pragmatism, demands an assertive metaspiritual role for the Church in addressing political and economic inequalities. As defender of Church doctrine, formerly Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger maintained the correctness of Christianity's truth claims against those who attempted to weaken and destroy Christianity

with their modern and postmodern intellectual, moral, cultural and political arguments. Incidentally, Cardinal Ratzinger regards the fall of communism as a decisive rejection and failure of liberation theology's this-worldly aspirations and conversely a decisive victory for Church doctrine.

Cardinal Ratzinger's arguments are reminiscent of those portrayed in Dostoevsky's dual between truth and freedom in the dream scene from *The Brothers Karamazov* where Jesus returns to earth in 16th century Spain only to be imprisoned and interrogated by the Grand Inquisitor. Cardinal Ratzinger's view, not unlike that of the Grand Inquisitor, is that we are not free to choose truth and that freedom is therefore constrained by truth. Truth is from God and exists independently of human reason and willing and is therefore not available in the wide range of choices described by contemporary relativist theories. Truth provides the order, the structure, the organization which holds back and ultimately tames chaos. Freedom in the extreme is anarchic and empty, e.g., Sartrean 'nothingness,' and can only be tolerated when under control. The apparent oppressiveness of truth is based on the misperception that freedom is sacrificed to truth when in fact it is the existence of truth that makes freedom possible.

The conflict between truth and freedom is as old as human social history insofar as some sort of social contract seems to provide the cohesive force for communities so that some part of the 'unlimited' freedom of the individual is exchanged for the order and security provided by the group. This social contract view compares favourably with Cardinal Ratzinger's belief that freedom in the abstract is meaningless unless it is protected by the order and value that only truth can provide. Following the social contract metaphor, truth makes freedom possible ... and this is in sharp contrast to Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor metaphor according to which the sophistry

of the self-aggrandizing Church, under the banner of truth, enslaves and thus denies freedom.

Cardinal Ratzinger brings to the surface the tension between the acknowledged limits of reason and the accessibility of truth through faith. While the skepticism of Kant may be interpreted as frank admission of human ignorance with respect to realm of the metaphysical, Cardinal Ratzinger suggests that skepticism really serves the interests of extreme human arrogance inasmuch as what is originally only ruled out of bounds eventually becomes of only marginal interest. In other words, relegating metaphysics to the uncertain and unknown—beyond even the fringe of human understanding—effectively dismisses metaphysics from human knowledge altogether. So much then for the age-old metaphysical questions about God, the afterlife, spirit, humankind's place in the universe, etc.—all questions which admittedly have generated endless and often bloody disputes but all of which have given humanity a perspective that is less anthropocentrically narrow-minded and conceited than that of philosophical positivism, which, with its practical and technological bias, has sanctioned the industrial and post-industrial age's obsession with the technical mastery of nature and human behaviour.

Also apparent in the arguments of Cardinal Ratzinger is the tension between mediated and direct revelation (revealed truth), i.e., truth mediated by the Roman Catholic Church or truth dispersed among masses. Is truth a human construct, and if not, then do human hands corrupt truth when bringing it back to earth? How can one group of people know that they are being guided by truth from God as opposed to truth from a powerful group of their fellow men? Returning to Dostoevsky and the metaphor of the Grand Inquisitor, Jesus, the indisputable source of truth, was suppressed by the Church, and the truth that he instantiated was rejected in favour of an earthly parody and corruption of God's truth. In other words, ac-

According to Dostoevsky, for all of the Church's defense of the truth of Christianity, what in reality was being defended was a human institution mediating as the power between God and man.

In Cardinal Ratzinger's *Truth and Tolerance*, there is an absolute and knowable truth, and freedom is made possible by truth's existence. Tolerance is the attitude of truth towards freedom and the humanity's attempts to discover truth. Instead of truth being opposed to freedom, truth creates the world of possibilities without which, to paraphrase Kant, freedom is blind, meaningless and anarchic. Truth provides the order, the value and the meaning to an otherwise disorderly, valueless and meaningless freedom. Tolerance is truth's magnanimous recognition and acceptance of the intrinsically incomplete and finite efforts of humanity seeking God.

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This Democracy 'Not for Export' (April 2006)

The New York Times

Front Page

April 15, 2006

For Immigrants and Business, Rift on Protests

By MONICA DAVEY

In Bonita Springs, Fla., 10 restaurant workers were fired this week after skipping their shifts to attend a rally against legislation in Congress cracking down on illegal immigrants. In Tyler, Tex., 22 welders lost their jobs making parts for air-conditioners after missing work for a similar demonstration in that city.

And so it went for employees of an asbestos removal firm in Indianapolis, a restaurant in Milwaukee, a meatpacking company in Detroit, a factory in Bellwood, Ill.

In the last month, as hundreds of thousands of people around the country have held demonstrations pressing for legal status and citizenship for illegal immigrants, companies, particularly those that employ large numbers of immigrants, have found themselves wrestling with difficult and uncharted terrain....

When hundreds of workers were fired for taking part in protests against pending legislation in Congress that would crack down on illegal aliens in the U.S., they learned a harsh lesson in civics.

It's one thing to believe that government will generally respect constitutionally protected civil liberties, in this case the First Amendment's guarantees regarding freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.

However, it's an altogether different matter to expect business owners and management to allow the world of politics and democratic expression to interfere with production. For many owners and managers who expect a kind of feudal loyalty in return for employment, the right to vote is thought to be enough democracy. Protest

and dissent are thought to represent the harmfulness of too much democracy, since they express criticism and dissatisfaction with the 'best of all possible worlds' and contradict the superficial optimism that drives markets ever higher, until

It's got to be difficult for outsiders (i.e., new immigrants) to wrap their heads around the notion that in a democratic society there can be such radically different worlds—one where individualism is respected and protected and another beyond the constitutional archives, where the logic of business sorts out what fits and what doesn't.

Needless to say, the form of democracy that is being marketed worldwide should be clearly marked 'For Export Only' so as not to get confused with the actually existing democracy in the U.S. (or here in Canada for that matter).

Why Don't People Like Bush? (April 2006)

Is it because he's stupid? Well, would you say that's the exception or the rule for people in authority?

Is it because he seems to want to be a dictator (or at least king)? Well, is that common or uncommon among those in power?

Is it because he's hypocritical? Well, is hypocrisy really so rarely seen among those who rule?

Maybe the reason why Bush is disliked is that he has become a stand-in punching bag for all of the abusive authority that we feel we can't rebel against in our everyday lives for fear of serious and swift retribution.

Well ... so what if Bush is a lightning rod for all sorts of anti-authoritarian sentiment? Should we step in to defend him against our pent-up anti-authoritarian rage?

Nah!

First of all, there is the ever so remote chance that he can be brought down, and it's a good thing to rein in the almighty every now and then. Second, even if he isn't impeached or forced to resign or demonized in the 2008 presidential election, he will at least have given us a common object to safely curse, despise and ridicule.

It's better than reality TV.

Don't Let the Political Cartoons Fool You: These Guys May Be Too Smart For Watergate (April 2006)

Would Nixon's imperial presidency have been brought down had the Watergate break-in never been discovered?

Maybe we'll have a clue to the answer, if the Bush Administration doesn't caught red-handed breaking the law in its own bungled plumbing job.

More and more often comparisons are being drawn between the Nixon and Bush presidencies. Both are associated with foreign wars that have divided the American public. Both are associated with wartime tactics that raised constitutional issues. Both sought greater powers for the presidency on the grounds of executive privilege and national security.

Both adopted extreme measures to plug leaks to the media. Publication of the *Pentagon Papers* was the big leak for Nixon, while the CIA's secret interrogation prisons in East Europe and the National Security Agency's illegal domestic eavesdropping are only Bush's most recent big leaks. So far Bush has managed to survive the big leaks and the damning revelations, most notably the falsehoods used to justify the Iraq War and then the prisoner abuse and torture sanctioned by the war on terror which, after all, is not a war like any other war, and therefore has no rules.

If Bush is not impeached and is not forced to resign from office, then that can be considered evidence that Nixon, too, could have avoided impeachment and resignation had he simply not been sucked into the Watergate scandal.

By avoiding, or not getting caught in, outright illegal activity, Bush may escape the intense, prolonged congressional scrutiny of all of

his administration's dubious actions. As long as government agencies can effectively intimidate and silence internal criticism and dissent, it may not even be necessary to burgle offices in downtown Washington D.C.

In fairness, there probably aren't any American presidents who didn't cross the line at some time. On the other hand, even though there might be some historical fairness in letting Nixon and Bush off the hook, there is good reason to judge them harshly. That reason has to do with the evolution of the office of president, an evolution that ought to be guided in the direction which keeps to the belief that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. To have steered a course towards tyranny and not to recognize it as such is to create conditions favourable for a dangerous repetition.

As a result of its recent terrorism scare, Canada has been unwillingly thrust on the world stage, this time not as the world's peacemaker and peacekeeper but as a nation that has to face up to some pretty harsh choices about how to balance national security against civil liberties.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative Party would be expected to follow a course not too different from President Bush in the U.S. and Prime Minister Blair in the UK. However, the Canadian electorate has been more than a little reluctant lately to give either of the viable national parties (Conservatives and Liberals) a resounding vote of confidence in the form of a majority government. So, the Tories do not have *carte blanche*.

In a British-type parliamentary system, minority governing status is the most effective check on the abuse and misuse of government authority, and Canadians have used this weapon many times in the past. In 11 of the 39 federal elections since independence, no single party has won a majority of the seats in the House of Commons—the most recent instance being the January 2006 election, which brought in a Conservative minority government. And, if that is not enough, Canadians have turned the governing party out of office entirely in 16 elections, again most recently in this year's election, which terminated the scandal-ridden Liberal government.

Now, Canada's democracy faces a test arguably even greater than that posed by the corruption scandals that brought down the Liberals. The recent arrest of 17 alleged terrorists, with potential links to the enemy of President Bush's 'war on terror,' has put Canada uncomfortably on the front pages of the world's newspapers. Now Canada has some really important policy decisions for the world (including the U.S.) to watch.

Two institutions which have figured prominently in protecting Canada's democracy up to the present—a multiparty system and a free press, which necessarily complement one another—will be severely tested over the next little while.

Should the need arise, will they be up to the task of exposing domestic spying, denial of due process, torture, fearmongering and 'clash of civilizations'-style foreign policymaking?

Ben Metcalf's 'On Simple Human Decency,' from the June 2006 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, makes a playful case for regicide but a more important and provocative case for curbing presidential power. Among the many comments and questions that the piece will elicit, here are just a couple.

First, is it possible to imagine there ever being an acceptable occasion for the overthrow of an American Government? If government becomes a tyrant, then in keeping with good Anglo-American political theory, the governed are said to have the right to defend themselves by revolution. However, just how bad would things have to get before such a political revolution could occur? Imagine how hard it would be to give up American electoral democracy, even if it had degenerated into one party rule. Credit *Harper's* with raising the spectre of political revolution, however far-fetched, to the level of political debate with its April 2006 cover story 'American *Coup d'Etat*.'

Second, the problem of the Bush Administration is much bigger than President Bush, so regicide does not get to the root of the problem. Just as the *Washington Post's* June 22nd editorial "Close Guantanamo?" argued, closing Guantanamo Bay, as an isolated action, would be of limited value as long as the U.S. detentions at the Bagram prison in Afghanistan, secret overseas detention facilities used by the CIA and the endless limbo between POW status and criminal defendant status persisted. Even if the King's head were lopped off, there would still remain those who created him and those who followed him, whether out of ideological sympathy, a regime-neutral sense of corporate loyalty, or renewed respect for the limits of democracy in the workplace in light of *Garcetti v. Ceballos*.

It would be in vain, silly and servile to pine for a wise leader who will bring out the best in his subjects. Instead, expect every President to want to be King, but let none succeed.

On Feudal Loyalty (July 2006)

Subservience to those above, severe discipline towards those below, and only in the third place competence—this is the prevailing order of selection criteria. The result is that the productive and creative elements suffer from an increase of mediocrity, indeed incompetence, dishonourable behaviour and insecurity in official positions, not to speak here of the political standardization that is required. (Rudolph Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*)

Rudolph Bahro, East German dissident, was writing about the bureaucracy of centralized planning in the German Democratic Republic—the hierarchical and overlapping bureaucracies of the Party, of the State, of the factories, etc.

For those familiar with the history of the Cold War, communist Europe and the dissident writings from behind the Iron Curtain, Bahro's pithy statement about party loyalty/fealty was striking mainly because it was the sort of stuff that we in the West did not expect to pass the censors. Bahro was able to bypass the East German censors by smuggling a copy of *The Alternative* into West Germany where it was duly published, although he was subsequently and unduly arrested and imprisoned as an enemy of the people.

Now that European communism is dead, isn't it ironic that Bahro's words still have some resonance ... here in the free market, liberal democratic West?

We are taught and persuaded and sometimes coerced into believing in the anti-feudalism of democracy and its natural, universal and irrevocable principles of fundamental human rights respecting “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” But then we see what we see

and we hear what we hear, and it doesn't seem to connect to the comforting metaphysics of Western political thought.

President George W. Bush has probably done more than most to show us what we in the West are still capable of becoming. Subservience, tyranny and dubious competence—for most of us, these are the hallmarks of the Bush Administration. This would include those whose economic and psychological well-being is tied up with the hyper-dominant feudal hierarchy that leads up to King George and then upwards to that super-secret society of queer handshakes, winks and nods where one would nevertheless likely recognize some familiar faces in the Vice-President, the Secretary of Defense and maybe even the President of the World Bank.

It is unbelievably easy to rally an audience around a severe critique of President Bush, and so much the better, because otherwise, if President Bush were highly regarded worldwide, there would be good reason to give up in despair for the human condition.

However, President Bush is in some respects like European communism—an easy target to critique but also a target that can easily divert our attention from targets much closer to home.

Staying with the Bush Administration for a moment, the term 'kiss up/kick down' is apparently a well-circulated term, as it was used in a *New York Times* article to describe current U.S. Ambassador to the UN John Bolton's management style while he was at the State Department. Although not as evocative or provocative as Bahro's language of subservience and tyranny, 'kiss up/kick down' comes to the same thing. It is all about feudal loyalty – one's place in the hierarchy and one's identity and well-being derived therefrom.

Moving from the centre of public attention to the periphery of personal experience, the same pattern of feudal loyalty emerges.

There is the classic management speak from a former vice-president of a local commuter school in downtown Toronto, which goes as follows: "If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem." Enthusiasts of 'Bushisms' will recognize this one as a variant of something like this: "if you're not with me on the war on terror, then you're probably a terrorist."

Those who have experienced corporate restructuring may have heard this one: "Keep your lips as close to so-and-so's ___ as you can," although it may not have been so clearly stated as it was in the case of this senior manager in the Ontario Ministry of Education who, for all his good advice, must have been wearing a blindfold, because he was soon departed.

Quite likely, everyone who has worked for a Fortune 500 company, whose survival depends on endless acquisitions and state-of-the-art accounting, e.g., Computer Associates, is familiar with the combined performance evaluation/loyalty test that follows on the heels of a major merger announcement and precedes a lot of 'career moves.'

Those who have interviewed for factory supervisory positions, e.g., with Xerox, where the questionnaires were developed before the term 'human resources' became fashionable, will probably recall questions like "Would you enjoy or dislike teaching 4th grade boys?" which seems to get to the point without being overly vague.

Then, finally, back to the world of academia, some may appreciate the incongruity between the world of academic freedom—one of the few places where there is protection of civil liberties even in the workplace—and the Ryerson professor's self-acclamation "I'm neither fish nor fowl." Obviously, a wise educated man who can hedge his bets on where his loyalties lay.

So, Bahro's critique of East German society seems to find suitable targets here in the West, too. This, of course, means that the contempt in which we were told to hold communism can find its long lost home here in the West. While conformity and hierarchical power are no less the rules of the game in the West than they were in communist Eastern Europe, you may not recognize the similarities unless and until you experience the anti-epiphany of your own Darkness at Noon. Identity and well-being are not easily maintained independent of some feudal chain of loyalty, which is perhaps the tragedy and the curse of John Donne's well-worn coin "no man is an island."

Why a change in course?

There is increasing pressure on the White House to develop an exit strategy that would bring about an immediate and significant de-escalation of the U.S. military presence in Iraq. Anti-war sentiment continues to climb alongside the daily reported casualty and death tolls, not unlike the not so long ago East Asian war in Vietnam. Despite the highly publicized Iraqi elections as evidence of America's success in transplanting democracy to the Muslim world, the escalation of violence in Iraq seems to have tipped the country into civil war. The rising costs of the war in terms of American blood combined with the increasingly bleak outlook for American success of any kind has created great and gathering disaffection in the U.S. with President Bush and his Iraq policy. The November 7th congressional elections which stripped the President's Republicans of their House and Senate majorities can fairly be interpreted as an American rebuke of the President and his failed policies. What is worth remembering, at what may mark a momentous turning point in U.S. foreign policy, is that half of voting Americans seem to have already sensed the foolhardiness and arrogance of U.S. foreign policy in Iraq, while the other half voted for President Bush a second time.

What was behind the original plan?

So what were we doing in Iraq in the first place? At first, we were told by the Bush administration and one of the most respectable members of his cabinet, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, that there was sufficient evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction programs to warrant pre-emptive, if not preventative, military intervention, even if waged unilaterally. Now, we know that the so-called *casus belli*, or justification for war as they say in

international law, was a fabrication of an incompetent or complicit intelligence community. Sounds like Vietnam, where it was President Johnson who stage-managed the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident in order to propel a massive escalation of combat troops into Vietnam.

Scrambling for a new message to market the Iraq war, the White House decided on the missionary theme of delivering democracy to the Muslim world. Policy wonks in America's great think tanks started dusting off their histories of U.S. efforts in rebuilding post-war Germany and Japan. This seemed plausible for awhile. But then the insurgency followed by civil war have threatened to undermine Iraq's electoral democracy by stripping away the most basic right of freedom from arbitrary physical violence. Meanwhile, the U.S. continues to maintain strong diplomatic relations with non-democratic regimes such as those in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Kazakhstan. Behind the face of democratic evangelism is the face of *realpolitik*. Even the hidden, self-serving motive of seeking to gain control of strategic oil reserves—an American foreign policy priority since the oil embargo of 1973-74—has failed to impress the American public, at least that part of the American public whose inflated gas bills have not been more than offset by record profits in their oil and gas industry stocks.

How do you acknowledge failure?

So, just like in Vietnam, once you know that the game is up, how do you get out? At one end of the spectrum are those who advise getting out of Iraq now for the following reasons. The U.S. has no reason to be there in the first place, and now, it is only making the situation worse. The war began with lies, the occupation continues with lies, and with that knowledge, American casualties in Iraq can no longer be justified. Civil war is in progress in Iraq, and there is

risk that the chaos in Iraq will destabilize the region. However, there is nothing more that the U.S. can do to improve the situation.

This 'retreatist' view, in whatever variant, including the one advanced in George McGovern's essay in the October 2006 edition of *Harper's Magazine*, is irresponsible. It would be irresponsible for the U.S. to ignite the flames of civil war and anarchy in the Persian Gulf and then abruptly leave, promising help from a distance ... over time.... The Balkanization of Iraq would become the legacy of America's military overthrow of Iraq's authoritarian government—hardly a victory. It does not really matter to Iraqis or anybody else that this was President Bush's war. The U.S. is committed to Iraq, and it does not matter whether the President is George W. Bush or Hillary Rodham Clinton or whomever. It is a commitment, damages have been caused and liability should be attached. If the U.S. follows the advice of McGovern and others, it will still be one and the same America that invaded Iraq, then precipitated civil war and then exited the battlefield with hands in the air and a shrug of the shoulders.

How can the damage be undone?

McGovern, in his article with William Polk, provides some ideas in 'The way out of war: A blueprint for leaving Iraq now.' However, the biggest problem with the retreat now and give moral and financial assistance later is—and this is brutally cynical—that once the troops are home the urgency of restoring law and order in Iraq disappears. But even more cynically, until and unless the price of this war reaches a level that disgusts a decisive majority of Americans there will be other wars just like Vietnam and Iraq—misconceived, misrepresented and mismanaged.

So, broadly speaking, having been invaded and occupied by the U.S. military, Iraq deserves ironclad security and re-building com-

mitments from the U.S. The U.S. military should stay the course if only to absorb fully the consequences of a misconceived war. This version of staying the course is not the same as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's views—the Cold War domino theory updated for the Middle East and radical Islam—as described in Bob Woodward's *State of Denial*. Indeed, the U.S. should not retreat, but it should go back to the nation building drawing board and figure out how to provide security against civil war and belligerent neighbour states, how to rebuild the war-torn physical infrastructure, how to provide reparations payments for damages caused by American foreign policy and how to promote international checks and balances against abusive power (just in case the domestic ones fail again).

An American tragedy—a democracy that has become too powerful for the world's good?

Thus far, U.S. foreign policy in Iraq is a failure. The one positive is that former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has been deposed, convicted of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death. However, does this outweigh the tens of thousands of Iraqi deaths during the war and the occupation, the nearly 3,000 U.S. dead, a civil war with no end in sight, the U.S. faced with another Vietnam debacle and U.S. moral leadership compromised? What effect will the U.S. failure in Iraq have on longer term global oil supplies and prices? Will U.S. influence among key Persian Gulf states decline, and will U.S. interest in democracy in the Middle East be sidelined? Will other countries and non-state actors act more recklessly in the belief that U.S. military force is incapable of successfully waging protracted conflicts? Will the U.S. ever be able to regain its credibility as a world leader in championing universal democratic rights and freedoms? These are difficult questions, which cannot be easily answered by the sound of retreat.

The Spanish term *maquiladora* refers to the Mexican border factory located in a special export processing zone, where the costs of regulatory compliance are subsidized or otherwise reduced in order to attract foreign, usually U.S., multinationals.

Along the industrialized northwest shore of Lake Ontario, one can find the Canadian version of the *maquiladora*—the Arctic *maquiladora*. Along this industrial corridor, factories and warehouses employ large numbers of temporary workers. This temporary labour force provides a surplus of cheap, flexible, unorganized and disposable labour for U.S. multinationals such as Xerox, Kraft, Dana and CTDI, which have low-end manufacturing, storage and distribution facilities along the corridor. The temporary workforce also increases overall employment figures so that Statistics Canada can present optimistic labour market statistics for the government's information departments/ministries and for secondary consumers of government-produced economic data.

Notwithstanding the alleged scientific and non-political claims of mainstream economics, government and business collusion in creating the legal arrangements whereby employers can acquire labour on an as needed basis is a classic example of the political nature of economics. In response to such government and business collaboration, French workers rioted in the Spring 2006 to protest the 'flexible' labour law that would exempt employers from giving cause when dismissing workers under the age of 26 who have less than two years employment. On the other hand, the European Central Bank, the European Union's counterpart to the Bank of Canada, is well known for its persistent advocacy of labour market reforms—reforms which would essentially make wage-benefit packages downwardly flexible to reduce the stubbornly high levels of unemployment in Europe's welfare states.

Governments are keen to portray themselves as the custodians of a strong economy with tolerable levels of unemployment and prospects for economic growth and increasing employment. As the International Monetary Fund commented in its 2003 post-mortem of the 2001-02 Argentine crisis, "combining an increase in labor market flexibility to U.S. levels with a 5 percentage point reduction in the payroll tax rate could have halved the unemployment rate," bringing it down to approximately 10 percent. Through the informal stakeholder selection process common to bureaucratic governance, business interests emerge as key stakeholders who are well represented and well placed during the economic policy planning and development process. Not surprisingly— although not fully appreciated for its impact on democratic principles—business uses its influence, both during and in between elections, to get tax relief, subsidies, contracts and, in this case, lower labour costs through regulatory immunity.

The economic efficiency of maximum employment at minimum costs is what mainstream economists teach as value-neutral, scientific economics in universities, in Fortune 500 companies and in federal, provincial and local governments. Paraphrased, the idea is that if business is freed to operate in feudal-like independence of the state, then corporations will be able to influence unemployment levels, keeping them neither too low (which would be inflationary) nor too high (which would be incendiary).

A comparison of the modern corporation with the landed nobility of the Middle Ages is useful to draw attention to the parallel relationships between corporations and government in the modern age, on one hand, and the aristocracy and the monarchy of the Middle Ages, on the other hand. Each helps the other govern in its respective domain. Political and economic power flow mainly between these two groups—between corporations and government in the modern world and between the lords and the monarch in the feudal

world. In each world, as in a federal system, there are shared and reserved powers, so that the rights and responsibilities of the subjects in the larger society are delegated from two different sources.

This comparison highlights the important and controversial point that actually existing democracy falls short of the rhetoric of democratic idealism and fails to convincingly demonstrate the best of all possible worlds. The political power of the ordinary voter, limited as it is to elections, is overwhelmed by the interest group and stakeholder politics that takes place in between elections and mostly behind the scenes of the elected parliaments and councils and even of the news media.

In the political realm, the individual rights of democracy are not what they seem, but in the economic realm—the world of business—the rights of the individual become even less discernible. Joining a corporate organization involves a contractual agreement according to which the individual receives economic benefit in exchange for work and also forfeits certain rights, which might apply in the political realm. The justification of corporate supremacy is one of the primary contributions of business-academic partnerships—among the most influential corporate image and ideology shapers being the *Harvard Business Review* and the Chicago School of economic thought. Dissent is certainly not acceptable; conformity is expected. The demand for loyalty is exaggerated beyond what would be imaginable in the political realm. Corporate values—from the prime directive to maximize profits to the post-Enron primer on business ethics—supersede all other values. In accordance with one's compliance with the rules, an identity is made, circulated for a time and then retired.

It is completely disingenuous to claim objectivity for the field of economics given the unmistakable collaboration within the business-academic-government community of inegalitarian lords and their

economic advisors. Furthermore, this alleged science-based objectivity provides for a rhetorical separation of the political and the economic. The separation is rhetorical as it is clearly unmistakable that in the real world of state capitalism there is no such line of demarcation between politics and economics. Nevertheless, this rhetorical separation of the scientific from the political persists, and it has the negative consequence of denying that freedom from arbitrary and overwhelming violence is just as valid in the economic realm as it is in the political realm. Unchecked power in the economic realm threatens to unleash with Nazi-like inhuman efficiency a world where universal human rights based on natural law are replaced by a world where political human rights are nominal and economic human rights are based on privilege, i.e., one's place in the feudal hierarchy.

As long as the political and the economic can be kept apart, the perpetuation of asymmetric rights and freedoms in the political and economic realms can be maintained. As long as there remains some significant level of political human rights, totalitarianism can be held at bay. However, as long as there continue to be significant inequalities in economic human rights, economic authoritarianism is unchecked and presents a constant obstacle to universal political freedom. And so the Arctic *maquiladora* is, or should be, an embarrassment for Canadians, since it reveals the hypocrisy of Canadian political, business and academic leaders who pride themselves on not being obsessed with power, wealth and status like their American counterparts.

"For they that are discontented under monarchy call it tyranny." (*Leviathan*, 142)

Introduction

In March 2003, the U.S., with less than unanimous support from its Western allies and the UN Security Council, invaded Iraq and removed the Iraqi government from power. The Iraq War was launched on the pretext that Saddam Hussein's authoritarian regime, its anti-U.S. animus and its weapons of mass destruction and terrorist connections represented a threat to U.S. national security. Under new American foreign policy guidelines for pre-emptive war, Saddam Hussein's Iraq was, therefore, a legitimate target for invasion and regime change.

By April 2003, Saddam Hussein's government had been overthrown and replaced by the U.S.-controlled Coalition Provisional Administration (CPA). As the occupation government for Iraq from April 2003 through June 2004, the CPA removed the old guard, created new laws and attempted to bring peace, security and justice to a country long victimized by the violent abuses of power of a seemingly invincible tyrant. Among the legislative acts of the CPA was the creation of the Iraqi High Tribunal – a new court created to address the human rights crimes, including war crimes, of the dictatorial regimes of the past forty years.

In 2005, Saddam Hussein was brought to trial before the Iraqi High Tribunal on charges related to the deadly government retaliation against those involved or sympathetic to the failed assassination attempt on Hussein in Dujail in 1982. A year later, the Iraqi High Tribunal found Hussein guilty of crimes against humanity and ordered that he be sentenced to death, with the sentence to be carried out within 30 days. In record-breaking time, the Appeals

Chamber of the Iraqi High Tribunal refused to challenge the verdict or the sentence, and on the last day of 2006 but one, Saddam Hussein was hanged. Despite Hussein's removal, the Iraqi High Tribunal has proceeded with the *Anfal* case of the 1988 massacre of Kurdish civilians by the Iraqi military's use of chemical weapons. While Hussein was dismissed as a defendant after his execution, the trial and judgment in the *Anfal* case is expected to validate the verdict of the *Dujail* case.

The title of this essay raises questions about the conflict between tyrannicide and the rule of law. The prospect of conflict emphasizes the apparent contradiction between rendering a judgment that never was in doubt (that Saddam Hussein was guilty of crimes against humanity) and establishing the legitimacy of the trial and the execution (both for the transition from tyranny and for history). In considering the potential conflict between tyrannicide, on one hand, and due process and equality before the law, on the other, the principal issues involved questions of jurisdiction (who judges), the rule of law (how the judge judges) and the Western perspective (how we see the judges and the judging).

Jurisdiction

First, on the issue of jurisdiction, should the trial have been conducted before the Iraqi courts or through the international courts? This important question evokes profound issues concerning sovereignty, justice and self-determination. Was Iraq acting as a sovereign nation in trying, sentencing and executing Saddam Hussein? Was the Hussein trial and execution an act of national justice in the sense that the Iraqi courts, acting on behalf of the Iraqi nation, held Hussein to account for violating the implicit social contract between the government and the people? Was the Iraqi nation, represented by its national judiciary, determining its own future as it exacted punishment for crimes committed by its former sovereign?

Before answering these questions, consider the following. Why was Hussein not tried before the International Criminal Court or even a special tribunal as in the case of Slobodan Milosevic who was tried before the International Criminal Tribunal of Former Yugoslavia? Were the reasons for Iraqi jurisdiction similar to those used to justify the 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem? Was it necessary for Iraqis to judge the man who had victimized the Iraqi nation in order for the era of the tyrant to be ended and the stage set for something better? Was there doubt as to the verdict and sentence that might be handed down by an international court or to whether a verdict would even be reached? Was this case to be a precedent for the supremacy of national courts in human rights jurisprudence?

Rule of law

Second, on the issue of the rule of law, were due process and equality before the law compromised to the point that the verdict of the Iraqi judiciary is invalid? According to Human Rights Watch, a leading international human rights monitoring organization, the rule of law was violated in the Hussein trial. But in the case of a deposed head of state, and a tyrant at that, what does equality before the law mean? Similarly, how much does it matter whether the justice is delivered by means of *pro forma* due process—a show trial—where the veil of legal justice is lifted momentarily to reveal revenge and retribution for arbitrary violence and death at the hands of a tyrannical head of state? Does the rule of law bend in the case of tyrannicide so that the outcome can be guaranteed? Usually the question is whether the head of state is above the law, but in this case, the question is whether a tyrant may be beneath the law.

Western Perspective

Third, on the issue of the Western perspective, how much of Western political theory and history is projected onto the Hussein trial

and execution? From Anglo-American political theory developed in the crucible of constitutional struggle in 17th century England, Thomas Hobbes, author of *Leviathan* and defender of authoritarian law-and-order government, grants Leviathan's subjects freedom from their ruler when he can no longer provide protection against anarchy or foreign invasion. Likewise, John Locke, author of *Two Treatises on Government* and defender of the parliamentary supremacy, allows for the use of force to resist the tyranny of either King or Parliament. Although neither explicitly advocates tyrannicide, both allow that a tyrant can be removed from power and hint that the deposed tyrant may be subject to a lesser standard of justice.

The Western political legacy includes two important events relevant to the Iraqi trial and execution of Hussein. First, in 1649 during the English Civil War, King Charles I was executed for plotting to overthrow the Commonwealth. Second, in 1793 during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI was executed for conspiring against the new French Republic. In English and French history, tyrannicide marks a watershed in the development of democracy. As in the case of Iraq, not all English or French agreed with their respective verdicts. Nevertheless, will tyrannicide be an epochal event in the case of Iraq, notwithstanding the important differences that Iraq's tyrant was deposed by a foreign power and that the trial and execution took place while a foreign military patrolled the streets of Baghdad?

1st backdrop *Production opens with the distant picture of the castle: flags flying on the four towers, great stone walls rising from the isolated mountain top, a huge arched door open and revealing a busy marketplace inside and row on row of arched windows on the second and higher levels where brightly-colored banners flutter in the breeze.*

The castle has long been a symbol and bastion of justice, where freedom from arbitrary detention and punishment has been extended gradually to everyone ... in principle.

On September 11, 2001, the castle was attacked.

2nd backdrop *The huge arched door entrance to the castle is now closed.*

In June 2004, the Supreme Court acknowledged that the President, through his military, could detain people— even Americans—as 'enemy combatants' indefinitely and without formal charges as long as these detainees were given some opportunity to question their detention.

3rd backdrop *The castle wall is solid from top to bottom with no windows or doors.*

In December 2005, the Detainee Treatment Act (DTA) became law and blocked foreign 'enemy combatants' from using the U.S. federal courts to challenge their detention.

4th backdrop *The huge arched door reappears and is slightly ajar.*

In February 2006, the Supreme Court allowed the case of H. (a foreign 'enemy combatant') to proceed, since it was already pending when Congress passed the DTA.

In June 2006, the Court ruled that the President's special military courts were unconstitutional.

5th backdrop *The great castle door has disappeared and a new, smaller door has appeared on the 2nd story, but there are no stairs.*

In October 2006, the Military Commissions Act (MCA) was signed into law, reversing the Court's June 2006 decision. Congress explicitly authorized the President's special military courts and categorically denied *habeas* review in all foreign 'enemy combatant' cases.

In April 2007, a reconstructed Supreme Court was given the opportunity to consider the constitutionality of the MCA, but the Court avoided the case.

6th backdrop *A ladder has been placed against the castle wall giving access to the 2nd story door.*

In June 2007, the military judges in two separate military commission cases, including the case against H., ruled that the President's special military courts did not have jurisdiction.

Final backdrop *Production ends with the 6th backdrop slowly rising, but the curtains close before the audience can see whether in the final backdrop the ladder and the door are still there.*

At the end of the Supreme Court's 2006-2007 term, the Court reversed its April 2007 decision and agreed to hear the case of the foreign 'enemy combatants.'

The Court will reconvene in October 2007.

It was the most optimistic of times. Innovation was satisfying tastes we never knew we had. And low prices made the increasingly necessary new gadgets and things affordable. It was a time of confidence. Business was booming—profits were breaking records, and ever larger numbers watched the omnipresent ticker. Workers were gainfully employed—unemployment had nearly disappeared. Money and credit were as easy to come by as drinking water. Prosperity was the word for the age.

We, i.e., humanity, or at least the thinking part of humanity, had become confident that we were in control of the future. The last great war was over, and capitalism had trumped socialism and was destined to become the greatest organizing force in history. The vast Western market was unopposed as it swept over the collapsed Iron Curtain and throughout the developing world.

All of this was happening on the grand stage of world history where the *Zeitgeist*—a converted and ardent capitalist—was becoming its potential. Skeptics said we'd invent a new basis for worldwide conflict—these were the 'clash of civilizations' people. However, for the most part, we were inclined towards the notion that we had seen the promised land and found it accessible.

Much further down at the level of particularized existence, we individuals were also becoming our potential. What animated the *Zeitgeist* on the world historical stage also animated us on the stage of everyday life. Dynamic innovation, maximum profit, full employment and unlimited buying power—these had become the great universal principles, which determined and organized our lives.

In the workplace, assimilation of change was sometimes difficult. When considered outside the context of the grand world historical development that was reorganizing human history, the changes looked to be no more than just the automation of the white-collar workforce. But when viewed properly,

- standardization of goods, services, processes and people
- flexibility of inputs and input prices/wages to respond to unexpected changes in market supply and demand
- efficiency of lowest cost production to ensure wage/price flexibility
- portability of production to maximize efficiency through competition
- discipline to enforce compliance with standardization and flexibility
- predictability through standardized flexibility and
- quality control for uniform products/services

were all essential components for the new universal economy that would deliver

- market-renewing innovation
- continuous business expansion
- ever-rising profits
- full capacity employment and
- easy money/credit needed to keep the whole thing going.

The project was often the means by which these changes were introduced at the micro level. Not having an assembly line, the office environment needed to be structured, and the project provided that structure. The project had a prescribed beginning and end, defined

inputs and outputs, process flow for converting inputs to outputs, progress milestones and quality control checkpoints. All workloads could be managed by project, and projects could do it efficiently, cost-effectively and always on time, on budget and in scope. All work could be packaged into standardized project modules. As packages, projects could be shipped anywhere, unpacked and run anytime always with the same uniform result.


Coming to the end of the 1990s, I was a believer. It seemed like we had reached something like the 'End of History,' with capitalism and technology and, of course, democracy, freedom and liberty in the ascendancy. It seemed reasonable that business logic was penetrating every aspect of our lives—transforming governments, countries and ordinary people into entrepreneurial cost/benefit calculators. Order was necessary to produce certainty. Conformity, normalization and something called the long view were necessary for order.


As I said, I was a believer in those heady days at the end of the millennium. Not only did it seem like the logic of business was inevitable, it also seemed that it was for the good—more money, more things, more security, etc. In addition, in this world where God had disappeared, we had found a new one. Now, more than ever, one could feel proud and respected for believing and promoting something as big as God. And so, the logic of business seemed unassailable—it satisfied both material and spiritual needs.


My first assignment was also my last. I thought as a consultant that I could bring the logic of business to primitive work environments. I was not prepared to accept defeat even though I encountered one red flag after another. For two years I believed that the logic of business could overcome even the most obstinate culture. Now, having failed miserably, lost my career as a consultant and ended up as an industrial migrant in Canada's rusting auto corridor, I can


look back and spot some of the signs that I missed, while nevertheless catching a glimpse of the action on the larger stage.


Below is a sample of indicators, which point to a work culture that is openly hostile to business logic and capable of holding out—at least for a generation or two—against even the mighty *Zeitgeist*. Project people call them red flags, because they signal disaster.


 Everyone on the seven-member interview panel looks ready for a nap—in fact there are traces of dust on their eyelids.

 When they say that they are family-oriented, they mean that everybody is related to everybody else.

 The guy you will report to is a master illusionist and a dead ringer for Groucho Marx.

 The employee turnover is remarkably low, but when it does occur there is usually a memorial service.

 You feel like you're walking through one of those grainy '70s-style movies of the week.

 The building has no windows and no mirrors.

That's the level of detail where individuals matter. It is far removed from the great stage where the action shows the irresistible force meeting the immovable object and pulverizing everything in between. But at the proper distance, one can miniaturize a particular project in its environment at a specific point in time and still see the larger backdrop of the *Zeitgeist* and its irresistible force imposing its form as the sea shapes the coastline. By now, the reader may wonder where we get the idea that the *Zeitgeist* brings progress and not just change.

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Thirty years after the genocide began, Cambodians have a chance to bring to justice the surviving leadership of the Khmer Rouge regime. Pol Pot, whose name is synonymous with the Cambodian genocide from 1975-1979, died in 1998, but others are alive and can be held accountable for the horrific period in Cambodian history, which remains open for so many. On November 19th Khieu Samphan became the fifth Khmer Rouge leader to be arrested to face charges before the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, a special war crimes tribunal convened to try Cambodian genocide cases.

Forty-six years ago a similar trial was held in Jerusalem. Kidnapped by Israeli agents in Argentina, Adolph Eichmann was tried for war crimes and crimes against the Jewish nation for his role in the World War II holocaust in Europe. Hannah Arendt, who covered Eichmann's trial for *The New Yorker*, coined the phrase 'banality of evil' to capture a different kind of evil and a different kind of criminal. Such a man was Eichmann—perfectly ordinary and not sadistic and murderous. But self-exiled from reality, he became one of the world's most evil men. Driven by self-promotion to blind obedience and tunnel vision efficiency, Eichmann actively facilitated unspeakable atrocities.

Now, enter Khieu Samphan, the Paris-educated Communist intellectual and Cambodian head of state during most of the Khmer Rouge's management of the killing fields, on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Khieu Samphan denies knowledge of and responsibility for the killings. As he wrote in an open letter to all Cambodian newspapers in August 2001, "I was only a scholar." Unlike Eichmann who, as an SS lieutenant colonel, was only a mid-level functionary in the Nazi regime, Khieu Samphan was a member of Pol Pot's inner circle. Yet Khieu Samphan maintains that he

did not have the authority to commit murder, let alone mass murder, and did not even know about the government's program of mass murder until years later.

In the case of Khieu Samphan, it is the intellectual, not the bureaucrat, who is so far removed from reality. As a Communist intellectual in postcolonial Indochina, Khieu Samphan's remoteness undoubtedly has something to do with what Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács described as class consciousness. Class consciousness is the recognition of the historical role of the proletariat in Marx's dialectical materialism, and it is not to be confused with consciousness of class, which is the trivial and the mundane consciousness of the workers who must be made to see the future. For Khieu Samphan, dwelling in the abstract concept of class consciousness would understandably have removed him from the reality of the killing fields. The killing could be attributed to the necessity of the dictatorship over the proletariat and of the inevitable march of history.

However, a claim of 'not guilty' on Khieu Samphan's part by reason of ignorance or impotence or intellectual otherworldliness suggests what Arendt might have called remoteness from reality. And the lesson from Jerusalem was that this remoteness from reality "can wreak more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together."

Like the Eichmann trial, Khieu Samphan's trial will be held in the country called home by victims of the genocide. The Phnom Penh court, like the Jerusalem court, is basically a national court, albeit with UN underwriting, that reserves the sovereign right to deliver justice to the nation of Cambodia for the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge during the late 1970s.

If Khieu Samphan is found guilty, he may go down in history as Cambodia's Eichmann—a facilitator of mass murder in a regime

where the ends justified the means and the long run was all that mattered.

The War Flower (November 2007)

Every year in the week leading up to November 11th, the red poppy blooms across Canada. It's part of the ritual remembrance of Canadian wars and casualties, the price of freedom and the victory of good over evil.

Among Canadians, the war poppy is about all of these things, but it's about something else as well. It's about the rightness of conformity and assimilation through received truths.

Jostled and tossed about in the bustling crowds in train stations, airports, shopping centres and sporting events in the days leading up to Remembrance Day, you cannot help but be struck by the sea of red poppies, rising and falling and sweeping up everything in its way. You'd be hard-pressed to find anyone without a red poppy pinned to a coat, jacket, sweater, blouse, shirt, hat, scarf, necktie or backpack.

These red poppies, memorialized in the solemn war poem 'In Flanders Field,' mark the dead from bloody World War I battles in northern France and Belgium. Here in Canada, today in the 21st century, this war poem is the liturgy and the red poppy the icon for the annual observance of remembrance and sacrifice.

There is, however, a casualty that often goes unnoticed. There's little remembering just why Canada went to war in 1914, whether the guys on the other side really were evil monsters, how exuberant patriotism and thin-skinned nationalism can distort reality, or whether war can ever be thoroughly revolting one or more generations removed. And there's little distinction between the due respect and pity for those consumed by the war and the dubious notion that fighting and dying can always be given meaning by the just cause.

Worst is the poem's eternally recurring and disturbing call to arms for all who remain ... undead.

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While some in the UK, Canada and Australia question the relevance of the monarchy in 21st century democratic society, I think the U.S. should consider adopting the Queen.

It's not without some hesitation that I recommend this. After all, I'm an American living in Canada, and there are a lot of people up here who still think the American Revolutionary War went the wrong way. For both sides, the myths and passions from our distant past are still very strong and difficult to escape. But now, the British Empire is only a scholar's memory, and American sovereignty and constitutionalism are well-established. So, it seems that an American constitutional monarchy might be compatible with American independence history.

Having sworn an oath of allegiance to the Queen for a provincial government job, I have had to argue the pros and cons of monarchy for many years. For the sake of a clear conscience, I interpreted my oath to be my consent to respect the laws of Canada, a sovereign nation, where the Queen is just a symbol for the supremacy and continuity of the rule of law, yada yada yada.

So, why suggest that the U.S. adopt the Queen? First, so many Americans are fascinated with larger than life figures, including British royalty. The Queen, properly controlled, can be an important social safety valve for leader worship. As a figurehead, her political power would be limited, but she would still command respect and admiration. Second, as reigning monarch, she could resist ambitious presidents who would step on the ballot box to reach the throne.

Monarchists argue that since governments come and go, there must be something that persists through changes in government.

There must be something, they add, that withstands the violence of coups and the reign of dictators. That something, they say, is the monarchy.

That leads to the third point. With the most powerful standing army in the history of the world, what if a U.S. president one day announced an end to U.S. military engagements and deployments overseas? Would there be a coup, and would it have the support of a redundant military? Who would represent the government in exile?

That role could fall to the Queen, who is already the head of state for Canada and a few island countries. As the head of the constitutional democratic state of the U.S.A., the Queen would command loyalty to the Constitution and to the principle of limited and non-arbitrary government. She would be the symbol of the resistance.

But what if the Queen expanded the scope of the royal prerogative or collaborated with a megalomaniacal president? Well, the British haven't always played the supine servant to their monarchs. Having a monarchy doesn't mean you can't knock their blocks off or swap Houses when they get out of hand. This is the ultimate safeguard. It even comes with its own 17th century political treatise. The Queen is the penultimate check.

We think through language, but we also think prior to language. These two statements are at the centre of a longstanding debate about the priority and primacy of language versus thought. In this summary paper, only one view will be featured, although it will be described with reference to its competition. The view in this paper is that thought creates the initial conditions for the emergence of language and that generally, the world of language is a subset of the world of thought. Bloom and Keil refer to the priority of a ‘language of thought.’

Before being exposed to words in a language such as English, all humans possess the concepts that these words correspond to, as part of what Jerry Fodor (1975) calls ‘mentalese’ or a ‘a language of thought.’ Under this view, as Fodor puts it, all language learning is actually second language learning – when a child learns the vocabulary of English all that happens is that the child learns the mappings from the English words onto the symbols of this prior language of thought. (351)

Pinker, one of the leading proponents of the view that thinking is prior to using language, continues with Fodor’s metaphor of ‘mentalese:’

Knowing a language, then, is knowing how to translate mentalese into strings of words and vice versa. People without a language would still have mentalese, and babies and many nonhuman animals presumably have simpler dialects. Indeed, if babies did not have a mentalese to translate to and from English, it is not clear how learning English could take place. (1994, 82)

For these authors, ‘mentalese’ or non-linguistic cognitive representations convincingly demonstrated that thought is prior to and

always behind language. That is not, however, to deny that thought and language interact causally, but it is different from the opposite view, stated by Boroditsky:

It appears that acquiring abstract concepts requires experience with language and that the eventual form of these concepts is largely shaped by the language experience....

Language can be a powerful tool for shaping abstract thought. When sensory information is scarce or inconclusive (as with the direction of motion of time), languages may play the most important role in shaping how their speakers think. (20)

Boroditsky is careful to avoid defending a straw man argument, declaring that “the strong Whorfian view—that thought and action are entirely determined by language—has long been abandoned in the field” (2). Even so, language is assigned the primary role for abstract conceptualizing. Slobin agrees that the strong form of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is unsupportable:

For one, language is only one factor that influences cognition and behavior. For another, if the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis were really true, second language learning and translation would be far harder than they are. (Slobin)

It is undisputed that language facilitates the internal and external expression of thoughts, but from the perspective that language is always catching up with thought, we are able to think thoughts before we have words to linguistically communicate these thoughts. As human communities, we continuously add words to fill the lexical gaps—gaps which are always emerging due to the dynamic nature of social conditions and needs. Borges reminds us that even in the imaginary Tlönian languages in which there are no nouns, the moon rose over the sea can be translated into the verb-based ut-

terance upward beyond the constant flow there was moonling or the adjectival cluster airy-clear over dark-round or orange-faint-of-sky. But either way, the linguistic formulation is a reflection of the Berkeleyian idealism of the planet Tlön (Borges 10-11). Pinker makes a more general argument about the motive force behind linguistic change:

Another reason we know that language could not determine thought is that when a language isn't up to the conceptual demands of its speakers ... they simply change the language. They stretch it with metaphors and metonyms, borrow words and phrases from other languages, or coin new slang or jargon.... Unstoppable change is the great given in linguistics, which is not what you would expect from [Nietzsche's] "prisonhouse of thought." (2007, 149)

And so language is always changing to meet the demands placed on it by thought and experience, including linguistic experience. Pinker adds that even in the face of Orwellian totalitarianism—referring to the 1984 prediction that Newspeak would eliminate all nonconformist thought by 2050—maintains that the “concepts of freedom and equality will be thinkable even if they are nameless” and that since concepts will greatly outnumber words, “existing words will quickly gain new senses, perhaps even regain their original senses (1994, 82).

While we may always experience language change and perhaps even linguistic progress, as long as the horizon recedes to infinity there will be an ineffable. The ineffable may be inexpressible, because it is only indirectly accessible (e.g., the Kantian *Ding an sich*) or it may just be a lexical gap, which may be closed eventually. The world of science may be considered an example of ineffable or mythologized experience that is now more formally thinkable and linguistically expressible. However, domains like religion and meta-

physics remain as elusive as ever. As Chien-hsing Ho puts it, linguistic access to the external world must be balanced by the use of language that does not overreach:

[L]anguage continues to be our very important access to reality.... Abandoning language would unwisely sever our relationships with others and with the world around us.... Whenever we can we should do our best, adopting the fittest way of expression, to express what seems ineffable.... But, with due respect to language, we must not think language knows no limits. (422)

This expression of the effable and the ineffable is reminiscent of the Kantian worlds of phenomena and noumena—the former a world that we think and talk about and the latter one about which we can at best speculate. The noumenal world and the ineffable world are, however, distinguished by the fact that the latter is even more inaccessible. As the Chan poet Hanshan writes:

My heart-and-mind is like the autumn moon,
Brightly reflected in a crystal-clear lake;
Nothing can make a good comparison,
How then shall I put it into words? (Chien-hsing Ho 422)

In summary, the examples of language catching up with thought—childhood L1 language acquisition, language change in linguistic communities, and L2 language acquisition—combined with other evidence of thought preceding language—animal communication and the transcendently ineffable—support a strong case for Pinker and his colleagues who reject the linguistic determinism of Sapir and Whorf. The implications of successfully countering linguistic determinism are several. It does not lead to the conclusion that there are innate ideas. But it does suggest the idea of Kantian-like faculties that make experience possible and are therefore innate and *a priori*. But unlike Whorf's linguistic dissection of nature,

this one is conceptual and pre-linguistic. Furthermore, Bloom argues that the line of causality in Whorf's linguistic determinism is flawed:

[C]orrelation is not causation; the fact that people who speak different languages tend to belong to different cultures does not entail that language has a profound influence on thought. So although there is a strong impression that the language one speaks must influence how one thinks, we think that this impression is more seductive than it is instructive. (365)

In conclusion, if a person's language limits do not reflect the limits of his/her thought, then for ESL teachers the corollary is that an L2 English language learner's thoughts will likely exceed his/her English linguistic performance. The L2 ESL student will be doubly burdened by the frustration of thinking thoughts that he/she can express adequately in his/her L1 language but cannot yet express in English and by the prejudice that he/she will experience when others correlate linguistic performance with intelligence and knowledge.

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Supplementary Notes

Bloom (364) – “Language may be useful in the same sense that vision is useful. It is a tool for the expression and storage of ideas. It is not a mechanism that gives rise to the capacity to generate and appreciate these ideas in the first place.”

Chien-hsing Ho (421) – “The ineffable can never be touched, in part or in full, by human concepts and words. The ineffable can only be indirectly and rather vaguely expressed and conveyed.”

Pinker (1994, 59-60) – quoting Benjamin Lee Whorf, “We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscope flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds—and this means largely by the linguistic systems of our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way—an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language.”

Borges (10-11) – in 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,' Borges describes the imaginary world of Tlön in which there are no nouns. In one of the languages, the verb is the basic unit of language. In this language, "The moon rose over the sea" would be translated as "upward beyond the constant flow there was moonling" or alternatively "upward, behind the outstreaming it mooned." In another Tlön language where the monosyllabic adjective is the basic unit of language, our noun moon would be replaced by an accumulation of adjectives such as airy-clear over dark-round or orange-faint-of-sky. The point is that the languages of Tlön presuppose thought—in

this case the idealism of the 18th century Irish philosopher, Bishop Berkeley.