From the Renaissance to the Modern World
A Tribute to John M. Headley

Edited by

Peter Iver Kaufman

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Guest Editor
Peter Iver Kaufman
Jepson School, University of Richmond
Richmond, VA, USA

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John M. Headley

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List of Contributors

Jerry H. Bentley was Professor of World History at the University of Hawaii, USA, and founding editor of the *Journal of World History* since 1990. His research interests included the cultural history of early modern Europe and cross-cultural interactions in world history. He is the author of *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (Oxford University Press, 1993) and the editor of *The Oxford Handbook of World History* (Oxford University Press, 2011). He passed away in 2012.

Constantin Fasolt is Karl J. Weintraub Professor at the Department of History and the College of the University of Chicago, USA. His research is aimed at developing a new perspective on European history by focusing on peoples relationship to their language. He has published *The Limits of History* (University of Chicago Press, 2004) and *Past Sense: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern European History* (Brill, forthcoming 2014).

David Gilmartin is Professor of History at North Carolina State University. He is the author of *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (University of California Press, 1988) and co-editor with Bruce Lawrence of *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia* (University Press of Florida, 2000). He is currently finishing a book on the politics of water and irrigation in colonial India and researching the history of the law of elections in 20th century India.

Peter Iver Kaufman is George Mathews and Virginia Brinkley Modlin Professor at the University of Richmond and Professor Emeritus at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In 2013, his latest book, *Religion around Shakespeare* was published by the Pennsylvania State University Press, and Palgrave Macmillan published *Leadership and Elizabethan Culture*, which he edited for the Jepson series. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the open access journal *Religions*.

Kate Lowe (Ph.D. The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1985) is Professor of Renaissance History and Culture at Queen Mary, University of London. She has written monographs on *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini* (Cambridge University Press, 2002) and *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge University Press 2004). She was involved with the exhibition *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe* at the Walters Art Museum in 2012-13, and is co-curating an exhibition on Renaissance Lisbon at the Wallace Collection in London in 2014. Her current project is entitled *Africa in Europe, c. 1440- c. 1650: Renaissance Encounters*.

John M. McManamon, S.J., is a professor of Italian Renaissance history and medieval nautical archaeology in the History Department of Loyola University Chicago. His latest book, *The Text*

and Contexts of Ignatius Loyola's "Autobiography", was published by Fordham University Press in 2013. At present he is working on a monograph dealing with Renaissance efforts to recover Roman shipwrecks from lago di Nemi near Rome. He earned his Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina under the direction of Professor John M. Headley.

John Jeffries Martin, professor and chair of History at Duke University, studies Renaissance and early modern Europe, with a particular interest in religion, identity, and law. Martin is the author of *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (University of California Press, 1993) and *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Palgrave, 2006). In addition, Martin has edited or co-edited four volumes, among them *Venice Reconsidered* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and he is co-editor with Richard Newhauser of *Virtues & Vices*, a series for Yale University Press. Before joining the Duke faculty in 2007, Martin was chair of the department of history at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Martin received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Harvard.

James M. Weiss is a scholar of early modern humanism, especially of the emergence of humanist biography. His *Humanist Biography in Renaissance Italy and Reformation Germany* (Ashgate) appeared in 2010. He is also an expert on the history of papal elections and the college of cardinals. His more recent research examines techniques of vocational discernment. He holds his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, and has taught at Harvard, Notre Dame, and Boston College, where he directs the Capstone Senior Seminar Program and is Associate Professor of Church History in the Department of Theology.

Ronald G. Witt is William B. Hamilton Professor at Duke University, emeritus. He specializes in medieval and early renaissance Italy. His most recent books are *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Brill, 2000); and *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of the Renaissance in Medieval Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Editorial

From the Renaissance to the Modern World—Introduction

Peter Iver Kaufman

Jepson School, University of Richmond, Room 245, Jepson Hall, 28 Westhampton Way, Richmond, VA 23173, USA; E-Mail: pkaufman@richmond.edu

On November 11 and 12, 2011, a symposium held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill honored John M. Headley, Emeritus Professor of History. The organizers, Professor Melissa Bullard—Headley's colleague in the department of history at that university—along with Professors Paul Grendler (University of Toronto) and James Weiss (Boston College), as well as Nancy Gray Schoonmaker, coordinator of the Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies—assembled presenters, respondents, and dozens of other participants from Western Europe and North America to celebrate the career of their prolific, versatile, and influential colleague whose publications challenged and often changed the ways scholars think about Martin Luther, Thomas More, the Habsburg empire, early modern Catholicism, globalization, and multiculturalism.

This special issue contains the major papers delivered at the symposium, revised to take account of colleagues' suggestions at the conference and thereafter. John O'Malley studies the censorship of sacred art with special reference to Michelangelo's famed "Last Judgment" and the Council of Trent. John Martin sifts Montaigne's skepticism about contemporaneous strategies for self-disclosure and self-discipline. Stressing the significance of grammar, Constantin Fasolt helps us recapture the Renaissance's and the early modern religious reformations' disagreements with antiquity. Ronald Witt's reappraisal of humanist historiography probes Petrarch's perspectives on ancient Rome. John McManamon includes tales of theft and market manipulation in his study of the early modern collection and circulation of books and manuscripts, the commodification of study. To "nuance" John Headley's conclusions about "the Europeanization of the world," Jerry Bentley repossesses the influence of other than European societies on several European theorists of human rights. Kate Lowe's remarks on the reconstruction of race in the Renaissance explores the effects of a critical mistranslation on what being black was taken to mean by Europeans. David Gilmartin introduces readers to the shape of democracy in nineteenth- and twentieth-century India, as well as to the understandings of popular sovereignty that affected elections, suggesting strides that scholars might take "toward a worldwide history of voting".

The remarkable range of these contributions comes close to reflecting the range of Professor Headley's interests and achievements, which James M. Weiss maps in his tribute, identifying "unifying themes" in Headley's work.

Article

Unifying Themes in the *Oeuvre* of John M. Headley

James M. Weiss

Capstone Program and Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, USA;
E-Mail: james.weiss@bc.edu; Tel.: +1-617-552-3897

Abstract: The great variety of historical figures and themes found in the published works of John Headley since 1963 reveal a unity of themes and values. The numerous persons whom Headley studied all envisioned a humane universal order even as they moved from theoretical reflection to actual political implementation. His more recent work holds up the European legacy of human rights, democracy, and freedom that have become a Western gift and challenge to non-Western cultures.

Keywords: Headley; Europeanization; empire; Renaissance humanism; cartography; Spanish Empire; globalization

Voltaire famously pronounced that history is nothing but a pack of tricks that we play upon the dead. In this essay, I propose an historical interpretation of the work of John Headley, so you might say I am playing a pack of tricks on the living—but lest you misunderstand my intent, John, I wish you a hearty "*Vivas, floreas, crescas.*" So let us begin with a little riddle: what do an English Chancellor and an Imperial Chancellor have in common? Or, what do the reformer Luther and the counter-reformer archbishop of Milan have in common? The answer, of course, is that John Headley published books on all of them . . . and more.

Yet John once fretted to me that he feared his work showed a dilettante's restlessness: he worried that he had moved from one subject to another without consistent focus. His comment marked a rare lapse in an otherwise judicious mind, for John's work shows a deep unity of theme and of moral values. I'll grant him the wide focus of a life spent in archives in Barcelona, Besançon, Brussels, Madrid, Naples, Rome, Seville, Turin, Vienna, and more, not to mention in this country the Houghton, Beinecke, John Carter Brown, Folger, Newberry, Huntington and other libraries. I'll also grant that stunning array of figures cross the title pages of his works: Martin Luther, Thomas More, Mercurino Gattinara, Carlo Borromeo, Tommaso Campanella, as well as the great, often anonymous cartographers of the early modern age. Yet despite all their ostensible diversity, they point in unison

to themes and values which not only sustained John's scholarly energy for over half a century but which, as he has argued over this last decade, sustained the best of our civilization for over half a millennium.

For these individuals all shared a commitment to the aspirations to a universal order which they envisioned as humane and universal, whether under the aegis of church or of empire. Whether John studied transgressors against established power like Luther and Campanella, or conservators of an emerging new order like Gattinara and Borromeo, or someone in between the two like More, they all embodied that struggle at the core of European civilization for (as John phrased it) "a symbiosis between the particular and the general, the local and the universal" ([1], p. 12).

In each of their lives, John held up for us the bedeviling dialectical relationship between Utopian visions and political realities—between, if you will, eloquence and efficacy. For as eloquent as all of them were in articulating a theoretical vision of universal order, each of them (except Campanella) crossed the threshold out from the study and into the council chamber to carry his vision into the rough and tumble of swiftly changing political realities. In that dialectic between thought and action, these individuals still command our admiration, as John wrote, for "their prodigious work habits and their sensitive humanist minds" ([1], p. 142). They all shared a common inheritance of medieval legal or theological training that was undergoing a fresh invigoration by the Renaissance humanist re-thinking of spiritual, ecclesiastical, and political realities.

As these men of ideas became men of power, they carried with them what John calls "the continuing human urge to transcend the local [community] for a more inclusive [*i.e.*, universalizing] order" ([2], p. vii) into a world that was collapsing into religious fragments while at the same time expanding into global empires. Again and again, John's work chronicled how the intractable realities of the English court, the Imperial chancery, the archdiocese of Milan, the Lutheran princes, or the Spanish empire would force these learned statesmen to settle for modified success. In addition, each of them was constrained to come to terms with the perennial struggle between church and state. Indeed, as John once declared, "The continuing effort to distinguish the two jurisdictions [church and state] without their actual separation, to renegotiate this distinction between the sacred and the secular, becomes perhaps the most decisive feature of Western civilization" ([2], p. viii). Indeed, John epitomized European civilization when he wrote that, "The interlocking universalisms advanced first by the Stoic notion of cosmopolis on the one hand, [then later] reinforced by the re-presentation of Christ's Body on the other, serve to inform the universalizing claims of each type of polity [*i.e.*, church and state] in their … permutations throughout the classical/Christian development" ([2], p. vii) of European history. Thus it is no wonder that John revitalized our appreciation also of Campanella, who "reverted to an extreme statement of universal papal theocracy" ([2], p. vi). For, as John has frequently explained, that effort to distinguish church and state would become in later centuries the all-out struggle between a sacral world view and secularization ([2], p. vii). As he would come to insist in his later work, that universalism laid the groundwork for Europe's highest contribution to world civilization.

In the midst of these themes, from the mid-1980s on, John's work turned again and again to Spain and the theme of global Empire. Some of his most incisive review essays are about books on empire and imperialism that appeared in these decades [3–7]. Spain's rapid acquisition of a truly worldwide dominion and its dynastic link to the Holy Roman Empire made its pursuit of universal order not

simply a Utopian dream but a concrete bureaucratic priority. Then, as the years unfolded, John began unfolding maps, real ones conserved at the Folger, the Newberry, the John Carter Brown, and elsewhere. For, as he would emphasize, maps enshrine both practically and symbolically a vision of world order. Indeed, those early modern maps dramatize the dialectic between world order and practical political realities.

Headley's interest in cartography took wings as it carried him to his recent book of 2008 [8]. The title of that book—*The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy*—took me and others aback: the habitually reserved, buttoned-down John Headley imbued his latest work with an outspokenly political edge and message. John Headley, of all people, became *engagé*. His object in that book was to reaffirm "the uniqueness of the Western tradition in the creation of a common humanity" ([8], p. 217) beginning with "the Renaissance [which] decisively … prepared the global context for the European engagement of the world's peoples" ([8], p. 1). For "deep within the recesses of the Western tradition," he descried "a universalizing impulse … that surpasses its chief rivals, Islam and China. The West demolished barriers to define geography and peoples as well as [to create] intercontinental traffic, [and the] commerce to make a global community a necessity ([2], p. x). In this amazing book, John identified two European developments as Europe's definitive gifts to the age of globalization, namely, first, "the idea of a common humanity as a single moral, biological totality…. with its program of natural, human rights" ([8], p. 2, phrase in re-arranged sequence) and second "the capacity for self-criticism and dissent [with its inherent idea of freedom]… which through a long historical process ultimately culminated in constitutional democracy … including … a free press, independent judicial review, and respect for the rule of law and the rights of minorities" ([8], pp. 2–3, phrase in re-arranged sequence).

John is aware of the deeper, somewhat darker dialectic of that European legacy, or as he calls it, the paradox. He wrote, "Admittedly, much in that [European] tradition did need criticism and reformulation" ([8], p. 5). He cited Diderot's observation of Europe, "the paradox [whereby] the most arrogant of civilizations is at the same time the most radically given to criticism of itself" ([8], p. 4). Amplifying on Diderot, John wrote that "this paradox is trumped by another, even more astonishing—that the civilization that in its colonialism and imperialism gave us the most savage, inhuman treatments of indigenous populations, not to mention the ultimate inhumanity of Auschwitz, was the same that promoted the idea of a common humanity and programs of human rights accompanied subsequently by a myriad of private organizations that continue to address poverty, hunger, disease, and multifarious needs throughout the globe" ([8], p. 4). To the extent that that these latter benefits are true, the "principle for the universal integration of all human populations is the true European legacy" ([5], p. 887; [6], p. 887).

And yet, how close has the world come to that universal integration? Even as John praised the European, or Western,[1] legacy of human rights, democracy, and freedom to dissent, he sounds the *qui vive*,[2] the alarm at the threats to their viability, not least in the United States in the first decade of this century. In the 1990s he sounded notes of hopefulness, such as when he wrote "A more

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[1]   On the distinct usages of European or Western, see [5], ch. 2, esp. pp. 63–102, and fn. 1, p. 227.

[2]   This is but one of the memorable and beloved phrases wherewith the learned Professor Headley sprinkles his conversations.

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truly universal inclusive secular reading of earth's peoples in some viable political community still awaits [us]" ([2], p. x). The hopefulness then turned, however, to a pervasive anxiety in the decade just ended, as seen especially in his frankly gloomy essay in *Hedgehog Review* that followed the book on Europeanization [9].

With the 2008 book on Europeanization, we might say that, at the pinnacle of his years John Headley himself has entered the company of the Utopian thinkers like More, Luther, and Campanella whom he so ably chronicled. He strains, he hopes, he exhorts, he coaxes his readers, as did they theirs, to hasten forward toward that brighter horizon of universal human rights within our grasp. Thus, the legacy of Utopian humanism revives itself in a moving, transmuted form in John Headley's latest works. So I would close by adapting for John Headley words taken from W. H. Auden's poem on William Butler Yeats:

> In the nightmare of the dark
> All the dogs of [warfare] bark
> And the living nations wait
> Each sequestered in its hate.
>
> Follow, [scholar], follow right
> To the bottom of the night
> With your unconstraining voice
> Still persuade us to rejoice . . .
>
> In the deserts of the heart,
> Let the healing fountain start,
> In the prison of his days
> Teach the free man how to praise ([10], p. 249).[3]

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[3] Paraphrased for this celebration and addressed to Prof. Headley; paraphrased words are indicated by brackets. The original words were, in order, "Europe" and "poet".

c. 1500-1800. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995. *The International History Review* 18 (1996): 873–87.

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10. Auden, W. H. "In Memory of W. B. Yeats." In *Collected Poems*, edited by Edward Mendelson. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1991, 248–49.

Select Bibliography of Works by John M. Headley

All books authored or edited by John M. Headley are found here. The articles are those supplied to the present author by Prof. Headley; others may exist. Only major book reviews relating to the subject of this essay are included. Since Headley is the author of all these works, the use of his name below is superfluous. For clarity, works are separated by category. An asterisk marks works mentioned in this essay.

Books

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2. Responsio ad Lutherum, in The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More, vol. 5. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969.

*3. *The Emperor and His Chancellor: A Study of the Imperial Chancellery under Gattinara*. Cambridge, 1983.

4. *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997. This book received the Marraro Prize of the American Catholic Historical Association and the Phyllis Gordan Prize of the Renaissance Society of America.

*5. *The Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

6. *The Problem with Multiculturalism: The Uniqueness and Universality of Western Civilization*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012.

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7. Medieval and Renaissance Studies: Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Summer 1967. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1968.

8. Edited with John B. Tomaro, *San Carlo Borromeo: Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century.* Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, and London, UK: Associated University Presses, 1988 (See also #'s 19 and 20 below).

9. Associate Editor. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996. 4 vols.

*10. *Empire, Church, and World: The Quest for Universal Order, 1520-1640.* Aldershot UK: Variorum/Ashgate, 1997.

11. *Confessionalization in Europe, 1550-1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan.* Aldershot UK and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004.

Articles Included in #10 above

This Variorum edition contained Headley's selection of what he considered his principal essays up to 1997. Given their importance in the author's own judgment, they are listed separately here as well as sequentially in the following lists of his essays. Here I give the Roman numeral used for their order in the volume, the title, and the year of their original publication, and their subsequent number in the list of his essays that follows this. The Variorum edition preserves the original pagination of all articles.

12. I. "Thomas More and Luther's Revolt." 1969 (#28 below).

13. II. "Luther and the Problem of Secularization." 1987 (#39 below).

14. III. "The Reformation as Crisis in the Understanding of Tradition." 1987 (#37 below).

15. IV. "'Ehe Türckisch als Bäpstisch': Lutheran Reflections on the Problem of Empire 1623-1638." 1987 (#38 below).

16. V. "The Habsburg World Empire and the Revival of Ghibellinism." 1975 (#58 below).

17. VI. "Germany, the Empire and *Monarchia* in the Thought & Policy of Gattinara." 1982/3 (#59 below).

18. VII. "Gattinara, Erasmus, and the Imperial Configurations of Humanism." 1980 (#34 below).

19. VIII. "The Catholic/Counter Reformation Reconsidered."1988 (Introduction from #8 above).

20. IX. "Borromean Reform in the Empire? *La Strada Rigorosa* of Giovanni Francesco Bonomi." 1988 (See #8 above, pp. 15–33).

21. X. "On Reconstructing the Citizenry: Campanella's Criticism of Aristotle's *Politics.*" 1991 (#43 below).

22. XI. "Campanella, America, and World Evangelization." 1995 (#61 below).

23. XII. "Spain's Asian Presence, 1565-1590: Structures and Aspirations." 1995 (#46 below).

24. XIII. "The Sixteenth-Century Venetian Celebration of the Earth's Total Habitability: The Issue of the Fully Habitable World for Renaissance Europe." 1997 (#49 below).

*25. XIV. "The Burden of European Imperialisms, 1500-1800." 1996 (#68 below).

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Selected Book Reviews Related to Themes of This Essay

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Article

Francesco Petrarca and the Parameters of Historical Research

Ronald Witt

William B. Hamilton Professor of History (emeritus), Duke University, 129 Carr Building, Campus Box 90719, Durham, NC 27708-0719, USA; E-Mail: rwitt@duke.edu

Abstract: Although scholars in the first two generations of humanism wrote the histories drawing heavily on ancient Roman sources, Petrarca was the first humanist historian to focuses on the history of ancient Roma. Because he was also the earliest to approach ancient Romans as historically conditioned human beings, he was able to see the achievements of the Romans in historical perspective. At the same time he was unable to separate mythology from history and acknowledged the effect of divine and diabolical forces on the course of human events.

Keywords: humanist historiography; historical perspective; Dark Ages; secularization

Scholars of Italian humanism have long recognized that the conception of their movement as constituting the rebirth of ancient culture had a religious origin ultimately traceable to the Christian belief in the rebirth of the sinner in Christ, that is, the recovery of divine acceptance lost for the human race by the fall [1,2]. The rebirth that occurred in baptism prefigured the vast majority of medieval reform movements in that in one way or another, the latter aimed at restoring the spiritual purity that had been lost over the centuries. Although Italian humanists of the Renaissance were primarily dedicated to emulating the intellectual, artistic, and moral achievements of the ancient world, both they and medieval reformers used similar terms, renovatio, reformatio, reflorere, to describe their goals, terms that implied in one way or other a certain perspective on history [3,4] The object of all these reform movements was to recover that which over an intervening period of time had been lost.

The humanists, however, differed from medieval reformers in the sharpness with which they saw the past. Medieval reformers looked back for guidance to outstanding exemplars of spirituality like the primitive church, the Apostles, the Egyptian Desert Fathers, or early Benedictine monasticism, but they showed little concern to examine these exemplars as historically conditioned phenomena. The Italian humanists too had their exemplars of conduct, the great writers and heroes

of ancient pagan Greece and Rome, but at the same time they had a scholarly interest in the ancient world apart from its usefulness to the present. In the long run, the clarity with which they came to grasp the nature of ancient society gave them a sense of historical perspective that led them (1) to an understanding of the past as a time-differentiated series of social, political, religious, and intellectual changes; and (2) against that backdrop, to objectify the present with a view to the reform of contemporary society and politics.

The origin of this appreciation of the past can be found in the work of Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), who, appalled by the moral corruption of his own society, looked back to ancient Rome as the exemplar of human achievement. As he famously asked: "What else, then, is all history if not the praise of Rome?" ([5], p. 417: "Quid est enim aliud omnis historia, quam Romana laus"). His question would have been met with incomprehension by the two earlier generations of humanists of whom the most outstanding were Lovato de' Lovati (1240–1309) and Albertino Mussato (1261–1329).[4] While drawing on ancient Roman sources for their own work, Lovato and Mussato showed little interest in investigating the nature of the society that produced them. The poetry of Lovato, the founder of humanism, reveals a confused notion of the ancient past where Greek and Roman history and mythology mingle without distinction as to their basis in reality. Albertino Mussato, Lovato's major disciple, and Mussato's younger Veronese contemporary, Ferreto dei Ferreti (1294–1337), derived their stylistic techniques from ancient Roman historians, primarily from Livy, but the focus of their interest was on contemporary history.[5]

At the same time, the effort of the first two generations of humanists to classicize their Latin through intensive study of ancient vocabulary and phraseology would lead later humanists to an appreciation of the thinking processes of ancient writers and render them approachable as personalities, that is, as historically conditioned human beings.

Besides the historians of modern history at Padua and Verona, a second group of learned historians in the two generations before Petrarca, Riccobaldo of Ferrara (1244/45–ca. 1318), Giovanni Matociis (Mansionarius) (died 1337), Benzo of Alessandria (died. ca. 1330), and two members of the Colonna family, Landolfo (ca. 1250–1331) and Giovanni (ca. 1298–1343/44) were authors of universal narratives of the history of the world. With the exception of Giovanni Matociis' work, these narratives ran from Adam and Eve down to their own day.[6] In Matociis's case, the author planned to narrate European history from Augustus to Henry VII. The presentation of Roman history by these historians manifested a broad acquaintance with Roman historical writing but they had no interest in imitating ancient Latin style. Their treatment of ancient Rome was presented as part of a continuous flow of events and lost its distinctiveness within a more extended narrative.

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[4] In [6], I argue that Lovato and Mussato, who are generally considered "prehumanists," are "humanists," and that "prehumanism," a term that has never been defined clearly, really means "pre-Petrarcaan," pp. 19–21.

[5] Mussato's most important historical writing was entitled <u>De gestis Henrici septimi Cesaris</u> and was initially published in [7]. Ferreto's major historical work, <u>Historia rerum in Italia gestarum</u>, was edited by Carlo Cipolla, [8].

[6] See my discussion of these historians in [6], pp. 112–14, 166–68, and 282–84; on Giovanni Matociis's <u>Historiae imperiales</u>, see [9]. Only the period between Augustus and Charlemagne was completed.

The same is true for the version of universal history that took the form of biographies of great men from all ages. Petrarca must have known Giovanni Colonna's De viris illustribus, a series of lives of pagans and Christians arranged chronologically down to modern times, written in Avignon before Colonna's departure for Rome in 1338 [10]. Another friend of Petrarca, Guglielmo Pastrengo (1290–1352), who visited Avignon the year after Giovanni's departure, may well have seen a copy of Giovanni's work before composing his own De viris illustribus and De originibus [11]. Both of these works, like Giovanni's, contained biographies of famous pagan and Christian heroes and authors.

With the exception of Benzo of Alexander, historians in both universalistic traditions shared a common conception of the ancient texts. The writings of the pagan authors were sacred: contradictions in the texts were only apparent and had to be reconciled. Whereas historians of modern history like Mussato and Ferreto had to determine what the facts were and order them in their account of recent events, these historians accepted the ancient past as given. If direct contact with the ancient past was to be established, the ancient historians had to be confronted, interrogated, and their writings reworked by the historical imagination.

Benzo of Alexandria (d. 1337) made a beginning of this process in his Cronica a mundi principio usque ad tempora Henrici ([12], 2, pp. 134–136). Despite his Cronica's medieval Latin diction and its encyclopedic approach, Benzo developed rigorous techniques in textual criticism. He endeavored to find the most reliable witnesses for his account and when they contradicted one another, he discussed the disagreements and then chose the most likely position. He also entertained the possibility that some of the contradictions were conscious distortions on the part of the writers. He did not hesitate to compare readings from different manuscripts and to admit obscurity in his sources when he found it. Benzo's Cronica, however, blended the history of ancient Rome into a history that ran from Adam down to the fourteenth century.

Nevertheless, Petrarca's focus on ancient Rome was not without precedent. Although he denied any influence of Dante on his work, it is more than likely that Petrarca's historical orientation had been affected by Dante's insistence that ancient Rome had been both the center of a perfect secular society and the site where Peter established Christ's church.[7] Moreover, although Dante's great poem represents a lyricization of universal history, the poet's imaginative recreation of ancient and modern personalities as interlocutors may also have inspired Petrarca. Despite the secular character of Petrarca's approach and his pessimism in later life regarding the possibility of Dante's hoped-for restoration of the empire at Rome, nothing earlier in Western literature comes closer to Petrarca's

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[7]   Referring to the place of the Roman empire in Dante's poem, Peter Armour, ([13], p. 170), writes: "What Dante is seeing is, in the first place, the mystery of the twofold providentiality of Augustus' perfect earthly Monarchy which prepared for Christ and thus of the ideal which, though its paganism was superseded, was thereby transmitted into the history of mankind redeemed by Christ and to the Christian world." Although there is no proof that Petrarca read Dante as a young man, he himself acknowledges in a letter to Boccaccio in 1359 that in his youth Dante's writings were easily available to him in Avignon (sine difficultate parabili). Defending himself to Boccaccio, who had sent him a copy of Dante's writings, he writes that although eager to collect books as a youth, he did not want to be influenced by the poet in his own vernacular work. In this way he sidestepped the question as to whether or not he had read Dante ([14], 4, p. 96).

conversations with his correspondents than Dante's poetic re-creation of men of antiquity in the <u>Commedia</u>.

At the very least Dante's emphasis on Rome would have resonated with the young Petrarca, who from the age of eight grew up in the area of Avignon, the ecclesiastical capital of Europe. Member of a refugee Florentine family, living in a milieu of papal bureaucrats largely Italian, but employed by a clerical hierarchy dominated by Frenchmen, Petrarca likely heard as a boy his father lament the desolation of Rome and the humiliation of Italy. Boasts of French superiority only sharpened his loyalty to his land of origin and to its Roman heritage.

Petrarca had longed for years to see Rome and when he finally did in the spring of 1337, the remains of the great ancient metropolis exceeded his expectations. As he wrote to his patron, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, just after his arrival in the city, seeing Rome in ruins did not diminish his opinion of the city's greatness, but increased it:

> "In truth, Rome was greater, and greater are its ruins than I imagined. I no longer wonder that the whole world was conquered by this city but that it was conquered so late."[8]

Against the background of this experience, Petrarca's belief that the history of ancient Rome was the only history worth knowing makes sense.

Loathing his own time, he tells us in his autobiography written in the last years of his life,

> "I especially dedicated myself to learning about antiquity, inasmuch as I have always disliked my own age, so that, had I not been restrained by the love of dear ones, I would always have wanted to be born in any other age. In order to forget my own time, I have always tried to place myself in spirit in other times. Therefore I took pleasure in history."[9]

His status as exile belonging nowhere in space might have facilitated the liberation of his imagination from his own time that he speaks of here.

Petrarca's sense of the historicity of the ancient Roman past, however, developed largely out of his humanist inheritance. His dedication to close study and imitation of ancient style, especially advanced by his youthful editions of Virgil and Livy, disclosed not only the literary techniques of ancient artistry, but the very processes of thought of the great writers. Such a degree of familiarity with the ancients awakened Petrarca to the fact that these writers were men of extraordinary talent but still men, creatures of history and proper subjects of historical research.

He granted, as he wrote, that although cities and kingdoms fall, kingdoms are transferred, customs vary, and laws are altered,

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[8] "Illa vero, mirum dictu, nichil imminuit, sed auxit omnia. Vere maior fuit Roma, maioresque sunt reliquie quam rebar. Iam non orbem ab hac urbe domitum, sed tam sero domitum miror" ([14], 1, p. 81). Unless specified all English translations are mine.

[9] "Incubi unice, inter multa, ad notitiam vetustatis, quoniam michi semper etas ista displicuit; ut, nisi me amor carorum in diversum traheret, qualibet etate natus esse semper optaverim, et hanc oblivisci, nisus animo me aliis semper inserere. Historicis itaque delectatus sum… ([15], p. 6).

"those things which are truly innate by nature do not change, and the minds of men and the diseases of minds are really the same as they were when Plautus imagined them."[10]

The result was a desacralization of ancient time and grasp of the great men of antiquity as human beings. Because of the basic constancy of human nature, not only are the moral teaching of ancient writers still valid, but the great men of antiquity can also serve as models of moral conduct and achievement for those of Petrarca's age.

The consequences of this desacralization were twofold. First of all, in contrast with the Christian apologetic tradition represented by Dante and earlier humanists like Mussato who maintained that pagan poets such as Virgil and Ovid wrote at points under divine influence, Petrarca steadfastly affirmed that what was taken as prophesy in their work was the product of their natural genius and that the truths they revealed were reached by natural reason ([18], pp. 540–44).

Second, his view of the great ancient writers as historically determined beings also affected his attitude toward the authority of their work. Ancient history was not frozen in the texts. Petrarca recognized that ancient historians like modern ones were liable to error and prejudice. Because of the contingent character of the texts, therefore, they were accessible to the critical judgment of the modern historian intent on constructing his own version of the past. Benzo of Alexandria, whom Petrarca had perhaps read, may have played the pioneering role in the development of textual criticism, but little in his works suggests that he viewed the ancients as personalities.

The intimacy which Petrarca felt for the great men of antiquity is perhaps best illustrated in his <u>Letters to Famous Men</u> in which he often pronounces judgments on the lives and works of his long-dead correspondents. In a number of cases he makes a point of demonstrating the temporal distance between himself and them. As he concludes his letter to Cicero:

"From the land of the living, on the right bank of the Adige, in the city of Verona, in transpadane Italy, on 16 June in the year 1345 from the birth of that God whom you did not know."[11]

In these letters to the ancients Petrarca uses his scholarship to construct imaginatively their historical epoch, and by implication articulate the temporal and cultural gap that separates them from his own time. Indeed, it is this sense of historical distance that constitutes the basis of our modern sense of anachronism, the sense of the historically inappropriate that seems to us in the contemporary world as simply part of our mental equipment, but that in fact was one of the great contributions of the humanists to modern thought.

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[10] "Que vero naturaliter insunt, non mutari, et animos hominum et animorum morbos prope omnes eosdem esse, qui fuerint, dum Plautus ista fingebat" ([14], 2, pp. 27–28). Petrarca had just cited several moralisms of Plautus. Also note: "Mundus idem est qui fuit; item sol, eadem elementa; virtus sola decrevit; civitatum nempe manuque congestarum molium alie creverunt, decrevere alie, quedam funditus corruerunt, nostris quedam surrexere temporibus: vetus est vicissitudo rerum humanarum" ([14], 3, p. 267). The later passage is cited from [16], pp. 404–05. In his important article summarizing Petrarca's political attitudes, Michele Feo, without citing these quotations, illustrates Petrarca's idea of the unchanging nature of human beings over time through examples from the humanist's actions ([17], pp. 116–18).

[11] "Apud superos, ad dextram Athesis ripam, in civitate Verona Transpadene Italie, xvi kalendas Quintiles, anno de ortu Dei illius quem tu non noveras" ([14], 4, p. 227).

For example, Petrarca's account of the murder of Caesar from his <u>De gestis Cesaris</u> (post 1366), essentially based on Suetonius, takes the form of a dialogue with the ancient historian. Petrarca is quick to condemn those among the assassins who had benefitted from Caesar's generosity. Of the omens presaging Caesar's coming death, he suggests that the finding of a stone in Capua predicting the assassination, which Suetonius considers a fact, may only be a legend. As for the other omens, even though at that time people believed in them and conducted themselves accordingly, Caesar as a cultivated and magnanimous person was right to overlook them.[12] The dictator should, however, have known what to expect, because the rumor of his coming assassination was public knowledge. His failure to read the note warning him of the plot that was handed him as he was going into the curia has led rulers since to read immediately what is handed them ([19], p. 316). The sense of temporal distance emerging from these passages prevades the <u>De viris</u>.

At its widest Petrarca's historical vision of ancient Rome embraced the centuries from the foundation of the city to the centuries of its decadence or, to use the phrase of Theodore Mommsen, to the beginning of the 'Dark Ages'.[13] Although he frequently identifies two periods of history, ancient and modern, without defining the point of demarcation between them, in <u>Africa</u>, his epic poem probably begun in 1338 and celebrating the victories of Scipio Africanus, Petrarca has Scipio break off his prophesy of the future with the reigns of Vespasian and Titus because "I cannot bear to proceed: for strangers of Spanish and African extraction will steal the sceptre and the glory of the Empire founded by us with great effort."[14] The earliest edition of his work of historical

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[12] Coniuratum est in eum a sexaginta sentoribus, Gaio Cassio et Marco ac Decimo Brutis tante cedis ducibus, quórum primus atque ultimus e suorum numero erant, medius semper adverse partis extiterat sed, venia donatus ac provincia auctus, aut oblata respuere aut profecto ipse quoque suus esse debuerat…Potest enim ese res fabulosa, quamvis eam Suetonius Tranquillis affirmet…Omitto suum et uxoris sue somnium, et que sunt id genus omnia, que a viro tam docto, tam magnanimo, iure optimo, ni fallor, sperni poterant; sed tunc vulgo observari talia, imo et procurari accuratius et caveri mos erat. Illud certe sapientissimo duci oculos aperuisse debuerat, quod et fama cedis in vulgus effusa erat…" ([19], pp. 315–16).

[13] This term is taken from the well-known article of Petrarca's conception of ancient Roman history by Mommsen, [20].

[14] "Ulterius transire piget; nam sceptra decusque/ Imperii tanto nobis fundata labore/ Externi rapient Hispane stirpis et Afro" ([21], p. 40 cited from [20], p. 119). For a criticism of Mommsen's position that Petrarca envisaged the early second century C.E. as the beginning of the "dark ages" and of the secular character of Petrarca's conception of Roman history, see [22]. Black cites numerous passages in Petrarca's writings that criticize the Donation of Constantine as destroying the primitive church and introducing corruption into the institution. As Black interprets Petrarca, the Donation of Constantine constituted the end of antiquity ([22], p. 66). Crucial to his disagreement with Mommsen is a letter of Petrarca to Giovanni Colonna, ostensibly written in 1337, describing a walk together through the ruins of Rome and listing ancient pagan sites that they have seen followed by a number of Christian sites ([14], 2, pp. 55–60). He cites Petrarca's word: "Multus de historiciis sermo erat, quas ita partiti videbamur, ut in novis tu, in antiquis ego viderer expertior, et dicantur antique quecunque ante celebratum Rome et veneratum romanis principibus Christi nomen, nove autem ex illo usque ad hanc etatem…([14], 2, p. 58). In an effort to give substance to this vaguely phrased division into ancient and modern times, Black adds: "This scheme is reinforced by his archaeological picture of ancient Rome: this is presented not in topographical but in chronological order—first of the classical, then of Christian sites:

biography, <u>De viris illustibus</u>, written in the 1340s, however, includes biographies of Roman leaders from Romulus to Titus (d. 81 C.E.), who was born in Spain, while the projected reworking of the text at the end of his life was to begin with Romulus and end with Trajan (d. 117 C.E.), another emperor of Spanish origin.

Consequently, at the latest, the great age of Rome ended for Petrarca in the early second century A.D. and thereafter began the age of shadows (<u>tenebrae</u>) which presumably endured down to Petrarca's generation. Responding to Agapito Colonna, who was angry when he heard that he was not to be included in the <u>De viris illustribus</u>, Petrarca responded:

> "I am unwilling to carry my treatment to such a distance and through so many shadows (<u>tenebrae</u>) for so few famous men; for this reason sparing material and labor, I set and determined the limit of my history long before our century" ([14], 4, pp. 28–29)

To his misfortune Petrarca had been born too late or too soon. As he wrote in his <u>Rerum memorandarum libri</u>:

> "… I, with so many reasons to lament, have none to console me, placed as I am at the boundary line between two peoples and looking, at the same time, behind and ahead."[15]

Nevertheless, although the contribution of Petrarca to the development of the concept of historical perspective is undeniable, much in his writing reflects the confusion of myth and history that characterized ancient and medieval historiography. In 1890, Pierre de Nolhac announced his discovery of a new manuscript of Petrarca's <u>De viris illustribus</u> that differed significantly from manuscripts of the work then known in that it began with a long preface followed by twelve <u>vitae</u> of biblical and mythological figures from Adam to Hercules [24,25]. Nolhac and later scholars down to the 1940s assumed that the text was the earliest version of the work and that subsequently Petrarca had excised the first twelve as his vision of the ancient past evolved.[16]

On the contrary, recent scholarship has established that the text beginning with non-Roman biographies was written in 1351 or 1352, several years after the first edition that began with

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his account goes up to Sylvester and Constantine and then abruptly breaks off" ([22], p. 66). The passage to which Black refers is the following: "Hic Christus profugo vicario fuit obvius; hic Petrus in crucem actus; hic truncatus est Paulus; hic assatus Laurentius; hic sepultus venienti Stephano locum fecit. Hic sprevit fervens oleum Johannes; hic Agnes post obitum vivens suos flere prohibuit; hic Silvester latuit; hic lepram deposuit Constantinus; hic gloriosam Calixtus exercuit Libitinam" ([14], 2, p. 58). The series of references, however, are not in fact in chronological order. John the Evangelist (d. ca. 100) is inserted between Lawrence, burned in 258, and Agnes, martyred in ca. 304. Contrary to Black's assertion, the list does not "go up to Sylvester and Constantine" but it ends with Calixtus, executed in 222. Accordingly, whether Petrarca intended this list as representative of the tour that he and Giovanni took through Rome or whether he recalled these sites as they came to mind, Black is in error in asserting that the list is chronological and that it proves that for Petrarca antiquity ended not as Mommsen has shown in the second century C.E., but with Constantine.

[15] "Ego itaque, cui nec dolendi ratio deest nec ignorantie solamen adest, velut in confinio duorum populorum constitutus ac simul ante retroque prospiciens…" ([23], 1, p. 19).

[16] On the chronology of Petrarca's composition of the <u>De viris illustribus</u>, see [26] and [27]. The earliest version of the <u>De viris illustribus</u> included three foreigners among the twenty-three lives, Hannibal, Pyrrhus, and Alexander.

Romulus.[17] It probably reflects Petrarca's intention to expand his treatment of ancient biographies beyond the Roman ones. There is evidence, moreover, that for a period of years in the 1350s, prior to the letter to Agapito Colonna cited above, he had contemplated an "all-ages" or a universal version of De viris illustribus that included modern heroes ([28], pp. 224–25).

Each of the twelve lives of the second edition rests on the assumption that the hero was a historical being. In the case of the biblical figures, Petrarca has Scripture and the early Church Fathers as his evidence. As for the mythological figures Petrarca relies with confidence on pagan as well as early Christian sources. In the case of Hercules, for example, he begins by admitting that Varro maintained that many men in previous times had been called Hercules because of their immense strength. Nonetheless, Petrarca seeks to establish the life of the one real Hercules "by depending on the more reliable but rare traces of what has been handed down."[18]

Conflicting sources considered Hercules to have been either a philosopher or a man of superhuman strength, but the examples of other exceptional men bear witness to the fact that intellectual and physical gifts can be combined in the same person. Among the labors that Petrarca believed the historical Hercules actually performed are his conflict with the Amazons, the Centaurs, Antaeus, and the Hydra. That Hercules supported the heavens on his shoulders, however, appears to Petrarca as an allegorical reference to Hercules's astronomical knowledge, while feats such as the leveling of mountains, the descent into hell, and the chaining of the beast with three heads "I pass over as fabulous."[19]

The ascription of superhuman qualities to figures like Jason and Hercules, whom we now consider mythological, challenges Petrarca's own principle of the continuity of human nature that is the foundational principle of his concept of historical perspective. The historical existence of creatures such as the Hydra and the centaurs, moreover, implies a contradiction to the general constancy of nature that underlies his position on human nature.

The potentialities of human activity within his space-time coordinates are further conditioned by divine and demonic intervention. Although omnipresent to human history, God and the Devil seem

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[17] Martellotti considers this second version the initial portion of an "all-ages" version of De viris illustribus, which Petrarca never completed ([26], p. 51). According to my reading of the preface to the twelve lives, however, Petrarca still intended to limit the work to ancient heroes, not to heroes of all periods ([27], pp. 107–8). The preface specifically refers to the pagan religious beliefs of his heroes: "multa etiam sciens apud alios ystoricos interserta vel vetusti moris vel insulse religionis, dicam melius superstitionis, plus tedii quam utilitatis aut voluptatis habitura preterii …" ([25], p. 24).

[18] "Id causa est quod de Hercule tam incerta, tam varia scripta sint ut velut laberinthi ambagibus implicitus lector exitum non inveniat. Sane quantum ingenii funiculo datum erit, inter caliginosas vetustissime rei semitas, vitatis multiplicium perplexitatibus errorum, per certiora tradentium, licet rara, vestigia ad verum quam propinquius licebit accedam" ([25], p. 104). Martellottti stresses that in writing these twelve lives Petrarca has drawn exhaustively on pagan and Christian writers for his information. For the vita of Hercules, see Caterina Malta's notes, [25], pp. 104–9, and those of Dotti [29], pp. 647–49. Martellotti concludes regarding the twelve lives: "Lungi dal rappresentare una sopravvivenza del Medioevo, anche quest'opera del Petrarca nasce dai suoi libri ed è una conquista del suo umanesimo…" ([26], pp. 79–80).

[19] "Thesalie fauces et scissa iuga monitum, et emissi amnes, ut fractum Acheloi cornu et copie dedicatum, ut descensum ad inferos et iecta trifauci monstro vincula, et cetera, quorum longa narratio est, fabulosa pretervehar" ([25], p. 108).

to have been especially active in ancient times. By means of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, God worked in history toward the time appointed for Christ's birth. While using their natural reason, ancient poets may have written certain truths about the divine, but Petrarca does not hesitate to assert that God directly inspired the Erithrean or Cumean Sybil to prophesy Christ's coming ([31], p. 40). Again, despite Petrarca's conception of the creation of the Roman empire as a human achievement, he cannot resist associating the empire with the birth of Christ. While leaving the causal relationship ambiguous, he writes: "…at what better time did God, the lover of peace and justice, deign to be born of the Virgin and visit the earth?"([31], p. 175: "Quo potissimum tempore amator pacis ac iustitie nasci deus ex virgine terrasque visitare dignatus es?")

As for demons, the pagan religion began when these evil beings took possession of statues erected by grieving relatives for their dead family members. However, although the demons fled the idols at the coming of Christ, demons remain an active source of historical causation in that they continue to tempt the human race to sinful actions ([30], p. 34).[20]

Finally, Petrarca's secular interpretation of ancient Roman history as demonstrating the height of human achievement made it impossible for him to extend his perspective to succeeding centuries. He never doubted that the advent of Christ marked the beginning of the era of revealed truth, one that exposed the utter falsity of pagan belief. Throughout his work the ascetic theme that "nothing endures" served as a counterpoint to his enthusiasm for ancient culture. In the face of the eternal, all worldly achievement became worthless, and the secular glory pursued by his ancient heroes would seem to have counted least of all. Insistence on the Roman achievement, consequently, had to be sealed off from any comparison with early Christianity. Otherwise, he would have had to view Jerome and his beloved Augustine as participants in a world in decline. To avoid this, perhaps unconsciously, his writings place the Latin Church Fathers in a vague spatio-temporal context without continuity with the ancient Roman past.

Of course, to criticize Petrarca because he was not a modern historian is unfair. It would be too much to expect him to have rejected pagan and Christian traditions that accepted as historical beings, figures whom we today consider mythological. Nor should we be surprised that among his sources of historical causation he recognized occasional interventions of God and the Devil, a view still held as the basis of historical explanation by some today. The goal of this paper has rather been to credit Petrarca with a pioneering role in developing a concept of historical perspective while at the same time qualifying the extent of his modernity by situating his innovative conceptions within his complex vision of the past with its strong allegiances to his predecessors.

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Article

Res aut res publica: The Evidence from Italian Renaissance Manuscripts and Their Owners

John M. McManamon, S. J.

History Department, Loyola University, Chicago, IL 60660, USA; E-Mail: jmcmana@luc.edu

Abstract: This paper examines a key tension in Renaissance culture as reflected in the origin and provenance of manuscript books. Were Renaissance manuscripts the private property of individual owners or the common wealth of a lettered public? Even an officially public library could not escape that tension, whether through abuse of borrowing privileges or plundering of vulnerable holdings. Market forces encouraged theft, while impoverished scholars used their knowledge to supplement meager incomes. Alternatively, a sense of common wealth is reflected in an ex-libris indicating that a codex belonged to an individual "and his friends." Book collecting, finally, becomes a helpful clue in discerning to what a scholar is committed. Some Renaissance clergymen used culture as a way to promote their ecclesiastical careers, while others collected and shared manuscripts as a way to promote tolerance.

Keywords: renaissance; manuscripts; humanism; libraries; private property; common wealth

"Some <scholars> ... may even decide to read <the *Iter Italicum*>, just as I have enjoyed reading catalogues and inventories of manuscripts."[21]

Paul Oskar Kristeller

Over a period of years in the recent past, I did read Kristeller's *Iter Italicum*. I found the experience exciting in a way that Carlo Ginzburg might appreciate: the historian as detective who unearths clues and follows where they lead ([2], pp. 96–125). Along the way, one encounters a tension related to Renaissance manuscripts: should one treat them as private property (*res*) or a

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[21] [1], 1, p. xxiv. I am grateful to the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA and Loyola University Chicago for generously supporting my research.

common wealth (*res publica*)? Take the history of Cardinal Bessarion's books, bequeathed to the Venetian Republic for public use. From the start, the Venetian government set conditions for the loan of those books: that one be a Venetian resident, provide a valuable item as security for the loan and return the book within eight days. Despite such stringent conditions, there were soon problems. In 1494, the government decreed a fine of 500 ducats for recalcitrant borrowers. In the early sixteenth century, the Procurators of San Marco, custodians of the library, added a new condition: the loan would occur only when three-quarters of their number approved. By 1506, the Procurators were ordered to stop all lending, get back in one week's time all books that were out or apply the 1494 penalty of 500 ducats. Nonetheless, lending continued, and matters did not improve.

When Andrea Navagero (1483–1529) served as librarian from 1516 to 1524, he actually brandished an apostolic *Breve* threatening excommunication for those who did not promptly return loaned books. The sanction had a precedent in the 1462 bull that Pius II issued to protect the new library that the Franciscan Giacomo della Marca (1393–1476) established in Monteprandone ([3], p. xxviii). Navagero's recourse to papal intervention means that he too had problems in getting borrowers to return books. And Navagero may have brought problems on himself. A letter that the Cretan scholar, Markos Mousouros (*ca.* 1470–1517), sent to Navagero on 8 May 1517 reveals questionable choices by borrowers and the librarian. For at least the second time, Mousouros emphasized to Navagero that he had evidence proving that individuals were stealing books from the library and selling them for personal gain. For example, the nephew of Venice's recently deceased Grand Chancellor, Francesco Fasiol (d. 1517), had purloined a copy of Apsyrtus's treatise on medicinal remedies for horses and then sold it to the bookseller Francesco Pozzi. While browsing in Pozzi's store, nestled among the apothecary shops selling spices in Venice (*la spezzeria*), Mousouros spotted the book, bought it, took it home and there recognized the clues that indicated its true provenance. The margins of the book still had Greek notes in Bessarion's hand, and the leaf where Bessarion often wrote a table of contents had been cut out. When Mousouros confronted Pozzi with the evidence, he confessed that he had bought the book from Fasiol's nephew. Mousouros next confronted Chancellor Fasiol, who was indignant and began surreptitiously to run down Mousouros's good name.

Books stolen from the Marciana not only found their way to Venice's booksellers but to artisans as well. The local barber near the church of Sant'Apollinare returned to Mousouros a copy of Bessarion's own *In calumniatorem Platonis*, stolen once again by Fasiol's nephew, who rightly assumed that he could sell the manuscript to the barber. Obviously, a barber would want a copy of Bessarion's defense of Plato in order to assist his son's study of Greek at Mousouros's school. Amid the darkness of the avarice of the human spirit shines the light of a barber's son, Domenego, seeking to become proficient in Greek. Because Mousouros did not have time to attend to the recovered books, he ordered that they be put with others he had left for safe keeping with his student, Carlo Cappello (1492–1546). Without telling Mousouros, some of his disciples (*egline*) put the books in cloth containers and sent them with Mousouros's other baggage to Rome. Mousouros assured Navagero that he still had the books and that they were "at your disposition" (*al commando vostro*). A diffident Navagero added a note to his copy of the letter, indicating that Alberto Pio da Carpi (1475–1531), another former student and lifelong friend of Mousouros, had come into possession of those books. Navagero seems to tip us off that Mousouros was currying

favor with a patron or making his own profit on Marciana books.

Other evidence indicates that Mousouros and Navagero respected the Marciana as a public institution. While Mousouros conducted negotiations in Rome to obtain for the Marciana the library of the Venetian cardinal, Domenico Grimani (1461–1523), Navagero worked to keep its books available to the scholarly public even in the absence of a permanent facility for their storage. In this exchange, however, both seem engaged in that perennial sport of covering for their actions. Mousouros was responding to an inquiry of Navagero about missing books, his explanation for the way the books reached Rome seems flimsy and he works to deflect blame by incriminating Navagero. Navagero never seemed properly concerned about Mousouros's repeated warnings that Fasiol and his nephew had abused borrowing privileges, and Navagero did nothing during Fasiol's lifetime to end the abuse. The librarian seemed cowed by powerful politicians. When notified of the theft of Bessarion's defense of Plato, Navagero told Mousouros not to worry about that particular book because the library had "an infinite number of copies." Though a bit short of infinite, the 1474 inventory of Bessarion's library listed four Greek copies and seven Latin translations of the entire work or portions thereof.[22]

What ultimately happened to the two stolen books? The trail has led us to the library of Alberto Pio da Carpi and from there might logically lead to the Biblioteca Estense in Modena. But Lotte Labowsky has argued that the copy of Apsyrtus cannot be found there or anywhere else, since the only copy of Bessarion's *In calumniatorem Platonis* presently in Modena and having Alberto Pio's library for its provenance (Est. gr. 125) is missing the marginalia of Bessarion that Mousouros described. Labowsky is therefore inclined to identify the copy briefly in the barber's possession with a codex now in the Vatican Library (Vat. gr. 1435) because the Vatican codex does have additions and corrections in Bessarion's hand. I would observe that the precise wording of Mousouros is not clear on the extent of Bessarion's notations: "having recognized some Greek letters of Bessarion in the margin" (*havendo io recognosciuto certe lettere grece de Bessarione in margine*).[23]

Alas, the following centuries likewise manifest cases of insiders, who exploited their position to pilfer manuscripts or portions thereof, especially as their market value increased. From a Jesuit perspective, Cardinal Zelada (1717–1801) brought dishonor on his given name, Francesco Saverio, by supporting the suppression of the Society of Jesus and then plundering the Jesuits' Roman residences for books and other valuable objects.[24] In the nineteenth century, two Greeks climbed to the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, recognized the importance of a codex there that conserved rare texts of early Greek geographers and cut out some folios from the codex. Aubrey Diller identified the culprits: the first was Minoides Mynas, who visited Vatopedi in 1841 under commission of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and left among his private papers seven leaves from Vatopedi 655 that the Bibliothèque Nationale acquired (Suppl. gr. 443A); the second was the "notorious Constantine Simonides," who gained entrée to Athos through an uncle who was an abbot there and sold the leaves that he stole from Vatopedi to the British Museum (Add.

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22 [4], 6, pp. 306–10; [5], pp. 318–19, 367–70; [6], pp. 63–64, 76–80, 115, 139–42, 486, 490; [7], pp. 100–2; and [8], pp. 329–30. All citations from Mousouros's letter are from [6], pp. 139–41.

23 [6], p. 79. See also [9], pp. 1–24 (Biblioteca Estense), p. 49 (a copy of Apsyrtus, dated s. XV-XVI, in Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Lincei, cod. Nic. Ross. 358 [43.D.82]).

24 [10], pp. 118–20; [11], pp. 64–65, 67–89; and [12], pp. 184, 209, 219–20 n. 23.

19391). In a rather understated way, Aubrey Diller describes Vatopedi cod. 655 as "somewhat dismembered."[25] Mynas and Simonides had such a fascination with old Greek manuscripts that they would forge the ones they could not steal.

In that same century, Guglielmo Libri (1803–69) deservedly earned the title of "master manuscript thief," exploiting the trust of the Italian and French governments to steal their codices and sell them to the earl of Ashburnham. In another classic understatement, Libri wrote his mother in 1835 and informed her that "the more I age and work, the more I enjoy old books."[26] From his more cautious beginnings in Florence, Libri gradually utilized his eye for valuable antiques and his talent for speculating on the book market to quicken his collecting. He eventually convinced the French government to catalog all manuscripts in France's provincial libraries, and he began visiting those libraries as a director of the initiative. Libri stole manuscripts from libraries in at least nine different cities, including Autun, for which he introduced the seminary library in the first volume of the *Catalogue générale*. When Libri offered manuscripts for sale to the British Museum, the Museum's librarians, while examining his collection in Paris, were tipped off to Libri's shady character, penchant to speculate and rumored theft of codices. Even after receiving that information, they still urged the British government to approve funds for the purchase. But the government did not feel that it could afford Libri's asking price. The true hero of the Libri saga, Leopold Delisle (1826–1910), concluded: "Enlightened men of all nations should agree to ostracize library pirates, who clandestinely carry abroad the fruits of their rapine, and <they> should combine to prevent any traffic in such articles" ([19], p. 285).

There is, at times, a curious disjunction between the quality of manuscript books commissioned by the richest patrons and the quality of the written texts conserved in those books. If the d'Este family did commission a luxury codex now in the Marciana (Marc. lat. XI.101), they received a book richly decorated with white-vine bordering and their own coat of arms and poorly written by a scribe whom Pietro Zorzanello (1883–1951) characterized as a "uomo proprio sfigurati," which one might roughly render, "a man truly to be numbered among the morons." Onto the folios of that beautiful container of quality parchment the scribe wrote a text filled with errors in rather crude letters (*literis crassioribus*). Zorzanello perhaps chose his words carefully: humanists of the Renaissance coined a diminutive form of *crassior*, "crassiusculus," for someone obtuse or mediocre ([21], 2, pp. 3 and 7; [22], p. 138). The same dynamic of poor copying probably took a few years off the life of Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1452). Ciriaco paid a scribe, Domenico di Cassio da Narni, to make two luxury copies of his letter on the battle of Ponza as gifts for wealthy patrons. At the last minute, due to Domenico's sloppy work, Ciriaco himself had to correct the texts before giving them to his supporters. Perhaps Ciriaco gambled that someone like Cardinal Giordano Orsini (*ca.* 1360–1438) would be happy to put the luxury codex on display in his home and never read it closely enough to notice those awkward, fifteenth-century equivalents of the "white out."

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[25] [13], pp. 228–29; [14], pp. 177–79; [15], pp. 10–14; and [16], pp. 40–41, with quotation.

[26] [17], pp. 53 n. 2 (letter of 26 May 1835): "... Quanto più invecchio e lavoro mi piacciono i libri antichi e sono contento solo quando perduto nei secoli passati oblio il presente e non preveggo l'avvenire." In addition to [17], pp. 59–106, see also [18], pp. 5–21; [19], pp. 279–90; and [20], pp. 161–79, 202–31, 320–31.

Because Ciriaco found himself pressed for time, he failed to catch several errors and could not, therefore, assure a text whose accuracy would reflect his esteem for his patrons.[27]

Even a *zibaldone* (family hodgepodge book), at the opposite end of the spectrum from the luxury parchment codex, might still be plundered as an object of perceived value. During the sack of Volterra in 1472, a local humanist notary, Biagio Lisci (*ca.* 1423-after 10 Dec. 1517), had his family journal taken as booty by a soldier named Lisandrino. When the rapacious Lisandrino eventually realized that he had not looted an illuminated Dante, he sold the Lisci *zibaldone* for four *soldi* to the grammarian Luca di Antonio Bernardi da San Gimignano (d. after 1 June 1499). Luca was a personal friend of Lisci but at first assuaged any pangs of conscience for the purchase by apparently concluding that, in this instance, two wrongs did make a right. At one time, Lisci had borrowed Luca's copy of the *Liber de temporibus* written by the humanist Matteo Palmieri (1406–75), but Lisci had never returned the book and apparently had lost it. There is a clue, however, that the grammarian Luca later experienced a moment of authentic remorse: the Lisci *zibaldone* is now part of the manuscript collection of the Biblioteca Comunale Guarnacciana in Volterra (cod. 5031). Perhaps Luca gave the journal back to its owner, a lifetime resident of Volterra, or perhaps he traded the journal for another book ([23], pp. 240–41; [24], pp. 25–28).

Down to our own times, scholars have speculated on the value of manuscripts first located during their research, utilizing legitimate and black markets. Ludwig Bertalot (1884–1960) had such an unstable income that he occasionally had to use his keen knowledge of manuscripts to support himself. In 1936, Bertalot recruited his American friend, Dean Lockwood (1883–1965), to serve as a go-between with Harvard University, whom Bertalot hoped would buy manuscripts he then owned. When Harvard did not do so, Lockwood himself bought one codex in 1946, sold it to William H. Allen (1918–97) the following year, and Allen sold it to the University of Pennsylvania Library.[28] Bertalot's behavior in the case of the codex Bolleanus seems less above board. After Remigio Sabbadini introduced Bertalot to Luigi Cesare Bollea (1877–1933), a Torinese historian, Bertalot recognized the value of a Renaissance miscellany that Bollea owned, and, in 1929, Bertalot purchased it. When forced by circumstances to sell the codex, Bertalot split it into two parts to maximize his profit, selling one piece to the national library in Berlin and another to the University Library in Frankfurt. However, until his death in 1960, Bertalot never revealed the division. In 1964, Kristeller and Giuseppe Billanovich identified the portion in Berlin and realized what Bertalot had done, which Billanovich characterized as a "regrettable, commercial decision" (*con infelice, commerciale idea*). Ursula Jaitner-Hahner had to follow a clue, a note on one of the thousands of index cards that comprised Bertalot's incipit catalogue, in order to identify the second

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27 Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Lincei, cod. Nic. Rossi 214 (35.E.27) (copied by Domenico di Cassio da Narni with autograph additions and corrections); and London, British Library, cod. Harley 4088 (copied by Domenico di Cassio da Narni with autograph additions). See [23], pp. 236–40; and [24], pp. 16–19.

28 Philadelphia, Univ. of Pennsylvania Library, cod. Lat. 7, with a note on fol. 105 that the Milanese humanist Lancino Curti (*ca.* 1460–1512) owned the codex in 1484. On the codex, see [1], 5, p. 372a-b; [25], pp. 247–52; [26], p. 83; [27], pp. 107–8; [28], 1, p. 253; and [29], 1, p. 154 (no. 2112). With the patronage of Ludovico Sforza (il Moro), the Lombard humanist Curti claimed to have written over 60,000 works. See [30], 31, pp. 487–88; and [31], pp. 10–11, 137–38, 190–203.

piece of the manuscript ("Codex Frankfurt [olim Bollea], fol. 124v"). To assure maximum value for both halves, Bertalot cut out the leaf with the fifteenth-century possessors' notes, cut the leaf in two and pasted one possessor's note into each half.[29]

There seems no more eloquent image of the privatization of manuscripts books than the coffin-like boxes in which the self-described Vellomaniac, Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872), kept his more than 60,000 codices ([32], pp. 119–30; [33], pp. 91–94). As his personal property, the manuscripts were certainly dead to the world. By contrast, collective instincts are apparent in the *ex libris* of Renaissance intellectuals like Bartolomeo Fonzio (Della Fonte, 1446–1513), Angelo Poliziano (1455–94) and Francesco Pandolfini (1470–1520) in Florence, Giovanni Melzi (d. after 1482) in Milan and the Hellenophile Arcangelo in Rome. From the start, they labeled their books the property of themselves and their friends.[30] The Venetian humanist Leonardo Giustiniani (*ca.* 1386–1446) was among the first to employ such an *ex libris*, crafted in, admittedly, pedantic Greek.[31] Giustiniani likely knew the proverb that Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, among others, cited and that, in 1508, Erasmus awarded the honor of first place among his *Adages*: "all possessions are common to friends."[32] Erasmus appreciated that adages constituted the ideal medium for his cherished message of a common intellectual patrimony, both classical and Christian. The adage is a literary form that, by nature, can never be private property.

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[29] [27], pp. 99–111. Bertalot drafted but never sent a letter to Helmut Boese in Berlin, in which he revealed the location of the second piece. At about the same time that Jaitner-Hahner found Bertalot's notes, she received an inquiry from the University librarian in Frankfurt about incipits in cod. Lat. octavo 136. Prior to the publication of the *Iter*, vol. 3, Jaitner-Hahner informed Kristeller of her discovery so that he could include the information there.

[30] In general, see [34], pp. 87–99. For Fonzio's formula, "Bartholomaei Fontii et amicorum," see Caroti and Zamponi, 30. Caroti and Zamponi note that Poliziano and Fonzio's heir, Francesco Pandolfini, used a similar formula. Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, cod. Sussidio H 52, belonged to Melzi ("Iste liber est mei Iohannis Meltii et amicorum"). Ambrosiana Sussidio H 52 is a composite codex dating from the mid-fifteenth century, has at least two hands, later entered the library of Count Donato Silva (1690–1779) and was purchased by the Ambrosiana from the bookseller Vergani. Melzi was a doctor of law and wealthy Sforza courtier, who wrote on ethics and Christian morality. We may know the name of one of Melzi's friends, Giovanni dei Pescatori, who left a borrower's note in Melzi's humanist miscellany. Apparently, Pescatori had more than one friend who owned manuscripts since other codices bear that same borrower's note written in vernacular dialect. See [1], 1, 347b-48a; [36], pp. 4–5; and [37], pp. 229–31, 234, 245–52. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. lat. 2936, has a bilingual possessor's note on fol. 1, indicating that the book belonged to Archangelus and his friends ("Hic liber est Archangeli καὶ τῶν φίλων"). The Vatican codex was written by two hands in the first half of the fifteenth century. See [1], 2, p. 357b; [29], 1, p. 202 (no. 2783); and [38], 2, pp. 315–16. It has form letters and orations of Antonius de Pizzinis Padovenis and a speech of Antonio Carabello (d. after 1436), who taught rhetoric at the University of Padua from 1434–36. On Carabello, see [39], pp. 470–74; and [40], 19, pp. 300–1.

[31] [34], p. 93, cites Giustiniani's bilingual motto: "ἥ βίβλος αὕτη Leonardi Iustiniani veneti ἔστιν ἔτι δε καὶ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ."

[32] [34], pp. 93–94; and [41], pp. 4–5, 25–32, 67–68, 76–77, 81–108, 122–30, 138–41, 144–45, 148–52, 164, 168. For *Adagiorum chiliades* 1.1.1, see [42], pp. 84–86; English translation, [43], pp. 29–30.

Because Kristeller saw the *Iter Italicum* as a consciously collective enterprise, he dedicated the book to the librarians of Italy and the rest of the world. His characterization of the volumes as a "cooperative enterprise" was not false modesty. Kristeller did quote a remark that his friend Robert Branner made, to the effect that Kristeller's research team consisted mainly of his right and left arms ([1], 1, p. xxv; 3, pp. xviii-xix). Though Kristeller granted that the cataloging demanded persistence on his own part, he wanted the volumes to foster a shift from the individual adventure of scholarly research to collaboration on a broader scale. He therefore exhaustively acknowledged the assistance he received from scholars and institutions and granting agencies and, of course, librarians. Kristeller's emphasis on cooperation explains his dismay for a lack of solidarity among a minority of persons with whom he dealt. In the preface to volume 6, Kristeller revealed that "there were a few librarians who failed to cooperate, and I prefer not to mention them" ([1], 1, p. xxii). In addition, some private individuals who owned manuscripts permitted Kristeller to see them but would not allow him to reveal their location. In a choice that would please More and Erasmus, Kristeller put those manuscripts in Utopia.

Scholars of any era might readily give the award for "Exemplary Manuscript Collector" to Christopher Columbus's illegitimate son, Hernando Colón (1488–1539). Generally, when Colón bought a book–and he bought many–he recorded the date and place of purchase, the costs to him in the local currency and the date(s) on which he consulted the book thereafter [44]. The award for "Avid Manuscript Collector" should go, perhaps, to the Venetian Emmanuele Antonio Cicogna (1789–1868), who saved as many as 5,000 manuscripts from ruin. While hunting for the surviving portions of the library of the librettist Lorenzo Antonio da Ponte (1749–1838), Cicogna tracked down an autograph manuscript of Camillo Contarini (1644–1722) that he purchased from a cheese and butter vendor and a thick bundle of Arsenal papers from a delicatessen owner. It was not that there was a sudden burst of interest among grocers in Venice for early modern texts. Rather, the enterprising shopkeepers had discovered that old parchment leaves comprised a sturdy wrapping for food items. In fact, stacks of parchment sold for 6 *soldi* a pound.[33] Imagine your *due etti* of prosciutto from San Daniele wrapped in a public letter of Leonardo Bruni.

Perhaps the best clue for contextualizing a Renaissance manuscript comes by pinning down its original owner. Though luxury illuminated codices make for successful exhibits, the majority of Renaissance codices are the working miscellanies of students of letters. When we follow the books of the students of Giovanni Lamola (*ca.* 1405–49), a product himself of an excellent rhetorical education, we appreciate better that foreigners studying in Italy and books copied for them diffused humanism to other parts of Europe, especially the Rhine and Danube regions of the German Empire. Lamola had several humanist mentors, including Gasparino Barzizza, Vittorino da Feltre, Francesco Filelfo and Guarino. His life unwound in pendular fashion: he moved away from his hometown of Bologna to pursue pedagogical opportunities elsewhere only to move back after a time and resume his lecturing at the *Studium*. Late in 1447 and early in 1448, while Lamola was at Bologna and not long before he died, he taught the humanities to a small but influential group of

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[33] [7], pp. 327, 343. For the Da Ponte codices formerly owned by Leopold von Ranke and now at Syracuse University, see [45], pp. xi-xiii, 1–109 (codices 2, 3, 7, 15, 20, 47, 50, 63, 65, 70, 72, 73, 76, 81, 83, 104).

German students, who then transmitted humanist culture to their native cities.

Johann Roth (1426–1506) fondly remembered Lamola as *praeceptor meus* after studying at Bologna in the 1440s, and the future prince-bishop first developed his lifelong interest in the humanities at Lamola's lectures ([46], pp. 351–53, 363; [47], pp. 403–405; [48], pp. 415–18). Hans Pirckheimer (*ca.* 1415–92) studied with Lamola, attributed his love for humanism to Lamola and began assembling at Bologna under Lamola's tutelage the massive compilation of texts in British Library codex Arundel 70.[34] Iohannes Heller (*ca.* 1414–1475/8) met Lamola in Bologna and put together his own compendia of epistolary, poetic and rhetorical models, now München Universitätsbibliothek Quarto 768 (terminus ante quem of 1452 and likely finished in Italy in 1450) and München Staatsbibliothek Clm 6721 (modeled on the former).[35] Hermann Schedel (1410–85) made one of Heller's compendia (Universitätsbibliothek Quarto 768) the nucleus of his own, now München Staatsbibliothek Clm 504, and Schedel then added in his hand the writings of Lamola and other authors active at Bologna at mid-century (Niccolò Perotti, Nicolò Volpe, Battista da San Pietro). Among the texts added, Schedel chose to include Lamola's panegyric for Jerome delivered in 1442.[36] Humanist miscellanies resist rigorous taxonomy. Some of the texts copied into them perforce reflect serendipity, put there to demonstrate the acquired skills of the redactor himself or reflect that redactor's peculiar interests. However, a core of the works consistently included in multiple codices may well represent a sort of evolving textbook of rhetorical pedagogy that traces its roots to the teaching of Barzizza and Guarino and early included speeches of Leonardo Giustiniani, Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini.

For example, after studying in Italy for fourteen years, Albrecht von Eyb (1420–75) put together a compendium of model texts that quickly found its way into print. By 1459, von Eyb had completed a first redaction of his *Margarita poetica*, whose title has likely misled some scholars. He originally went to Italy to study law under Catone Sacco (1394/7–1463) at the University of Pavia. When Sacco moved from Pavia to Bologna, von Eyb followed him. In Bologna, von Eyb met Lamola and joined the little circle that included Pirckheimer and Heller. The fruits of von Eyb's encounter with Italian humanism appear in the *Margarita poetica*, which Gianni Zippel has characterized as a manual of rhetoric whose model speeches were all fifteenth-century compositions, except for one sermon by Jerome. Among the contemporary speeches, von Eyb, like Schedel, chose to include Lamola's panegyric of Jerome.[37] So, Italian humanists of the Barzizza

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[34] [49], pp. 104, 113–14, 236–38 (Lamola's letter to Pirckheimer from late 1448); and [50], 7, pp. 701–2. The grandson of Hans, Willibald Pirckheimer (1475–1530), had Albrecht Dürer design a bookplate for him with the inscription "Sibi et amicis"; see [34], pp. 97–98.

[35] [51], 1, pp. 1–75; and [52], pp. 75–76. Belloni questions whether the *Iohannes adolescens* whom Lamola mentions in his letter to Pirckheimer was Heller, given that Heller was *ca.* 34 years old at the time and had earned degrees in arts and in civil and canon law. I concur with scholars who believe that Lamola does refer to Heller. Lamola might be using *adolescens* in a Roman sense or as a way to tease the older Heller.

[36] [53], p. 370; [54], pp. 411–19, 439–58; and [55], pp. 5–7. München, Staatsbibliothek, cod. Clm 504 has at least seven orations by Lamola. On humanist pedagogy at Bologna in the second half of the fifteenth century, see also [56], pp. 209–10, 216–19.

[37] [53], pp. 378–79; and [57], 1, pp. 182–83, who notes the presence of the autograph in Eichstätt, Staatsbibliothek, cod. 633. Sottili remarks that, in the *Margarita*, von Eyb also acknowledged the impact

and Guarino schools taught eloquence based upon contemporary models, and Jerome afforded a measure of sacral protection for their rhetorical pedagogy. The sermon of Jerome that von Eyb chose to include is an apology for the value of rhetoric for believers. Though Jerome acknowledges in the sermon that one can proclaim the Christian Gospel effectively without any formal rhetorical training, he proposes that, by using rhetorical skills, one will evangelize in a way that deepens the impact of the message and causes it to take lasting root in the hearts of believers.

Thanks to Albrecht von Eyb, Giovanni Lamola, Pierpaolo Vergerio and other humanists, we have acquired a sense of the importance of Jerome as the patron saint of humanist rhetoricians. A remote echo of that Renaissance cult may have led Charles William Dyson Perrins (1864–1958) to invest the profits from his manufacture of Worcestershire sauce in a luxury Quattrocento Jerome codex. The codex illustrates that every manuscript book has its own personal history hinted at by clues left therein.[38] This particular codex has a collection of Jerome's letters that the scribe Giovanni Grasso di Carpi completed copying in Ferrara on 28 February 1467. No expense was spared: Jerome's letters are written on parchment in an *antiqua* characterized by its small corpus and long descenders. The first folio has an interlacing white vine border on red, blue, green and gold background. Key elements like the bordering of green leaves along the bottom and right side of that folio are edged in gold ([60], 1, pp. 179–82 and 2, plate 73; [61], 3, pp. 57–61).

In the midst of a wreath of green leaves, the illuminator of the manuscript placed a coat of arms featuring a lion rampant, which leads to a first question: whose coat of arms is it? Sir George Warner suggests two possibilities: the Acciaiuoli family or the family of Grasso himself. If the coat of arms belongs to the Acciaiuoli family–and Warner sees a clear resemblance to the Acciaiuoli arms–then why did Grasso sell the manuscript to someone else two years after he had finished it? Logically, it would go to the Acciaiuoli as commissioners. So Warner feels more inclined to attribute the coat of arms to the Grasso family because their shield also featured a lion rampant. The two-year lag in sale may also be indicative: the Acciaiuoli may have turned down the completed work and it took Grasso a while to sell a book decorated with their coat of arms, or perhaps, after a time, he decided to turn his labor to profit and could only sell a codex with his own family shield to an eager collector like Battista Panetti (*ca.* 1439–97).

Mystery 2: why did the notary son of a family with a coat of arms choose to earn a living copying luxury manuscripts? We do know that Giovanni Grasso copied other codices: Ovid's *Fasti* in 1460, Horace and Propertius in 1461, Virgil in 1464, Guarino's translation of Strabo in 1470 and a collection of humanist poetry in the codex Bevilacqua (Est. lat. 1080) ([60]; [61]; [62], p. 128; [1], 1, pp. 383b–84a, and 4, pp. 180b–81a). We also know a good deal about the copying of the Jerome manuscript thanks to Grasso's subscription. He finished his work in the home of Niccolò da Campo, he paid homage to the duke of Ferrara, Borso d'Este (1413–71), he offered an invocation to Jesus, Mary, Saints George and Maurelius (patrons of Ferrara) and Saints Jerome and

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of lectures on rhetoric he attended at the University of Pavia; see [58], p. 131. For von Eyb's thinking on women and whether a man should marry, see [59], pp. 734–49.

[38] [32], p. 3: "The bibliographer's ideal would be to compel each and every volume to tell its own history; the clues by which this goal may in many cases be attained would not displease the mind of the modern reader of mystery-fiction, and the brain of an ideal bibliographer, tracing the pedigree of a manuscript, works not infrequently in the same grooves as the ideal detective of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

Peter Martyr (patrons of Giovanni) and he ended with a prayer that his heavenly patrons guide him on the path of good (*iter bonum*!), defend his soul from the attack of the ancient enemy and his body from a deceitful tongue or a royal assault.[39] Giovanni Grasso therefore had a personal devotion to Jerome, whose works he copied, flattered the d'Este rulers of Ferrara, where he lived, and abused the hospitality of friends, whose study he littered with spilled ink and torn parchment. Mystery 3: what king would care enough about a scribe working in the home of Niccolò da Campo to attack him there? *Mitto in silentium*.

Evidence establishes that, once Giovanni had finished copying the letters, it took him almost two years to sell the codex. Text on the flyleaf mentions a cashier's note (*nota de cassa*) from 17 February 1469 recorded in an Argenti bank register, likely bound in red. The evidence indicates that Battista Panetti had three days earlier paid Michele Argenti for the purchase of the Jerome codex copied by Grasso and for a Suetonius codex copied by another scribe. Anton von Euw and Joachim Plotzek suggest the possibility that Grasso used his finished codices to obtain financing from the Argenti bank for his copying business and would then deposit a completed codex with the bank, which handled the sale as payment on the loans ([61], 3, p. 60). Panetti, in turn, was a Carmelite friar and avid book collector, and the codex records the day of his death, 27 March 1497 ([63], pp. 183–228). The codex remained in the possession of the Carmelite friars at the convent of San Paolo in Ferrara where Francesco Antonio Zaccaria (1714–95) saw it in 1757 during his "iter italicum" and mentioned it in print five years later.

In 1810, according to a possessor's note on the first flyleaf, the codex had passed into the hands of Francesco Mainardi in Ferrara. The next notice of the codex is found in the *General Catalogue* of books offered for sale by Bernard Alexander Christian Quaritch (1818–99) in London in 1868. To maximize the market value of the manuscript, Quaritch made the dubious claim that "[i]t may be remarked that this voluminous and interesting correspondence of St. Jerome is of very unusual occurrence in Manuscript."[40] The book was auctioned by Sotheby's in 1877 where an unnamed Austro-Hungarian nobleman purchased it. The connoisseur-artist Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919) bought the book in 1900, probably for its illumination. Dyson Perrins then dipped into his Worcestershire sauce profits and bought the codex from Fairfax Murray in 1906. Sotheby's auctioned the manuscript a second time in 1959 when Arthur Rau (1898–1972), an English rare book dealer operating from Paris, bought it. The codex ultimately retained its appeal to manufacturers of foodstuffs since the *chocolatiers*, Peter Ludwig (1925–96), and his wife Irene (1972–2010) purchased the book and kept it for a time in Cologne. In 1983, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles purchased at Sotheby's the entire lot of 144 illuminated manuscripts in the Ludwig Collection. In our age of indiscretion, of course, there is also a rumored price for the sale, a price befitting the Getty of forty million dollars.[41]

The final clues worth mentioning are those related to a question that Kristeller posed in his introduction to the fourth volume of his *Iter*: to what were the persons who wrote or collected the manuscripts committed ([1], 4, p. xxiii)? Among craftsmen who either copied manuscript books or

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[39] The phrase "deceitful tongue" (*lingua dolosa*) occurs in Psalm 120:2 (Vulg. Ps. 119:2).

[40] [64], p. 7 (no. 36). See also [32], pp. 158–68.

[41] [65], p. 246. The expression "age of indiscretion" was coined by Bettini [66].

produced portolan charts, there is an admirable group who preferred to hide their identity and let the text or chart speak for itself. They did, at times, supply a clue: their initials. In one subscription, the scribe M. C. actually gave voice to Bruni's translation of Xenophon: "Thus ends Xenophon's book *On Tyranny*, and M. C. wrote me, whom Leonardo of Arezzo translated from the Greek language into Latin."[42] The portolan chartmaker, Jacopo Maggiolo (d. *ca.* 1605), seems an early exponent of "the art of making the best of a difficult situation" (*l'arte di arrangiarsi*). After a fertile career producing charts from 1551 until 1573, Maggiolo gave no further signs of activity at Genoa until 1602. Out of nowhere, Jacopo reappeared that year and made a portolan chart conserved today in Milan. Corradino Astengo got on the case and noticed signs of scraping by a razor blade on the parchment below the date "1602." Astengo's deduction: Maggiolo may have pulled an old chart off a storage shelf in 1602 and quickly updated it by falsifying the year of its manufacture. If Maggiolo—or a subordinate at his request—did counterfeit the chart, he had a motive. Even though Maggiolo was likely old and infirm in 1602, he proved to the government of Genoa that he could still produce a chart as good as the ones he had made thirty years earlier. And if that was his ruse, it worked. The government continued to pay Maggiolo a salary until 1605 ([68], pp. 83–84).

Numerous members of the Renaissance clergy either wrote works or owned books. For some reason, this detective feels drawn to search for the clues that might indicate to what those clergymen were committed. A priest like Tommaso Baldinotti (1451–1511) in Florence focused on the quality of his handwriting and not the quality of his life. He wrote vernacular and Latin elegies in a clear humanist cursive hand, but he was hardly a moral paragon, engaging in bawdy discussions and amorous liaisons ([1], 2, p. 110a–b; [69], 5, pp. 493–95). A bishop like Pierre de Versailles (1380?–1446) seemed focused on using his noble and clerical status to pile up prestigious and remunerative benefices. Pierre accumulated those benefices as apparent rewards for services rendered but did little or nothing to provide pastoral assistance to his various flocks. While at the Council of Basel, Pierre was accused of backing Pope Eugene IV in order to become a cardinal. Eugene did trust Pierre sufficiently to make him part of an embassy to Constantinople from 1437–38, where Pierre gave public speeches and negotiated for a Council under papal patronage to reunite Catholic and Orthodox churches. Having outmaneuvered a parallel delegation from Basel, Pierre accompanied the Greek representatives on their journey to the West. As a proven supporter of papal monarchy and papal ambassador to Charles VII of France, Pierre won appointment to the bishopric of Meaux in 1439. Someone with noble roots in Versailles seems fated for attraction to the most powerful courts of the day. In addition to the discourses in Constantinople, Pierre preached on important occasions at the Council of Basel, including Jerome's feast day. Enea Silvio Piccolomini characterized his preaching as having "more chutzpah than eloquence." On another occasion, Pierre was said to have rushed into the midst of a meeting of the Council and stirred up "many animated altercations," suggesting the unseemly possibility of fisticuffs between assembled Church dignitaries.[43] One cannot help but wonder if the choice to have Pierre preach on Jerome was subconscious typecasting.

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[42] Udine, Biblioteca Arcivescovile, cod. 49, fol. 49, cited by [67], p. 120: "Explicit liber Xenophontis de tyrannide et M. C. me scripsit quem Leonardus Aretinus ex greco sermone in latinum convertit."

[43] [70], pp. 208–66, esp. p. 230, where Coville quotes Piccolomini's letter of 20 May 1437, "... plus animi habens quam eloquentiae." [70], p. 265, sees Pierre's commitment similarly: "Il dut être plutôt

Other clergymen balance the picture. Bishop Bernhard von Krayburg (1412–77) gathered a large and important library at his castle in Chiemsee (Salzburg). He was instrumental, for example, as a conduit for Bruni's letters to Germany, and he also owned codices with the marrow of Petrarch's humanist ideas. From that intersection between humanist and religious cultures, von Krayburg developed a personal affection for letters, a profound sense of spirituality and a firm commitment to reform the lives of his clergy ([71], p. 95; [38], 1, p. xxxiii). The efforts to study classical languages, collect books and reform the clergy that bishops like Bernard von Krayburg and Johann Roth made helped to reshape the ideal of episcopal sanctity in German-speaking lands ([55], p. 17; [47], pp. 397–98; [72], pp. 43–48). Battista Panetti, the Carmelite professor of theology who owned the Jerome codex that Dyson Perrins later acquired, collected humanist works, copied ancient inscriptions and probably learned Greek. While working in the *scriptorium* of his convent of San Paolo in Ferrara, Panetti developed his respect for books and his desire to protect them as valuable witnesses to the past. In building his collection, the Carmelite would gather individual fascicles, organize them in chronological order, bind them together, add a Latin epigram on the flyleaf and supply at least a partial table of contents for the new composite volume. Panetti's embrace of humanism led him to assume a public commitment as well, functioning as a secret counselor to Duke Ercole I (1431–1505), entering friendships with leading humanists like the Duke's orator, Ludovico Carbone (1435–82), and even giving an occasional speech himself. The tolerance of his book collecting is mirrored at least once in the tolerance of his public advocacy. When the local Dominican inquisitor, Paolo da Bologna, condemned a scholar to burning at the stake for a mistaken interpretation of Scotus, Panetti decried the unjust verdict ([73], p. 310; [62], pp. 183–92).

There are also practitioners of classical philology and humanist rhetoric who later took a serious interest in Scriptural study. Agostino Dati (1421–78) accepted an appointment by his bishop to lecture on the Scriptures in Siena, and Bartolomeo Fonzio (Della Fonte, 1446–1513) came out of retirement in part to do the same at the University of Florence. There may be manuscript books somewhere in the *Iter* that offer clues as to what those two learned humanists said in their lectures on sacred letters ([75]; [35], pp. 60–68; [76], pp. 810–13). But the choices speak for themselves, as do Panetti's tolerant choices in collecting books and decrying injustice. Tolerance, moreover, seems an appropriate note on which to end a discussion of Renaissance manuscripts as private property or common wealth. In the introduction to a translation of Vitruvius, Frank Granger observed that Vipsanius Agrippa (*ca.* 63–12 BCE) by his geography and Asinius Pollio (76 BCE-4 CE) by his library helped expand the horizons of literate Romans of the age of Augustus. Granger's characterization of the contribution of Asinius Pollio seems germane to this paper, for Granger follows Pliny and others in arguing that, because Asinius Pollio assembled the literature and science of the time in the first public library at Rome, he "made human genius a common possession (*res publica*)" ([76], p. xvii, citing Pliny *N.H.* 35.2.10; [77], pp. 244–45). Such an endeavor is shot through with tolerance, in the works collected and in the accessibility granted.

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ambitieux: il eut de nombreux benefices...." The "Sermo" for Jerome that Pierre de Versailles delivered at Basel in 1435 was conserved in cod. 118, fols. 330v-37v, of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Kaliningrad (Königsberg) but is now lost; see [1], 5, p. 167a–b.

Even a cursory journey through the vast resources of Kristeller's six volumes sensitizes one to the relevance of the tension between books as private property and books as common wealth. Abuse of borrowing privileges from a public library goes on. College professors, myself included, may scruple at times about our ability to withdraw a book for an entire semester or academic year, especially when we compare the amount of time we consult the book to the amount of time it sits idle on our bookshelf where it is unavailable to others. A public ethos might lead us to keep the book out of the library for the minimum amount of time. European libraries have long worked to develop other creditable solutions, from chaining their books to a reading stand in the Renaissance to creating in our own day authentic research libraries where books never leave the premises. Individuals still exploit their social prestige to gain special access to valuable books, and individuals still steal valuable books and sell them on open and black markets. Manuscript books are a marketable commodity, and the marketing of Renaissance manuscripts runs the capitalist gamut from crass speculation to responsible entrepreneurship. At its worst, it represents a violation of the public trust twice over: the theft of a book in the first place and the sale of the stolen book in the second. Moreover, in an effort to acquire resources of use to the public, institutions and libraries have had a difficult time resisting the temptation to deal with disreputable sellers.

There are various ways to measure the value of a manuscript. As a container for words and the thought that they express, books are material objects put together from bundles of parchment or paper and bound together inside a variety of covers. Some collectors have bought manuscripts solely for the quality of their material production. Such manuscripts become luxury items akin to a Rolex watch. One can tell the time with a far less expensive Timex watch, and, to the delight of John Cameron Swayze (1906–95), the Timex may well be "still ticking." Most surviving manuscripts from the Renaissance, however, originated in the study of the humanities, a curriculum that revolutionized adolescent education and held sway for centuries in the Western world. Their value was not calculated in terms of cost of production and profit from resale, but in terms of assembly of contents and assistance to an education that, thanks to that compendium of texts, should last a lifetime. A student who owned such a manuscript book could always consult its particular texts whenever professional or personal needs so dictated. When one student shared his compendium with another, the educational fruits were multiplied and humanist culture more widely diffused. Magnanimous scholars did not hesitate to label a manuscript the common property of themselves and their friends. Treating a manuscript as a common wealth fostered a sense of human genius as a common possession and a concomitant spirit of tolerance. A good adage, no matter what its source, was applicable to the experience of all human beings, and genuine human insight, even by pagan authors, had appropriate application to the good and holy living of Christians. Committed bishops who had learned the humanities promoted moral reform.

Given such interrelationships, it was vital that a scribe accurately copy texts into the manuscript. Alcuin of York (d. 804) composed a poem that he affixed as an inscription (*titulus*) in a monastic scriptorium to remind copyists of the importance of what they were doing and the accuracy with which they did it. For the Carolingian monk, copying books supplied a more valuable service than pruning vines, for, while the latter assisted only the physical appetite, the former served the human

spirit.[44] Nonetheless, and ironically, some of the most valuable Renaissance manuscripts from a material perspective are among the least valuable from a textual perspective. Perhaps more ironically, sloppy copying did not always reduce the value of the manuscript in the eyes of prestigious owners, leading one to wonder if they ever read the texts in the book. Ultimately, the history of each individual Renaissance manuscript illustrates the tension between private property and common wealth, for the book regularly moved from private to public ownership and back again. Battista Panetti made the Jerome text copied by Giovanni Grasso available to the Carmelite friars of his convent in Ferrara and, presumably, to learned visitors to that convent. After all, friars take a vow to hold all property in common. Charles William Dyson Perrins limited the circulation of the codex after he had purchased it to enhance his collection of illuminated manuscripts. The Getty Research Center, thanks to its vast resources, was once again able to make the codex available for wider consultation. Throughout its journey, the manuscript remained a container for the words and thought of human intelligence. For that reason, we too provide a service to the human spirit when we join Pliny in lionizing Asinius Pollio for establishing a public library in Rome. We thereby acknowledge human genius as our common wealth.

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[44] Alcuin, *Carmen* 94, in [78], p. 320. See also [79], p. 33; [80], pp. 35–36; and [81], pp. 34–35. I thank T. C. Price Zimmermann for suggesting Alcuin to me.

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Article

The Global Consequences of Mistranslation: The Adoption of the "Black but …" Formulation in Europe, 1440–1650

Kate Lowe

The School of History, Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, UK;
E-Mail: k.j.p.lowe@qmul.ac.uk

Abstract: This article investigates the genesis of a linguistic model occasioned by a mistranslation that was taken up in the Renaissance, and had an enduring global impact. I call this model the "black but…" formulation, and it is to be found in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout written texts and reported speech, in historical as well as literary works. It was modeled grammatically and ideologically on the statement "I am black but beautiful" often attributed to the Queen of Sheba in 1:5 of the "Song of Songs", and had a detrimental effect on how members of the early African forced diaspora were viewed by Renaissance Europeans. I argue that the newly adversarial nature of the phrase was adopted as a linguistic and cultural formulation, and introduced into Western European cultures a whole way of approaching and perceiving blackness or looking at black African people.

Keywords: Black; linguistic formulation; Renaissance; slave; "Song of Songs"

This article investigates the genesis and adoption in Renaissance Europe of a linguistic model that was to have an enduring global impact. The adoption of this model, first in Latin, and then in the major European vernacular languages, had a detrimental effect on how sub-Saharan Africans were viewed in the period 1440–1650, enshrining negative expectations about what black skin signified.[45] In the article, I examine what I am calling the "black but…" formulation, which is to

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[45] From the 1440s onwards, Europeans captured or purchased people from West Africa, and brought them to Europe as slaves [1]. For further information, see the collected volume by Earle and Lowe. My usual disclaimer applies: I am using the phrases "black" and "white," and "black Africans" and "white Europeans," as constructs. For a sense of the wide range of ways in which black Africans were categorised after they arrived in Europe, see [2].

be found in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout written texts and reported speech, historical as well as literary works. It must have been modelled grammatically and ideologically on a statement often attributed to the Queen of Sheba in 1:5 of the Biblical book called the Song of Songs, the Song of Solomon or the Canticle of Canticles (also known by its Latin name as the Cantica Canticorum) in the Old Testament of the Bible.[46] The Song of Songs is a collection of intense love lyrics between a man and a woman, resembling those found in ancient Egyptian collections. The propriety of including the Song of Songs in the Bible was questioned from the start (and there has been more fuss in the last century) but it has been accepted as canonical by both Jews and Christians. There have also been many different theories about how the Song of Songs should be interpreted: is it allegorical (the Lord's love for Israel or Christ's love for his Church), dramatic (the shepherd's courtship of the Shulammite maid), literal-historical (a celebration of human love or a repertoire for weddings), cultic or ritualistic or finally parabolic or typological in terms of certain topics of Israelite theology ([4], p. 209)?

The relevant statement was translated from Hebrew into Latin as "Nigra sum sed formosa" (I am black *but* beautiful [my italics])[47] whereas, in fact, this is a mistranslation from the Hebrew, and the translation should read: "Nigra sum et formosa" (I am black *and* beautiful [my italics]).[48] The relevant Hebrew word here is ו (*vav*), which has a slightly larger range than "and," but effectively in this context does just mean "and." So one word has been changed here, with the result that the whole meaning of the phrase has been utterly altered; instead of the descriptive or factual "I am black and beautiful," the Queen of Sheba is made to justify or explain her beauty, as though a black skin were in itself a barrier to beauty. What I am going to argue is that not only has the whole meaning of this phrase been changed, but that the newly adversarial nature of the phrase was adopted as a linguistic and cultural formulation. This act of mistranslation introduced into Western Europe cultures a conveniently fixed, but pejorative way of approaching and perceiving blackness, and of looking at black people, which effectively enshrined an acceptance of low expectations in relation to the attributes and capabilities of sub-Saharan Africans.

In order to understand the context, it is necessary to investigate in a very summary fashion the critical area of biblical translation up to the advent of printing in the fifteenth century, focusing on translations of this particular verse from the Song of Songs. The Hebrew Bible has the neutral word ו which is best translated here by "and." The Septuagint, which is often abbreviated by the Roman numerals LXX, is the Greek translation of the Old Testament; the translation of the Song of Songs is usually assumed to have been completed by 100 BC, probably in Alexandria. It is generally agreed by Old Testament scholars that the translation aimed to be as literal as possible, prioritising the sacrality of the original over fluency or clear understanding ([7], p. 20). The Septuagint has the Greek word καὶ (meaning "and" in both classical and patristic Greek, with a larger range in classical Greek) in 1:5 ([8], 2, p. 261). I should like to stress again that the semantic range of both ו

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[46] On pre-Renaissance interpretations of blackness in relation to the Song of Songs, see [3], pp. 16–22.

[47] ([5], 9, p. 180): "nigra sum sed formonsa [*sic*]."

[48] For another mistranslation in the Song of Songs relating to skin colour, see [6], p. 20. Braude suggests that in the same verse the Hebrew word שחור (*shahor*), meaning "black and burnt," had been incorrectly interpreted by ancient Greek, Latin and vernacular translators to be a permanent rather than a temporary black skin; he posits that this might have been "an innocent scribal error."

and καὶ is larger than "and," and both could in certain cases mean other things, but they could not mean "but." So the straightforward meaning of this verse in the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Septuagint is clear: "I am black and beautiful."

However, the Vulgate, that is the Latin translation of the Bible made by Jerome in the fourth century AD, instituted the use of the Latin word *sed* meaning "but" into the Song of Songs, 1:5. Jerome translated the Song of Songs over a few days in 398 AD. There had been previous Latin translations of the Bible (known collectively as the Vetus Latina), taken from the Greek Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew original, but they had been "piecemeal, inelegant and sometimes unreliable" ([9], p. 790). Jerome spent twenty years overall on his version, which was finished in 405 AD. For his translation of the Old Testament, he went back to the original Hebrew and Aramaic, and his proclaimed purpose was to render the sense of a passage rather than to provide a literal rendition of the words. Assuming that Jerome's knowledge of Hebrew was sufficiently good for him not to have mistaken the range of the word ו, for him there must have been an opposition between "black" and "beautiful," so he rendered the phrase: "I am black but beautiful," and the "black but …" formulation entered the Western European repertoire.

There is one additional point I should like to make here. Before Jerome made his new translation direct from the Hebrew, he had also revised the translation of the Song of Songs of the Vetus Latina, on the basis of the Greek text. This Latin translation survives in complete form in only one manuscript, although according to Peter Dronke "it was also widely known through quotations and through its use in the liturgical office and mass of the Virgin Mary" ([9], p. 236). In this earlier translation, Jerome rendered the relevant part of Song of Songs 1:5 into Latin as "Fusca sum et formosa" ("I am *dark and* beautiful" [my italics]), a far cry from his later translation, both in implicit and explicit meanings ([10], p. 19). Given that Jerome must have made a conscious decision to change the meaning of the verse in two ways—in terms of general aspect or skin colour from "dark" to "black," and in terms of sense from "and" to "but"—and given that it is certain he was aware of the choice in front of him, it may be that there is an opportunity here to hypothesise and maybe even to reconstruct why and how he moved from one translation to the other.[49] However, it is notoriously difficult to translate the myriad meanings associated with the vocabulary of colour between one period and another, and Jerome may not have intended "black" to indicate a black skin rather than a dark one. Whatever his intention, these two changes were to be momentous in their consequences for Africans in Renaissance Europe and globally.

Although this is a gross and rushed simplification of the extremely complicated and nuanced history of early biblical translation, for the purposes of this article and my argument it seems clear that it was Jerome in the fourth century who set up the opposition or contrast between blackness and beauty, and that the reasons for its existence should therefore be sought in his attitudes and surroundings.

It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the Vulgate, which in the course of the Middle Ages became the only Latin translation of the Bible to be used. In the fifteenth and

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[49] This sort of opportunity is relatively rare, but unfortunately it lies outside the scope of my research. Compare [11], p. 148: "Colour terminology is another example of how complex it is to ascertain referential and associative meanings and then to convey these into another language."

sixteenth centuries, with the advent of printing, the Vulgate's canonical status, and belief in the "truth" of its message, became ever more fixed. This Latin translation of the Bible (known as the Gutenberg Bible after its place of publication) was the first book to be printed in Europe, in late 1455 or early 1456. So the fact that it contained the words "Nigra sum sed formosa" (I am black but beautiful) meant that the adversarial opposition of the two words "black" and "beautiful" was sanctioned and further enshrined. Perhaps even more damagingly for sub-Saharan Africans in Renaissance Europe, the waves of European vernacular biblical translations unleashed by print all followed Jerome's Vulgate and perpetuated the mistranslation.

Simultaneously, many of these vernacular translations were seen to codify previously fluid languages and to become the carriers and transmitters of those languages. For example, although there had been a whole swathe of previous German translations of the Bible, starting with one issued by Johann Mentelin at Strasbourg before 27 June 1466, it was Martin Luther's translation that set the mould ([12], p. 46). Not only did it follow the Vulgate in its rendition of the Song of Songs 1:5: "Ich bin Schwarz, aber gar lieblich," but it also became one of the foundational texts of the German language, and consequently its grammatical constructions and linguistic turns acquired classic status ([13], p. 669). The same set of circumstances can be traced in England.[50] There were several translations of the Vulgate into English before the King James Version of 1611, which is still considered by many Protestants to be the standard version. One of the most famous was by the translator and Catholic martyr, William Tyndale, but he was killed before he had translated the Song of Songs. The King James Version was translated by six teams of Protestant scholars but it has not been possible to find out who exactly of the team translated any particular passage. The group that translated the Song of Songs was based in Cambridge, and consisted of Edmund Lively, Dr. John Richardson, Dr. Laurence Chaderton, Francis Dillingham,Thomas Harrison, Dr. Roger Andrewes, Dr. Robert Spalding and Dr. Andrew Byng ([16,17]). The relevant passage reads precisely: "I am black but comely" (comely is a slightly old-fashioned word meaning "pleasant to look at"), but the translators (of the King James version) have also added a resumé of the main points of the chapter at the top, which reads: "1. The church's love unto Christ. 5. She confesseth her deformity." The twinning of the concepts of blackness and deformity was normal in some circles, but this biblical instance seems not to have been noticed by scholars interested in attitudes towards sub-Saharan Africans.[51] The team of translators was specifically directed to rely upon five earlier English translations whenever there was disagreement, one of which was Tyndale's. The King James Version is hailed as a landmark composition in the English language, and was extraordinarily influential. Its effect on the language can be observed in a multitude of other texts. For example, the English translation of Song of Songs, 1:5 resurfaces in an obviously related but upside-down form in the English translation by Paul Isaiah of Sebastian Münster's work, *The Messiah of the Christians and the Jewes*, of 1655. In "A Disputation of a Christian with an Obstinate Jew," the Christian says: "For you Jewes have a peculiar colour of face, different

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[50] Although further investigation has been lacking, it has been noticed that the four major Renaissance English translations of the Bible all translated ׳ as "but" ([14], p. 50; [15], p. 111).

[51] For the perceived link between blackness and deformity in Renaissance England, see [18], pp. 94–95.

from the form and figure of other men; ... for you are black and uncomely, and not white as other men" ([19], pp. 1–2).[52]

The history of the translation of the Vulgate into the vernaculars of Southern Europe, and their printing, is obviously relevant here. The Vulgate was translated into Italian and appeared in print very early on, so (for example) there are several printed editions of the whole Bible in Italian from the 1470s.[53] Almost immediately, printed Latin translations of individual books, accompanied by Italian commentaries, also appeared.[54] And while a complete translation of the Bible into Spanish did not appear in print until 1569 (even though there had been prior printed translations of the Old Testament in Spanish),[55] individual books of the Bible, including the Song of Songs, were printed in Latin, and commented on in Spanish, in the later fifteenth century ([23], p. 127; [24]) However, it is worth noting that there was no translation of the whole Bible—or of a testament—into Portuguese in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, although at least one individual book, Ecclesiastes, is now known to have been translated, so in the case of Portuguese, the linguistic model must have come directly from the Latin Vulgate.[56]

In my second section, I should like to turn to fifteenth and sixteenth-century non-biblical usages of this formulation in historical and literary works. Although I shall concentrate on vernacular examples, the oppositional phrasing that contrasted black skin to positive qualities appeared in many Renaissance Latin texts, both manuscript and printed. A good example is provided by the pen portrait in 1608 of the Congolese ambassador to Pope Paul V which appears in the manuscript diary of Giovanni Paolo Mucanzio, one of two papal masters of ceremonies. Ne-Vunda's description opens with a statement about his skin colour ("black of face and skin"), which is then contrasted to a long list of excellent qualities ("*but* noble and seemly in appearance, and of sober habits and of great shrewdness and ability in negotiating ... pious, devout and most committed to the Catholic faith." [my italics])[57] The "black but ... formulation" worked by insisting that it was noteworthy or exceptional, although not impossible, for a black African to be in possession of these character traits.

The greatest concentration of black Africans in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe was in Portugal, and the "black but ..." formulation appears very frequently in Portuguese. Many of these non-biblical usages cluster around notions of civilised and noble behaviour, effectively forcing a consideration of how black Africans in the Renaissance could be "gentlemen." Black could be

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[52] I should like to thank Eva Johanna Holmberg for this reference.

[53] This includes those translated in 1471 and 1477 by Niccolò Mallermi. In [20], the editor Marino de Venezia has glossed the relevant verse: "Son negra quanto a lerrore: ma formosa et bella quanto a la verita" (sig. Bi r). See also [21], p. 93.

[54] Song of Songs 1:5 appears in Latin in [22], sig. Av.r with Italian commentary (Av.r-v). See also [21], p. 101.

[55] Wilson, 127.

[56] Tom Earle discovered a printed copy of Damião de Góis' translation of the book of Ecclesiastes into Portuguese ([25], p. 43).

[57] "Nigra facie et carne sed aspectu nobilis et decorus ac moribus gravis et magnae prudentiae ac dexteritatis in negotiando et … pius devotus et Catholicas religionis zelantissimus" ([26], p. 649. On Ne-Vunda [27], pp. 120–3).

juxtaposed successfully with many other normally "white" qualities. Peter Russell has analysed the descriptions in two Portuguese chronicles by Rui de Pina (*c*. 1450–1522) and João de Barros (1496–1570) of the 1488 visit by the Wolof prince of Senegambia known in Portuguese as "Bemoim" (elsewhere identified as Jelen, the *bumi* of Jolof) to King João II in Lisbon; they provide an excellent example of how a contradictory response to powerful and important sub-Saharan Africans could be couched in terms of the "black but …" formulation ([28], p. 198; [29]). Pina was present at Bemoim's visit; Barros had various sources for it. Pina praised Bemoim's impressive appearance and, rather surprisingly—as he had to speak through an interpreter—his oratory, which was considered one of the most fundamental Renaissance skills, thereby signalling that the black African prince had passed the test of entry to the Renaissance "club." In fact, therefore, either Bemoim's speech had been written by a Portuguese secretary or Pina was imagining a speech that never happened, a sort of symbolic speech that Bemoim would have given had he been able. As part of Pina's remit was to glorify João's deeds, especially his African deeds, it was necessary for him to invent a sophisticated and cultivated African prince who would in his very person reflect João's glory. But Pina revealed his inner struggle to categorise Bemoim when he wrote that "he did not seem a black barbarian *but* a Greek prince brought up in Athens," [my italics][58] and I believe the word "but" here is crucial, marking the contrast between [bad] black barbarian and [good] Greek prince, between blackness and nobility. For Pina, the colour of Bemoim's skin confusingly marked him as a barbarian while his oratorical skill induced classical comparisons. João de Barros reworded this sentiment and toned it down somewhat, but the message was similar.[59]

There are many other examples. The fifteenth-century Portuguese chronicler, Gomes Eanes de Zurara, writing of some "Moors" captured in "Guinea" by Antam Gonçalvez in 1441, declared "for though they were black, yet had they souls like the others."[60] Francisco Álvares, in his book of his journey to Ethiopia in 1520, *The Prester John of the Indies*, wrote of someone he met, Frey Mazqual: "Inspite of his blackness he was a gentleman," ("frei Mazqual … o qual em sua pretidão era gentil-homem") which is an opposition (black versus gentlemanly or black versus noble) that is quite common ([34], 1, p. 65; [35], 1, p. 13; [18], pp. 104–5). Álvares proceeded to elucidate *why* he believed this man was a gentleman, on the grounds of European behaviour, manner of speaking and manner of self-presentation: "he came up to us like a well born man, well educated and courteous. This gentleman had a very good led horse and a [handsome] mule on which he came, and four men on foot," that is, he spoke and acted in a gentlemanly fashion, and he owned the mounts and was surrounded by the servants that identified someone as a gentleman in Europe ([34], 1, p. 65). This list effectively meant that, according to Álvares, the "damage" caused by being black could be mitigated by the acquisition of the attributes of European civilisation, provided by a European education and observance of the conventions of European status indicators. The famous North African Muslim traveller and writer, al-Hasan al-Wazzan, renamed Leo Africanus after he was enslaved by pirates, given to Pope Leo X and "converted" to Christianity, wrote a description of Africa in the 1520s, which was translated into English by John

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[58] "Non pareciam de negro bárbaro, mas de príncipe grego criado en Athenas" ([30], p. 92).

[59] Barros remarked that Bemoim appeared not as a "principe barbaro … mas como podia ser hum dos senhores da Europa" ([31], fols. 30v–31v).

[60] "Ca pero negros fossem assy tijnham almas come os outros" ([32], 1, p. 55; [33], 7, p. 78).

Pory and published in London in 1600 ([36,37]). Here too one can find the "black but …" formulation effectively used in conjunction with the notion of being "noble" or a gentleman. Pory's translation of the passage on the town of Cabra in the kingdom of Timbuktu on the Niger read: "I my selfe am acquainted with Abu Bacr, sirnamed Pargama, the kings brother, who is blacke in colour, *but* most beautifull in minde and conditions" [my italics] ([38], 3, p. 826). This kind of statement can be read as a compliment about someone who has confounded normal expectations by overcoming the supposed disadvantage of being black. Black skin, according to this view, did not exclude other qualities and characteristics, but possession of a black skin certainly made them more worthy of comment ([18], p. 105).

This comment-worthiness was multiplied many times if the person in question were a slave, and therefore of lowly status. So in the anonymous Spanish poem *Coplas de como una dama ruega a un negro que cante en manera de requiebro* (*Verses of How a Lady Begs a Black Slave to Sing to Her*) of *c.* 1520, the slave Jorge remains "proper" even when the talk turns to sex, forcing the lady finally to comment that "*though* bay in colour, you have white manners" [my italics].[61] The word used is *mohíno* (black-faced, bay horse) and a recent editor of the poem, Jeremy Lawrance, believes that the lady, even though she wants to have sex with her slave, "cannot bring herself to call Jorge black" ([39], p. 92). Here it is clear that there are accepted white standards of behaviour, and that when black people attain or even (as here) surpass them, white Europeans often approach the topic through the "black but …" formulation.

Interestingly, some texts carried this further by analysing the degrees of gentlemanly behaviour displayed by certain sub-Saharan Africans. In the sixteenth-century work in heroic verse by Jerónimo Corte-Real, detailing the death of the sea-captain Manuel de Sousa de Sepúlveda in 1552, entitled *Naufragio e Lastimoso Sucesso da Perdiçam de Manoel de Sousa de Sepulveda, & Dona Lianor de Sá sua Molher & Filhos, Vindo da India para este Reyno na Nao Chamada o Galião Grande S. Ioão* (translated into English as *The Tragic History of the Sea*), published in Lisbon in 1594, the author described the *bano* of Luranga in Natal as being from "a truly noble family. They are the best-natured and most gentlemanly blacks ['negroes'] in all this land" [40].[62] This Portuguese author appears far more open than many other Europeans, but even he felt the need to stress the gentlemanly aspects of these particular Africans because their behaviour was considered so unusual.

It is thus not surprising to find the "black but …" formulation—a formulation starting from a negative set of assumptions about black skin and what it signified—being employed in a less supportive fashion. The sixteenth-century Franciscan lay brother from Sicily known as Benedetto il Moro (*c.* 1524–89), who was created the first black saint in Europe in 1807, was also boxed in by these oppositional terms ([43], p. 299). For instance, in a life of him written in 1623 by a fellow Franciscan Antonino di Randaczo, the "black but …" formulation was repeatedly used against Benedetto. In one paragraph, Randaczo managed three different permutations and I shall mention two of them here. In the first Randaczo wrote: "although they [Benedetto and his parents] were black, they were well-fed and of good habits ("di buoni costumi"), good Christians and fearful of

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61 "Aunque de color mohíno / la plática tienes blanca" ([39], pp. 75 and 92).
62 Translated into English in [41], p. 283; also see [42] pp. 229–45.

God." This formulation "although he was/they were black" ("benchè fosse/fossero negri") is to be found everywhere in late fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italian sources. A few lines further on, Benedetto's father Christofaro is described in almost the same terms as the African prince Bemoim: "he was not thought of as a black slave *but* as any respectable and virtuous person" [my italics] ([44], p. 125).[63] The concern with status makes itself felt again. All these examples show that the writer/hagiographer believed that being black was in general an impediment to a whole range of good behaviours and esteem indicators, and that to be black *and* to earn the respect of white Europeans was an enormously difficult task only attainable by an exceptional few. Randaczo's biography is a very informative text, which not only details the many indignities and insults Benedetto was forced to endure on account of being black, but also displays clearly the prejudices of the author.

Finally I should like to consider for a while the notion of black Africans and beauty/ugliness. In literary texts, the "black but ..." formulation can also be found being applied to notions of beauty, that is, in a very close manner to the original Vulgate translation ([45], pp. 1–14). So, for example, Gomes Eanes de Zurara could comment on a fourteen-year-old black girl: "she had well formed limbs, and even reasonable presence, given that she was from Guinea." ([32], 2, p. 259).[64] Of course, the sexual overtones of this remark cannot be discounted, especially from a writer who at other points is not neutral in his descriptions of Africans. But the reason I originally became interested in the "black but ..." formulation is because of the apparent contradiction in fifteenth and sixteenth-century documents and texts between writers who decried and disparaged sub-Saharan Africans as "ugly" and those who described them as "beautiful." I feel I should stress that many Africans were singled out on account of their beauty—their physical attraction was noticed and commented upon, certainly in Italy, the country I work on and know best. A typical example here would be the 1487 description of a black slave in Filippo di Matteo Strozzi's Neapolitan record book: "a little black male slave, about 11 years old, who is as beautiful as it is possible to say."[65] Once again, the possible sexual overtones of this remark cannot be excluded. But appreciative comments were made about black men and women, and boys and girls, in an absolutely freestanding manner, outside the negative straightjacket of the "black but …" formulation. On the other hand, much more common are references of the following, and now very familiar, sort. D. Teodósio, the Duke of Bragança in the mid sixteenth-century, had a black jester and musician called Jácome Feio. *Feio* means ugly, and this type of depreciative nickname was very common for Africans in Renaissance Europe. Jácome was described as "black *but* very witty," [my italics] as though it were unlikely that he would or could be witty if he were black ([47], p. 195, number 540).[66]

The aim of this article has been to show how a particular linguistic formulation invented by Jerome in the fourth century for his new translation of the Song of Songs 1:5 "I am black but

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[63] "[N]on era reputato come scavo negro ma come qualsivoglia persona respetata et virtuosa."

[64] The Portuguese reads: "na qual havia assaz boa postura de membros e, ainda, presença razoável para guiné [que era]," [33], 2, p. 495. On Zurara, see [46], pp. 261–5.

[65] Florence, Archivio di stato, Carte Strozziane, serie V, 47, Ricordanze verde HH, fol. 76r: "uno schiavotto nero d'anni 11 nel circha, lo quale è bellissimo quanto si possa dire". I should like to thank Amanda Lillie for this reference.

[66] "Este charamela era negro, mas muito discreto." See also [48], p. 188.

beautiful" led in Renaissance Europe to a conceptual framework in which there was a formulaic antagonism between blackness and positive qualities. The formulation led to an acceptance of low expectations in relation to black people, which translated globally into a recipe for misery. The commencement of the slave trade from West Africa which brought tens of thousands of enslaved sub-Saharan Africans to Europe in a forced diaspora from the 1440s onwards coincided with the advent of the printing press, the Vulgate becoming pre-eminent among printed editions of the Bible, and the many new vernacular translations of the Bible which codified European languages in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. So at a moment when enslaved sub-Saharan Africans were arriving in large numbers in Europe for the first time, Jerome's formulation on blackness seemed to offer the literate a clear linguistic model for simultaneously adverting to the disadvantages of being black, and for allowing the possibility that a favoured few black Africans could, rather surprisingly, have positive attributes. I hope I have shown some of the myriad ways in which white writers across Western Europe fixed upon this formulation and tinkered with it, but left clear its essential elements. A solitary act of mistranslation centuries before multiplied in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into a linguistic commonplace that made normal an antagonism between blackness and the accepted goals of European society (such as nobility or beauty), raising the stakes for any black African seeking acceptance or integration. And at a stroke, the lives of the vast majority of early diasporic enslaved sub-Saharan Africans were made much more complicated and difficult.

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Article

The *Confessions* of Montaigne

John Jeffries Martin

Department of History, Duke University, Durham, NC 27708, USA;
E-Mail: john.j.martin@duke.edu

Abstract: Montaigne rarely repented and he viewed confession—both juridical and ecclesiastical—with skepticism. Confession, Montaigne believed, forced a mode of self-representation onto the speaker that was inevitably distorting. Repentance, moreover, made claims about self-transformation that Montaigne found improbable. This article traces these themes in the context of Montaigne's *Essays*, with particular attention to "On Some Verses of Virgil" and argues that, for Montaigne, a primary concern was finding a means of describing a self that he refused to reduce, as had Augustine and many other writers before and after him, to the *homo interior*.

Keywords: Montaigne; self; confession; prayer; repentance; interiority; sexuality; sincerity

Montaigne occupies a salient, even a privileged place in the history of the self. His *Essays*—begun in 1571 and revised almost continuously down to the time of his death in 1592—constituted, after Augustine's *Confessions*, the single most important work of introspection prior to Descartes and Rousseau.[67] Yet, as a form of self-representation, Montaigne's work is particularly complex. The *Essays*, after all, lack not only the philosophical rigor found in, say, Descartes or Locke; they also lack the narrative form familiar to us in the works of Augustine and Rousseau. Montaigne insists that he can only make sense of himself through "*essais*," efforts at developing a portrait of who he is under his different aspects, in various associations, in fluctuating moods. Thus, Montaigne does not organize his *Essays*, despite their autobiographical patina, around a central event. He rejects a narrative and places in its stead what might almost appear to be a series of discontinuous fragments, moving us not seamlessly but with some puzzlement from

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[67] On this genealogy, see *inter alia*, [1–4]. Citations to the *Essays* are given first to the French text edited by [5] and then to Frame's translation [6].

topic to topic: from (to give what appears to be an especially random ordering) "Sumptuary Laws" to "Sleep" to "The Battle of Dreux" to "Names" to "The Uncertainty of our Judgment" to "War Horses." And so it is with his life as well. There is no (or little) chronology here, only different experiences captured in relation to various subjects that enabled Montaigne to explore both the world and himself. The *Essays*, in short, are self-consciously fragmented—a "bundle of so many disparate pieces," as Montaigne describes them ([5], p. 758; [6], p. 574).[68]

But what are we to make of this strange, at times meandering self-representation? Oddly, despite the strangeness of the form of the *Essays*, scholars have tended to read his work as a kind of bridge from the medieval to the modern self, finding in Montaigne adumbrations of the bourgeois individual. If Augustine desired to make himself known to God, then Montaigne struggled to make himself known to man. The eminent literary historian Erich Auerbach, for instance, famously characterized the *Essays* as "the first work of lay introspection" ([1], p. 308). And, if Descartes, who read Montaigne with great care, would seek to find a defining internal feature of what made him who he was and he located this in the *res cogitans*—the thing within each of us that doubts and thinks—Montaigne appears to gesture towards this sense of interiority with his notion of "*une forme maistresse*." "There is no one," Montaigne writes in his essay "Of Repentance," "who, if he listens to himself, does not discover in himself a pattern all his own, a ruling pattern, which struggles against education and against the tempest of the passions that oppose it" ([5], p. 811; [6], p. 615). Much in Montaigne, therefore, seemingly points towards his role in the shaping of modern identities. As the philosopher Charles Taylor has written, "Montaigne served as a paradigm figure to illustrate another way in which Augustinian inwardness has entered modern life, and he helped to constitute our understanding of the self" ([3], p. 184).

In this essay I examine Montaigne's notion of the self not in relation to the forms of identity that developed over the following centuries but rather in relation to his own time by attending in particular to his deeply ambivalent attitude towards confession. For Montaigne's view of confession stood in stark contrast to the predominant views of both Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. In general Montaigne's contemporaries viewed confession—along with the attendant practice of repentance—as capable of effecting a transformation or an amelioration of self. Yet throughout the *Essays* Montaigne pushes back against this view. He veers away from confessing in a religious sense; he refuses to repent; above all he does not believe he can change himself in some fundamental sense, even as he self-consciously develops a different way of telling the truth about himself. As a result, the way Montaigne talks about himself offers an ethics of identity that challenged the repressive mechanisms of both Church and State in early modern Europe. Indeed, as the literary scholars Virginia Krause and Reinier Leushuis have recently argued, Montaigne's ambivalence towards confession constituted a self-conscious rejection of the external pressures men and women faced from the late Middle Ages on to reveal themselves to the authorities—both secular and religious—through confessing. For Montaigne, so these authors argue, self-revelation should not be forced, but voluntary; and they relate Montaigne's mode of self disclosure to *parrhesia*, the Greco-Roman practice of speaking freely about oneself that Foucault examined with great insight in his *History of Sexuality* [7–9]. There is much about Krause's and

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[68] "Of the resemblance of children to fathers".

Leushuis's framing that I find compelling, especially given that Montaigne was explicit in how horrified he was by the ways in which confession was a practice of violence, not only in the torture chamber ([5], pp. 366–369; [6], pp. 264–266)[69] but also in the Wars of Religion that ravaged France at his time. At the same time, I wish to suggest that Montaigne's ambivalence towards confession stemmed also from his anthropology: his fundamental belief that we are not easily reformed or transformed and, in this sense too, he broke with the Christian idealism of both Protestants and Catholics who continued to insist that faith and grace—in various configurations—could indeed lead to a transformation of the inner self or a fundamental change in character. Nonetheless, Krause and Leushuis are correct to insist that, for Montaigne, the self was not merely subject to authority. It was not, that is, something to be disclosed purely in the courtroom or the confessional—locations in which it was bound to be distorted. To the contrary, Montaigne's ability to know himself and to describe himself was an exercise in a form of sincerity that did not seek to conform to power but rather to challenge it. His basic understanding of his identity and his approach to self-revelation were closely connected, in my view, to his compassion and his cosmopolitanism as well as to his hatred of torture, of witch-trials, and of the violence unleashed by both Catholics and Calvinists over the matter of confession.

To be sure, there are frequent moments in the *Essays* in which Montaigne appears to confess, albeit in a decidedly secular or lay fashion. After all, at times, Montaigne seems to want to tell everything, even at the risk of making his readers uncomfortable. Famously, Montaigne's book is a text (often a polemical text) against masking, against dissimulation, against hypocrisy. And it is fitting that Montaigne opens his book with a claim to sincerity: "*C'est ici un livre de bonne foy*," he writes in his brief address to the reader, adding "I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice, for it is myself that I portray" ([5], p. 3; [6], p. 2). Montaigne returns frequently to the claim that he has nothing to hide. "I have an open way…I do not refrain from saying anything, however grave or burning" ([5], p. 792; [6], p. 600).[70] "A generous heart should not belie its thoughts; it wants to reveal itself even to its inmost depths (*jusques au dedans*)" ([5], p. 647; [6], p. 491).[71] "I like to see people speak up bravely among gallant men, and to see the words go where the thought goes" ([5], p. 924; [6], p. 705).[72] And these gestures are confirmed, it seems, by Montaigne's anti-rhetorical essay "On the Vanity of Words" ([5], p. 305–307; [6], pp. 221–223).

At first, therefore, Montaigne's language seems to reflect what we might even describe as an increasing emphasis placed on expression, on openness, on sincerity [10]—ideals that constituted a powerful countercurrent in a culture that was largely characterized by dissimulation [11,12]. In a fundamental sense this current had been fed by the religious ideals of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Certainly, the idea that one should either express or be able to express openly what one believed or felt in one's heart had become central to both Protestant and Catholic thinkers in this era. "Our talk must be sincere," Calvin wrote, "that it may be the very image of an upright mind" ([13], Psalm 12:3). And, from the late Middle Ages on, the Catholic doctrine of

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[69] "Of conscience".

[70] "The useful and the honorable".

[71] "Of presumption".

[72] "Of the art of discussion".

confession had made self-disclosure an essential component of the sacrament of penance and of one's reconciliation with the Church. Moreover, by the late sixteenth century, this confessional ideal had taken even deeper roots in Catholic Europe and likely contributed in significant ways to a more generalized notion of the value of self-revelation, not merely to one's priest but also to one's loved-ones, friends, and neighbors. Concern for expression, therefore, was not merely religious; it also spilt over into what was an emerging ideal of sincerity in early modern culture—an ideal that was frequently evoked in this period to critique a political culture that appeared to many to discourage any form of honest speech, especially when addressing one's prince or superiors or even fellow courtiers. Not surprisingly, there are even moments in the *Essays* in which Montaigne uses the language of confession to describe his desire to make himself known to the world. In the essay "Of Presumption," he even refers to his writing itself as a form of confession ([5], p. 653; [6], p. 495). Yet, while Montaigne rails against hypocrisy and dissimulation, his view of confession is deeply ambivalent; indeed he largely rejects both the act of confession itself and the claim of repentance that often accompanied it as incapable of making sense of his experience.

Confession is a central theme in Montaigne's essay "On Some Verses of Virgil." While most scholars have attended to the erotic surfaces of this essay, which provides a disarmingly frank account of his *amours*, Montaigne attempted here not only to reflect on his love affairs but also to probe the limits of confession itself. He had already signaled a certain skepticism towards the notion that prayers could be pure or that repentance could be transformative. "I rarely repent," Montaigne had declared in his essay "Of Repentance" ([5], p. 806; [6], p. 612). But that "On Some Verses of Virgil" also constitutes an important discussion of confession becomes clear when, early in the essay, he uses the word "confession" or "confess" six times in as many paragraphs ([5], p. 845–846; [6], pp. 642–643).

What Montaigne means by confession in this essay is by no means obvious. Certainly, his confession is deeply layered. It is a confession simultaneously of his youthful pursuits of the pleasures of the body (forgiven already by Montaigne to himself because they were, he claims, pleasures sought under conditions of honesty) and of his now mature, even aging pursuits of the memory of pleasure. He is clearly not confessing to reform his youth. He is explicit about this. His recollection of his *plaisirs* is an important solace. He not only does not condemn his thoughts; he savors them. They rescue him from his melancholia. They are part of who he is—who we all are, even if we deny that this is the case. He had been particularly clear about the fact that confession is not transformative in his essay "On Repentance," where, with considerable irony, he condemns those older men who now claim to be pure: "I hate that accidental repentance that age brings. The man who said … that he was obliged to the years for having rid him of sensuality had a different viewpoint from mine." "I shall never," Montaigne adds, "be grateful to impotence for any good it may do me…Youth and pleasure in other days did not make me fail to recognize the face of vice in voluptuousness; nor does the distaste that the years bring make me fail to recognize the face of voluptuousness in vice. Now that I am no longer in that state, I judge it as though I were in it" ([5], p. 815; [6], p. 619).

Furthermore, Montaigne's views of confession are reflected also in his attitude toward prayer. As he tells us at the start of his essay "Of prayers," he says no prayer more often than "The Lord's Prayer" ([5], p. 318; [6], p. 230). And yet, in his discussion of prayer as in his discussion of

repentance, he recognizes that the mere utterance of pious words is no guarantee of the amendment of self. Too often he notes, "we pray out of habit and custom…all in all, it is only an act" ([5], p. 319; [6], pp. 230–231). And he is distressed that, in the wake of the Reformation, the sacred words of prayer have become almost too familiar and are used too coarsely, without a sense of the need for the proper internal state of the supplicant. "It seems, in truth," Montaigne writes at the conclusion of the essay, "that we use our prayers as a jargon, and like those who use holy and divine words for sorceries and magical effects, and that we count on their effect depending on the texture, sound, or sequence of the words, or on our bearing." The failure here, as in his discussion of repentance, is precisely the same: our failure to repent. "For with our souls full of lust, untouched by repentance or by any fresh reconciliation with God, we go and offer him these words that memory lends to our tongue, and hope from them to derive expiation for our sins" ([5], p. 325; [6], p. 236). Perhaps Montaigne, a Roman Catholic, had Calvin in mind. In the *Genevan Confession*, Calvin had written that "prayer is nothing but hypocrisy and fantasy unless it proceed from the interior affection of the heart" ([14], p. 29).

Confession, therefore, is neither a pious nor religious act for Montaigne. Rather it becomes a kind of brutal honesty about his own identity. Montaigne has "ordered himself" to dare say all that he can. "The diseases of the soul," he writes, "grow more obscure and stronger…That is why they must be handled often in the light of day, with a pitiless hand, be opened up and torn from the hollow of our breast" ([5], p. 846; [6], p. 642). Yet the matter is not only one of self-disclosure, it is also a matter of frank talk about sex, which is usually disavowed, hidden, disguised. Montaigne is perturbed by the hypocrisy of those who "send their conscience to the brothel but keep their countenance in good order" ([5], p. 846; [6], p. 643). And he declares in an exquisitely ironic passage that he will take a different path:

> In honor of the Huguenots, who condemn our private and auricular confession, I confess myself in public, religiously and purely. Saint Augustine, Origen, and Hippocrates have published the errors of their opinions; I, besides, those of my conduct. I am hungry to make myself known, and I care not to how many, provided it be truly. Or to put it better, I am hungry for nothing, but I have a mortal fear of being taken to be other than I am by those who come to know my name. ([5], pp. 846–847; [6], p. 643)[73]

Sexuality is a particularly rich field in which to explore the limits of confession as transformative; and "On Some Verses of Virgil" derive their importance, in part, from the way they illuminate Montaigne's notion of the self and what can be said about the self. Love-making, as Virgil describes it in his account of Venus and Vulcan, is especially arresting to Montaigne because it points to an important aspect of how we are in the world. We are overcome by desire and we are brought into peace in the embrace of another. The passage that occasioned the essay was from Book VIII of the *Aeneid*:

> Dixerat; et niveis, hinc atque hinc Diva lacertis
> Cunctantem amplexu molli fovet ille repente
> accepit solitam flammam, notusque medullas
> intravit calor, et labefacta per ossa cucurrit

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[73] "On some verses of Virgil".

non secus atque olim, tonitru cum rupta corusco

ignea rima micans percurrit lumine nimbus

…. …. …. … Ea verba loquutus

Optatos dedit amplexus, placidumque petivit

Conjugis infusus gremio per membra soporem.

[The goddess ceased to speak, and snowy arms outflung

Around him faltering, soft fondling as she clung.

He quickly caught the wonted flame; the heat well-known

Entered his marrow, ran through every trembling bone.

Often a brilliant lightning flash, not otherwise,

Split by a thunderclap, runs through the cloudy skies.

……   He spoke,

Gave the embraces that she craved; then on her breast

Outpoured at last, gave himself up to sleep and rest.] ([5], p. 849; [6], p. 645)

But, as Montaigne also notes, Virgil's verses were also Lucretius's. In the opening pages of the *De rerum natura*, Lucretius had called upon Venus to bring Mars into a state of peace, lines that Montaigne introduces by stating "What Virgil says of Venus and Vulcan, Lucretius had better expressed of a stolen enjoyment between her and Mars."

Belli fera moenera Mavors

Armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se

Rejicit, aeterno devinctus vulnere amoris…

Pascit amore avidos inhians in te Dea visus,

Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore:

Hunc tu Diva tuo recubantem corpore sancto

Circumfusa super, suaveis ex ore loquelas

Funde

[He who rules the savage things

Of war, the mighty Mars, oft to thy bosom flings

Himself; the eternal wound of love drains all his powers;

Wide-mouthed, with greedy eyes thy person he devours,

Head back, his very soul upon thy lips suspended:

Take him in thy embrace, goddess, let him be blended

With they holy body as he lies; let sweet words pour

Out of they mouth.] ([5], p. 872; [6], p. 664)

Montaigne, who had known Virgil almost his entire life, had first appreciated Lucretius in Dénis Lambin's 1563 edition of the poem (On Montaigne's readings of Lucretius, see [15]). In reading the poem, he recognized at once—so we learn from his own annotations—Virgil's reliance in his description of love-making on Lucretius. Montaigne finds Lucretius's language especially captivating. He praises it for its vividness, its naturalness. In part, his praise of the poem is part of a larger anti-rhetorical emphasis we find throughout the *Essays*. But it is also clear that Montaigne

finds in Lucretius something he admires even more. Lucretius's words are not "of air, but of flesh and bone," Montaigne writes, adding "elles signifient plus qu'elle ne dissent" ([5], p. 873; [6], p. 665). What Montaigne values, that is, is a language that is powerful, natural, and descriptive of the thing itself—he is not interested, he claims, in the false truths of the rhetoricians.

For many, of course, the discourse of sexuality in Europe at this time was the discourse of the confessional—at least in theory. And, in this sense, Montaigne's "On Some Verses of Virgil" might be read as a kind of counter-confession. He repudiates the idea that sex is in any way shameful. "What has the sexual act, so natural, so necessary, and so just, done to mankind, for us not to talk about it without shame and for us to exclude it from serious and decent conversation?" ([5], p. 847; [6], p. 644). This is an important move. Montaigne's language about sexuality celebrates its naturalness. He will talk frankly about it, because it is a fundamental part of who he is, who we all are. And it is not an act that is confined to marriage. "Marriage," he writes, "has for its share utility, justice, honor, and constancy; a flat pleasure, but more universal. Love is founded on pleasure alone, and in truth its pleasure is more stimulating, lively, and keen, a pleasure inflamed by difficulty" ([5], p. 854; [6], p. 649). But, despite these differences, there is in both cases, as Montaigne describes it, something profoundly natural about the body (not the soul) reaching out to another body. Montaigne sees this as a matter of balance, of the way he personally is. And he rejects the notion that the soul is superior to the body.

> May we not say that there is nothing in us during this earthly imprisonment that is purely either corporeal or spiritual, and that we do wrong to tear apart a living man, and that it seems somewhat reasonable that we should behave as favorably at least towards the use of pleasure as we do of pain....For it is indeed reasonable, as they say, that the body should not follow its appetites to the disadvantage of the mind, but why is it not also reasonable that the mind should not pursue its appetites to the disadvantage of the body. ([5], p. 893; [6], p. 681)[74]

Montaigne had similar misgivings about repentance. To be sure, Montaigne does not reject repentance entirely. For those sins that are out of character, by which "we are carried away by passion," one could repent and credibly promise not to commit them again. And in such cases, Montaigne adds, "vice leaves repentance in the soul, like an ulcer in the flesh" ([5], p. 806; [6], p. 612).[75] "But as for these other sins so many times repeated, planned, and premeditated, constitutional sins, or even professional or vocational sins, I cannot imagine that they can be implanted so long in one and the same heart, without the reason and conscience of their possessor constantly willing and intending it to be so. And the repentance which he claims comes to him at a certain prescribed moment is a little hard for me to imagine and conceive" ([5], p. 812; [6], pp. 616–617).

Repentance was not possible, that is, for those sins that are constitutional. For these sins, Montaigne maintains, the mind and one's desires have already consented. They are practiced over and over again; they are habitual. They are "rooted and anchored in a strong and vigorous will [and] cannot be denied." ([5], p. 808; [6], p. 613) It would be hypocritical to claim that one could

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[74] "On some verses of Virgil".

[75] "Of repentance".

repent of them, and be changed or reformed. For in such cases, "repentance is nothing but a disavowal of our will and an opposition to our fancies, which leads us about in all directions" ([5], p. 808; [6], p. 613).

Although Montaigne does not approve of the notion of repentance as a matter of personal reform, he does acknowledge the power of what we might call a social repentance in which a person who has transgressed against another seeks to set things right or make them whole again. In his essay "On repentance," Montaigne shares an especially revealing anecdote. While visiting a relative at Armagnac, a region just to the southeast of Bordeaux, Montaigne had met a peasant whom he calls simply "le larron," the thief. The peasant's story points to what we might see as a more archaic form of reconciliation, one that possibly predates the Christian emphasis on confession and repentance.[76] Born into poverty, the peasant found that he had to steal in order to survive. And he spent his life stealing from neighboring fields and estates. But now, Montaigne writes, "he is rich for a man in his station." And then Montaigne adds: "And to make his peace with God for his acquisitions, he says that he spends his days compensating, by good deeds, the successors of the people he robbed….Judging by his description, whether it is true or false, this man regards theft as a dishonorable action and hates it, but hates it less than poverty; he indeed repents of it in itself, but in so far as it was thus counterbalanced and compensated, he does not repent of it" ([5], p. 812; [6], p. 616).[77]

Montaigne is not saying that the thief was without guilt. But Montaigne appears to see the ethic of compensation exemplified by this peasant's story as in many ways superior to the ethics of so many around him, who confess their sins, even as they continue to slaughter one another. What difference do our confessions make, Montaigne seems to be asking, if we are not reformed? And how, he wonders, can our confessions reform us? For Montaigne, confession can be a form of self-disclosure. But it doesn't change us.

In a fundamentals sense, then, Montaigne's *Essays*, despite their open character, transcend the very practice of confession itself. From Montaigne's standpoint—and I do not think I am exaggerating here—the central problem with confession lay in its insincerity. To confess was to enter too easily into a claim of reform. Either this was a cheapened mode of reform—for example that of the old man repenting of his youthful excesses—or an unnecessary one. And Montaigne's public reflections on sexuality made this especially clear. For in his reflections on this subject, Montaigne was able to capture something of the experience of what it means, in a deep sense, to be human. This is the way I am, Montaigne writes. This is the way we all are. Perhaps if we are honest about our natures, we shall have less need to reform ourselves; and perhaps if we have less need to reform ourselves, we shall have less need to confess; and perhaps if we have less need to confess, we can be more generous and accepting of one another. Confession, in Montaigne's view, was tied not to reform of self but rather to self-knowledge.

This was a powerful lesson during the Wars of Religion in France, the horrifying, seemingly ceaseless conflict that haunts the *Essays*. And in these wars confession was prominent among the issues over which Catholics and Calvinists were polarized. For Catholics confession remained the

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[76] For an interesting perspective on medieval values of reconciliation, see [16].

[77] "Of repentance".

gateway to the sacrament of penance. Christians had been enjoined since the early thirteenth century to make an annual confession to their priests. But this was only the first step. They were also expected to approach this sacrament in a state of contrition (genuine sorrow for their sins) and a desire to reform; and then to carry out the penitential acts of satisfaction that the priest imposed. Within this sacrament, repentance was a two-fold process. It involved not only carrying out the penitential acts but, even more important, as the Council of Trent proclaimed not long before the outbreak of the French Wars of Religion, "sorrow of mind a detestation for sin committed with the purpose of not sinning in the future" ([17], Session XIV, Chapter 4). Repentance, in short, assumed that the individual Christians were capable of moral change—what Carlo Borromeo, the Archbishop of Milan, would call "la vera emendatione della vita" [18]. While rejecting both sacerdotal confession and satisfaction, Protestants nonetheless continued to emphasize not only the importance of repentance in the sense of contrition and transformation but also the necessity of confession, though not to a priest but directly to God. Calvin especially would make repentance central to the life of a Christian. To be sure, Calvin saw true repentance as "a special gift of God." Nonetheless, for Calvin and for his followers alike, repentance was understood as "a laying aside of the old, put[ting] on a new mind….a transformation not only in external works, but in the soul itself" ([19], Book 3, 3.6).

Another way of grasping Montaigne's view of confession is to contrast him with St. Augustine ([20], pp. 214–219). In his essay "On Presumption," Montaigne writes: "For the movements of my soul, I want to confess here what I am aware of" ([5], p. 633; [6], p. 480). To some degree this is an Augustinian gesture, since, for Augustine confession as a form of the recognition of one's shortcomings was the very opposite of presumption, which was a form of vainglorious posturing. Moreover, like Augustine, who had commented in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* that "*vita mea est confiteri te, domine*," ([21], Psalm 30) who held in short that his masterpiece *The Confessions* could not be disentangled from his life, Montaigne closely identified his book with his person: "I have no more made my book than my book has made me," he tells us in his essay "On Giving the Lie," adding, "a book consubstantial with its author, concerned with my own self, an integral part of my life; not concerned with some third-hand, extraneous purpose, like all other books" ([5], p. 665; [6], p. 504). Both authors, in short, were masters of forms of self-writing in which text and life were interwoven and at moments indistinguishable. Both were engaged in a form of self-examination.

Yet, in other ways, Montaigne departs sharply from Augustine. For the Bishop of Hippo as for many of his contemporaries confession was not only a focus on one's sins, it was also a form of praising God. And this is most decidedly not the case in Montaigne's *Essays*. To be sure, he uses the word "confess" frequently, but, apart from one particularly complex passage in which he does seem to have an explicitly religious idea in mind, he generally uses it in a legal rather than a theological sense. Confession was, for Montaigne, a form of admission to a crime or to a plan or to a thought more than a form of seeking amendment or improvement.

More decisively, Montaigne also rejects the cultivation of the narrative self for which Augustine's *Confessions* was the preeminent example, though remarkably this was a text that

Montaigne (who cites several other works by Augustine in his *Essays*) may not have known.[78] In the Augustinian narrative life takes on meaning around certain key turning points—conversion above all but also moments of contrition—and the individual was seen as a pilgrim on an earthly journey, whether one was aided by a priest, as in the Catholic tradition, or made this journey on one's own, as in the Protestant. Fundamentally the Augustinian self is represented within the framework of a narrative of grace. The *Essays*, by contrast, do not assume a narrative form; and Montaigne does not share Augustine's view that reform of self was possible. To the contrary, Montaigne believes he can best capture himself through a series of portraits over time, viewing himself in different circumstances and from varying perspectives.

"I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics" ([5], p. 1072; [6], p. 821).[79] In the *Essays*, Montaigne has, in fact, made himself his subject, with the curious result that he is both the observer and the observed. But he does not render this subject stable. To the contrary, the subject he observes is not constant. He compares his mind to a "runaway horse" that "gives birth to so many chimeras and fantastic monsters, one after another, without order or purpose, that in order to contemplate their ineptitude and strangeness at my pleasure, I have begun to put them in writing" ([5], p. 33; [6], p. 21).[80] "Others form man," he writes at the beginning of his essay "Of Repentance," adding, "I tell of him, and portray a particular one, very ill-formed…Now the lines of my painting do not go astray, though they change and vary. The world is but a perennial movement….I cannot keep my subject still. It goes along befuddled and staggering, with a natural drunkenness. I take it in this condition, just as it is at the moment I give my attention to it. I do not portray being; I portray passing…This is a record of various and changeable occurrences, and of irresolute and, when it so befalls, contradictory ideas: whether I am different myself, or whether I take hold of my subjects in different circumstances and aspects" ([5], p. 805; [6], pp. 610–611).[81] But the self is not only changeable, it is complex to know. "We are all patchwork, and so shapeless and diverse in composition that each bit, each moment, plays its own game. And there is as much difference between us and ourselves as between us and others. Consider it a great thing to play the part of one single man [Seneca]… In view of this, a sound intellect will refuse to judge men simply by their outward actions; we must probe the inside and discover what springs set a man in motion. But since this is an arduous and hazardous undertaking, I wish fewer people would meddle with it" ([5], p. 337; [6], p. 244).[82]

Yet Montaigne's decision to write, to take an inventory of himself in different moments and in different settings, helps him in the end get at something more fixed: "In modeling this figure upon

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[78] Several scholars (among them [22,23]) have argued that Montaigne did not know the *Confessions*, but others believe this unlikely. Auerbach's view that Montaigne must "have been aware at least of the existence and character of this famous book" is, in my view, compelling [1].

[79] "Of experience".

[80] "Of idleness".

[81] Following Brody [24], Strier, argues that this passage does not imply, as many scholars suggest, that Montaigne's view of the self as fluid or postmodern, but Strier's reading of "soit que je sois autre moymesme, soit que je saissie les subjects par autres circonstances et considerations" flattens the subtle interplay of a relatively fluid self embedded in Montaigne's French ([25], p. 218).

[82] "Of the inconsistency of our actions".

myself," he writes, "I have had to fashion and compose myself so often to bring myself out, that the model (*le patron*) itself has to some extent grown firm and taken shape. Painting myself for others, I have painted my inward self with colors clearer than my original ones….Have I wasted my time by taking stock of myself so continually, so carefully? For those who go over themselves only in their minds and occasionally in speech do not penetrate to essentials in their examination as does a man who makes that his study, his work, and his trade, who binds himself to keep an enduring account, with all his faith, with all his strength" ([5], p. 665; [6], p. 504).[83] It is in this dynamic sense—with a deep consciousness of the mutability, even the fluidity of self—that Montaigne claims he is setting forth nature not artifice: "Those of us especially who live a private life that is on display only to ourselves must have a pattern established within us by which to test our actions and, according to this pattern, now pat ourselves on the back, now punish ourselves. I have my own laws and court to judge me, and I address myself to them more than anywhere else" ([5], p. 807; [6], p. 613).[84]

In early modern Europe the ideas of St. Augustine proved enormously influential. Perhaps they resonated with a culture that scholars, ever since Burckhardt, have portrayed as deeply duplicitous—a period in which heretics, merchants, courtiers, and rulers learned to conceal their thoughts and feelings in the dangerous realm of social interactions that lay before them. In this era, as William Bouwsma has argued, "a relaxed and candid self-exposure now became dangerous; human intimacy was inhibited by the need for vigilance in masking the true self" ([26], p. 169). Moreover, like Augustine Renaissance men and women tended to think that the inner self was the more authentic self, and this perspective would enjoy a rich afterlife in the works of such writers as Descartes, Locke, and Rousseau.

Like many of his contemporaries, Montaigne was disturbed by the hypocrisies of his generation, and he warned his readers not to let themselves "be taken in by either the face or the words of one who takes pride in being always different outside and inside" ([5], p. 648; [6], p. 491).[85] But Montaigne did not believe that confession in the traditional religious sense could close the gap between one's interior and one's public life. If, that is, sincerity was for most of Montaigne's contemporaries the outward expression or avowal of one's internal beliefs and feelings—an ethic modeled on confession—for Montaigne, sincerity was a far more wrenching process: not the expression of one's beliefs or feelings but rather the portrayal of one's very being. This was Montaigne's most radical claim: "I want to be seen here in my simple, natural, ordinary fashion, without straining or artifice; for it is myself I portray" ([5], p. 3; [6], p. 2).[86] The image of portraiture, as we have seen, is fundamental. Moreover, even when Montaigne discusses his frankness, it is as though he is describing a kind of hydraulic process and not a sense of the need to express himself: "But besides the fact that I am made that way, I have not a supple enough mind to sidestep a sudden question and escape it by some dodge, or to invent a truth, or a good enough memory to retain something thus invented, and certainly not enough assurance to maintain it; and I put on a bold face because of weakness. Therefore I give myself up to being candid and always

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[83] "Of Giving the Lie".
[84] "Of repentance".
[85] "Of presumption".
[86] "To the reader".

saying what I think, by inclination and by reason, leaving it to Fortune to guide the outcome" ([5], p. 610; [6], p. 492).[87]

Did Montaigne's self-acknowledged poor memory make Augustine's solution to self-understanding inaccessible to him? For Augustine, it was memory above all that served as the reservoir of identity, even when memory failed ([27], Book 10). Perhaps, in the absence of a good memory, Montaigne had no choice but to portray rather than to express himself. Perhaps he had no choice but to write in order to discover himself. And on the subject of self, Montaigne's writings are strikingly ethnographic [28].[88] His gaze upon his self, that is, resembles his gaze upon others, both within his own culture and beyond. He reports and he portrays; he does not express in Augustinian fashion his thoughts or feelings, and he does not confess. Moreover, it seems that Montaigne's view of the relation of his internal to his external self differed from the views of most of his contemporaries. For, well before Montaigne was writing and, indeed, down to our own time, it has been a characteristic of many western thinkers to insist on the priority of what we might call the inner over the exterior self. We tend to believe, that is, that our thoughts and feelings precede our words and that a fundamental characteristic of our individuality lies in our ability to decide what to reveal and what to conceal about our inner lives, our "true" selves. Confession and self-expression more generally become, within this framework, a privileged site for such self-disclosure. In part, as the philosopher Charles Taylor has argued in his important book *Sources of the Self*, we are able to adopt this interpretation because "we think of our thoughts, ideas, or feelings as being 'within' us, while the objects in the world which these mental states bear on are 'without'" ([3], p. 111). But such a view of the self, as Taylor himself emphasizes, is not a universal one, found in all cultures. Rather it is a historical construct. And, indeed within western culture, this localization of the self as inward would, Taylor argues, find its inaugural voice in the writings of St. Augustine for whom the inner self became—no matter what roles we assume in public—the locus not only of moral agency, knowledge, and memory but also of identity ([3], pp. 129–35). But this very construct seems at least partially undone in Montaigne. It seems impossible, in Montaigne's case, to view the true self as the interior self alone. Floating outside Montaigne's inner self is the observant "I" of the author. Montaigne's self is, as Jean Starobinski has observed, a dialectical self, at once "*le 'je' observateur et le moi observé*" ([29], p. 65). Scholars disagree about the relation between these two aspects of Montaigne's identity. But it is by no means clear that Montaigne would have reduced his true identity to his inner self alone. He was—though this is a matter for further exploration—a man who lived most fully in his associations with others, whether he met them in books or in person. He was a man of broad associations. His identity was deeply social and, as his reflections on his sexuality and on his health make clear, deeply embodied. In the end, the way Montaigne was in the world transcended his inner self which, as a consequence, was only one aspect of his character. Perhaps this too was why Montaigne refused to confess. Confession, in the sixteenth century, was a disciplining strategy, a means of simplifying and sorting identities along religious and political lines. Montaigne is explicit that he cannot so simplify. "I give my soul

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[87] "Of presumption".
[88] I thank William M. Reddy for this reference.

now one face, now another, according to which direction I turn it." Montaigne writes in his essay "Of the Inconsistency of our Actions," and adds:

> If I speak of myself in different ways, that is because I look at myself in different ways. All contradictions may be found in me by some twist and in some fashion. Bashful, insolent; chaste, lascivious; talkative, taciturn; tough, delicate; clever, stupid; surly, affable; lying, truthful; learned, ignorant; liberal, miserly; and prodigal: all this I see in myself to some extent according to how I turn; and whoever studies himself really attentively finds in himself, yes, even in his judgment, this gyration and discord. I have nothing to say about myself absolutely, simply, and solidly, without confusion and without mixture, or in one word. ([5], p. 335; [6], p. 242)

Confession, whether in the courtroom or kneeling before a priest, was not a capacious enough practice to capture such a self. For Montaigne, confession, therefore, was both an inadequate and an overly reductive mode of self-disclosure. Inevitably he feared that he would be misunderstood in such a tribunal, just as he knew so many of his contemporaries were either wrongly convicted or made wrongfully to feel shame about their deeply human lives.

Acknowledgements

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Article

Saving Renaissance and Reformation: History, Grammar, and Disagreements with the Dead

Constantin Fasolt

Department of History and the College, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL 60637, USA;
E-Mail: icon@uchicago.edu

Abstract: *Renaissance* and *Reformation* used to serve historians as the main terms with which to refer to European history from roughly 1300–1600. Today those terms are commonly replaced with *early modern history,* and the periodization of European history into ancient, medieval, and modern periods itself is looking increasingly suspect. There are good reasons for those changes. But they obscure both the significance of disagreements dividing the living from the dead and the significance of grammar, in the fundamental sense of *grammar* advanced by Wittgenstein, for treating such disagreements. *Renaissance* and *Reformation* have the advantage of doing just the opposite: they confront us with both those disagreements and the significance of grammar. That makes them very much worth keeping.

Keywords: antiquity; Renaissance; Reformation; Humanism; early modern; Wittgenstein; grammar; historiography; philosophy of history

There is a peculiarity about the revision of historians that excludes them from the benefit of the common law that innocence must be assumed until guilt is proved. The presumption which is favourable to makers of history is adverse to writers of history. For history deals considerably with hanging matter, and nobody ought to hang on damaged testimony.

<div align="right">Acton</div>

1. Introduction

It seems that we cannot agree on what to call the history of Europe from roughly 1300–1600. We used to call it *Renaissance* and *Reformation*. Now we are not so certain what that means. Many

among us would rather call it *early modern history*.[89] This is more than merely giving a new label to a familiar thing. It is true, of course, that we can call a given thing by any word we please—but only if the thing is really given. There was an airline once called ValuJet. Then it ran into trouble. Now it is called AirTran.[90] That was a change in name that worked. But it is different with Renaissance and Reformation. The reason why some of us call Renaissance and Reformation *early modern history* is that we do not know exactly what we mean by *Renaissance* and *Reformation* because it is precisely *not* a given thing. But if it is not a given thing, it really does not help to change what we are calling it. We cannot even tell if we are merely changing labels or changing the subject, too. So far from being a matter of mere terminology, the change from *Renaissance* and *Reformation* to *early modern history* reveals a basic truth about our state of mind: we are confused about the subject we are studying.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. In Sections two to five I will explain what seem to me to be the reasons why we are confused. They stem from the desire to turn history into a science. In Section six I will make three observations that seem to me to follow from that explanation. One is that there are valid reasons for the shift from *Renaissance* and *Reformation* to *early modern history*. Another is that the same reasons call for something different from that shift. The third is that *Renaissance* and *Reformation* confront us directly with the significance of disagreements dividing the living from the dead and the significance of grammar for treating such disagreements. That makes them very much worth keeping.

2. Agreement on Criteria

First, then, what is the source of the confusion? For an answer to this question I think it helps to reduce two familiar accounts of Renaissance and Reformation to a bare minimum. One was given by the people who lived through Renaissance and Reformation. It is embedded in the very terminology of *Renaissance* (rebirth) and *Reformation* (reform).[91] That terminology refers to some kind of revival of antiquity. It places the emphasis on what was or should have been the same in Renaissance and Reformation as in antiquity. The other was given in the nineteenth century, most famously by Jacob Burckhardt (1818–97) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). Burckhardt and Hegel viewed Renaissance and Reformation as the beginning of the modern world (see [5,6]). They stressed whatever was the same in Renaissance and Reformation as in modernity.

Once it is put like that, we seem to face a contradiction. On one account, Renaissance and Reformation revived antiquity; on the other, they ushered in modernity. That raises obvious questions: which of these two accounts is true and in which sense? Could both of them be true? What *was* the same in Renaissance and Reformation as in antiquity? What *was* the same as in modernity?

[89.] See the appendix for some historical details about the usage of *early modern* since the nineteenth century and a rough illustration of the growing preference for the term since the end of World War II.

[90.] Or was, at least, called AirTran before it was bought out by Southwest Airlines in 2010. I thank William Walsh for pointing that out to me.

[91.] The literature is all too obviously huge. Standard surveys are by Ferguson [1] and Dickens [2]. For more recent work see Martin [3] and Schutte [4]).

These are exciting questions. They constitute a great temptation to jump directly into the fray of evidence and argument. But the temptation needs to be resisted until we know the answer to a more basic question, namely, how can we even tell that *anything* is the same as anything else in history?

That question is more difficult to answer than it may seem. The most convincing answer I have found was given by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). His answer works not just for history, but for any area of knowledge. It is that you can only tell that something is the same as something else if you have a criterion of identity, and a criterion of identity is something that you cannot have unless you speak a language and understand its grammar ([7], pp. 24–25; [8], nrs. 243–55, pp. 95^e–98^e).[92]

Here *grammar* means something different from syntax and morphology. It concerns the essence of what things are. It draws distinctions between things that infants do not know, and that we take for granted once we have mastered them as, for example, the distinctions between a color and a shape, a number and a sound, a memory and a dream, the present and the past, and "I" and "you." As Wittgenstein put it, "*essence* is expressed in grammar" and "grammar tells what kind of object anything is" ([8], nrs. 371 and 373, p. 123^e). If that is true, then without knowing grammar we cannot tell what kind of object *anything* is, let alone whether it is the same kind as another. Apart from grammar, talk of identity is meaningless.

You cannot very well agree with Wittgenstein on this unless you throw out most of the conceptual baggage with which scholars and scientists have been traveling for centuries, including not a few who made the so-called linguistic turn. Needless to say, that is difficult to do and I do not propose to do it here.[93] But the point about identity itself is not particularly complicated to explain.

Take one of Wittgenstein's favorite examples: the sentence "it is 5 o'clock on the sun" ([8], nrs. 350–1, pp. 118^e–19^e). On its face, that sentence looks like a straightforward statement of a certain fact. The meaning of the statement may not be exactly clear. But one thing seems to be certain: no matter what it means, it must be either true or false. Either it is 5 o'clock on the sun, or it is not. There seems to be no other possibility. The law of the excluded middle has to hold, no matter what we say.

This is what Wittgenstein denied. He asked, what does it mean to say, "it is 5 o'clock on the sun"? Someone might answer, "it means the same as 'it is 5 o'clock here on earth,' except that it is on the sun." That is an explanation by identity. It relies on the notion that something is the same as something else, namely, time on the sun as time on earth. But the explanation does not work. When we say, "it is 5 o'clock here," we know what we mean. We know because we know how to tell the time: by looking at a watch. Our watch is the *criterion* by which we tell what time it is. Our watch is not the only criterion that we could use, nor necessarily the most reliable. We can also use cellphones, radio announcements, computer clocks, the frequency with which some atoms oscillate, and the position of the sun of course. But the important point is this: regardless of *which* criterion we use, we know what "5 o'clock" means only because we have *some* criterion on which we are agreed.

[92.] For an introduction to the significance of criteria see ([9], pp. 3–125, and [10], pp. 159–96).

[93.] I have found the most effective guidance in [9–15], and the writings of Rush Rhees (1905–89), Norman Malcolm (1911–90), Georg Henrik von Wright (1916–2003), and D. Z. Phillips (1934–2006).

That makes a criterion something radically different from data or evidence. It is neither a given fact nor something that you can observe. It is established by agreement, and the agreement is embedded in the language we have learned to speak. As Wittgenstein put it, "it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life" ([8], nr. 241, p. 94ᵉ). The criterion we use to tell the time of day is but one tiny and specific part of that agreement. Without such an agreement, we could have no criterion. Without such a criterion, we could not make sense of "5 o'clock."

That is precisely the condition in which we would find ourselves if someone were to say, "it is 5 o'clock on the sun." We would not know what sense to make of that expression. We have no criterion for the time of day on the sun. We have no idea what "5 o'clock on the sun" is supposed to mean—let alone whether it is the same as "5 o'clock on earth." There is no "same time" on the sun. If we say that "5 o'clock on the sun" means the same as "5 o'clock on earth, except that it is on the sun," we are not saying anything at all. We merely beg the question. We have not yet explained just *what* it is that is supposed to be the same. Until we do, the sentence "it is 5 o'clock on the sun" merely looks like a statement of some fact with an uncertain meaning. In reality it is no statement whatsoever. It is meaningless. You might as well say, "gobbledy is gook." And "gobbledy is gook" is just a funny sound. It does not amount to an assertion. It can be neither true nor false. It is not subject to the law of the excluded middle. The law of the excluded middle does not apply to funny sounds, no matter how closely they ape the appearance of a sentence.

3. Disagreements with the Dead

If Wittgenstein was right on this, and I believe he was, we have a problem in history that is quite different from the problems we generally say we have. The problems we generally say we have are two. One is to tell what happened in the past. The other is to understand the past in its own terms. But these problems are not as great as they are said to be. Solving them of course takes time and effort, and the effort may well fail. But that is true in every area of knowledge. It hardly makes history more difficult than chemistry or economics. We know a lot that happened in the past. We know that Caesar died. We know that medieval knights went on crusade. We know that the first cities were built a few thousand years ago. We know that until 1969 none of us had travelled to the moon. To doubt such knowledge, not for specific reasons in a specific context, but because the past is something of whose existence we cannot be completely sure because it is supposedly no longer present, is to abandon history for metaphysics.

The case is similar with understanding people in their own terms. If we have evidence and know their language, we have the means to understand the people. If we do not, we don't. It makes no difference whether the evidence and the language come from the present or the past. What makes a difference are the difficulty of the language and the evidence. Take Thomas Pynchon (b. 1937), for example. Last time I checked he was among the living. But I do not believe I understand him now or ever will, in his own terms or any other terms, as well as William Durant the Younger (ca. 1266–1330)—and this in spite of the fact that William Durant the Younger was a medieval bishop who died many centuries ago. Don't get me wrong. I love *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). But I

find Durant's *Tractatus de modo generalis concilii celebrandi* (*ca.* 1310) much easier to follow (see [16–18]).

The problem, in other words, is neither how to understand the people of the past in their own terms nor how to tell what happened. That can be done, up to a very reasonable point. The problem is that sometimes doing the one means not doing the other. Sometimes our understanding of the people whose history we are writing ends in a disagreement with those people about our understanding of what it was that happened.

We know what we can do where such a disagreement arises among the living. We distinguish between understanding what someone says and agreeing with someone that it is true. I have no trouble understanding people who say that history is bunk. But I do not agree with them. I say, "The past is very much worth knowing." I understand that in the view of some the world is run by a conspiracy of Jews. But I maintain that that is not the case. I say, "You are deluded. No such conspiracy exists." I understand the man who says that he defended a human being's right to life when he killed the abortionist. But I deny what he asserts. I say, "That is not what happened. What happened is that you committed murder." We have a disagreement about criteria of identity. We state our disagreement and then take it from there: we talk or fight; we solve our disagreement or we keep arguing; we agree to disagree or go our separate ways.

But what if we run into a disagreement with people in the past? And what if our disagreement does not divide us simply over the difference between the truth or falsity of one or another statement, but over the criteria we need in order to determine what our disagreement is *about*? How can we tell what people in the past were doing or what was happening to them if they were living, not on the sun, but on the historical equivalent of the sun: a place in time where our criteria for telling what is the same as something else did not exist? How do we manage that kind of disagreement? Shall we use the criteria on which we are agreed today? That would mean taking sides with the living and disagreeing with the dead. Shall we then use the criteria used by the people whose history we are writing? That would mean switching sides, but not solving the disagreement. In either case the disagreement stands. In either case it is uncertain just what the disagreement is about, and the uncertainty is threatening to leave us without anything to say or do.

4. The Problem for Historians

Disagreements dividing the living from the dead over criteria of judgment and identity, it seems to me, confront historians with their most fundamental problem. Happily the problem is never all-consuming. There is a lot that has not changed or changed only a little in the entire span of human history, from the beginning of the career of *Homo sapiens* down to the present day. We eat, we drink, we sleep, we dream, we laugh, we cry, we sing, we dance, we mate, we live, we die. We have that much in common with every human being who lived before our time.

That is by no means a small thing. It means that we are able to surmount the differences between the many different forms of life that have been taken up by different human beings at different times in different places as though they were so many different ways to play.[94] We can

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[94] See Huizinga [19] and Geertz [20] for two influential statements of the significance of play in human forms of life.

learn the different languages and understand the different forms of life. As Wittgenstein put it, there is a "system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language," and that system consists of "shared human behavior" ([8], nr. 206, p. 88ᵉ). That is a happy teaching. If it were otherwise, there would be little for historians to do.

Unhappily for historians, our profession requires us to concentrate on change. We must confront the differences between the present and the past, including differences in criteria, judgments, language, and forms of life. We must not be content with taking past people at their word. We are obliged to figure out what was the case, even if it turns out to differ from the case past people thought it was, or that they lied. We cannot place responsibility for meeting that obligation on any evidence. The evidence can only teach us the terms that human beings were using in the past. It cannot teach us which terms we are supposed to use today. We have to choose those terms ourselves with every word we say. If we use no past terms, we dismiss whatever judgments the people of the past were making as though their judgments did not count. If we use no present terms—assuming that were possible—we could not even tell what *counts* as evidence today, let alone of what it is supposed to be the evidence.

We must therefore negotiate between the present and the past. Our relation to the past is dialectical: the past talks back. We are obliged to listen, and we must act accordingly. Sometimes we must dismiss past forms of thought and action as lying beyond the limits of, not our understanding, but our present agreement in a present form of life. Sometimes we must insist on present forms of thought and action with which the people of the past might never have agreed. We may not simply do as we are told. We have to draw a line where our agreement with the dead comes to an end. There are some games we cannot play. But we must also recognize and understand those forms of thought and action with which we disagree and render an account of our disagreement. Our knowledge *of* the past has to include the differences by which we are divided *from* the past. Excluding those differences from history would be absurd. Anachronism is our daily bread. Whichever way we turn, we find ourselves confronting disagreements between the living and the dead, not simply about the difference between true and false, but about different forms of life. There is no history without such disagreements. As Arnaldo Momigliano once put it in a memorable turn of phrase, "What history-writing without moral judgments would be is difficult for me to envisage, because I have not yet seen it" ([21], p. 370). He just ought not to have limited his claim to judgments that are "moral" (cf. [22], esp. pp. 403–5).

That, it seems to me, is the most basic difference between history and science. It constitutes a problem that scientists can pretty much ignore. Scientists are not obliged to bother with the terms in which past people spoke. They have disagreements with each other, not with the past. They study, not human beings, but the phenomena of nature—and nature does not talk back in any human language. Criteria that were used in the past are none of their concern—no more than magic, final causes, or phlogiston. Science ends where history begins. When scientists make statements about the past, as they most definitely do, they do so in terms on which they are presently agreed.

They can forget the terms that were used in the past. They know what they are studying.[95] Historians do not enjoy that luxury. Sometimes they act as though they did. But when they do, the histories they write obliterate the most characteristically human kinds of change: change in criteria of judgment, change in language, and change in form of life.

5. The Source of the Confusion

That, I think, explains our confusion about Renaissance and Reformation. When we began to treat Renaissance and Reformation as periods in the history of Europe, we replaced what humanists and reformers had said about themselves with our judgments. We adopted criteria of identity they did not share. We did so because our form of life had changed. We recognized the change we made and looked for justification. We thought we found justification in the evidence. The evidence, we thought, allowed us to establish precisely what was the same in Renaissance and Reformation as in antiquity and in the modern age. But in so doing we forgot the difference between history and science. We treated the dead as though they were the same as us. We failed to heed the difference between criteria and evidence—between their form of life and ours. We did not notice that our evidence contained no reasons with which to justify our criteria or our form of life. We acted as though the evidence could do our job for us. We neglected our most interesting and most important task. No wonder we never got the knowledge that we sought.

What we got instead was information. We piled evidence on evidence, kept asking ever subtler and more specific questions, and multiplied the criteria with which to tell what is and what is not the same as something else in history. We never asked the question that needed to be answered first: how did they differ from ourselves, not simply in what they said and did, but in their agreement on the criteria that specified just what *it* was they said and did? Not having asked the question, we could not find the answer. The answers we did find gave us no satisfaction. Dissatisfied, we could not rest. Instead we have kept going in one and the same direction: more questions, more evidence, more information. The further we progressed, the less our answers meant. As we increased our knowledge of Renaissance and Reformation, we turned *Renaissance* and *Reformation* into seemingly useless terms. Instead of proving that Renaissance and Reformation were the same as antiquity or as modernity, or both, we cast increasing doubt on the possibility of knowing anything about the past at all. Instead of taking responsibility for our disagreements with the dead, we dismantled the agreements we had with each other.

Today we find ourselves divided into factions: those who keep insisting on studying Renaissance and Reformation and those who think those terms are vague or meaningless; those who believe we can know something about the past and those who believe that we cannot; those who look for facts and those who look for understanding; those who treat the dead as though they had never really been alive and those who treat them as though they had never really died; those who ignore the judgments made in stating facts and those who state no facts so as to make no judgments. Our information is superb, our understanding faint. We face a mountain of evidence, a

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[95.] It is worth pointing out that this distinction between history and science is entirely schematic. In practice, the boundaries between history and science are always fluid, and sometimes alarmingly so, as Wittgenstein [23], Winch [12], and Kuhn [24] have shown in different ways.

riot of conflicting criteria, and profound uncertainty about the meaning and extent of our knowledge of the past. That is the price we pay for having practiced history as though it were a science. No wonder we are confused.

6. Saving Renaissance and Reformation

Now let me offer the observations that seem to me to follow from this argument. The first is that there is an excellent reason for the shift from calling our period *Renaissance* and *Reformation* to calling it *early modern history*. The reason is that we have looked for things in Renaissance and Reformation that are the same as things today—except, of course, that they took place in Renaissance and Reformation, that sun in time where we imagine things to be the same as here except that they are on the sun. Trying to find such things has landed us in a dead end.

I do not mean that things like that cannot be found. One can make a perfectly compelling case that things in Renaissance and Reformation were quite the same in this or that regard as things in antiquity or in the modern age or, for that matter, in any other age. I mean that making such a case reduces the human beings of the past to objects of scientific study. It amounts to treating the dead as though they had never been capable of speech. It does violence to them by ruling their judgments out of order, as if we had the right to say, "You did not know what you were doing, but we do, and we will tell you now." The desire to refrain from doing such violence, it seems to me, is the real source of the attraction of the shift to *early modern history*. That makes it a welcome change.

My second observation is that the change is not of the right kind. It is one thing to recognize that treating Renaissance and Reformation as the rebirth of antiquity or the beginning of the modern world can hardly be the thing to do. But it is quite another to acknowledge our disagreements with the dead.

Stanley Cavell has written that the search for shared criteria amounts to a claim to community ([9], p. 20).[96] In searching for shared criteria in history, we thus lay claim to a community uniting the living with the dead. Precisely because it unites us with the dead, it challenges our humanity to the core. We cannot meet that challenge unless we take responsibility for our criteria. To state something as true about the past without taking responsibility for the criteria we use in doing so, or worse, to stop maintaining anything as true in the belief that the transience of our criteria gives us the freedom to stop using them, is to fail our responsibility as human beings both to ourselves and to the dead. That failure is the chief reason, I believe, why our knowledge of the past leaves us dissatisfied and why we can find no end to disagreements that put our sanity in doubt. It cannot be remedied simply by changing terms or turning one's attention to new subjects of investigation.

My third observation is that we may have a better chance of meeting our responsibility if we preserve the terminology of *Renaissance* and *Reformation*. The reason is that disagreements with the dead pose problems not only for historians. They pose problems for all human beings who try to maintain agreement in a shared form of life.[97] Among those human beings the people living in

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[96.] "The philosophical appeal to what we say, and the search for our criteria on the basis of which we say what we say, are claims to community." (Cf. [10], p. 186).

[97.] The conflict between Creon and Antigone over the burial of Antigone's rebellious brother Polynices makes for a compelling statement of this very point in one of Europe's oldest tragedies; see [25].

Europe during the times of Renaissance and Reformation deserve particular attention. For the intensity with which they tried to bring antiquity to life reveals nothing more clearly than the problems their disagreements with the dead posed to their form of life. That makes Renaissance and Reformation superb examples of the specific form those problems take and the specific manner in which they can be addressed.

The specific form those problems took consisted of a failure to recognize the disagreements dividing Europe from antiquity—not unlike the failure I have imputed to historians today. "The continuity supposedly uniting Europe with antiquity, it seems to me, is a canard we owe to the confusion of history with science. What actually united Europe with antiquity was an ongoing dialectic of disagreements about the most fundamental questions that human beings face and that could never be concluded because Europe kept making it a point of pride to measure itself against the very antiquity from which it had long since departed—a departure nowhere more evident than in the growth of the vernaculars and in the transformation of Latin from a language spoken by ordinary people into the possession of a literate elite. That was a change in form of life.

The problems peaked when scholastic theologians, jurists, and philosophers claimed the ability to demonstrate the truth about the God of Christianity, the law of ancient Rome, and the philosophy of Aristotle with scientific certainty in terms no ancient would have recognized. They peaked because the scholastics never recognized the gulf dividing their thinking from the very ancient writings on whose authority they based themselves, and never took responsibility for the sheer novelty of the criteria on which they came to be agreed. Their confidence divided Europe into factions—*via moderna* and *via antiqua*, conciliarists and papalists, clergy and laity, Protestants and Catholics—fighting each other with increasing passion because they could not tell the difference between their disagreements with each other and their disagreements with the dead.

The specific manner in which those problems were addressed consisted of a turn from science to language. That turn was made by humanists and by reformers with very much the same resolve.[98] The significance historians of Renaissance and Reformation have long attributed to that turn thus is entirely deserved. But it is difficult to understand the full extent of that significance unless it is framed in the terms that Wittgenstein provided in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In those terms "the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" [8], nr. 23, p. 15ᵉ) and "giving orders, asking questions, telling stories, having a chat, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing" ([8], nr. 25, p. 16ᵉ). For "it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life" ([8], nr. 241, p. 94ᵉ).

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98. That is the reason why this essay pays virtually no attention to the differences between Renaissance and Reformation. Needless to say, those differences are great. But what matters for present purposes is that humanists and reformers subjected the language of scholastics to equally pointed criticism and treated the language of antiquity with equally great respect. That the former lavished their attention on classical Greek and Roman writers whereas the latter lavished theirs on the Bible and the Fathers is of secondary interest here—particularly since neither humanists nor reformers ever divided their attention between ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian writings nearly as sharply as we tend to imagine. It is solely for the sake of simplicity that the following remarks are focused on Humanism. *Mutatis mutandis* they apply equally to the Reformation.

In those terms language is more than a means of communication and nothing like a veil or screen dividing us from past or present reality. It rather is the essence of humanity, the practice that makes human beings human, a part of human nature. "What we are supplying," Wittgenstein said, "are really remarks on the natural history of human beings" ([8], nr. 415, p. 132ᵉ; cf. [10], pp. 149–58, 237–87). The natural history he had in mind is not to be confused with what is commonly so called. So far from being founded on the distinctions that lend conceptual stability to natural history as it is usually understood—distinctions like those between mind and matter, culture and nature, language and reality—the natural history of human beings in Wittgenstein's sense has precisely the reverse relation to those conceptual distinctions: it furnishes the ground from which they draw their sense. It is analytically prior to all conceptual distinctions. It is therefore a matter of neither language nor reality, neither culture nor nature, neither mind nor matter. It is not scientific and cannot be based on evidence. It is the history of a form of life whose essence is the ability to speak. It is told in the form of grammatical remarks—remarks on language—because "*essence* is expressed in grammar" ([8], nr. 373, p. 123ᵉ).[99] That makes the natural history of human beings one and the same with the history of language.

That is the kind of history, it seems to me, that Humanism sought to teach. Its subject matter was the language (the form of life) in which human beings are agreed and the nature (the essence) of human beings as expressed in grammar. *Studia humanitatis* is not a metaphor. When humanists studied grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy, they studied precisely what they said they did: humanity. They studied humanity in order to solve their disagreements with antiquity, not by rejecting the form of science to which they owed those disagreements, but by staking their claim on humanity properly understood, drawing firm boundaries round the terrain where science has the right to rule, and learning to distinguish their disagreements with each other from disagreements with antiquity.

On this understanding it is plain nonsense to conceive of Humanism in terms of the distinction between content and form. Humanism has no content *but* matters of form: forms of speech, forms of language, forms of life, and forms of humanity.[100] It gives knowledge not of things but of their essence; not of data but of criteria; not of facts but of their meaning. To identify Humanism with a specific doctrine or a specific set of disciplines is to miss its significance.[101] To treat Humanism as the enemy or the successor of Scholasticism is to misunderstand the character of the distinction between the two and to ignore the great respect scholastic forms of knowledge continued to enjoy side-by-side Humanism well beyond Renaissance and Reformation (cf. [37–40]). Scholars who base their understanding of Humanism, not on the nature of humanity, but on the differences

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99. This corroborates the significance Ronald Witt ([26], pp. 6–7, 16–17), attributes to the study of grammar, not rhetoric, as the most fundamental humanist endeavor, albeit on entirely different grounds.

100. For explicit criticisms of misleading applications of the distinction between content and form from different points of view see Gray [27] and White [28].

101. Hans Baron (1900–88) was right to stress the significance of Humanism, but not to identify it with a specific form of politics ([29], cf. [30,31]). Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–1999) was equally right to point out that Humanism focused on the study of classical grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy, but missed an opportunity to spell out why such studies mattered ([32]; cf. [33–35]). Two outstanding recent accounts of Italian Humanism have been provided by Witt [26] and Fubini [36].

dividing humanists from other human beings betray a preoccupation with the distinctive qualities of scholars that does justice neither to the humanity of scholars nor that of the illiterate.

Humanism was precisely the right means to come to terms with the disagreements that peaked in scholastic thought and proved invulnerable to scholastic means of analysis. If it concerned itself with anything specific being said, or the specific language in which it was being said, then only because language cannot be used at all, much less used well or studied, except by saying *something* in *some* language, regardless of whether *something* is a matter of love or hate, peace or war, art or science, ethics or law, politics or religion, philosophy or theology, and regardless of whether the language is ancient or modern, classical or vernacular, poetry or prose. Humanism demonstrates the clarity with which its proponents understood that their disagreements with each other did not turn on the difference between true and false, but differences in language. It held out the hope of agreement in a form of life that could be shared by the literate and the illiterate alike, and that would let them express their disagreements with the dead with the respect the dead deserve.

That hope, it seems to me, united humanists with reformers in a cause that makes the differences between them seem marginal—until their hope was dashed. It explains why they devoted themselves to studying ancient languages and ancient ways of life with a degree of urgency that must seem baffling, if not completely incomprehensible, to anyone who does not recognize the ability to speak as the essence of humanity. When they said that they were bringing antiquity back to life, they were under no illusion that antiquity was something like a corpse that could have been resuscitated in the rude sense with which their purpose has sometimes been confused. So far from ignoring the differences dividing them from antiquity, they gave those differences much greater prominence than anyone had done before. If they did bring antiquity to life, they did so, not by forging some kind of magical identity but quite the opposite, by restoring antiquity to the standing of one of two different parties in the dialectical relation between the present and the past (cf. [41–44]). They understood what the ancients had known and the scholastics had forgotten: that the humanity of human beings unites them in the very act by which they take responsibility for differences dividing them from each other.

That strikes me as an outstanding reason to keep referring to the period as *Renaissance* and *Reformation*. The reason is not simply that *Renaissance* and *Reformation* reflect the understanding that humanists and reformers had of their place in time. Nor is it simply that *Renaissance* and *Reformation* flag the respect they had for antiquity. And least of all it is that *Renaissance* and *Reformation* have the authority of tradition. That *early modern history* is a newfangled way of speaking about the period is no good reason for rejecting it. *Renaissance* and *Reformation* themselves are terms that were newfangled once. Tradition, as the saying goes, consists of innovations that have worked.

What gives *Renaissance* and *Reformation* a great advantage over *early modern history* is that they render a service, not to tradition or the past, but to ourselves. We call ourselves historians and we regard our discipline either as one of the humanities or as a social science more closely related to the humanities than social sciences like economics and sociology.[102] But our practice puts us at odds with

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[102.] At the University of Chicago the Department of History is housed in the Division of the Social Sciences, not the Humanities.

humanists and reformers in Renaissance and Reformation. It rather makes us cousins of the scholastic theologians preceding them. Like our cousins, we are divided into conservatives who claim that our knowledge reflects reality because it is in fact reality we know (our *via antiqua*) and critics who claim that reality lies irretrievably beyond our ken because our knowledge merely reflects the categories of our understanding (our *via moderna*). Like our cousins, we have not grasped the role that disagreements with the dead play in our form of life and we hold language cheap. We lag behind the humanists and the reformers. We have not risen to the challenge our time poses to us as they did rise to theirs.

As far as I can tell, the turn to *early modern history* confirms that diagnosis. At best, it replaces disagreements historians once had about the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age with disagreements about the beginning and the end of early modern history. At worst it prevents us from taking responsibility for our criteria of judgment and identity. By contrast *Renaissance* and *Reformation* bring us directly face to face with the significance of disagreements with the dead and the significance of grammar for treating those disagreements. *Renaissance* and *Reformation* do not tell us what that significance might be all by themselves. But they will not let us forget the cause uniting humanists and reformers. That makes them very much worth keeping.

7. Conclusions

Europe's relationship to antiquity can serve historians as a criterion with which to tell how Europe met the challenge the past gives all human beings all the time. At times Europe was confident of having met that challenge. At such times, Europe could well afford to focus its energies on science. Scholasticism, Enlightenment, and the nineteenth century come to mind. At other times Europe's confidence was shaken, Europe's agreements turned into faction, and Europe's disagreements with the dead demanded a kind of knowledge no science has on offer, regardless of whether the science is logical, mathematical, physical, or any other kind. At those times, grammar took precedence.

There may be no time in European history when disagreements with antiquity proved more difficult to manage than during Renaissance and Reformation—except perhaps the time when the Ottonians restored the Roman Empire and when the Pope, as St. Bernard once put it, transformed himself from the successor of St. Peter into the successor of Emperor Constantine.[103] And there may be no time when grammar was needed more urgently to understand what human beings share, what makes them different from each other, and what they are to do about their disagreements with the dead—except perhaps the time beginning when Wittgenstein was born.[104]

[103.] "In all that belongs to earthly magnificence thou hast succeeded not Peter, but Constantine." ([45], p. 119).

[104.] For a succinct statement of the deep opposition in which Wittgenstein found himself to what he considered to be the spirit of his times, complete with an expression of a desire to write "to the glory of God" that does not seem unlike the desires of humanists and reformers, including his stress on the deplorable circumstances thwarting fulfillment of his desire, see the foreword he wrote for his *Philosophical Remarks* in 1930, ([46], p. 7): "This book is written for such men as are in sympathy with its spirit. This spirit is different from the one which informs the vast stream of European and American civilization in which all of us stand. That spirit expresses itself in an onwards movement, in building ever larger and more complicated structures; the other in striving after clarity and perspicuity in no matter what structure. The first tries to grasp the world by way of its periphery—in its variety; the second at its

Renaissance and Reformation were probably the last time when disagreements with antiquity posed the main challenge to Europe's agreement in form of life. The antiquity from which we find ourselves divided nowadays is no longer that of ancient Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome, but that of humanity as a whole, from its pre-hominid beginnings via the spread of *Homo sapiens* across the globe to the invention of urban and rural forms of settlement that used to typify most human life until as recently as only two centuries ago. The forms of life we have since then invented differ so deeply from all their predecessors that Europe itself is fast receding into antiquity. Our successors will have less reason to study ancient Athens, Jerusalem, and Rome than our predecessors did. But they will find it just as difficult to tell the difference between their disagreements with each other and their disagreements with the dead, and they will still need grammar to maintain their humanity.

It is a sobering thought that the attention humanists and reformers lavished on language was not enough to stop Europe from entering into civil wars that wreaked more havoc with Europe's agreement in form of life than anything had done before. On that score scholars who stress the differences dividing humanists from other human beings make an important point. Their point is proof of the grave difficulties that human beings face in learning how to exercise the faculty of speech without destroying the agreement—the humanity—they owe to that very faculty. Today those difficulties may well be greater than they have ever been before. That makes for an outstanding reason to keep studying the history of, not early modern Europe, but Renaissance and Reformation.

Appendix

Though not widely used before World War II, *early modern*, especially in the combination *medieval and early modern*, with a meaning not quite like that under consideration here, but not far removed from it either, has sporadically appeared in the title of historical writings since at least 1869 in such expressions as *early modern history, early modern period, early modern times, early modern age*, and *early modern Europe*; see [47–53]. Since World War II *early modern* has gradually become as popular as *Renaissance* and decidedly more popular than *Reformation*. That, at least, is suggested by searching the full text of history journals on JSTOR (excluding external links) for the terms *Renaissance*, *Reformation*, and *early modern*, counting their frequency in five-year increments from 1945–2009 (inclusive), and examining the results, which I did on 9 July 2011 for the 262 history journals available on JSTOR on that day.

Table 1 shows how often each of the three terms *Renaissance*, *Reformation*, and *early modern* appeared in the full text of those 262 history journals during a given five-year period from 1945–2009. It tells us that the frequency of all three terms has been growing steadily since 1945. But that merely reflects the steadily increasing number of history journals and articles published

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centre—in its essence. And so the first adds one construction to another, moving on and up, as it were, from one stage to the next, while the other remains where it is and what it tries to grasp is always the same. I would like to say 'This book is written to the glory of God,' but nowadays that would be chicanery [*Schurkerei*], that is, it would not be rightly understood. It means the book is written in good will, and in so far as it is not so written, but out of vanity, *etc.*, the author would wish to see it condemned. He cannot free it of these impurities further than he himself is free of them."

during those same years. (The mixed picture for 2000–2004 and the sharp drop in 2005–2009 are presumably artifacts of the embargo most journals place on the online availability of recent issues.)

The picture looks quite different if one examines the frequency of the three terms relative to each other, as on Chart 1 below. The chart demonstrates a decline in the relative frequency of *Renaissance* starting around 1960 and continuing steadily thereafter (by about a third, from 59% of the total in 1960–64 to 40% of the total in 2005–09); a more marked but equally steady decline for *Reformation* from a smaller starting base (by about two fifths, from 36% in 1960–64 to 21% in 2005–09); and a tenfold increase during the same period for *early modern* from a tiny starting base (from 4% to 39%).

A few points of historical detail may lend some color to this picture. In 1951, not long after World War II, Erich Hassinger [54] made an early and particularly emphatic plea for treating the history of Europe from roughly 1300 to the French Revolution as a single period, though without using the term *early modern*; cf. the encouraging response by Fernand Braudel [55]. Hassinger followed up in 1959 with a comprehensive account of early modern history in his *Werden des neuzeitlichen Europa, 1300–1600*, the first volume of a three-volume *Geschichte der Neuzeit* edited by Gerhard Ritter ([56], esp. pp. xi–xviii). In 1970, about twenty years later, Eugene Rice published his *Foundations of Early Modern Europe, 1460–1559* [57]. This may well be the most successful textbook ever written about early modern Europe; see ([58], p. 298). It was at least partially responsible for making *early modern* a standard and widely used instrument in the historian's toolkit. Its staying power was confirmed in 1994, almost a quarter century later, when it was published in a revised edition co-authored by Anthony Grafton [59].
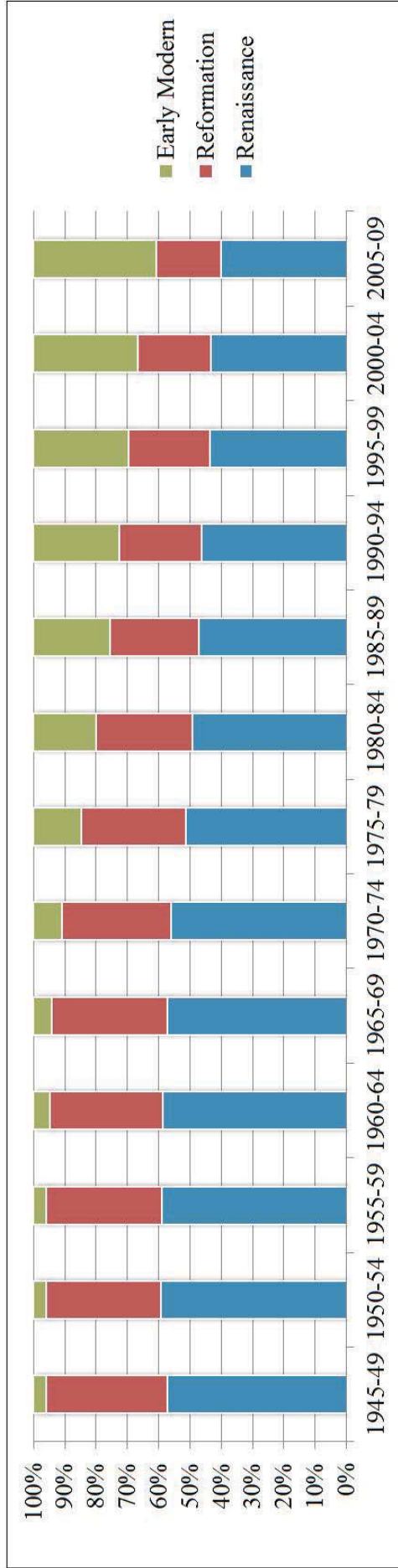
For a sampling of more recent scholarly perspectives on the uses of *early modern* see [58,60–67], and consider the programmatic statements in the *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation* edited by Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy ([68], vol. 1, pp. xiii–xxiv), where *early modern* is preferred and *Renaissance* and *Reformation* are "freed from the great burden of being 'the turning point' of European history" (p. xxiv), as well as the preface "From the Editors" by Heiko Oberman and James Tracy to the first issue of the *Journal of Early Modern History* ([69], p. 1), where *early modern* is used to designate a period in world history.

The Society for Renaissance Studies in Britain continues to publish *Renaissance Studies*, and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA continues to publish *Viator* with the subtitle *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*. But the *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* published since 1971 by Duke University Press was renamed *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* in 1996.

Table 1. Absolute Frequency of *Renaissance, Reformation,* and *Early Modern* in History Journals on JSTOR.

	1945–49	1950–54	1955–59	1960–64	1965–69	1970–74	1975–79	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–99	2000–04	2005–09
Renaissance	459	689	795	965	1,084	1,348	1,513	1,638	1,929	2,216	2,471	2,463	1,332
Reformation	310	425	500	593	708	841	981	1,020	1,168	1,261	1,470	1,322	688
Early Modern	33	48	55	88	110	219	454	673	1,003	1,325	1,720	1,901	1,304
TOTALS	802	1,162	1,350	1,646	1,902	2,408	2,948	3,331	4,100	4,802	5,661	5,686	3,324

Chart 1. Relative Frequency of *Renaissance, Reformation,* and *Early Modern* in History Journals on JSTOR.

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Article

Towards a Global History of Voting: Sovereignty, the Diffusion of Ideas, and the Enchanted Individual

David Gilmartin

Department of History, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8108, USA;
E-Mail: david_gilmartin@ncsu.edu

Abstract: This article suggests a framework for moving toward a global history of voting and democracy that focuses less on the diffusion of European ideas (however important those ideas were) than on embedding the history of voting within a worldwide history of ideas on sovereignty. The article posits a general framework for such a history focusing on a "conundrum of sovereignty" grounding legitimate rule in a space imagined as simultaneously within and outside worldly society. Rooted in a "secular theology" such ideas shaped in the 19th and 20th centuries the establishment of systems of mass voting (including the secret ballot), and the sovereignty of the "people" both in Europe and other parts of the world alike, in the process producing an image of the individual voter as an "enchanted individual." The article looks at developments within Europe and in India in these terms.[105]

Keywords: voting; democracy; sovereignty; elections; people; conundrum; Europeanization; India; secret ballot; influence; secular theology; enchanted individual

Introduction

The world-wide history of elections and democracy has often in recent decades been portrayed as a history of diffusion. In his *Europeanization of the World: On the Origins of Human Rights and Democracy*, John Headley has written a compelling account of the power of universalizing European ideas, including democracy, as a global legacy. Europe, in Headley's framework, represents the critical node from which democracy's underlying ideas were diffused to the world.

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[105] I gratefully acknowledge the journal's two anonymous referees' helpful responses to an earlier draft of this paper.

That the "spread of democracy" has become in recent years a foreign policy imperative linked to the spread of American power and hegemony, a tendency perhaps most dramatically on display in America's invasion of Iraq, is a fact of which Headley is well aware and highly critical. Yet, as Headley readily acknowledges, the fact that democratic ideas have sometimes been embedded in a history of Euro-American conquest and imperialism, and have a complex and conflicted history even in Europe itself, hardly lessens their importance as a legacy to the world. Rather, his argument is that the European development of these ideas has been a unique phenomenon, which therefore requires that we conceptualize their worldwide influence in terms of their outward spread from the European nexus in which they originally developed [1].

Such a view is hardly entirely new. The search for a global history of voting, with European and American transformations at its center, extends back at least as far as Charles Seymour and Donald Paige Frary's multivolume history, *How the World Votes: The Story of Democratic Development in Elections*, published in 1918. Yet many scholars have also been wary of such narratives. Some have stressed the variety of traditions of voting and democracy even within Europe itself and its overseas offshoots. Thus, in their work on the history of the secret ballot, which has now become the UN-endorsed "global norm" for voting, Malcolm and Tom Crook detail the complex and conflicted history of this practice in America, Britain, and France alike. Similarly, in his survey of "Where and When was Democracy Invented?" John Markoff has found no clear "center" for a narrative of the modern history of voting practices. "The history of democracy is profoundly polycentric," he writes, "and an exclusive or even disproportionate focus on the world's centers of wealth and power will miss much."[106] Other scholars have critiqued European diffusionism by pointing to the many, little studied traditions of voting and consultative assemblies existing outside the framework of European influence, particularly at the local level ([4], pp. 23–45). Perhaps the most thoroughgoing critique of diffusionism in this vein was offered by J. M. Blaut in his *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (1993).

Nevertheless, it is true, as Headley persuasively argues, that European ideas have in fact played a critical role in the world-wide history of democracy, and it is vital, as Headley suggests, for historians to take this seriously. Whatever the histories of earlier voting practices in some contexts, modern electoral practices in most parts of the non-European world have, particularly in their legal forms, overtly evoked European voting models, a process that can traced back at least to late 19th-century Japan. The history of India, which today manages the largest single electoral arena in the world, is a case in point. Today's Indian electoral system owes much in its structure and form to the introduction of elections into India by the British as a central element in India's political structure. Indeed, a history of democracy in India that failed to take account of the roots of many of Indian democratic forms, processes, and ideas in the subcontinent's long connection to Great Britain, could hardly do justice to the central importance of voting in India's political system today. The political theorizing (and political contradictions) that shaped Britain's evolving electoral system in the 19th century remain in some ways a living legacy in shaping the ongoing evolution of India's 20th-century electoral system.

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[106] [2], pp. 199–237; [3], p. 689. Interestingly, however, despite Markoff's emphasis on polycentricism and the Crooks' emphasis on the "global", in neither of these works is there any serious effort, even in invoking the "global," to move beyond the history of Europe and its overseas colonial offshoots.

Yet there are still many fundamental reasons why it would be a distortion to see such connections as simply, or even primarily, as one of diffusion. Ideas relating to democracy and voting were everywhere closely linked to concrete structures of power, and it thus makes little sense to see processes of voting and democracy as products of the diffusion of seemingly free-floating ideas that developed in deep contextual interaction with European politics, but which then can be imagined to emerge in developed form to influence other parts of the world. Beyond this, if ideas relating to democracy are truly to be seen in a world-wide context, then the larger human dilemmas within which they have been framed, need to be tackled also against a world-wide backdrop. Whatever the distinctive history of democratic ideas in modern Europe, and in particular of the idea of the "people's sovereignty" lying at democracy's heart, the historical significance of European ideas on a global scale is best assessed if the development of popular sovereignty is analyzed against the broader backdrop of sovereignty itself as a problem in political theory long confronted in societies all around the world. Ideas shaping voting, as an ultimately worldwide phenomenon, must be seen, in other words, in Europe and in other parts of the world alike, as deeply embedded in larger ideas about the nature of sovereignty and legitimate rule.

The Global Framing of Sovereignty

To provide such a global frame for sovereignty, it is useful to begin with the work of Carl Schmitt, who argued in the 1920s that "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts" ([5], p. 36). This provides an important frame for bringing the histories of sovereignty in Europe and in many other parts of the world into mutual conversation, for in this framework they can be viewed as variant "theologies of power" or, to use Schmitt's term, "political theologies" [6]. Schmitt's emphases in fact offer a frame for grounding the more particular problems of democracy's world-wide trajectories in larger questions about the relationship of worldly and cosmic power. But for our purposes here, the values of Schmitt's specific theories are still limited, for whatever their potentially universalizing implications, they are deeply embedded within the specific history of European Christianity. In order to move toward a global history of voting, it is important to step outside Europe before returning to a discussion of the influence of European ideas on the world.

For this, the work of the Sanskritist, J. C. Heesterman, provides a useful starting point. Heesterman has given us an overarching explication of the theology of sovereignty in premodern India that provides, I would argue, a frame for such a global discussion of sovereignty (and thus, ultimately, of the sovereignty of the "people' in the modern world). At the heart of Heesterman's argument is his notion that kingly sovereignty, whatever its forms, was at its root not a seamless ideology, but a "conundrum." For Heesterman, the "conundrum of the king's authority" lay historically in an irresolvable contradiction, relating to the nature of power in the world, that all sovereigns faced: to be effective and legitimate, the king had to somehow be a part of the social community he ruled and yet, simultaneously, stand outside it ([7], p. 117). To put this a different way, legitimacy hinged on the sovereign's ability to project himself as the embodiment of the community as a unity, an abstract entity standing outside politics, even as he ruled from within the community, managing its differences and conflicts in the name of order.

This conundrum, as Heesterman argued, ultimately played itself out in India in different ways. It was reflected in the tension between kings, whose skills and violence allowed them to maintain social order, and brahmans, who were associated with ritual powers linked to cosmic forces outside the community. It was reflected in the mythic association of kings with the world "outside" the community, the forest, the world beyond civilized settlement, a connection that was re-emphasized in ritual cycles, even as the king managed everyday conflict within the worlds of agricultural settlement and cities. It was reflected also in the association of kingship with renunciation, always in tension with the ongoing social entanglements that actually ensnared an effective king. But central to his argument was that whatever forms sovereignty's manifestations took, these could never resolve what was ultimately an insoluble paradox. "The king had to be both part of the community and external to it," Heesterman writes ([7], p. 118). Without this, sovereignty could not operate. Critically, he argued, "Indian tradition, instead of trying to solve the problem, acknowledge[d] its insolubility" ([7], p. 157).

This paradox is, of course, framed in Heesterman's story in distinctively Indian terms, but it points toward the relationship of sovereignty to a more universal problem, the question of the relationship of divinity to the world as a backdrop for understanding sovereignty—or, to put this another way, of the relationship of cosmic powers standing outside human society to the problem of legitimate worldly rule. We can thus see this same "conundrum of sovereignty," though in different forms, in multiple contexts. Azfar Moin, for example, has written compellingly with respect to the evolution of such ideas in the Muslim Safavid and Mughal empires. However much the legitimacy of the sovereign hinged on the management of diverse groups and diverse interests within the social/political world, sovereignty was also critically linked for them to sacred (particularly sufi and millennial) models of authority that, even if sometimes in tension with sacred law, defined touchstones of sovereignty outside the constraints of worldly community [8]. Such tensions framed visions of sovereign authority in Europe as well, a fact that has been explicated most clearly in Ernst Kantorowicz's analysis of the doctrine of the "king's two bodies," the one immanent and mortal, grounded in worldly politics, the other eternal, representing authority's grounding in a cosmic order that framed the collectivity as a unity existing outside time, outside the internal politics that divided it [9]. Such visions of sovereignty could be multiplied around the world in similar terms. Yet, taking Heesterman's arguments as a guide, what is noteworthy about all these forms of sovereignty was the underlying, almost mystical, *insolubility* of the conundrum that lay at sovereignty's heart.

Critically, this paradox also provides a central backdrop for understanding the modern evolution of what many would see as Europe's greatest contribution to the history of sovereignty—and certainly to the history of voting and democracy—the idea of the "sovereignty of the people." Edmund Morgan, has thus remarked on the structural significance of the old idea of the "king's two bodies," in inflecting the defining tensions shaping the emergence of the idea of the sovereign "people" in Britain and America ([10], pp. 78–93). Others have traced in considerable detail the role of specifically European theological models in influencing competing, intellectual visions of sovereignty in Europe, a complex story, on which much has been written, that is well beyond our

treatment here.[107] But in relating this story to the larger history of sovereignty—and to Heesterman's conundrum—the key is tracing the transplantation of this conundrum into the individual self, which provided the foundation, ultimately, for the imagining of the "people" to be sovereign. The vision of the individual as both an active player in the world, and yet, at the very same time, as an autonomous moral agent, transcending the bonds of society, was of course one with a distinctive European trajectory in religion and political theory. As Headley himself points out, the idea of "sacred individuality as a property of the self," was a key in the development of democracy, linked as it was to notions of "human equality, dignity, and reciprocal recognition" ([1], p. 218). But the most powerful element in the "sacred" here was its secular evocation in terms of what we might call in a broader sense an "enchanted" individual self, an image of the self defined in its relationship to the world by sovereignty's insoluble conundrum.[108]

The emergence of the idea of the individual's "enchantment" was in fact only made possible in by its association with the large political changes that marked the 19th century as an era of rapid political and socio-economic change. Indeed, the individual's "enchantment" was inextricably linked to another powerful idea that marked this era: the association of modernity—and the 19th-century transformation of the state—with what Max Weber famously called in 1917 the "disenchantment of the world." This too is an idea that has received much historical treatment. The world's "disenchantment" was associated not only with the rise of science, but also with the "rationalization, secularization and bureaucratization" that accompanied the rise of the ever more intrusive European state ([13], p. 695). But the "disenchantment" of both nature and society, which empowered the ever-expanding action of the state upon both, is hard to comprehend unless we also imagine its being linked to an "enchanted" individual who stood outside the world, an autonomous observer who made sense of the world through reason, and was thus the bearer of an almost mystical autonomy.

To suggest the linking of these processes, it is useful to turn to Foucault's famous analysis of Bentham's panopticon, an imagined prison with a central guard tower from which all prisoners were under perpetual observation. Foucault presents this as a model for a new 19th-century structure of discipline, one in which the ubiquitousness of external surveillance prompted the internalization of surveillance into the self as a form of self-discipline, increasingly diffused within society. But this internalization was always ambiguous, for, as Stefanos Geroulanos writes in

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[107] The writing on this is, of course, extensive, but one recent effort to provide a framework for understanding different visions of sovereignty based on a distinction (using theological terms) between "immanent" and "transcendent" theories of sovereignty is Lior Barshack. He thus distinguishes between visions of sovereignty derived from the structure of social relations in the here and now, such as is found in the thinking of Thomas Hobbes, with transcendent theories, defined by the projected existence of a collective, immortal "corporate body," conceived as existing outside the realm of the present and transcending the social, which is the locus of sovereignty. See, [11] and [12].

[108] The term "enchanted" is one that comes with much baggage, as it has often been used to refer to the worlds of magic and wonders that survived the rise of science, and has thus sometimes been also associated with an elitist critique of popular "irrationality." (For a good overview of its historiography, see [13].) I use it here precisely to emphasize an image of the self conceived as standing outside the world of science and society, like the sacred, yet also conceived of in secular terms rather than overtly religious terms.

commenting on Foucault's parable, the effects of the panopticon on the individual derived *both* from the force of external control and observation, *and* from the hidden nature of the central observer in the panopticon who, like God, was unseen, "at once present and absent" ([14], p. 642). Viewed from this perspective, the internalization of surveillance into the self of necessity involved two contradictory and interlinked aspects; it entailed, on the one hand, the internalization of self-discipline (associated with the 19th century expansion of forms of education and social control), and, on the other, the incorporation into the individual self of the image of the omniscient observer himself, hidden and standing apart from society. If this was the self's internal governor, its internalization also defined the individual's claims to an "enchanted" autonomy from the social world, an image of detached omniscience powerfully reflected in 19th century science, literature and history. Though perhaps highly schematized, such a model helps to provide a frame for imagining the "enchanted," sovereign self, as at once, like God, standing apart from the pressures of society, and yet at the same time increasingly bound into society's expanding influences.

It was from this perspective that the "disenchantment of the world" and the "enchantment" of the individual came to be imagined as logically, if paradoxically, linked, a relationship that made possible the imagining of the people's sovereignty in the late 19th century as a living political force, defining a collectivity of sovereign individuals who were both the object of the state's power (through its increasingly powerful operation on an objectified "society") and, at the very same time, the source of a sovereign authority controlling and containing the state's power. And it was the individual *voter* who embodied both sides of this equation, a man of the world defined by his sociology, his objectifiable class, identity and interests, and a man imagined *at the very same time* to be endowed with a freedom of will that put him beyond sociology, and thus capable of exercising autonomy as sovereignty's enchanted essence.[109]

The tensions in this formulation were of course marked (and played themselves out in much writing on the nature of the self in the late 19th century), but with respect to voting they were captured most clearly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in controversies surrounding the introduction of the secret ballot, which came to represent a symbolic expression of popular sovereignty's conundrum. Though the secret ballot has now become naturalized in popular thinking as inseparable from democratic voting, the deep tensions it embodied can be seen in the long 19th-century debate on the introduction of the secret ballot in England. Though few of these debates were cast explicitly in terms of the nature of sovereignty, at their root was a powerful undercurrent focused on the tension between the imagined autonomy (and free choice) of the voter, on the one hand, and the immanent pressures of society and social influence, on the other. The focus of these debates was in fact framed by Sir William Blackstone's famous reflections in the mid-18th century on the dangers of "undue influence" to the very "principles of liberty" that underlay the meaning of consent and voting. Since social pressures, and dependence, could undercut the autonomy of voters, property qualifications were essential, Blackstone argued, in order to exclude from voting those persons who were "under the immediate dominion of others" or

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[109] Such a vision of the individual as simultaneously within society, and yet defined by an essence setting him apart from it, can be found with a variety of nuances in nineteenth- century social theorists. (See, for example, [15], pp. 149–63).

too poor to have a "will of their own."[110] Blackstone thus laid out a framework in which the insoluble tension between individual "free will" and the pressures of social circumstances lay at the very heart of voting's meaning. Though for Blackstone this tension could be addressed by a system of voting based on property that excluded those who were, as he put it, "suspected to have no will of their own" (which included not only the propertyless, but also women and children, whatever the theoretical universality of the "principles of liberty"), his concerns pointed toward the fundamental conundrum that would shape law on voting as pressure for the expansion of the franchise increased in the 19th century.

It was this conundrum that in fact provided the context for much of the debate on the secret ballot in the 19th century. On one level, of course, the argument for the secret ballot was a pragmatic one, focused simply on how to limit the pressures of social influence on voting in a practical way. Thus John Stuart Mill argued in favor of the secret ballot in 1850 on the ground that votes cast on the basis of social influence, rather than on the dictates of individual "judgment" rooted in "conscience", "virtue", and "moral obligation," could only produce "a faithless, a prostitute, a pernicious vote" (quoted in [17], p. 52). In such circumstances, secrecy was practically necessary to protect the individual's free judgment. But for many, the secret ballot was not just a practical measure; it symbolized, in a sense, the spatial marking of the voter's core of autonomy—the antithesis of everyday socio-political influence—as the key to voting's meaning. "Free agency is the very soul of voting," George Grote, the philosophical radical and early champion of the ballot thus wrote in the 1830s. The great evil of the day," he continued, in describing what was in actual fact an inescapable part of every election, "is that everyone thinks he has a right to employ his influence over another" ([18], p. 30). Put in these terms, Grote's advocacy of the secret ballot thus seemed to go beyond simply protecting the voter from overt coercive pressure (however important that was) to imagining the secrecy of the ballot, in an enclosed voting booth, as a spatial reflection of an individual will that stood conceptually apart from the very idea of social influence. The ballot was thus, for the voter "a secret," as Grote put it, "of his own conscience, which no human being can fathom" (quoted in [19], p. 51). Voting was, in other words, an act beyond objectification. The demand for the secret ballot, which was finally accepted in Britain in 1872, thus underscored that if voting was necessarily an open and highly political process (in which influence was both necessary and inevitable), the individual act of voting itself was also hidden, internal, standing apart from society's constitutive social and political bonds. It was, in other words, an enactment of sovereignty's conundrum—an act by "enchanted individuals," who, though embedded in society as an essential concomitant to the political meaning of elections, nevertheless somehow stood, in their essence, apart from it.

Such tensions, of course—even as embodied in the secret ballot—did more to dramatize the underlying contradictions in the concept of the people's sovereignty than to resolve them. In terms of the global history of voting, and its grounding in a world-wide history of sovereignty, it is in fact important to note that certain key 19th-century developments in voting, such as the spread of the

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[110] [16], 1, p. 165. Though the emphasis on property-holding was critical to evolving theories of popular sovereignty, it is important to note, as Edmund Morgan does, that this does not necessarily mean that in actual fact property owners were somehow immune to the pressures of social influence. ([10], pp. 158–59).

secret ballot, actually flew in the face of some of the earlier discourses of popular consent that had evolved from the European enlightenment and earlier. In fact, the secret ballot seemed to challenge for some a long-emerging vision of the "public" in England as constituted by men, fortified by dominion in the private/domestic realm, who could forthrightly speak in public to bring reason to bear as a check on the state. This was a vision of a free, open realm of rational discussion as a critical form of surveillance over power, a notion of the public sphere, as historically delineated in the work of Jurgen Habermas, as a vital framework for popular consent ([20], pp. 237–56; [21], 16–42; [22]). But even though the voter was, in theory, a bearer of reasoned consent, the secret ballot seemed to challenge the transparency of reason. From such a perspective, secret voting could be read as subversive of the public square itself, an affront not only to open, reasoned argument as the source of public authority, but also a rebuke to enlightenment values (and one in which individual autonomy, even in affective or "irrational" form, could potentially be read as more important to government by consent than reason). It was this concern that led Mill himself to eventually turn against the secret ballot, arguing that it was better if votes, which were a trust of the community, were cast openly.[111]

Of course, the triumph of the secret ballot in 1872 in some ways put an end to this debate in England—as in most European countries, where the secret ballot was adopted during the late 19th-/early 20th-century era ([3], pp. 674–77; [26], pp. 449–71). But historians have continued to debate its significance in terms of the long-term evolution in England—and elsewhere—of democratic values.[112] While the expansion of the franchise in the late 19th century affirmed an image of democratic equality, these years also witnessed, in social reality, an escalation of inequality and class conflict ([25], pp. 86–87). Given these pressures, some have seen the introduction of the ballot as a practical, institutional mechanism of limiting popular pressures on elite power, precisely by framing the individual within the voting booth as removed from direct, *public* mobilization. Others, in contrast have seen voting as an important pedagogical institution, empowering new visions in the late 19th century of popular influence over elite government.[113] But from our perspective here, the secret ballot was most important in crystallizing the paradoxical relationship

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[111] [23]; [24], pp. 354–78. For a discussion of the secret ballot that is cast in terms of a broader analysis of secrecy in England as a marker of those things whose place within the larger structure of liberal values was "undecidable," see [25]. One might also speculatively suggest that this emphasis on autonomy over reason also pointed toward many of the tensions in 20th century democracy, including, in some ways, the rise of fascism.

[112] The lasting tensions that it has embodied were captured, as late as 1971, in telling comments by Jean-Paul Sartre: "The *isoloir* [voting booth], planted in the middle of the school hall or the council chamber, symbolizes all the acts of treason that an individual can commit against the groups with which he is involved. It says to everyone: 'No one can see you; you are responsible only to yourself; you are making your decision in complete isolation and, afterwards, you can conceal your verdict or even lie about it.'" (Quoted in [26], p. 470).

[113] The argument that the secret ballot, and contemporaneous changes in party organization, were associated in Britain with a restriction of popular democratic political culture, is made in [27]. A contrary argument, focusing on the importance of individual autonomy and choice as a key legal element in the elaboration of mass electoral democracy, and also in the spread of democratic values (which was reflected in the eventual recognition of the secret ballot), is made powerfully for pre-WWI Germany in [28].

between individual will, social influence, and the workings of democracy, that defined the attempted embodiment in 19th- and 20th-century Europe of a vision of the people's sovereignty in mass voting. The grounding of the secret ballot in older religious ideas, in "political theologies," has in fact been the subject of considerable debate. But the argument here is that the ballot is best seen not simply against the backdrop of a specific European (or Christian) template of religious ideas (however important these might be), but in terms of its relationship to a longer and larger history focused on sovereignty's worldwide—and insoluble—conundrums.

Voting in the World: The Case of India

This is, of course, even more critical if we are to place the history of voting in Europe in its relationship to the broader world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Given the ways that voting was inextricably linked to the imagining of power, it is hardly surprising that ideas on sovereignty in Europe were also significantly linked to the history of sovereignty in Europe's overseas colonial empires, whose structurings, as historians have increasingly argued, had important influences not only on the spread of European ideas, but also on how conceptions of power evolved within Europe itself. It is worth remembering in this regard, that the secret, state-produced ballot was widely known in the late 19th century as the "Australian ballot," as it was first instituted in Australia in the 1850s ([19], pp. 45–62). But no case in fact illustrates more clearly the importance of these interactions in the larger history of voting than the case of India, with its long colonial connection to Britain. The eventual, early 20th century introduction of elections into India under British rule drew directly, in some respects, on late 19th- and early 20th-century legal and political developments relating to mass voting in Britain, including the establishment of the secret ballot. But Britain's India connection in fact influenced significantly evolving conceptions of sovereign authority (and thus of voting) on both sides of the colonial connection.

In tracing the intellectual history of British sovereignty in India, Mithi Mukherjee has in fact recently shown how debates on the nature of British imperial sovereignty were, from their late 18th-century beginnings, closely linked to the debates shaping modern sovereignty at home [29]. As Mukherjee argues, the bitter conflict in England on the morality of East India Company rule in late 18th-century India, in which Edmund Burke played a prominent role, helped to crystallize a vision of legitimate sovereignty with two contradictory aspects, which mirrored the conundrums of sovereignty we have already discussed. Mukherjee calls these the "colonial" and the "imperial." While the legitimacy of "colonial" authority rested on the state's ability to operate *within* the fragmented and autocratic realities of Indian society and ideas in order to maintain order (that is, to adapt its rule to India's worldly realities, as the British saw them), the state also grounded its legitimacy in an "imperial" association with universalizing principles of "natural law," which defined for it a critical, self-defined moral position outside these social realities. These contradictory—yet still interlinked—ideas later evolved in the second half of the 19th century, under the direct rule of the Crown, to a vision of sovereignty linking the state to an idea she terms "justice as equity," an idea identifying the state's sovereign legitimacy precisely with its ability to act as an impartial arbiter in a society of which it simultaneously was and was not a part.

Here the conundrums of sovereignty were dramatized in stark form. On the one hand, the state's claims to legitimacy in India lay in its ability to order the subcontinent's fragmented array of

primordial identities (most notably caste and religion), largely through its administration of law and through the "disenchanting" sciences of ethnography, census, cadastral surveys, *etc.* In this way it defined itself as a modern state. But it also defined for itself—as a central facet of its claim to sovereignty—a place above and outside this society as the executive and judicial arbiter of rights, a position that was a product of a distinct, self-projected *British* imperial identity associated with law, impartiality and personal self-control. Whatever its foreignness, this was a framework of sovereign legitimacy, echoing older Indian ideas of detached sovereignty, with which, as Mukherjee shows, even many early Indian nationalists engaged.[114] Though clearly cast in terms in some ways quite different from those shaping the evolution of the people's sovereignty in UK itself (particularly with respect to the very different place of the individual in British colonial conceptions of an objectified Indian "society"), the structural parallels between the Indian case and the precisely contemporary definition of a sovereign authority conceived to be both within—and yet standing apart from—society in Britain, are striking.[115]

Such structural parallels are particularly critical when we consider the colonial introduction of elections into India in the early 20th century (roughly contemporaneous, in fact, with the final moves toward universal adult suffrage in Britain in the 1910s and 1920s).[116] British introduction of elections as an important element of governance into India at the end of WWI, did not represent an effort to spread or diffuse European democracy so much as to extend and solidify what Mukherjee would have called "colonial" forms of governance. Though the introduction of a significant electoral component into colonial rule was certainly in some ways an effort to buy off at this time the regime's increasingly vocal critics, both internally and internationally, the introduction of elections was preeminently an effort to discipline "popular" politics, channeling it within controlled voting structures, including a very narrow, propertied franchise and a structure of electoral constituencies that captured India's fragmented "colonial" structure, including "separate electorates" for minorities. India was still a society defined in British eyes by its deeply ingrained structure of primordial loyalties and influences, which could only be ordered by a detached, "impartial" sovereign state. Elections thus represented initially the efforts of a colonial state to maintain a vision of sovereignty as resting on its Olympian "impartiality," standing outside India's social divisions.

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[114] Mukherjee in fact sees the early Indian National Congress's engagement with this discourse of sovereignty linked to "justice as equity" as rooted in their judicial positioning within the empire and in a vision of British rule as modeled, in essence, on a court. She does not actually explore, however, the connections of these ideas with older Indian ideas of legitimate sovereign authority that might perhaps be linked to Hessterman's conundrum of sovereignty ([29], pp. 105–49).

[115] One key to the intersection of visions of sovereignty in the Empire and in India relates to the role of the imperial British monarchy, as the embodiment of a detached vision of sovereignty, or "justice as equity," as Mukherjee puts it. ([29]). Mukherjee sees this as very important in India; for a discussion of the connections between empire and the simultaneous transformation of the monarchy in Britain itself, see [30].

[116] There were some local and municipal elections in India in the late 19th century, and very limited Council elections as well, but it was only with the 1919 reforms that elections assumed an important place in the overall structure of British rule.

But, whatever British intentions in introducing elections, an expanded system of voting in India carried with it (in the structure of the secret ballot and in election laws designed to protect the autonomy of the individual voter) the germ of a structural vision of popular sovereignty, that came to have a profound impact as it intersected with Indian ideas about the nature of legitimate sovereign authority. In practice, the Indian National Congress, now led by M. K. Gandhi (1869–1948), initially decided to boycott the first set of provincial elections in 1920, seeing them (not incorrectly) as simply an effort by the British to shore up the foundations of their rule. But as Congress soon began to contest colonial elections, Gandhi's ideas came to play a major role in grounding a vision of popular sovereignty firmly in an Indian context.

The development of Gandhi's ideas suggests, in fact, the critical intersection of colonial ideas with older Indian ideas embodying sovereignty's conundrums. The colonial vision of legitimate sovereign authority, standing apart from society, now found reflection in Gandhi's popularization, within India's movement for self-rule (*swaraj*), of a sovereign, Indian national self, defined by personal non-violence and self-restraint and guided independently of society by the inner light of Satya, or Truth. As a frame for a vision of the "people," detached from India's social divisions, Gandhi, in effect, turned the colonial vision of impartial "justice as equity" against the colonial state itself. Yet, at the same time, Gandhi linked this reversal to older Indian ideas of renunciation as a foundation for sovereign authority. For Gandhi, the *sannyasin* (or renouncer), who remained active in the political world, in fact became the idealized model for a vision of the Indian "people", composed of men and women who now carried an "enchanted" internal essence into the "disenchanted" external world of colonial politics and state authority:

> If the *sanyasin*s of old did not seem to bother their heads about the political life of society [Gandhi wrote], it was because society was differently constructed. But politics properly so-called rule every detail of our lives today. …A *sanyasin*, having attained *swaraj* [self-rule] in his own person, is the fittest to show us the way. A *sanyasin* is in the world, but he is not of the world…([31], pp. 376–77).

It would be hard to find a clearer statement of the image of the "enchanted individual," living within society yet standing outside it—here cast in distinctive Indian terms, but tracking the conundrums of sovereignty that were playing themselves out in European democracy as well.

These late colonial developments provided the critical backdrop for the emergence of electoral democracy in India after its 1947 independence, and for the establishment of an electoral system based on universal adult suffrage that made India, at the time of its first general election in 1952, at a stroke the largest arena of mass democratic voting in the world. In many respects, the structuring of India's voting drew heavily on British models—and British electoral practice and law—brought to India in the late colonial era. Yet at the same time, its system of voting—and of popular sovereignty—was hardly a simple product of "Europeanization," but of complex interactions between very old Indian ideas about sovereignty, ongoing contradictions in European ideas about popular sovereignty, and the distinctive forms of sovereignty that had marked the colonial structure.

These interactions have played out in myriad ways, but they can be briefly traced here in the history of legal structures and in the history of constitutional ideas. Like the sovereign king, the sovereign Indian "people" were imagined in the Indian constitution as *simultaneously* bound to worldly "society," with all its divisions and hierarchies, and as external to it, defined as a unity by

the ineffable capacity for freedom of the individual, two poles held together in contradiction. The image of the free individual voter, separated from society, was asserted, even for illiterate voters, through a technology of secret voting based on electoral symbols. But the vision of Indian society as marked by extraordinarily high levels of social dependence, coercion and primordial identification (a view of Indian "society" shared by many of the high-caste drafters of India's constitution with India's earlier British rulers) cast the contradictions shaping the enchanted individual voter in India's system in unusually stark terms. Strict electoral laws were thus viewed as necessary in India, targeting the dangers of "undue influence" on the individual voter on a large scale. The structure of this law came from Britain (with its own underlying vision of a tension between "undue influence" and voter autonomy), but the sweeping character of the law went well beyond most European precedent. It prohibited appeals for votes on the basis of a candidate's "religion, race, caste, community or language," and even targeted the "the use of, or appeal to, national symbols, such as the national flag or the national emblem" that might compromise the freedom of individual rational authority.[117] Such rules were all the subject of many court cases in the years after mass elections began in India. But noteworthy about India's system, in a broader worldwide context, was the deep ongoing tension between the actual politics of elections, in which the pressures of caste, religion, and patronage in popular electioneering remained extremely powerful, and a structure of law that put the autonomy of the enchanted individual at its theoretical heart, however limited its actual reach in transforming elections. It is in fact tempting to see India's electoral structure as designed precisely to keep the two poles of sovereignty's conundrum in tension, thus in practical effect acknowledging, in Heesterman's terms, its fundamental insolubility ([32], pp. 406–27).

This is also evident in the extraordinary role of India's national Election Commission in administering elections in India, an institution that had no precedent in British electoral practice. The critical fiction of the Election Commission is that it manages the most contentious political arenas in India (its national and state elections) and yet somehow claims to exist outside politics. It thus embodies a vision of law-bound, procedural democracy standing apart from the actual political conflict that represents the nuts and bolts of electoral competition. Though the Election Commission's position in Indian politics has been the subject of controversy over the years, the Commission has in recent decades underscored its position as standing apart from everyday politics by issuing what it calls a "Model Code of Conduct" for candidates in elections, which is not technically justiciable, but which is highly publicized by the Election Commission and has gained an important foothold in the national imagination. This hardly prevents, of course, a multitude of violations of the code by candidates. But the issuing of the Code, which is sometimes interpreted in highly moralistic terms, suggests the secular theology lying underneath it. As one supporter thus wrote in the 1990s to T. N. Seshan, the then chief Election Commissioner (who publicized the Model Code as never before), the position of the Chief Election Commissioner in enforcing the code had become reminiscent of that of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, who declared: "*Dharmasamsthapanarthaya, sambhavami yuge yuge* [to uphold dharma, I shall incarnate in every

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[117] Representation of the People Act, 1951, Section 123 (3), as amended. For a table of these and other provisions relating to "corrupt practices" in Indian elections, see the Election Commission of India website: http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/CurrentElections/Table-MCC.pdf.

age]" (quoted in [33], p. 253). Here the Election Commission was conceptualized, in effect, as an emanation of divinity on earth (an *avatar*), there to make sure that in the midst of social pressure and worldly corruption the sovereign voice of the people could be heard. Yet lest one take too literally the religious language of such a comment, it is critical to note that the expansion of the EC's authority occurred in the early 1990s against the backdrop of an Indian Supreme Court decision underscoring the foundational importance of secularism to the "basic structure" of the Indian constitution.[118] Indeed, Seshan himself was quite active in seeking to limit the scope of religious rhetoric in election campaigns. Rather, it is tempting to see such comments as evidence of a continuing, secularized "theology of power" that underlies voting. The EC's central role lies in managing one of the most complex social—and intensely political—events in the world, India's massive general elections. And yet even as its success lies in deep engagement with society, its authority hinges on its simultaneous claims to be external, to stand outside this social world.

Indeed, at the heart of Indian elections we can also see the same tensions we saw in Europe in defining the individual sovereign self. It was, of course, Gandhi who was most responsible during the independence movement for popularizing a vision of a new Indian self that was defined by the operation of internal self-control and self-discipline, guided by Satya. This was a vision that was, as some have argued, in some ways lost in the structuring of the Indian constitution, with its many foreign borrowings and strong statist vision, reflecting far more the ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) and B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956), than those of Gandhi. But the structure of mass voting in India nevertheless continues to embody in critical respects a Gandhian vision of the self, cast as the site of the irresolvable tension between an enchanted autonomy and the pressures of a social world deeply structured by dependence and influence.[119] This was personally manifested for Gandhi, as we have already noted, in a kind of this-worldly asceticism, a style that, while still having popular appeal in India, has lost a good deal of its force in Indian politics since 1947. But the structure of Indian elections in the 21st century still bears the powerful imprint of this idea, particularly in the contrast between India's fragmented and bitterly contested electoral politics on the ground, and its seemingly self-denying submission to an extraordinarily rule-bound vision of procedural democracy.

From such a perspective, the Indian Constitution itself can be read for all its institutional and statist borrowings, as a form of "self-binding," as Sanjay Palshikar puts it, that draws legitimacy from the image of the self-controlled, sovereign individual ([35], p. 213).[120] This has represented a powerful vision constituting an image of the Indian "people" as a whole, their imagined unity standing in opposition *both* to the social pressures of interest and identity pressing on the social individual, *and* to the "disenchanted" power of the bureaucratized, highly objectifying,

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[118] The case was *S. R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), AIR 1994 SC 1918.

[119] For an argument stressing the importance of Gandhi's thinking to the constitution, in spite of the rejection by the constituent assembly of many of his specific ideas, particularly about the place of the village in constitutional structure, see [34], pp. 59–78. The idea of a self-disciplined individual as central to India's constitutional order was, in fact, deeply internalized by Nehru as well.

[120] Palshikar notes Hobbes' rejection of this self-binding idea, based on the idea that a "binding promise cannot be performed by one party alone." But arguably, this was precisely what constituted the case for Indian constitutionalism as viewed within a Gandhian framework.

developmental Indian state. In practice, of course, forms of electoral corruption, including vote-buying, are widespread. But the countervailing existence of a legal framework embodying the image of the autonomous voter, widely viewed as central to the very legitimacy of elections in India, reflects, in a sense, the ongoing—and insoluble—tension in the Indian operation of the conundrum of sovereignty itself.

In sum, the power of this vision of the sovereignty of the people can be explained neither through a history of diffusion from Europe nor by a search simply for democracy's indigenous Indian roots. Rather it is an idea best framed by the larger worldwide conundrums of sovereignty itself—now embedded in the sovereignty of the Indian "people."

Afterthought

There is, of course, a significant danger of distortion in trying to force multiple, variant systems of voting, and variant democratic histories into a common, overarching comparative frame. But such framings allow us to point to commonalities and differences as we examine democracy, which are essential to any move toward a worldwide history of voting.

A telling example for such a framework lies in the meanings embedded in the powerful phrase, "We, the people," which opens both the American and Indian constitutions. As the phrase suggests, the importance of the American model in shaping certain aspects of the Indian constitution is unmistakable; in both cases the meanings attached to the "people" can also be traced back to Europe. Historians and philosophers have in fact devoted considerable attention to the meanings of the "people" as conjured up in the American constitution (and the American revolution), particularly in comparison with both earlier and later popular revolutions in Europe [10,36,37]. And yet when cast against the Indian case—and the larger worldwide history of the conundrum of sovereignty—the distinctive invocation of the "people" in the American constitution's preamble takes on distinctive meanings. In the American case, the "people" are seemingly mobilized in the constitution's opening phrase to be a unidirectional source of authority, the active font of legitimacy for a constitution that the people themselves directly "ordain and establish." The "people" seemingly express their mystical unity in the very act of creating the Constitution. In the Indian constitution, on the other hand, the "people" are simultaneously the subject *and* the object of constitutional authority; they "adopt, enact, and give" the Constitution, as the Preamble declares, "*to ourselves.*"[121] As both the givers and receivers, in other words, the "people," as conjured in the opening of the Indian constitution, project simultaneously their two contradictory capacities, as the enchanted independent source of the constitution's power, and, at the very same time, as a receiver bound in dependence by the gift. The deep-seated, insoluble tension defining the sovereign citizen, trapped between social forces and an imagined autonomy, is here, in a sense, writ large.

Such phrasing also points to the importance of comparative frames, going well beyond the simple diffusion of ideas, for a global history of voting. Some would argue that if there was a check

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[121] Italics added. This precise language in fact appeared earlier in the preamble of the Irish constitution of 1937. But the very different world from which this was adapted is suggested by the fact that in the text of the Irish constitution, the phrase "We, the people of Eire" was preceded by: "In the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom is all authority and to Whom, as our final end, all actions both of men and States must be referred…"

to unitary popular sovereignty in the US constitution, it was seemingly rooted less in the conundrum of the sovereign individual, as both controlled and controlling, both autonomous and subject to influence, than in the paradoxical relationship between the federal system and the states, whose relationship itself defined a sovereign conundrum.[122] If the "people" ordained the constitution, it was the states themselves, after all, and not the people, who ratified the document. But the differences between the two cases can perhaps best be read in ongoing differences in election law—and in processes of voting. While in Indian election law, the "enchanted individual" has been seen as continuously threatened by the force of influence in society, and thus requiring legal protections that allow the autonomous self to be heard, in American election law, the individual is more often seen as defining his/her autonomy through self-assertion in worldly politics itself, and thus needing far fewer legal protections. The threats to the individual's autonomy come far less from society than from the state itself. Indeed, if individual assertion is converted into a vision of sovereign authority existing outside the world, this is perhaps more commonly achieved in popular American thinking through market models, where it is an "invisible hand" (a secularized hand of divinity?), operating simultaneously both within and outside social relations, that seemingly converts self-interested social action and conflict into a unitary vision of the "people," somehow transcending the social.[123] In such a frame, the paradox of autonomy and control has raised a very different set of questions from those shaping the meanings of voting in India—though it can perhaps still be read in terms of the conundrum of a sovereign voice that stands both within the community, and outside it, at the same time.

To posit such a contrast between the "people" in the US and Indian cases, is no doubt highly speculative, and is merely a suggestion for exploration. But if we are to see this within a larger global history of voting, it is important to see here also the underlying paradox of the people's sovereignty in comparative operation, not simply as part of the long-term story of the "Europeanization" of the world, but part of a larger story about the nature of sovereignty itself, in which Europe and the rest of the world alike have been embedded. It is only then that we can begin to move towards a truly global history of voting.

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[122] Though it is well beyond discussion here, the tension in the framing of the US constitution as a document of a sovereign people on the one hand, and as a compact of sovereign states on the other, is a profound one, and in critical ways replicated the conundrum of sovereignty we have discussed. It should be noted that although India's system is also a federal one, there was no sense in which its constitution was, like the American one, a compact of the states.

[123] This at least has been the seeming theory underlying a long line of recent U. S. Supreme Court decisions on American voting law, including the landmark decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010).

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Article

Europeanization of the World or Globalization of Europe?

Jerry Bentley

Department of History, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822, USA;
E-Mail: jbentley@hawaii.edu

Abstract: Building on his long career as a distinguished historian of early modern Europe, John Miles Headley has recently turned his gaze to the influence of Europe in the larger world. In *The Europeanization of the World*, Headley makes an insistent case for the uniqueness of European values—particularly human rights and democracy—and argues that these values are Europe's most precious gifts to the larger world. Without seeking to diminish the remarkable intellectual and cultural achievements of European peoples, this presentation will suggest a more nuanced view of relations between Europe and the larger world. Human rights and democracy mean different things to different peoples in different contexts at different times, and there have in fact been numerous expressions of both in societies beyond Europe. Furthermore, European theorists of human rights and democracy drew influence from societies beyond Europe. To the extent that the Europeanization of the world is a persuasive idea, it is possible only because of a prior globalization of Europe.

Keywords: human rights; democracy; Renaissance; early modern Europe

Building on his long career as a distinguished historian of early modern Europe, John Miles Headley has recently turned his gaze to the influence of Europe in the larger world. In *The Europeanization of the World*, Headley makes an insistent case for the uniqueness of European values—particularly human rights and democracy—and argues that these values are Europe's most precious gifts to the larger world [1]. Without seeking to diminish the remarkable intellectual and cultural achievements of European peoples, this presentation will suggest a more nuanced view of relations between Europe and the larger world. Human rights and democracy mean different things to different peoples in different contexts at different times, and there have in fact been numerous expressions of both in societies beyond Europe. Furthermore, European theorists of human rights and democracy themselves drew inspiration from sources beyond Europe. To the extent that

the Europeanization of the world is a persuasive idea, it is possible only because of a prior globalization of Europe.

In light of Headley's career as a distinguished historian of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, it will be appropriate to begin this discussion with a scriptural text. The passage I have chosen comes from the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10: "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us" (AV). The words of the Preacher suggest the advisability of caution—second thoughts—to anyone making expansive claims for uniqueness and novelty in world history. Yet uniqueness is one of the defining characteristics of Headley's Europe. The terms "unique," "uniquely," and "uniqueness" make at least fifty appearances in his book, with all but five of these referring to the alleged distinctiveness of European values.

Headley's basic argument is simple and straightforward. Europe (or sometimes, more ambiguously, "the West") invented and developed two principles of universal significance: the idea of a common humanity, which underlies values of human rights and toleration, and the normalization of political dissent, which serves as the foundation of a free press and constitutional democracy. Both principles built on intellectual foundations stretching back as far as Socrates and the ancient Stoics, Headley argues, but both of them achieved distinctive formulations in the early modern era. The notion of a common humanity emerged in the sixteenth century, as European mariners visited all parts of the world that were accessible through the seas, prompting the construction of the notion that humanity is a single biological and moral community. The acceptance of political dissent began to take on institutional form in the seventeenth century with the emergence of party politics, constitutions, and concepts of popular sovereignty. Headley holds that both principles—the idea of a common humanity and the normalization of political dissent—underwent continuous and sustained development during the period 1500 to 1800. He readily acknowledges that similar moments occurred in other societies, albeit briefly and intermittently—in the work of Mencius and Akbar, for example—but he maintains that there was no sustained development or institutionalization of human rights or democracy in other lands. He harbors no illusions about the moral superiority of Europe. He acknowledges clearly and repeatedly that Europeans have perpetrated horrible atrocities both on fellow Europeans and on other peoples. Yet he holds also that Europe has been the target of undue criticism, and he maintains firmly that the European values of human rights and democracy merit respect and appreciation as gifts to humanity. This one-paragraph summary cannot do justice to the depth, subtlety, and sophistication of Headley's analysis, but I hope it at least represents fairly the major arguments of his book.

One peculiarity of Headley's book on *The Europeanization of the World* is that it actually has little to say about the world beyond Europe. The principal task of the book is to trace the intellectual history of the ideas of human rights and democracy in European context. Headley accomplishes this task in most impressive fashion: indeed, his book represents a *tour de force* of conventional intellectual history by patiently following strands of ideas from ancient through medieval to early modern times, tracing their influence on successive generations of thinkers, and recounting their gradual assemblage into the modern ideas of human rights and democracy. If this

sounds like a whiggish approach, it is. But it also represents a sensitive and detailed review of two ideas that have profoundly influenced European and North American historical experience.

Nevertheless, in light of his expansive title—*The Europeanization of the World*—it is surprising that only on page 193 (out of 218 pages of text) does Headley raise the question: "But what of the world beyond Europe?" It is even more surprising that the following pages have more to say about European views on the world beyond Europe than about the world beyond Europe itself. Headley's book actually deals with the Europeanization of Europe, not at all with the Europeanization of the world, which would presumably involve the widespread adoption of European human rights values and democracy in the larger world.[124] Judging from the topics and issues that Headley chooses to discuss, the Europeanization of the world would seem to be a future prospect—a development that might eventually take place, and a development that will be able to draw on pre-existing cultural elements in the world's various societies (e.g., the work of Mencius and Akbar) as well as European constructs—but it is not a development that has already taken place and that accordingly might be susceptible to historical review and analysis.

The recognition that Headley's book deals with the Europeanization of Europe rather than the Europeanization of the world suggests a question: What if we take the larger world more seriously and examine developments in the larger world on their own terms, rather than relying exclusively on European constructions of the larger world? Historians once considered Europe a unique site of exceptional traits, including reason, enterprise, innovation, creativity, organizational talent, rule of law, and risk-taking behavior, and they even held that the European demographic regime was unique in that Europeans practiced birth control and sought to limit population expansion more than other peoples. As scholars have looked beyond Europe and conducted serious research in other parts of the world, however, they have exposed these vague notions about Europe's supposed uniqueness as speculative myths, misunderstandings, or self-congratulatory conceits that bear limited resemblance to historical reality as historians have best been able to construe it. Most of these conceits represent the residue of Hegelian ideology as professional historians absorbed it in the nineteenth century. Only since about 1950 have historians and area studies experts undertaken the herculean effort that has generated better and more reliable knowledge about the larger world. In the context of the vast library of scholarship they have produced on the world beyond Europe, it has become clear that Europe was far less unique, in any meaningful sense of the term, than earlier generations of historians supposed.

What about the issues of human rights and democracy? When considered in global context, will they melt away under the harsh, unblinking glare of historical analysis like the other supposedly unique traits of European peoples? In their favor, the ideas of human rights and democracy have a higher degree of specificity than the earlier-cited list of vague qualities frequently attributed to Europe. Certainly no historian will ever discover a premodern Asian analogue to Locke's *Second*

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[124] In Headley's case, this term would mean something different from the earlier "Europeanization of Europe" discussed by Robert Bartlett who believed it meant the spread of Christian cultural elements, administrative practices, and institutionalized education from the core European region of the former Carolingian empire to more peripheral regions ([2], pp. 269–91). Yet if Headley were to frame his argument in terms of an Europeanization of Europe rather than the world, the process he describes might well seem to be an extension or deepening of Bartlett's Europeanization.

Treatise of Civil Government or an ancient African equivalent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, just as none will ever discover the European correspondent to the Confucian *Analects* or the *Bhagavad Gita*. The specific features of cultural traditions are obviously unique to the peoples who created them. It would be pointless to expect peoples of other societies and cultural traditions to formulate doctrines of human rights or democracy that are precise parallels of European doctrines. This kind of uniqueness is undoubtedly important: it is the kind of uniqueness that makes history possible, since unique developments and experiences are the very stuff and matter of historical analysis. In this sense of the term, every society, every individual is unique, and nobody will even begin to doubt that that is true.

Headley's uniqueness, however, is altogether different in character. When he discusses the uniqueness of European values, he has in mind something more like exceptionalism rather than the everyday uniqueness that historians routinely deal with in their work. His conception of European uniqueness implies the claim that European agents elaborated particular values that are so wholly unlike and so fundamentally different from those found anywhere else that they had no proper counterparts in the larger world and hence are not even comparable to values elaborated in the world beyond Europe. Consideration of European uniqueness in Headley's strong sense of the term requires attention to two questions about historical developments in the world beyond Europe: First, whether societies beyond Europe may have developed some functional equivalents of human rights and democracy that served similar purposes, even if they did not achieve the same formulations that they did at European hands? And second, whether the European formulations of human rights and democracy may have drawn on influences and inspirations from the world beyond Europe? In both cases, I respond that the answer to these questions is Yes.

Democracy and efforts to promote democracy have obviously loomed large in world affairs over the past quarter-century. It is a disappointment that historians have had little to say about democracy, leaving the task largely to political scientists, philosophers, and legal scholars. Headley is one among the few, the proud, the brave among historians who have taken up the challenge of analyzing democracy in historical context. This task is difficult for several reasons: there is no objective standard to measure what does or does not count as democracy; since the twentieth century, the term democracy has figured so prominently in ideological disputes that its very use raises different assumptions in different minds; like any other concept laden with moral implications, democracy does not lend itself to the kind of precise analysis that is possible for measures of wheat, jugs of wine, bolts of cloth, and other items studied by historians of the material world; and moreover, perhaps most importantly, democracy is a word with deep emotional power that brings visions of hope to some while striking fear in the hearts of others and prompting very different assumptions and historical analyses in all cases. That does not mean that historians should not analyze democracy in historical context. Quite the contrary: as a profoundly influential historical phenomenon, democracy is far too important to leave to the tender mercies of political scientists, philosophers, and lawyers (with all due respect to these distinguished scholars for the contributions that they have been able to make from their own vantage points).

When thinking about democracy in global historical context, it is or should be clear that it will have different characteristics at different times and in different places. Bicameral legislatures with regular schedules of full, free, fair, and unobstructed elections were rare features anywhere in the

world before the twentieth century. If these were the criteria for democracy, no part of the USA was democratic before passage of the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women's suffrage in 1920, and some regions would not qualify as democratic until after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Granting that bicameral legislatures with regular schedules of full, free, fair, and unobstructed elections are absolutely wonderful and admirable institutions, we clearly need more flexible criteria if we want to hold a fruitful conversation about democracy on a cross-cultural and global basis. What kinds of institutions and practices might qualify as functional equivalents of contemporary democracy?

Amartya Sen has considered this question in especially illuminating fashion. Following John Rawls in particular among others, Sen views democracy less as a matter of establishing specific institutions or even voting than of exercising public reason and making a place for individuals to participate in public decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods. "Public reasoning," he explains, "includes the opportunity for citizens to participate in political discussions and to influence public choice. Balloting can be seen as only one of the ways—albeit a very important way—to make public discussions effective, when the opportunity to vote is combined with the opportunity to speak and listen, without fear" ([3], p. 14). By this standard, democracy in some form or another is by no means the exclusive preserve of Europe and its North American offshoots. Athens and Rome were certainly early laboratories of democracy, but Sen argues persuasively that India also has long been a site for the exercise of public reason. From the time of the ancient Himalayan republics through the early Buddhist councils and the imperial courts of Ashoka and Akbar to the present day—for the better part of three millennia—south Asia has been a forum for the exercise of public reason. Nor was India the only such forum. Sen argues that the Buddhist values that emanated from ancient India inspired similar practices in other lands where Buddhism found a large following. He cites the case of the Japanese Buddhist Prince Shotoku, to mention only one example among many, who in the early seventh century implemented a constitution providing that "Decisions on important matters should not be made by one person alone. They should be discussed with many" ([3], pp. 81–82).

Historians Steven Muhlberger and Phil Paine adopted a similar approach in their exploratory sketch of "Democracy's Place in World History" [4]. Focusing their attention on local rather than royal, imperial, or national levels of organization, Muhlberger and Paine argue that over the long run of history politics has been mostly a local affair, that councils and assemblies organized on a village or kinship basis have tended to most of the governmental and decision-making matters that impinge directly on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, and that these councils and assemblies have operated in large measure on democratic or quasi-democratic principles to the extent that discussion, consultation, debate, negotiation, and often voting informed public decisions. The authors adduce cases from China, India, sub-Saharan Africa, and native societies in North America to substantiate their argument that local practice has depended on a kind of rough, de facto democracy in much of the world beyond Europe.

The kind of democracy that Sen, Muhlberger, and Paine have in mind is clearly not the equivalent of contemporary democracy, nor did it confer the kind of protections that individuals properly expect from contemporary democracy (at least when it functions well). Unlike de facto democracies in other parts of the world, contemporary democracy rooted in Europe benefits from

deep intellectual traditions and powerful institutions that inform and sustain this strain of government, and one of the merits of Headley's book is precisely to sort out the lineages of these intellectual traditions.

Yet the works of Sen, Muhlberger, and Paine help to make two points clear. First, when talking about the world, it is crucial for historians to resist temptations to restrict their horizons to story lines that are familiar from European experience. It is essential for them to go further and undertake the difficult work of actually investigating historical reality in the larger world, just as professional historians from Leopold von Ranke forward have compiled remarkable histories of Europe and its American offshoots. Second, if they are going to talk about democracy in global context, it is essential for historians to recognize the fact that democracy will take different shapes and sport different colors in different societies. To take one cultural expression as the Ideal Type of Democracy, or as the standard against which all the others get measured and inevitably found wanting, is tantamount to a foreclosure on any opportunity for investigation, analysis, discussion, or debate about the nature and history of democracy itself.[125] When historians venture from Europe into the larger world, it is essential that they open their minds to the reality that different peoples in different societies have different rationalities that do not necessarily benefit from being judged against European standards. By this light, European peoples elaborated a remarkable and admirable strain of democracy, but that does not necessarily mean that democracy *per se* is a purely European gift to the world. Rather, it will be more helpful to think of democracy—like agriculture, perhaps—as an ever-changing and constantly evolving product of multiple independent inventions by different peoples in different world regions at different times and under different sets of circumstances.

Even in cases of multiple independent inventions, there is abundant scope for different individual traditions to influence the development of others. Indeed, this is the prospect that Headley's book envisions with respect to European values of human rights and democracy in the larger world. Here I would like to suggest that outside influences played a role in the development of some values in Europe itself. When it came to democracy, of course, Europeans were able to build on distinctive elements from classical antiquity and the medieval era. When it came to toleration and human rights, however, ancient and medieval experience offered them much less positive or constructive guidance. Thus, where their own cultural and intellectual tradition was lacking, European theorists of toleration and human rights drew inspiration from other wells. One source was the purely practical experimentation with a limited religious toleration that Dutch authorities tried in the interests of maintaining public order in their own multi-confessional environment [6]. Another was the kind of everyday practice of tolerance that members of communities often extended to their fellows as recently outlined by Stuart B. Schwartz [7]. Yet another, which will be my focus here, was the long-institutionalized practice of religious toleration in the world of Islam, which European peoples learned about through the reports of travelers who commented on customs and conditions in the lands they visited. None of these sources of

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[125] Donald Treadgold takes exactly this approach. While claiming to deal with "the history of freedom on a world scale within a single pair of covers," he devotes his attention almost exclusively to Europe and North America, and he takes European conceptions of freedom as the de facto standards of freedom (including democracy and human rights) ([5], p. 2).

inspiration has figured prominently in conventional approaches to intellectual history, which quite simply has not gotten us very far in understanding the influences that helped to bring about policies of religious toleration. Yet these sources are essential for a proper historical understanding of religious toleration and human rights. Analysis of these sources of inspiration and their influences on emerging theories of toleration calls for the exploration of historical sources that intellectual historians have not previously taken into consideration.

Historians have of course long recognized that European scholars avidly consumed the works of Muslim philosophers and scientists during the middle ages, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There has been less attention to the possibility of any continuing influence in early modern times. As conventionally practiced, intellectual history has made limited contribution thus far to the understanding of this issue. The task is not simply a matter of tracing the genealogy and the handling of individual ideas through a series of European intellectual agents—the forte of conventional intellectual history—but rather of spotting influences that arrived by unusual routes and that European theorists might well have intentionally obscured.

A case in point comes from recent studies of a philosophical novel by Ibn Tufayl and its influence in early modern Europe. Ibn Tufayl was a twelfth-century physician and political advisor at the court of the Almohad Sultan Abu Ya'qub Yusuf of Morocco and Spain. He was a companion of Ibn Rushd (Averroes) whom he in fact invited to reside at the sultan's court. About 1160 or 1170 Ibn Tufayl wrote his novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*—the name means "living son of the wakeful"—a boy abandoned as an infant who grew up on a tropical island with no other human inhabitants. Nursed through youth by a kindly doe gazelle, Hayy discovered on his own how to control fire, build shelter, domesticate animals, and invent tools. Later, on the basis of nothing more experimentation and reason, he became a physician, astronomer, and philosopher. Thus he was eventually able to reason his way to an understanding of the world and even to the existence of God. In the last pages of the novel Hayy encountered a wise hermit, who introduced him to the outside world. But Hayy found it profoundly unappealing because its inhabitants led their lives on the basis of doctrine and dogma instead of reason and experimentation, so he soon abandoned human society and returned to his island [8].

The story of Hayy caught the attention of free thinkers in Europe from the fourteenth century. Moses of Narbonne made a Hebrew translation in 1349, and Pico della Mirandola made a Latin translation on the basis of Moses's Hebrew in the late fifteenth century. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Ibn Tufayl's influence soared. In 1671 Edward Pococke the younger—son of Edward Pococke, the first Laudian professor of Arabic at Oxford University—published the first Latin translation (which he had prepared under his father's supervision) directly from Ibn Tufayl's Arabic under the title *Philosophus autodidactus*. Translations into Dutch, English, French, and other languages followed shortly thereafter, and Ibn Tufayl's book became quite the rage in England as well as the Continent. It is likely that the story of Hayy was the model or inspiration or point of departure for Daniel Defoe's account of Robinson Crusoe, and Ibn Tufayl's influence is clearly traceable in Spinoza, Leibniz, Pope, Bayle, and Diderot, among others ([9], pp. 628–31; [10]).

Was Ibn Tufayl's novel also a source of inspiration for John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*? There is no absolute documentary proof, but G.A. Russell has advanced a powerful and persuasive argument on this point. She points out that before 1671, Locke's interests

included political and social but not epistemological or psychological issues. In 1671, however, he began the initial work on the treatise that eventually appeared in 1690 as the first edition of the *Essay on Human Understanding*. From 1652 to 1667 Locke lived principally at Oxford, where he was an outspoken admirer and a very close personal friend of Edward Pococke the elder as well as a tutor (1660–1661) to Edward Pococke the younger. Although Locke's library does not seem to have included a copy of Ibn Tufayl in Pococke's Latin translation, it is quite literally inconceivable that he was unaware of the book at precisely the time he began his own epistemological work. It certainly would be a remarkable coincidence—a little too much coincidence for my own comfort—that just at the moment his close friends produced a Latin translation of Ibn Tufayl's novel, Locke began to think totally independently about the human mind as a *tabula rasa* that progressed to understanding on the basis of sense experience and reason ([11], 224–65; [12]).[126]

The prospect that an obscure medieval Muslim philosopher might have sparked a foundational idea in a luminary such as John Locke is a notion that nobody would have even wasted time contemplating only a few years ago. Yet now it seems all but certain that Ibn Tufayl did indeed strike a chord with Locke and provide him with the kernel of an idea that he later developed in his own way and according to his own genius. Is it possible that additional influences came from the Muslim world or elsewhere to spark ideas among European thinkers who then worked them into formulations that have become familiar to us as human rights theory? More broadly, to what extent might peoples beyond Europe have contributed to the development of modern thought about human rights?

Throughout the early modern era—from the earliest fourteenth-century ventures to the nearby Atlantic islands and fifteenth-century soundings in west Africa through sixteenth- and seventeenth-century explorations in the Americas and Asia to eighteenth-century reconnoitering of the Pacific Ocean basin—an avalanche of information about the larger world poured into Europe. Merchants, missionaries, conquerors, settlers, and other travelers deluged European readers with their reportage on previously undescribed lands and peoples. Among the many strange and outlandish customs reported in this body of literature was the practice of religious toleration already observed for almost a thousand years in Muslim lands. We know for a fact that many of these travel accounts made their way to the notice of influential readers—including John Locke among others.

An early example of this reportage came from the accounts of three men who were some of the earliest Englishmen to travel extensively in Mughal India: Sir Thomas Roe, Edward Terry, and Thomas Coryat. Roe was the first English resident ambassador to India, serving as emissary of King James I to the Mughal court from 1615 to 1619. Terry was Roe's chaplain for most of his time in India. Coryat was a writer and traveler—neither merchant nor emissary—who spent five years (1612 to 1617) visiting various Muslim lands with an eye toward writing an account to follow up on his popular description of his earlier travels through Europe, *Coryat's Crudities*.

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[126] Although lacking the translation of Ibn Tufayl, Locke's library lacked the translation of Ibn Tufayl, but included three commentaries by Edward Pococke the elder on the books of Hosea, Joel, and Micah in the Hebrew Bible ([13], p. 212). Locke of course made no mention of Ibn Tufayl in his famous essay, but he illustrated his point with several references to conditions in the Muslim world ([14], pp. 71–72, 94, 657, 708).

These three were some of the earliest Englishmen who had the opportunity to spend considerable time in India and observe the Mughal court and society from perspectives outside the trade factories of the East India Company. They knew each other well and sometimes traveled together as they followed the Mughal court. All three portrayed the current emperor, Jahangir, as fair and generous of spirit, while characterizing his father and predecessor, Akbar, in similar terms. All three also commented specifically and with a notable degree of wonder on the policy of religious toleration that prevailed in Mughal India.

During the course of his embassy, Roe addressed at least two letters to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury and brother of Roe's friend Sir Maurice Abbot, who was Deputy-Governor of the East India Company. In one notable letter of 30 October 1616, Roe focused his attention on religious affairs in the Mughal Empire. He reported (mistakenly) that Timur and his descendants introduced Islam to India "but imposed it vpon none by law of Conquest, leauing consciences at liberty." He noted that alongside "strict Mahometans" (Sunni), there were others who were followers of Ali (Shiites) as well as numerous other sectarians following their own preferred prophets (presumably Sufis). Thus he characterized Islam as "a mingled religion, not vpright with their great Prophett." But that was just the Muslim population of India. The "Gentilles" population was even more diverse, including some who would drink wine, others who would eat swine, some who worshipped beasts, a few who would not even swat away the insects that attacked them, and many who refused to associate with certain others on the basis of their rank. The whole he characterized as "a Confusion." The confusion only became more complex after Akbar sponsored the presence of Roman Catholic missionaries and debates between Hindu, Muslim, and Christian representatives. Akbar even permitted conversion to Christianity, a policy continued by Jahangir, whom Roe characterized as "Content with all religions" and respectful toward every sect. Roe himself never doubted the truth of Christianity in the form of his own inherited Anglican confession, and he did not refrain from offering up numerous barbs about the aims and work of the Roman Catholic delegation in India. Yet he also made available to his readers a mostly fair (albeit sometimes inaccurate) characterization of a powerful and prosperous society that consciously followed a policy of religious toleration ([15], 2, pp. 308–19).

Thomas Coryat died in India and so was unable to compose the account of travels through Muslim lands that he hoped to provide, but several letters survive from his days in India. They confirm and build upon the image of India advanced by Roe. Coryat confirmed Jahangir's friendliness to Christians, noting that the Mughal emperor referred to Jesus as "Great Prophet Jesus." He related a story about Akbar to emphasize his tolerance and fair-mindedness: After certain Portuguese had tied a copy of the Quran around a dog's neck and chased it around the city of Agra, Akbar's dear mother reportedly suggested that he retaliate by tying a copy of the Bible around another dog's neck and chasing it through the streets of Hormuz. "But hee denied her request, saying that, if it were ill in the Portugals to doe so to the Alcoran, being it became not a King to requite ill with ill, for that the contempt of any religion was the contempt of God, and he would not be revenged upon an innocent booke." Coryat also recounted his own quite amazing experience. After a Muslim insulted him by calling him an infidel, Coryat replied with a lengthy impromptu oration in which he publicly denounced Muhammad as a false prophet, the Quran as the

work of a Byzantine monk named George, Muslim prayers as offenses before God, and the Muslim paradise as "a filthy quagmire … full of stincking dung-hills," among other broad slurs. Not one to restrain himself in the manner of Akbar, Coryat at least recognized both the riskiness of his action and his good judgment in choosing the Mughal realm as the venue for his denunciations: "If I had spoken thus much in Turky or Persia against Mahomet, they would have rosted me upon a spit; but in the Mogols dominions a Christian may speake much more freely then hee can in any other Mahometan country in the world" ([16], pp. 246, 271, 273, 278).

Coryat placed his trading of insults in the prominent commercial city of Multan (modern-day western Pakistan, south of Lahore), while Edward Terry attributed a similar confrontation to him at Agra, the Mughal capital south of Delhi. There, according to Terry, Coryat took offense at the proclamation that there is no God but God and that Muhammad is the prophet of God. "Which words Master Coryat often hearing in Agra, upon a certaine time got up into a turret, over against the priest, and contradicted him thus in a loude voice: *la Alla, illa Alla, Hazaret-Eesa Ebn-Alla*: No God but one God, and Christ the sonne of God; and further added that Mahomet was an imposter; which bold attempt in many other places of Asia, where Mahomet is more zealously professed, had forfetted his life with as much torture as tyrannie could invent. But here every man hath libertie to professe his owne religion freely and, for any restriction I ever observed, to dispute against theirs with impunitie." Elsewhere chaplain Terry affirmed that in the Mughal realm "All religions are tolerated, and their priests in good esteeme, My selfe often received from the Mogoll himself the appellation of Father, with other many gracious words, with place amongst his best nobles."[127]

The accounts of Roe, Coryat, and Terry were only three among thousands of travel reports that reached Europe during the early modern era. Why pay so much attention to this trio? Although their names are obscure today, the works of all three men reached audiences of influential readers. Samuel Purchas included excerpts from all three men's works in his collections of travel accounts, *Purchas*, *his Pilgrimage* and its successor volumes, which were of course wildly popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Locke's library included a copy of Purchas as well as a separate copy of Terry's book ([13], pp. 216, 245).[128] Quite apart from Purchas, Coryat's letters and Terry's report appeared independently in seventeenth-century editions, and Roe's journal in an eighteenth-century edition. Coryat's letters made the rounds at the Mermaid Tavern near St. Paul's Cathedral. He was a regular at the Friday Street Club there—a group with an illustrious membership, including Ben Jonson, John Donne, Inigo Jones, Sir Robert Cotton, Samuel Purchas, and John Selden, the most outspoken Englishman advocating religious toleration in the early seventeenth century. (Coryat addressed two of his letters from India to Laurence Whitaker, "the High Seneschall of the Right Worshipfull Fraternitie of Sireniacal Gentlemen, that meet the first Fridaie of every moneth at the signe of the Mere-Maide in Bread-streete in London," for transmission to his friends at the tavern ([16], pp. 241–52, 256–58). So far as I can see, Selden did not make use of any intelligence about the Muslim world in making his own case for religious

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[127] See Terry's account of his experiences in India, which was composed probably about 1620 or 1621, reprinted in [16], quoting from pp. 315 and 331.

[128] Locke also possessed copies of works by other prominent travelers, such as François Bernier and Paul Rycaut, who reported on the world of Islam. It is quite clear that he valued information about conditions in the Islamic empires.

toleration. Yet his fundamentally Erastian approach had as its aim a regime of managing public order that was not at all unlike the system that Akbar and Jahangir supervised in Mughal south Asia.[129]

Eventually, however, information about religious toleration in Muslim lands quite clearly made its way into works by some of the most prominent architects of toleration theories. By the late seventeenth century, it was commonplace for European theorists to compare Muslim policies of toleration favorably against Christian intolerance ([18], pp. 393–95). To mention only two particular luminaries, John Locke and Pierre Bayle both went to considerable lengths to learn about conditions in the Islamic world, and they both took a noticeable and particular delight in pointing out that Muslims, Jews, and Christians of all confessions—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, and others—were free to practice their faiths openly in Muslim lands while Christian European lands restricted religious freedom to a narrow range of confessions at best. As Locke proposed in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), "let us suppose two churches, the one of Arminians, the other of Calvinists, residing in the City of Constantinople. Will any one say, that either of these churches has right to deprive the members of the other of their estates and liberty, as we see practised elsewhere, because of their differing from it in some doctrines or ceremonies; whilst the Turks in the meanwhile silently stand by, and laugh to see with what inhuman cruelty Christians thus rage against Christians?" ([19], pp. 224–25).[130] In his entry on "Mahomet" in *Le Dictionnaire historique et critique* (begun in 1695), Bayle compared Christianity and Islam with respect to toleration: "The Mahometans, according to the principles of their faith, are obliged to employ violence, to destroy other religions, and yet they tolerate them now, and have done so for many ages. The Christians have no order, but to preach, and instruct; and yet, time out of mind, they destroy, with fire and sword, those who are not of their religion." Indeed, Bayle attributed the very survival of Orthodox Christianity to its good fortune to have fallen under Muslim domination: "It may be affirmed for a certain truth, That if the western princes had been lords of Asia, instead of the Saracens and Turks, there would be now no remnant of the Greek church, and they would not have tolerated Mahometism, as these Infidels have tolerated Christianity" ([21], pp. 38–39, 349–50).

Could the European value of religious toleration have emerged in the absence of the Muslim example of toleration? Yes, undoubtedly. Persecuted souls like Sebastian Castellio put out the call for toleration evidently without benefit of knowledge about conditions in the Muslim world, and the Dutch example suggests that purely practical considerations of social stability might well have pushed European peoples in the direction of toleration even if they didn't particularly like the idea and even though there was limited foundation in European tradition to build upon. The historical record is so full of contingency and unpredictable chance developments that it would not be wise to preclude the possibility that a European theory of toleration might have arisen on the basis of

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[129] Selden's table talk is full of comments to the effect that there can be no objective determination as to which religion is better than the others, so that the state must serve as referee and ensure that harmony prevails in a society hosting multiple religious communities ([17], pp. 9, 79, 161–67).

[130] In his second, third, and fourth letters on toleration, Locke continued to invoke the example of Muslims [20]. On purely religious grounds he argued the futility of persecution, explaining that every religion and every church is orthodox unto itself, but heretical in the eyes of others.

purely indigenous elements. Counter-factual considerations to the contrary notwithstanding, in the event, the Muslim example did indeed play a role in the gradual emergence of toleration theories during the early modern era and the European Enlightenment [18].[131]

But the Enlightenment was by no means the end of influence from beyond Europe on human rights doctrine. To the contrary, advocates from African, Latin American, and especially Asian lands played crucial roles in bringing about the crowning achievement of the human rights movement—adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations on 10 December 1948. Conventional treatments present the UDHR as the result of European and North American initiative inspired by the political values of the Enlightenment and the democratic revolutions [27]. Yet a minor spate of recent studies has demonstrated convincingly that Asian, African, and Latin American lobbyists pushed for human rights conventions much faster than their European and North American counterparts.

Adoption of the UDHR did not represent the first (or last) international consideration of human rights issues. Well before adoption of the UDHR, the First Universal Races Congress (1911), the Paris Peace Conference (1919), and the Dumbarton Oaks Conference (1944), among others, all heard calls for human rights under the rubrics of racial equality and self-determination of peoples as well as civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. In all cases, European and North American representatives resisted efforts by Asian, African, and Latin American delegates to advance policies of racial equality and self-determination. Intellectual and diplomatic foot-dragging on these issues continued well into the 1960s. Adoption of the UDHR was both necessary and possible in 1948 precisely because European and North American representatives had successfully stalled the recognition of human rights values on multiple occasions beforehand [28–30].

Who were the advocates for human rights before adoption of the UDHR, and what causes did they promote? Recent scholarship has emphasized two issues—freedom of movement and racial equality—as prominent aims of human rights advocates outside Europe. Japanese and especially Chinese activists asserted their "common human rights" from the 1870s, as discriminatory immigration laws restricted their mobility in violation of international treaties and sometimes even imperial policies. Racial equality, which implied equality of nations in the international order, was a goal dear to the hearts of Japanese and Chinese peoples in the era of the unequal treaties during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Japanese delegates to the Paris Peach Conference lobbied famously but unsuccessfully with Chinese support for the League of Nations to embrace racial equality as a founding principle. Chinese were perhaps even more active in the promotion of international racial equality, especially after Japan managed to escape the burdens of the unequal treaties following victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 to 1895. Their argumentation was eclectic, drawing influence sometimes from Christianity, Enlightenment theories, and international law, but also relying on the long tradition of Chinese civilization and the Confucian principles of reciprocity and mutual respect, while also reflecting the practical grievances of communities inconvenienced by human rights violations [31,32]. Thus Chinese advocacy of human rights was emphatically not a borrowed or derivative discourse. Rather, as two scholars have put it,

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[131] Apart from Marshall's very brief notice [18], existing historical scholarship on religious toleration [22–26] totally ignores extra-European influences.

"discussion of rights in China has long been motivated by indigenous concerns, rather than imposed from without, and it has been interpretive and critical, rather than passive and imitative" ([32], p. xiii). More broadly, in the words of the best contemporary historian of human rights: "The historical origins of powerful visions capable of shaping world events and attitudes like those of international human rights are rarely simple. Instead, they emerge in complicated and interrelated ways from the influence of many forces, personalities, and conditions in different times and diverse settings, each flowing in its own unique way like tributaries into an ever larger and mightier river" ([28], p. 4).

Indeed, neither democracy nor human rights is an exclusively European invention. Functional equivalents have long been prominent in the world beyond Europe, and peoples from the larger world have made their own contributions to the recognition of democracy and human rights as we understand them today in the international community. In this presentation I have mentioned only a few routes by which knowledge and influence flowed from the larger world into Europe and North America, and I have mentioned only a few individuals from the world beyond Europe who contributed to the formulation of contemporary values. This is the case because only recently have historians even begun to consider it worth their while to investigate expressions of democracy and human rights beyond European and North American horizons. We simply do not yet have the foundation in basic research to present a fully fleshed account of democracy and human rights in all world regions.

European and North American peoples have been conspicuous in their own efforts on behalf of democracy and human rights, and I have absolutely no wish to minimize or disparage their contributions. But the time has come, in the interests of clear historical understanding unclouded by Eurocentric mythologies, to take the larger world seriously, to scour global archives just as assiduously as historians have examined the European record over the past two centuries, and to follow as clearly as Headley has done for Europeans the contributions that peoples beyond Europe have made to the development of democracy and human rights.

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