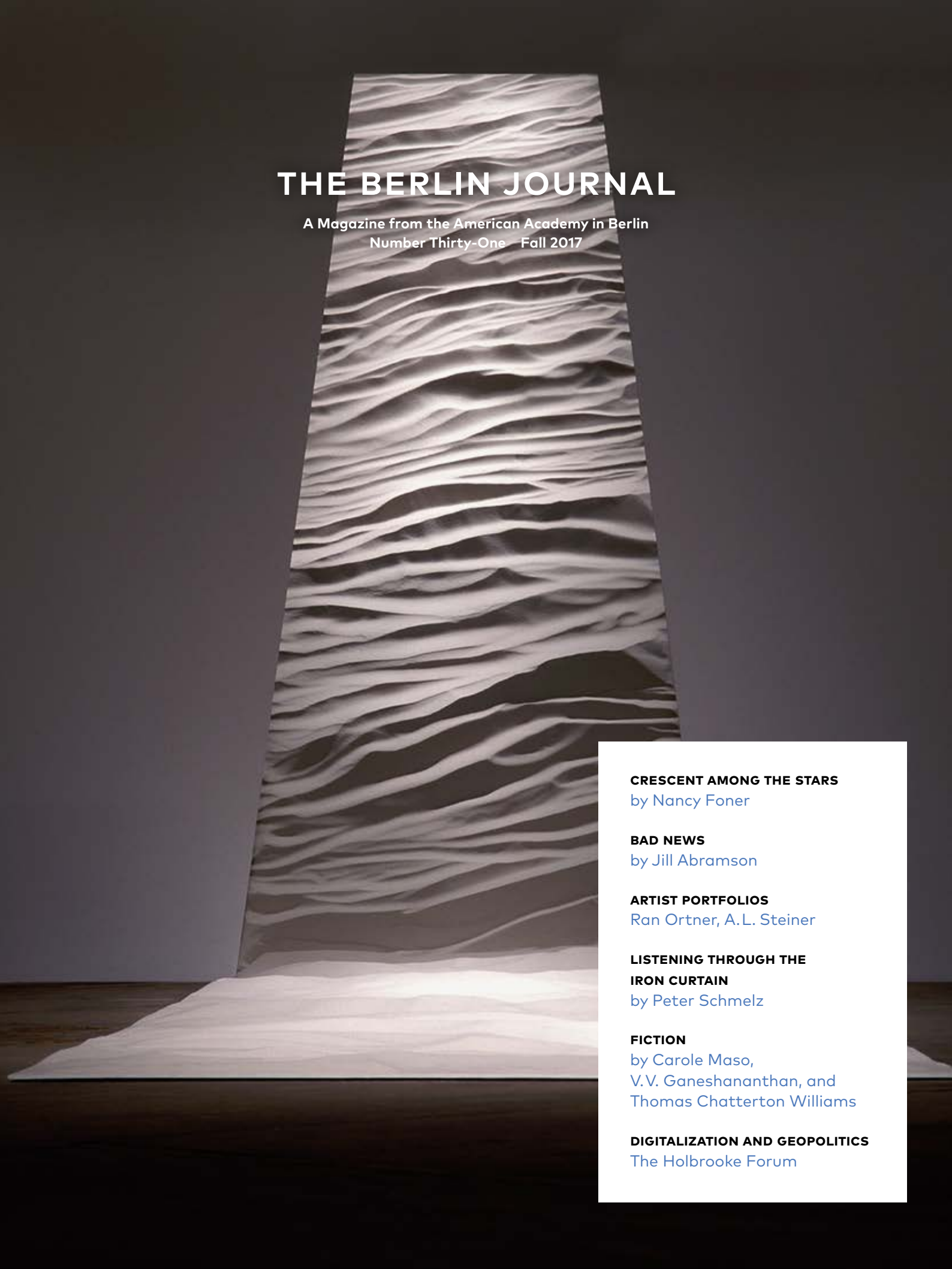

# THE BERLIN JOURNAL

A Magazine from the American Academy in Berlin
Number Thirty-One Fall 2017

**CRESCENT AMONG THE STARS**
by Nancy Foner

**BAD NEWS**
by Jill Abramson

**ARTIST PORTFOLIOS**
Ran Ortner, A.L. Steiner

**LISTENING THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN**
by Peter Schmelz

**FICTION**
by Carole Maso, V.V. Ganeshananthan, and Thomas Chatterton Williams

**DIGITALIZATION AND GEOPOLITICS**
The Holbrooke Forum

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# CONTENTS


## FOCUS
4

**6** NICOLE'S FATHER IS NOT GERMAN
by Kristen Monroe

**12** CRESCENT AMONG THE STARS
by Nancy Foner

**16** THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE SECTARIAN MIDDLE EAST
by Ussama S. Makdisi

**20** ARTIST PORTFOLIO
A.L. Steiner; text by Boychild

**24** UNDERCOVER OUGHTS
by Jacqueline Ross

**28** IN A NAME
by Thomas Chatterton Williams

**32** THE TIDE WAS ALWAYS HIGH
by Josh Kun

## FEATURES
36

**38** LISTENING THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN
by Peter Schmelz

**42** PERFORMING SOUND
an Interview with Raven Chacon

**44** THE NAMES
by Carole Maso

**46** ARTIST PORTFOLIO
Ran Ortner;
text by Michael Cunningham

**52** THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SOLOMON MAIMON
Translation by Paul Reitter

**58** GARDENING
by V.V. Ganeshananthan

**61** "THEY, THE PEOPLE"
by Dilip Gaonkar

**64** BAD NEWS
by Jill Abramson

**67** THE HOLBROOKE FORUM
Eberhard Sandschneider;
A Conversation between Stephen Hadley and Christoph Heusgen

## NOTEBOOK
74

**76** REMEMBERING ANNA-MARIA KELLEN

**78** THE 2017 HENRY A. KISSINGER PRIZE

**82** AL GORE AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY

**84** KERRY JAMES MARSHALL AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY

**86** WELCOMING NEW TRUSTEES

**87** DEDICATION OF THE FELLOWS PAVILION STUDIES

**89** PROFILES IN SCHOLARSHIP

**91** BOOK REVIEWS
by Norman Naimark, Paul Guyer, and Andrea Orzoff

**96** ALUMNI BOOKS

**97** SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

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**COVER IMAGE** Ran Ortner, *Invert*, 2002. Back wall, mirror, platform, 1,000 pounds of sand

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# PRESIDENT'S NOTE

## The Promise of Dialogue

**WELCOME TO THE** 2017–18 issue of the *Berlin Journal*, an intellectual yearbook that mirrors the concerns and conversations enlivening the Hans Arnhold Center this academic year. From the literary, musical, and visual arts to some of the most pressing issues facing politics and societies, the commitments outlined in this issue combine distinct disciplines into a panoply of incisive work and thought.

The fellows represented herein are members of our thirty-ninth and fortieth classes, marking the beginning of the twentieth year of our fellowship program, which began in the autumn of 1998 and included playwright Arthur Miller, poet C.K. Williams, and architecture critic Diana Ketcham. That same year saw the publication of American Academy founder Richard Holbrooke's *To End a War,* his memoir of conflict and peacemaking in the Balkans. Anticipating this anniversary, our Holbrooke Forum will convene a gathering of policymakers and scholars this October to explore what Holbrooke and his team accomplished in resolving that war and consider the challenges that persist in the region.

In describing the Balkan turmoil of the 1990s as a political crisis, Holbrooke challenged the popular notion and recurring claim that the region was fundamentally resistant to diplomatic intervention. Specifically, he took issue with Robert Kaplan's 1993 book *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History,* "which left most of its readers," Holbrooke wrote, "with the sense that nothing could be done by outsiders in a region so steeped in ancient hatreds." The "ancient hatreds" claim remains aggravating to both historical and policy analysts, and in the pages ahead we address this frustration head-on: historian and spring 2018 Siemens Fellow Ussama Makdisi echoes Holbrooke's critique in "The Mythology of the Sectarian Middle East," emphasizing the historical contingencies that define current enmities. Political scientist and spring 2018 Dirk Ippen Fellow Kristen Monroe argues how "many of the most frequently discussed political cleavages in America—race, religion, ethnicity—assume immutability about [. . .] in-group/out-group distinctions and the hostilities associated with them." And sociologist Nancy Foner, the fall 2017 Berthold Leibinger Fellow, stresses historical contingency over essential differences in attributing Europe's anxiety about Islam both to demography and to the degree that secularity is assumed to define European public spheres.

Foner is one of three 2017–18 fellows whose research focuses on questions of political migration and social integration—the topic the American Academy has identified as a theme of collective interest over the coming years. Ethnomusicologist Josh Kun, whose thoughts on the Mexican sound and identity of Los Angeles follow in the pages ahead, will be the spring 2018 Bosch Fellow in Public Policy, and Amy Remensnyder, a spring 2018 Nina Maria Gorrissen Fellow, will work on a history of medieval Lampedusa and its near-millennial past as a European receiving-point for African migrants. "Race in Comparative Perspective" will serve as the Academy's second focal theme; the comparison involves both transatlantic and interdisciplinary dialogues, as is so strongly implied in and among the contributions by Foner, Monroe, and Thomas Chatterton Williams in this issue.

In a brief address to the opening-night audience of the Berlin Konzerthaus Orchestra on September 8, music director Iván Fischer remarked that every rehearsal begins with a traversal of a chorale by J.S. Bach. What a resonant comment for the cultural analyst—and an invocation of what composer and spring 2018 Inga Maren Otto Fellow Raven Chacon celebrates as the "soft pace of the city." Fischer's disclosure affirms how and why Berlin's legacy has inspired so many American Academy scholars over the years to study music's interface with politics and religion.

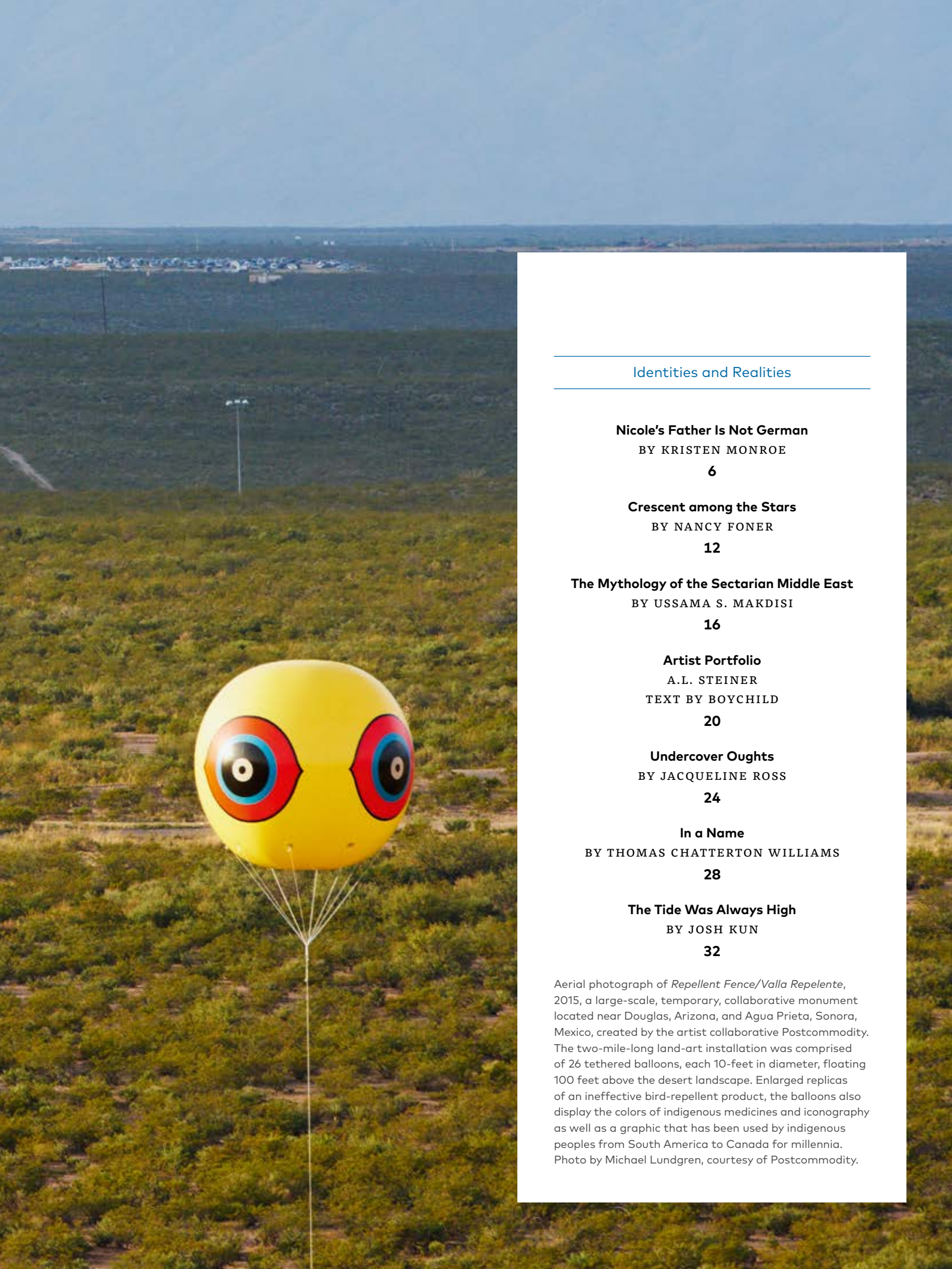
The *Konzerthausorchester,* founded in East Berlin, in 1952, alongside its much older sibling, the Berlin State Orchestra, or *Staatskapelle,* founded in 1570, carries subconscious memories of cultural life in the German Democratic Republic, where musical communities of players and audiences served also as displaced religious communities—surprisingly analogous to what Felix Mendelssohn had in mind in 1829, when he observed that the vocalists of his secular revival of Bach's St. Matthew Passion "sang with a devotion as if they were in church [*Sie sangen mit einer Andacht, als ob sie in der Kirche wären*]." No less devotional were the decidedly secular politics of Cold War German music, which historian Peter Schmelz, a fall 2017 Anna-Maria Kellen Fellow, traces via "an intimate history of musical exchange" between West Germany and Soviet Ukraine. Spring 2018 Axel Springer Fellow Christian Ostermann will complement Cold War studies with his biographical project on master-spy Markus Wolf.

The cohabitation of intimacy and terror has made its way uncannily through successive incarnations of German history and society. In today's Germany, however, the solidity of political debate and civil society-based initiatives proves both impressive and admirable to visiting American scholars. At the same time, their scholarly and creative commitments, flexibility, and imagination—and the exchanges they enable—testify to the resourcefulness, vigor, and diversity of American intellectual and cultural life.

These are anxious times for the health and future of transatlantic dialogue, the robust brokering of which defines the core mission of the American Academy in Berlin. For this reason, our drive, momentum, and contributions carry more promise than ever.

Michael P. Steinberg


FOCUS



Identities and Realities


**Nicole's Father Is Not German**
BY KRISTEN MONROE
**6**

**Crescent among the Stars**
BY NANCY FONER
**12**

**The Mythology of the Sectarian Middle East**
BY USSAMA S. MAKDISI
**16**

**Artist Portfolio**
A.L. STEINER
TEXT BY BOYCHILD
**20**

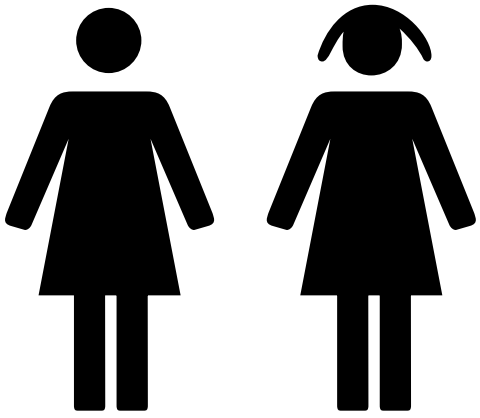
**Undercover Oughts**
BY JACQUELINE ROSS
**24**

**In a Name**
BY THOMAS CHATTERTON WILLIAMS
**28**

**The Tide Was Always High**
BY JOSH KUN
**32**


Aerial photograph of *Repellent Fence/Valla Repelente*, 2015, a large-scale, temporary, collaborative monument located near Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico, created by the artist collaborative Postcommodity. The two-mile-long land-art installation was comprised of 26 tethered balloons, each 10-feet in diameter, floating 100 feet above the desert landscape. Enlarged replicas of an ineffective bird-repellent product, the balloons also display the colors of indigenous medicines and iconography as well as a graphic that has been used by indigenous peoples from South America to Canada for millennia. Photo by Michael Lundgren, courtesy of Postcommodity.

# NICOLE'S FATHER IS NOT GERMAN



## What difference does difference make?

by Kristen Monroe

**MY DAUGHTER CHLOE** and her friend Nicole were playing one day, when the subject of ethnic background arose. Nicole was in a different classroom than Chloe, so her class had not yet done the ancestry study, where students trace their family tree, but Nicole was interested in the topic nonetheless.

"Chloe's a mutt," I told Nicole.

"What's a mutt?" Nicole demanded, her 12-year-old mind not familiar with the concept.

"It means she's got a lot of different nationalities roaming around her background. Part Greek from her daddy's father. English and Scots from his mother. And just about everything from northern Europe, plus a teeny bit of Cherokee on my side."

Nicole thought about this a moment.

"You're a mutt, too," I continued.

Now Nicole was paying attention. "How do you know that?" she asked.

"Because I know your mother's mother is French and your dad is part English and part German."

Nicole's face froze, her retort sharp and indignant.

"My father is NOT German! He's art history! He's chair of the department!"

Raised in an academic ghetto, by a father who indeed was chair of the art history department, and a mother who was both an art history professor and associate dean of humanities, Nicole and her outraged protest reflected her particular worldview, her knowledge of what was important for academics' kids: academic disciplines. Nicole did not care a hoot about ethnic, racial, religious, or national backgrounds. But little Nicole—so seldom party to the social-science dinner-table conversations that too often bore children of political scientists—illustrates several important concepts that all academics and, indeed the populace as a whole, should incorporate into their discussions

of race, ethnicity, and group politics more generally: the concept of moral salience, or the psychological process by which differences between people and groups become deemed ethically and politically relevant. Fleshing this out could have profound effects on our discussions of differences, making us more aware of the social construction of the significance of differences, and how the framing of our discussions of such differences will shape prejudice, discrimination, and the treatment of such different groups. Let me expand, beginning with my experience with Chloe and Nicole.

**FOR AN ACADEMIC'S** kid, disciplines matter. Disciplines are what allocate resources. Few in American academia even notice, let alone care, if their colleagues are French, or Brazilian, or Chinese.

Nor do academics care much about religion anymore—even if a religious colleague tells us she is reluctant to talk about her Roman Catholic faith, and Islam has now become controversial on many campuses, as it has in the country at large. So perhaps the bad old days are not behind us. But, overall, one's area of specialization—and perhaps methodological approach—is what is most salient in academia. Faculty brats are thus not raised to think in terms of racial, ethnic, religious, or national prejudice. These differences are simply not relevant for them. They carry no moral salience.

A close friend's son went off to a summer program at Yale the summer before his senior year. He was approached by a young fellow student. She told him her name and introduced herself as being from New York City and "just your ordinary JAP."

My friend's son looked taken aback. Although Allan had been born in Manhattan, he had been raised in California and had no idea what JAP meant. "Ah, you don't look Japanese," he stammered. "Why would you call yourself that?" the sweet young man asked, not realizing how naïve he sounded.

"Jewish American Princess!" the young woman threw back at him. "What planet are you from?"

Like my own children, this young man had been raised in a university ghetto. A *bubble*, Chloe used to call it, populated by children from all parts of the globe and comprising most of the ethnicities, languages, religions, and skin tones known to man. So the view of the world—what is "natural"—to a child from University Hills looks quite different than it does to most of the rest of the world.

Indeed, Allen phoned his parents his first year at college to tell them that there were "none of my people" at Yale when he first arrived.

"What do you mean?" they asked.

"There are no Asians here," Allen explained.

His parents assured Allen that there were, in fact, probably a fair number of Asian students at the university; there just weren't as high a proportion as there were in his honors or AP classes in high school, or on UCI's campus itself, with its 54 percent Asian population.

Then they gently reminded Allen, "You're not Asian."

His rejoinder was quick and to the point. "I know. But they're my people." And so, they were, with Allen, eventually majoring in East Asian History.

Allen was able to choose "his people," choose the group with which he wanted to affiliate, the people with whom he wished to associate, to spend time with. That's as it should be. We should all be able to choose how we define ourselves, and should not be restricted in this self-definition, as long as how we do that does not hurt ourselves or others.

**I WISH OUR** political discussions of identity in American politics could reflect such concern for individual freedom and self-definition. Even in American political science, I find an odd confusion between group politics and identity politics. There is a surprising tone in our discussions of differences, one that implies that the group distinctions that currently dominate American politics exist because they reflect some immutable difference between groups in our society.

I accept that variations among people do exist, and that some of these distinctions indeed may even be immutable. But this is not the critical factor in ethics or in politics. What matters is the political and moral salience we accord these differences.

The salience—the ethical or political relevance of a difference—is what is central in how we treat others. Why do certain societies sometimes judge religion to be relevant for how we treat people? Why not make it mathematical ability? Why does the color of my skin matter, but not my ability to speak a language or manage money? Why are linguistic differences sometimes politically relevant, while athletic abilities are not? There are so many ways in which people

differ; why do we as a group decide some of these differences carry political or ethical significance, but not others? The designation of one characteristic as politically important is totally and artificially constructed by society; in reality, the treatment of a difference is often constructed by a small group within that society or culture.

To be clear, social constructions are not necessarily easy to break. We speak of countries—such as France or Germany—as if they had always existed. Yet when we consult any historical atlas, it is immediately evident that countries come and go. Even the very concept of a nation is socially constructed, a concept created by human beings. States do not exist in the same way mosquitoes exist. And we speak of race as if it existed, with skin color denoting some kind of difference that is permanent, immutable. Yet from a biological point of view, we are all members of the same race: *homo sapiens sapiens*.

Kids get this. Both Nicole and Chloe at some point in their early years came in and asked if they were black. They simply had no clue what it meant to speak of a "black person." Try explaining to a five year old why some people got to designate some physical differences as ones that justified oppression and inequality. When you attempt that, it is immediately clear how foolish it is to assume that the differences we grow up assuming are ethically relevant are cast in stone, and must condemn us as a society to ongoing prejudice. One of the best social science theories I know that speaks to the important question of prejudice against other groups—reflected so concisely by Nicole—is social identity theory.

**SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY** was formulated by Henri Tajfel, a Polish Jew born in 1919. Interested in studying chemistry, Tajfel, being Jewish, was prohibited from studying in Poland, so he went to France and studied at the Sorbonne. When World War II broke out, he enlisted in the French army and was captured by the Germans. Miraculously, he survived, but after the war, he returned to Poland to find all his family and most of his friends had perished in the Holocaust. Deeply affected by this loss, Tajfel initially worked for the United Nations, helping resettle Jewish orphans. After Tajfel married Anna-Sophie Eber—herself a German Jew who had moved to Britain before the war—he, too, relocated to Britain.

In 1951, Tajfel enrolled at Birkbeck College, University of London, where he studied psychology. He graduated and worked as a lecturer, first at that university and then at Oxford, where he examined several topics in social psychology: nationalism, social judgment, and the cognitive aspects of prejudice.

Coming of age during the Holocaust, Tajfel's personal and professional life was changed by it. He has deeply personal reasons for wanting to understand what had allowed the Holocaust to happen, especially in Germany. Other postwar scholars joined him in their response. They were aghast at what had happened and attempted to determine why and how such an event could happen in Germany, previously considered a wonderfully civilized nation with a great tradition of learning and culture.

THE DESIGNATION OF ONE CHARACTERISTIC AS POLITICALLY IMPORTANT IS TOTALLY AND ARTIFICIALLY CONSTRUCTED BY SOCIETY.

Much of the first work on this question, "Why did the Holocaust happen in Germany?" came from philosophers—such as Theodor Adorno—who stressed personality factors. The Germans, so the theory ran, were more authoritarian than were other nationals, and hence would be more inclined to follow orders.

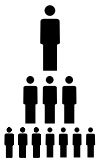
Tajfel rejected this explanation. His personal experience had shown him how large numbers of Germans—not just Germans with personalities of a particular type—happily supported Nazism. To Tajfel, the Nazis would not have been successful were it not for the support of "ordinary" Germans. His work on social judgment led him to ask whether the roots of prejudice might originate not in extreme personality types but rather in the "ordinary" processes of thinking. Thus began thousands of studies, by Tajfel and his students such as John Turner, designed to try to decipher the psychological basis of the kind of prejudice and discrimination at the heart of the Holocaust. The first step, for Tajfel and his students, was the belief that people naturally categorize.

Tajfel noted an inherent psychological need to eventually identify and associate with certain "in-groups." Associating with a particular group plays an important psychological function in bolstering our sense of who we are and how we feel about ourselves. We have complex identities and sort ourselves and others into categories. We label people as members of diverse groups. These groups are then juxtaposed in pairs. We classify people as men or women, young or old, rich or poor, friend or foe. Or, in the instance that initially motivated Tajfel's work, Jew or Aryan.

As part of this process by which we think about ourselves, we compare our in-groups with other so-called out-groups, and demonstrate a favorable bias toward the group to which we belong, just as Nicole's outrage stemmed from the fact that her father was being re-categorized out

of what she had been taught to think of as a desired group: art historians.

Tajfel's social identity theory thereby roots prejudice, discrimination, and the violence that can result from it in an innate psychological need for distinctiveness, self-esteem, and belonging. We naturally form groups and then we desire our group identity to be both distinct from and compared positively with that of other groups. The critical intellectual traction of social identity theory lies in establishing a clear link between the psychological and sociological aspects of group behavior, in effectively linking the micro-level psychological need to distinguish, categorize, and compare ourselves with the broader social phenomenon of group behavior.



**THE THEORETICAL CLAIMS** of social identity theory have been substantiated empirically in thousands of experiments conducted by Tajfel and his students, in what became known as the Bristol School of social psychology. The classic experiment takes a group of previously unconnected individuals and randomly assigns them to Group A, B, or C.

Everyone in Group A is then offered Option 1 or 2. Option 1 would give all members of Group A $5, all members of Group B $10, and all members of Group C $15.

Under option 2, all members of Group A would lose $5, Group B $10, and Group C $15.

As we might expect, most members of group A (roughly two-thirds) choose Option 1, which gives money both to their group and the other groups. Everyone gains in Option 1. But with a surprising consistency, roughly one-third of the members of group A choose Option 2, the option that costs them money. Tajfel's explanation is that even though under Option 2 members of group A lose money, they do better than all the other groups because they lose less. Their need to do better than others, to feel superior in some way, trumps their need to actually do better in objective terms.

The key here is less the gain or loss and more the arbitrary assigning of people to groups. The groups themselves are not "real" or inherent or immutable. But once you are put into a group, you find shared interests and identity. There is nothing inherently in common you share; the collective sense of identity is artificially created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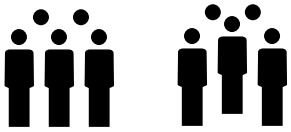
by the external experimenter. But in the "real world," these categories are often just as artificial. Who was a Tutsi and who a Hutu in Rwanda-Burundi during their ethnic cleansing? Who was a Jew and who an Aryan in the Third Reich? This distinction was often quite artificial, particularly when one considers the fact of intermarriage, the many people classified as Jewish who were utterly secular, and those for whom Jewish identity played only a minor part of their pre-Nazi period identity. It is important to remember here that groups do not automatically flow from differences; artificially created groups precede the discovery of difference and the creation of its political and ethical salience.



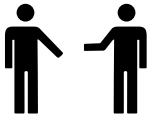
**THE TAJFEL FRAMEWORK** provides a valuable starting point for understanding how important both real and perceived differences can become when encounters between individuals are conceptualized as encounters between group members. For Nicole and for Chloe, the relevant out-group would be those greedy people in the biological or hard sciences, as they hear their parents grumble about resources going to the biological or the physical sciences. Or, worse: the medical school!

Fortunately, most members of the schools of humanities or the social sciences don't rise up and slay all the hard scientists on campus. So why do others kill, or at least engage in prejudicial treatment of some "different" groups, as opposed to others? Why did the Nazis pick the Jews? The homosexuals? The gypsies? Why not choose the munitions makers? The Lutherans? Why do these—but not other—differences get selected as politically relevant?

FORTUNATELY, MOST MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOLS OF HUMANITIES OR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DON'T RISE UP AND SLAY ALL THE HARD SCIENTISTS ON CAMPUS.

Beyond this, what makes neighbors—people who are members of different religious or ethnic groups but who have lived together in peace, often for centuries— suddenly find these differences politically and ethically germane? This was the case with many Jews and their Aryan neighbors during World War II. It occurred in the former Yugoslavia, where Muslims, Orthodox Christians, and Roman Catholics suddenly found these differences mattered, in this case because of events that had occurred over 500 years in the past.

The interesting point for us is the extent to which many of the most frequently discussed political cleavages in America—race, religion, ethnicity—assume immutability about the in-group/out-group distinctions and the hostilities associated with them. Yet we all know that there is one human race and that—as the news media repeatedly reminded us during the 2008 presidential campaign—a man from Africa can wed a woman from Kansas to produce a child who can become president of the United States of America, just as a Catholic and a Jew can marry, or a German and a Japanese, a Serbian Orthodox wed a Roman Catholic, a Hutu and a Tutsi, and so on. There can be friendship, affection and love across these "differences." Hostilities across the divides are not necessary.



**THIS RETURNS US** to the initial question little Nicole picked up: the political relevance of categorization. The central nature of racial encoding as a marker for in-group versus out-group status results from particular theoretical models of categorization and learning. The social scientist in me would tell my class of graduate students that a classical model of behavioral conditioning, or learning, would argue that any conditioned stimulus—like race—can be associated with any unconditioned stimulus—like fear—simply through repeated associations between the two. Such linkages can be learned vicariously, by watching the reactions of others, such as one's parents, or leaders who wish to exploit our fear of those who are "different" for the leader's own political gain.

Chloe and Nicole can learn to react with outrage to out-groups who are faculty members in the biological, medical, or hard sciences by witnessing their parents' reactions to them as "others" who are hogging scarce university resources. Just as white men can be told by politicians that this country is no longer theirs, that their political power and economic well-being are being threatened by "the others" who are coming to our country. This kind of model not only assumes the equipotentiality that suggests that any two stimuli are equally likely to be associated, but also assumes that fear acquisition becomes easily linked to certain categories—race, ethnicity, religion, or academic disciplines—in the encoding of out-group status. □

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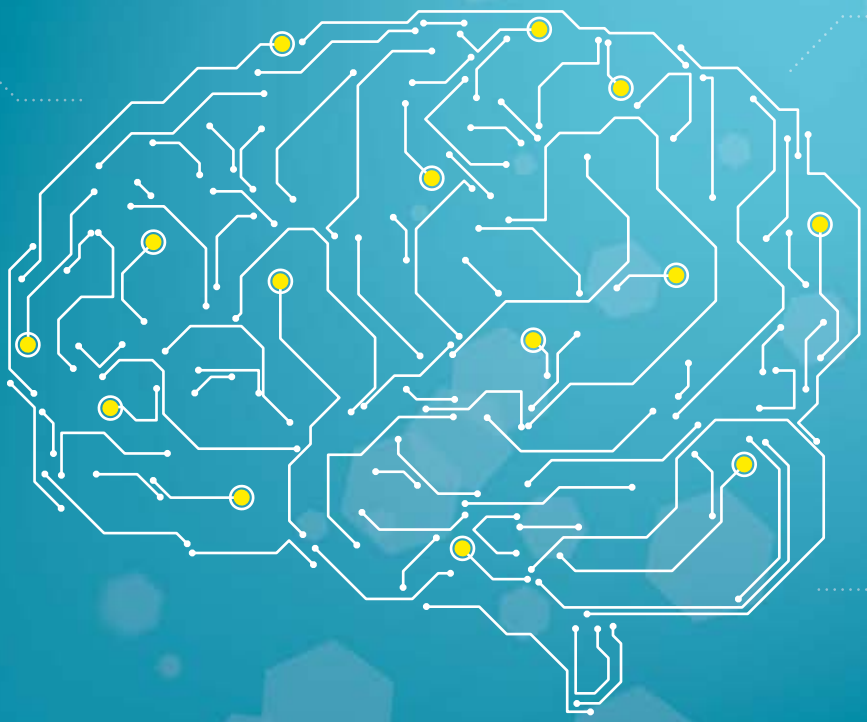

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# CRESCENT AMONG THE STARS

## Is it harder being Muslim in Western Europe than in the United States?

by Nancy Foner

ISLAM HAS CREATED greater challenges—and barriers—for immigrants and their children in Western Europe than in the United States. This may seem strange to say, especially in light of recent developments in the United States. But the fact is that Islam has become a greater source of contention and conflict in Europe and a more central divide between immigrants and the native majority population.

Of course, there is considerable anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States, with many cases of discrimination, bias incidents, and hate crimes, including vandalism of mosques and even occasional violence against Muslims, as well as state surveillance since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Most recently, anti-Muslim statements have become common in public discourse at the highest levels of American society. Not long after taking office, President Trump issued an executive order banning visitors from several Muslim majority countries.

Despite these challenges, Islam in the United States has not become a major cleavage between long-established residents and a large segment of the immigrant-origin population. Nor has it become as frequent a subject of public debate about immigrant integration and assimilation as it has in Western Europe. In other words, immigration debates in the United States have not been Islamicized or systematically connected with anti-Islamic rhetoric in the same way or degree to which they have been on the other side of the Atlantic. In the United States, hostility to Islam has, to a large extent, focused on security issues and on Islam as an external threat from outside the country. In Western Europe, although fears of terrorist networks are a component of anxieties about Muslims, civilizational threats—for example, threats to what are seen as core European liberal values of free speech, gender equality, and equal rights for homosexuals—have loomed much larger and become a prominent theme in political discourse and debates.

Nor have cultural practices associated with Islam aroused the same kind of controversy in the United States as they have in Western Europe. In France, a 2004 law banned the headscarf in French public schools because it was seen to threaten the principle of *laïcité*, or state secularism. Everywhere in Europe, the black head-to-toe veiling—the niqab—that leaves only slits for the eyes, has been the subject of public debate, with France, once again, banning it in public places. Arranged (or "forced") marriages among Muslims have also come in for considerable criticism in Europe, but in the United States they have led to hardly any public discussion or concern.

In addition to worries in Europe about the allegiances of second-generation Muslims to jihadist causes—and suspicions that they will commit acts of terrorism on European soil (as they have in Paris, London, and Brussels)—there is a widespread concern that a strong Muslim (or ethnic) identity competes with, or may even replace, feelings of belonging to the national community. Public debates in the United States about immigration are less focused on national identity and fears about cultural fragmentation than in Europe, where anxieties about Muslims' identities are a larger issue.

**Why is being** Muslim a more significant marker of a fundamental social division for immigrants and their children in Western Europe than it is in the United States? One reason certainly has to do with the different demographics of immigration. A much larger proportion of immigrants and their children in Western Europe are Muslim (about 40 percent of all immigrants from outside the European Union). In the United States, Muslims are a tiny proportion of the immigrant population, an estimated four to eight percent, and only one percent of the total population, compared to five to eight percent in major European countries like France, Germany, and Britain. Also, Islam in Western Europe is associated with large immigrant groups, which are among the most disadvantaged minorities in terms of poverty, unemployment, and education. In the United States, a substantial proportion of Muslim Americans are well-educated and middle class.

A second reason why Islam is more problematic in Western Europe has to do with the place of religion in contemporary society. Americans are considerably more religious than Western Europeans. About half of Americans in a national poll a few years ago said that religion was very important in their lives, more than twice the proportion in Germany, Britain, or France.

A secular mindset dominates in most Western European countries. In Western Europe, those who worship regularly and hold strong religious beliefs, including Christian ones, are a small minority, and claims based on religion have much less acceptance. When the religion is Islam, with its particular demands on how followers conduct their lives, these claims often lead to public unease, sometimes disdain, and even anger, and, not surprisingly, tensions and conflicts.

Europeans often feel that their societies should not tolerate religious practices or cultural customs that conflict with liberal secular norms and widely accepted views on, for example, the equal role of women. At the same time, they expect religious conservatives, including Muslims, to tolerate behavior that they may consider morally abhorrent, such as open displays of sexuality.

Americans, on the other hand, give more legitimacy to religiously based arguments in the public sphere. Political demands made on the basis of religion are a common feature of American life, put forward most vocally by evangelical (primarily white) Christians, who comprise about a quarter of the US adult population. As the scholarly literature on immigrant religion emphasizes, becoming more religious is a way of becoming American. It is often seen as a problem in Western Europe.

Third, and related, is the historical *role* of religion in society. The American history of religious pluralism, shaped by foundational principles of religious freedom and separation of church and state, and its success in incorporating Judaism and Catholicism into its predominantly Protestant national narrative—and into the fabric of mainstream institutions—provide a platform for the easier integration of non-Christian religions. In Western Europe, despite the breaking of many links between church and state and the high degree of secularism, the ways that Christian religions have been institutionalized and historically entangled with the state have made it hard for Islam to achieve equal treatment. (To be sure, European governments have begun to make some accommodations for Muslim religious practices such as granting permission to build mosques and, in some countries, establishing national or local "Islamic Councils." Still, the institutional context continues to favor Christianity in many ways, and thus marginalizes Islam.)

In Germany, according to the 1949 constitution, the state must be neutral in religious matters, but there are still strong links between church and state. Long-established Protestantism, Catholicism, as well as Judaism—but not Islam, the third largest religion—are recognized as public corporations entitled to federally collected church taxes and the right to run state-subsidized religious services and hospitals.

Throughout Europe, magnificent churches and cathedrals dot the landscape, but few mosques can compete in appearance. In France, for example, where the exclusion of religion from the affairs of state is the official ideology, the 1905 law on the separation of church and state designated all religious buildings built before then as property of the French state; the same law prevents the state from contributing to the construction of new ones. The state therefore owns and maintains most Christian churches and allows them to be used for regular religious services. Most French mosques are makeshift structures in converted rooms in housing projects, garages, or even basements.

Government support for religious schools has created other inequalities in Western Europe between long-established religions and Islam. In Britain and France, the state provides support for religious schools as long as they teach the national secular curriculum. While seemingly fair to all religions, this arrangement favors the established churches. The British government funds more than 6,500 Church of England and Catholic faith schools, but, as of 2017, only 27 Islamic faith schools in a nation of three million Muslims. In France, about 20 percent of French students go to religious schools (mostly Catholic) that receive the bulk of their budgets from the government, but, as of 2009, there were only two Muslim schools funded in this way.

**As we look** ahead, are there any signs of change? Predicting the future is always risky, but it is worth sketching out some factors that may, on the one hand, exacerbate and, on the other, reduce the barriers facing Muslim immigrants and their children in both the United States and Western Europe. In the United States, the historical record provides some optimism that eventually Islam will come to have a more established place. It may have taken more than a century, but America overcame the fear of the "Catholic menace" and widespread views of Catholicism as an anti-modernist religion incompatible with democracy. Perhaps in the decades ahead we will be talking

about America as an Abrahamic civilization, a phrase joining Muslims with Jews and Christians. As the historian Gary Gerstle has written, "America, at present, is a long way from that formulation of American national identity, but no further than America once was from the Judeo-Christian one." Moreover, in the context of the American color line—and a society where color-coded racial cleavages are more problematic than divisions based on religion—phenotypically white and light-skinned members of the Muslim second generation who are economically and educationally successful and culturally assimilated may come to be seen and accepted as part of the dominant white population.

In both the United States and Europe, it is likely that, over time, more second-generation Muslims will have routine contact and interactions with long-established Europeans and Americans in a range of social settings, including workplaces, schools, and universities. This kind of intermingling can increase comfort with people of Muslim background, reduce prejudice, and lead to friendships and even intermarriage.

In Western Europe, as the number and proportion of the second and third generations rise, the participation of Muslims in mainstream European political and economic life, including the upper tiers of the occupational ladder, is bound to become more common and increasingly normal. Those in the European majority population are also likely to grow more accustomed to Islamic religious observance, particularly as Islam becomes more Europeanized, or, given internal divisions within Islam, "European Islams" take root. As members of the second generation take over religious associations and institutions, many will strive for a more liberal version of Islam than their parents practiced, and that is viewed more positively by the wider population. Already, a substantial number of the second generation holds views in sync with mainstream Western ideas about the separation of state and religion, and gender equality in education and the labor market.

But some dark clouds loom on the horizon. In the United States, unforeseen issues, events, and controversies may arise that significantly increase hostility to American-born Muslims and political attacks on them. Who, after all, would have predicted the September 11 attacks on the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center? Or the extent to which Republican presidential hopefuls in the 2016 campaign would use anti-Muslim rhetoric to rally support? Still, if Muslim Americans' rights to religious freedom are threatened, they have the Constitution as well as civil liberties advocates and liberal politicians on their side. Also, the small size of the US Muslim population makes the group seem less threatening, even though this small size can contribute to the general population's lack of personal exposure to Muslims, which can lead, in turn, to an easy fueling of negative sentiments toward them.

In Western Europe, although the trend of Western European governments to make accommodation for Muslim practices is likely to continue, there is a long way to go before Islam achieves parity with mainstream religions. Moreover, the prospects for relatively high rates of unemployment and stalled social mobility among many second-generation Muslims will provide fodder for those who will continue to argue that Muslims will never fit in or successfully adjust to European society.

While most second-generation Muslims in Western Europe do not support a politicized Islam, a minority of them do. The aggrieved sense of exclusion felt by some second-generation Muslims has created a pool of potential recruits for fundamentalist doctrines and extremist Islamist groups. This development, along with terrorist incidents by "homegrown" Muslims, could reinforce tensions with long-established Europeans and fuel anti-Muslim hostility and rhetoric. This has already been happening over the last few years, as several thousand second-generation European Muslims have gone to fight with Islamist groups in the war in Syria. Fears and anxieties about Islam have also been heightened by the violent terrorist attacks involving European-raised Muslims in Paris, London, and Brussels, as well as by the recent European refugee crisis, with a massive surge in the number of asylum seekers entering Western Europe, many of them Muslims from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The refugee crisis has had political repercussions, increasing support for anti-immigrant and anti-Islam parties such as *Alternative für Deutschland* in Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel came in for heavy criticism after opening the country to a huge refugee inflow.

**It is hard** to predict to what extent the divisions between the majority population in Western European countries and Muslims will deepen in the near future, or become less pronounced over a longer period. It does seem likely that Muslims in Western Europe are poised to continue to experience greater challenges to inclusion than their counterparts in the United States. In this context, policies that reduce the stigma and disadvantages confronting Muslims should be high on the agenda. In Germany, for example, recognizing Islam in the corporate structure of the German state would put Islam on an equal footing with other major religions. In France and elsewhere in Europe, providing more public space to Islamic institutions would give those of Muslim background greater representation in public life. Government policies cannot ensure greater acceptance for Muslims, but they can go a long way toward lessening the barriers they face and encouraging their smoother integration. □

This essay draws on material and analyses in Richard Alba and Nancy Foner's *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*, published by Princeton University Press in 2015.


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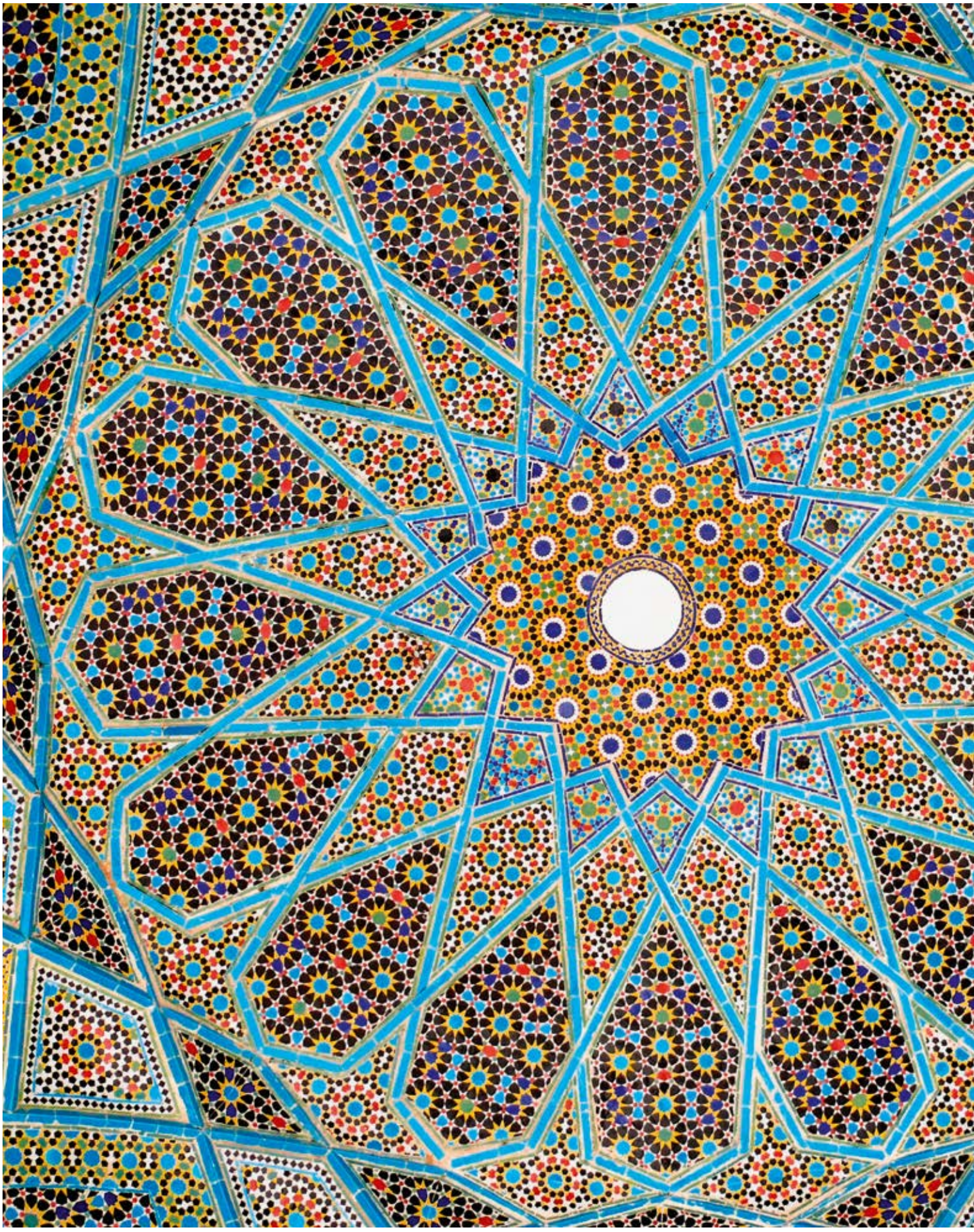


Iranian glazed-ceramic tiles, ceiling of the Tomb of Hafez, Shiraz, Iran. Photo: Pentocelo, Wikimedia

# THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE SECTARIAN MIDDLE EAST

## Divisions within, divisions without

by Ussama S. Makdisi

**THE TERM "SECTARIANISM"** is inherently elastic and ambiguous. It is used to denote pervasive forms of prejudice, historic solidarities, the identification with a religious or ethnic community as if it were a political party, or the systems through which political, economic, and social claims are made in multireligious and multiethnic societies. The term "sectarianism" is also used to indicate the favoring of one group over another, whether in hiring practices, renting, job allocation, or the distribution of state resources—that is to say, behavior akin to racial discrimination and profiling. "Sectarianism" is also used to describe sentiments that propel strident communal mobilizations, intercommunal warfare, and genocidal violence perpetrated by one group against another. Finally, "sectarianism" can also be thought of as a colonial strategy of governance insofar as Britain, France, Israel, and the United States have routinely manipulated the religious and ethnic diversity of the region to suit their own imperial ends.

Historically understood, "sectarianism" was first identified as a modern problem in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire and in the post-Ottoman Middle East at exactly the moment when the questions of equality, coexistence, citizenship, imperialism, and nationalism became salient around a European-dominated world. The advent of secular political equality did not go uncontested in any multireligious, multiethnic, or multiracial society of the nineteenth century. Recall that revolutionary France sought to reimpose slavery in Haiti after slaves there had liberated themselves, in 1804; the emancipation of enslaved blacks raised enormous controversy in the United States; and the defense of slavery was at the heart of its bloody Civil War. Jim Crow "separate but equal" segregation was legalized across the American South in the 1890s and was maintained until the mid-1950s. In Europe, modern racialized anti-Semitism followed the emancipation of Jews and found its most terrible expression in the Holocaust.

The Islamic Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), for its part, struggled with the question of the political equality of non-Muslim subjects. Under enormous European pressure in the mid-nineteenth century, the sultanate decreed a revolutionary equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. This shift was met with resistance—often described by historians as "sectarian" because unprecedented anti-Christian riots occurred in Aleppo and Damascus in 1850 and 1860.

But this political transformation of unequal subjects into supposedly equal citizens also

produced the modern idea of "sectarian fanaticism" and as the antithesis to "true" religion and civilization. Whereas the former was seen as undermining national unity, the latter were at the heart of national modernization projects in the late Ottoman Empire and in the post-Ottoman Middle East. The concern with sectarianism in the modern Arab world thus does not simply indicate a political space contested by competing religious and ethnic communities, it also presupposes a shared political space. In this sense, rhetoric about "sectarianism" as insidious in the Middle East emerged in the late nineteenth century as the alter ego of a putatively unifying nationalist discourse.

Sectarianism is a diagnosis that makes most sense when thought of in relation to its ideological antithesis—much like racism in the contemporary United States: to identify and condemn racism in America, one presumably upholds an idea of equality and emancipation. To identify and condemn sectarianism in the Arab world, one presumably upholds an idea of unity and equality between and among Muslims and non-Muslims. For this precise reason, it was only in the early twentieth century, in Lebanon, that the Arabic term for "sectarianism"—*al-ta'ifiyya*—was coined, as a negative term in relation to national unity.

The origin of this specific Arabic term emerged out of political debates about the nature of the post-Ottoman Lebanese state. More broadly, prominent intellectuals of the twentieth-century Arab world—Amin Rihani, Sati' al-Husari, Antun Saadeh, Constantine Zurayq, Zaki al-Arsuzi, Edmond Rabbath, Munif al-Razzaz—all discussed sectarianism as a major internal impediment to modern development and sovereignty. A secret Arab society, which included Zurayq, was founded in Beirut in 1935 and developed branches in Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Kuwait. It condemned "sectarian, racist, class, regional, tribal, or familial" solidarities that diluted and weakened "Arab solidarity."

Nationalist intellectuals, in other words, recognized real social and economic problems within their societies, including that of sectarian affiliation. Yet, they also created a trope about sectarianism as a negative, reactionary holdover from a pre-modern age. In the 1950s, Zurayq, who was deeply opposed to mixing religion and politics, inveighed against "sectarian fanaticism" in evocatively modernist terms. He regarded sectarianism to be a problem "cascading from the past into the present," and thus as an anachronism "in the age of nationalisms, and indeed in the age of the atom and space." For him, sectarianism constituted the antithesis of an ideal of a secular, national modernizing state.

Even the Lebanese political elites, who created the first formal sectarian power-sharing government in the Arab world, accepted constitutionally that "political sectarianism" had to be a temporary measure (Article 95 of the Lebanese constitution). Proponents saw "political sectarianism" as a necessary evil until such time as the Lebanese people were able to cast off allegedly innate sectarian solidarities and embrace a modern secular Lebanese identity. Opponents saw "political sectarianism" as a disease bound to weaken, if not destroy, the national body politic. During the same mandate period, the great pan-Arab pedagogue Sati' al-Husari established a secular national educational system in Iraq. He referred to his Iraqi detractors as sectarian. He believed that those who opposed his vision for a modern, secular Arab-nationalist Iraq under the Hashemite monarchy represented reactionary elements in society.

**Despite this evident** politicization and ideological framing, Arab understandings of "sectarianism" have often considered it both an internal *and* external problem. These interpretations have frequently connected internal "sectarian," "tribal," and "feudal" obstacles to progress and development with the reality of Western interventionism in the region. Throughout the twentieth century, citizens of the Middle East have been haunted not only by the possibility of internal fragmentation in their societies, but also by the prospects of foreign manipulation of the region's religious and ethnic diversity. Self-criticism, in short, does not preclude being anti-colonial, or recognizing the dangers of both domestic and foreign threats to national sovereignty.

Indeed, the Western idea of a "sectarian" Middle East has been inextricably bound with modern Western domination over the region; the idea of an innate Middle Eastern or Islamic sectarianism serves to absolve Western powers from their complicity in creating, encouraging, or exacerbating divisive political landscapes. A recent manifestation of this obfuscation and such ideological deployment of the idea of the sectarian Middle East occurred in 2003, when L. Paul Bremer III, the US administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq—who spoke no Arabic and, by his own admission, knew very little about the country—rationalized the sectarian effects of US interventionism by insisting that Iraqis only "vaguely understand the concept of freedom," and pleaded for US guidance. In his view, sectarianism in the region was endemic, so much so that Bremer described parts of Iraq as "the Sunni homeland."

This description reduces Iraqis to a single sectarian affiliation as if it were primordial and as if it trumped kinship, history, geography, national affiliation, ideology and so on. It is the equivalent of granting a non-American enormous power to reshape the United States and having him describe the area between Boston and New York as the "white homeland," other parts of the United States as the "Latino homeland," and still other parts as the "African-American homeland," with all the violence that such grotesquely reductive descriptions entail. The aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, of course, witnessed not only the destruction of what remained of the secular Baathist Iraqi central state; it also created a new Iraqi Governing Council along explicitly sectarian lines. This fateful decision to divide Iraqi government along "Sunni," "Shiite," and "Kurd," or to invent a "Sunni triangle," was not predetermined objectively by the diversity of Iraqi society. It was principally a US imperial interpretation of this diversity.

More blatantly, then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice confidently declared, in 2006, amidst Israel's devas-

tating US-backed assault on Lebanon, that the world was observing the "birth pangs of a New Middle East." This, too, displayed how Western interventionism and imperialism in the region not only exacerbates "internal" problems, but also creates new conditions and contexts that define the very nature of what is internal.

In 2016, President Barack Obama said of the Middle East, "[Its] only organizing principles are sectarian," and that the conflicts raging there under America's watch "date back millennia." But Obama's assertions were both deeply injurious and self-serving. Injurious because they discount the rich, twentieth-century history of the Arab world that underscores the numerous social and political bonds in the region which are manifestly not sectarian; self-serving because they affirm an imperial self-righteousness that presumes that the problems of the Arab world, including those that affect the United States, are due to the persistence of immutable sectarian solidarities. This assertion casts the problem of sectarianism as principally and essentially an Arab one. We have tried to help them, the message goes, but they are hopeless.

Of course, it would be absurd to insist that there are not local and regional actors who play the complex modern sectarian game along with Western powers. It would be absurd, as well, to deny that religion and religious differences are not salient features in the history of the Middle East as they are in many other parts of the world as well. For centuries, the Ottoman Empire used religious categories to classify and discriminate against its vast and diverse subject population. The so-called millet system established ecclesiastical and communal autonomy for Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and Jewish subjects in the empire. Islamic law unquestionably distinguished and discriminated between Muslim and non-Muslim. The ruling Ottoman dynasty and its elites proclaimed themselves repeatedly to be defenders of Islam, locked in a struggle against heretics and infidels. One can, therefore, discuss sectarian outlooks, actions, and thoughts in the Middle East in a manner similar to how one would talk about racial (and racist) outlooks, actions, and thoughts in the United States. Yet just as American scholars have gone to great lengths to challenge the notion of singular, age-old racial identifications, whether black or white, so too should scholars of the Middle East reject the facile, monolithic, and ahistorical interpretations of sectarian identity so beloved by academics, pundits, think tank "experts," and politicians.

**Sectarianism is far** less an objective description of "real" fractures in a religiously diverse world and far more a language about the nature of religious difference in the Middle East. It is a discourse that has been deployed and expressed by both Middle Eastern and Western nations, communities, and individuals to create and justify political and ideological frameworks in the modern Middle East within which supposedly innate sectarian problems are contained, if not necessarily overcome.

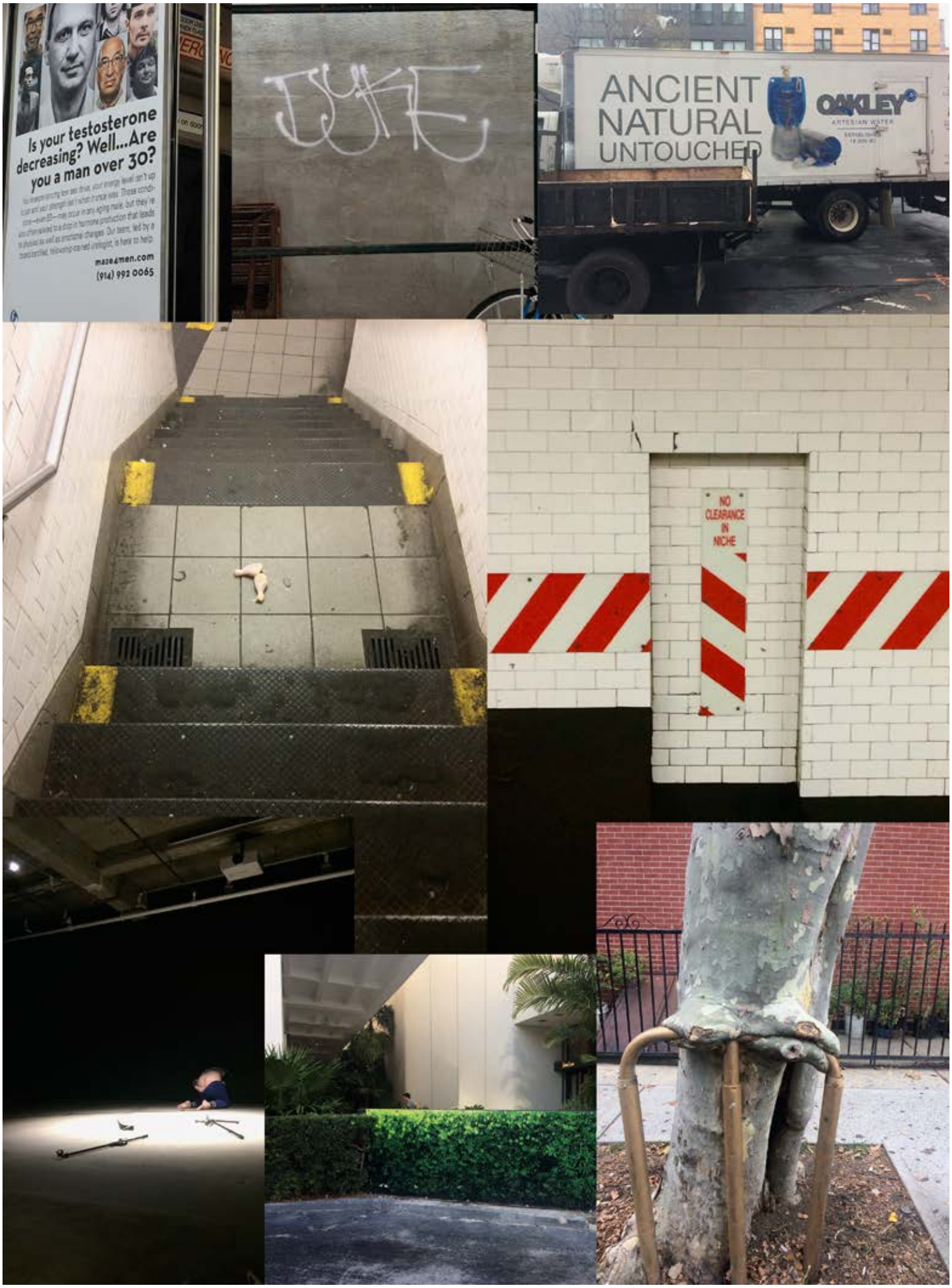
In this way, the "sectarian" Middle East does not simply exist; it is imagined to exist, and then it is produced. Yet the strong association of the term "sectarianism" with the Middle East repeatedly suggests that the region is more negatively religious than the "secular" West. This is an ideological assumption woven into how the Arab and Muslim worlds are generally depicted as having fundamentally religious landscapes. Not only does this assumption gloss over how religious the West actually is, it also pretends that what is occurring in the Middle East reflects an unbroken arc of sectarian sentiment that connects the medieval to the modern. Modern politics, in short, is transformed into little more than a reenactment of a medieval drama between Sunni and Shi'i, rather than being a geopolitical struggle in which Western states are deeply implicated.

I am for this reason in sympathy with Syrian historian Aziz al-Azmeh's criticism of the "over-Islamization of Islam." This fixation with the study of Islam, the Muslim, the Muslim woman, and Islamic piety has ignored and relegated as historiographically and analytically unimportant secular Arabs, or Muslim Arabs who do not necessarily flaunt their piety in ways that conform to Western stereotypes. It also effaces the agency and histories of non-Muslim Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Armenians, and others who have lived, interacted with, and shared a culture with Muslims across the Middle East. Most of all, this Western fixation with the allegedly medieval and fixed nature of religiosity in the Middle East distracts scholars and the general public from understanding the modern roots of the "sectarian" Middle East.

I am not suggesting that we think of sectarianism as only, or even primarily, a question of colonial "divide and rule." But I am saying that we should stop pretending that the so-called internal dimensions have not themselves been massively affected, exacerbated, and even transformed by the West. When the noted political scientist Fouad Ajami tendentiously insisted that the "self-inflicted" wounds "matter" more than foreign ones, he obfuscated the degree to which the foreign has long shaped the landscape in which the "local" plays itself out. Rather than assume sectarianism to be a fixed, stable reality that floats above history, it is far more important to locate and identify—to historicize—each "sectarian" event, moment, structure, identification, and discourse in its particular context.

What is needed urgently, therefore, is a new research agenda to study the dialectic—the complex, constant, and unequal relationship between local and foreign—that makes up the modern Middle East. We also need to appreciate the dynamic between tradition and transformation, between history and politics, between self-identification and orientalist representation, and between discourse and action that makes up the substance of what we call "sectarianism." □

This essay is derived from a February 2017 article published by the Center for the Middle East at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.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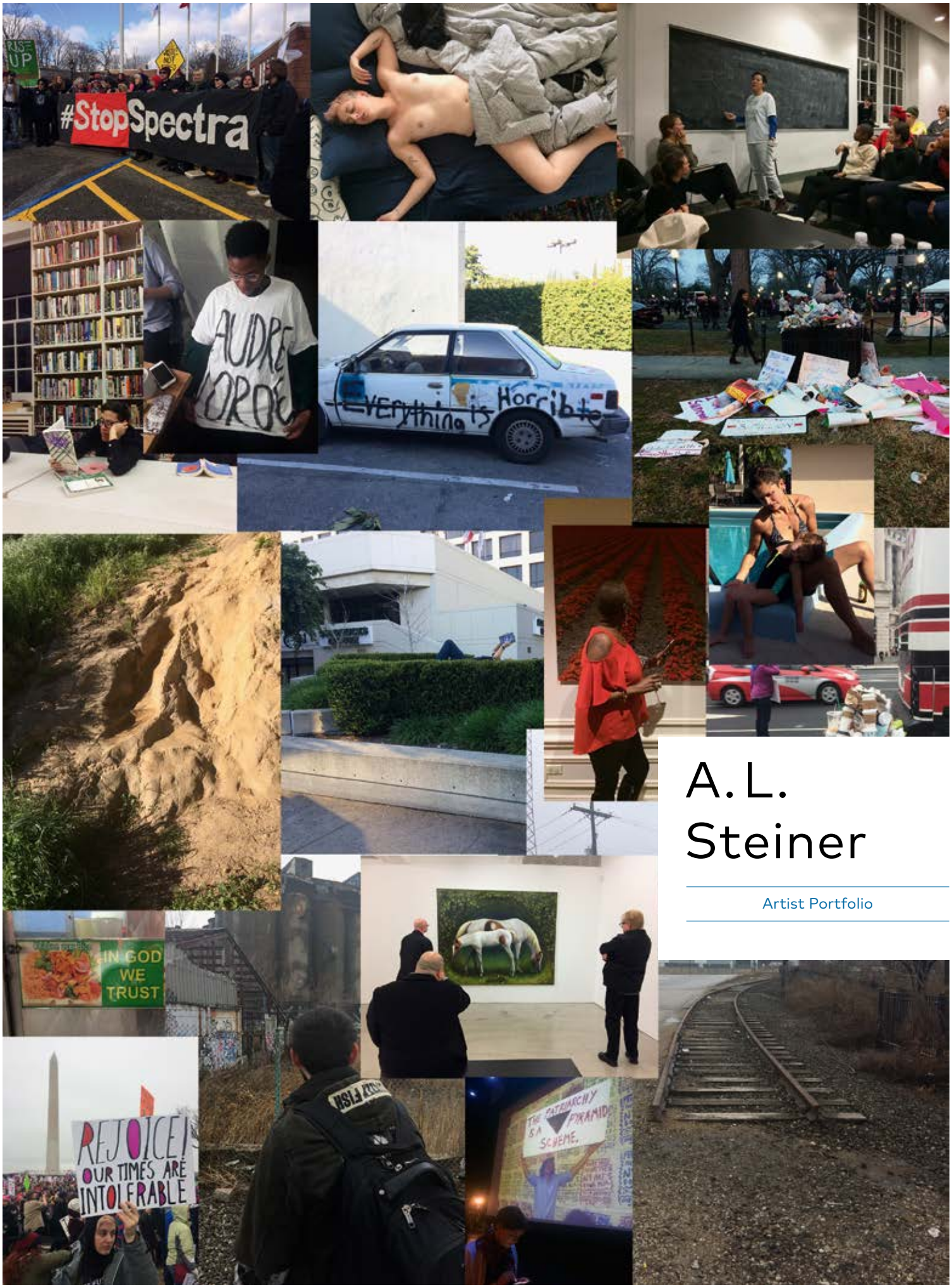


# A. L. Steiner

Artist Portfolio

# TO SHARE OBSERVATIONS

On the work of A.L. Steiner

by Boychild

> How can violence be such a balm? The criminal animation of a more than natural law, anajuridical movement in theater's interstitial space, an experimental acting out of anchoritic cell and cause. The secret life of things is open—made plain, phenomenal ding-hiss, this thing we are, all these things we are that we keep trying to get to, that we can't get back to, because they're miles ahead in nothingness. Maybe the problem is simply looking at, which is to say listening to. How can you show the out circularity of that perception, its difficult pleasures of (re)turn and syntax, its embedded, imperceptible hesitations and miniature seismic events, its (dys+hyper)lexic scratches and scars?
>
> *– excerpt from "Sudden Rise at a Given Tune" performance, by Fred Moten and Wu Tsang*

memory is all wrapped up in time.

disparate moments of peoples' lives nestle against one another, belong to one another. i'm in this field, in this living room, on this bed, at this beach, on the couch next to, this person, these people. bodies, flesh, skin, gaze, melding into the scenery. the layers are the periphery of memory and love emanates from these moments. somehow the precariousness of the shared intimacy. it is devotional. the repetition reveals a many of life, a multiplicity of queer life. repetition as a tool that connotes infinity.

a laugh is evoked from the liminal place where wanting to cry begins. the trappings of the thermodynamic arrow of time collapse. the personal has fractured the line, making it multiplicitous, "unstable," roving, and we as viewers are not just looking in, but are being looked back at.

inside and outside are no longer separated but connected. windows within the frames are ulterior stories and places. the invisible boundary dissipates. the glass of the window, the glass ceiling, is broken not shattered, rather, metaphorically disintegrated as an illusion of solidity of matter.

**Love Changes the Lover. Lovers Love Loving Love. Change Loves Loving Change.**

the sun, again. screams from behind a juicy cumulous cloud. just below it, again, another sun, or maybe it's the same sun in another moment looks at a person looking back. a reflection of the sun's halo wraps around the subject's head. a moment of grace comprised of two moments that are normally fissured by the snapshots cut/splice. another labyrinth. we are implicit.

looking mimics Deleuze's folds, univocal instances resonate and dance amongst each other, a quantum particle leap through the plenum, a conversation, intra-dialogical. the rearview mirror of a past, forgotten or released back to time. a radical, devotional, observational commitment to both. the blurry distinction between love and hate, collaboration and treachery. the blurry distinction. the blurry existence of queer presence and futurity, of being. oscillating life form, Deleuze's pleats.

> Who you looking at falls to where you looking from, when you looking. Ask and you can cut when and where. You can not remember where or when.
>
> *– excerpt from "Sudden Rise at a Given Tune" performance, by Fred Moten and Wu Tsang*

**[PREVIOUS SPREAD]**
*Smart & final, teile eins und zwei* (sketch), 2017. Color jpegs. Courtesy Deborah Schamoni Galerie/München

**[LEFT]**
*Love Changes the Lover,* 2015. Framed color-pigment prints, 221×143.8cm, unique collage. Courtesy Blum & Poe/Los Angeles. Photograph by Joshua White

# UNDERCOVER OUGHTS

## Social surveillance and moral reform

by Jacqueline Ross

AS CARICATURED IN dozens of films of and about the early American century, crackdowns on late nineteenth and early twentieth century saloons, dancing halls, brothels, and gambling parlors were often pursued by religious activists and undercover entrepreneurs. Fired with the zeal of social improvement, these enthusiastic agents were hired by Progressive reformers—and often against the wishes of the police.

But the agenda of these undercover moral reformers was not limited to cracking down on vice. Their bigger aim was to change the social conditions that underlay these vices—and, not least, to keep an eye on the leisure habits of recent immigrants. In New York, prominent social reformers like Lillian Wald and Jacob Riis, supported by organizations such as the Tenement House Committee and the Committee of Fifteen, solicited recommendations from organizations such as the Central Federation of Churches and Christian Workers, and the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor. They did so for "insider investigators" who were familiar with the neighborhoods and languages of recent immigrants and could serve as undercover investigators of prostitution in tenement housing.

Undercover investigators operated in teams of two, paying tenement house prostitutes for their services and then filling out pre-formatted reports that were signed by a notary public and could serve as sworn testimony admissible in a court of law, with the aim of suggesting reforms to housing conditions that would decrease the incidence of prostitution. Undercover agents would pay prostitutes in the presence of an investigating partner; the reports were used not only against the women but also against the owners of tenement houses who allowed their buildings to be used by prostitutes. Not incidentally, these investigations exposed the graft, complicity, and corruption of the local police department, which tolerated the presence of "disorderly houses" in immigrant neighborhoods.

Similar undercover operations targeted saloons and gambling halls in immigrant neighborhoods, as well as dance halls where white and black New Yorkers mingled. In her fascinating study *New York Undercover* (2009), sociologist Jennifer Fronc has documented the extent to which these operations—undertaken by social reform organizations like the Committee of Fourteen and anti-saloon activists such as the Anthony Comstock Society for the


*Prohibition group,* September, 1922. Print from glass negative. National Photo Company Collection, Library of Congress. Call Number LC-F81-20369

Suppression of Vice—represented efforts by "nativist" reformers committed to racial segregation and suspicious of recent immigrants to police the sexual and leisure habits of immigrants and racial minorities.

Many of these reform societies used volunteers from immigrant communities to serve as undercover agents, and they hired private detectives to gather evidence about saloons that were selling liquor outside of approved hours, all with the aim of shutting down these establishments.

But moral entrepreneurs like Anthony Comstock also used undercover tactics to investigate the Art Students' League, in New York, for selling catalogues that featured artistic representations of nudes. The Committee of Fourteen would engineer interracial encounters in saloons and dance halls known to welcome black and white customers. Documentation of liquor being served to women under the age of 18 served as a pretext for shutting them down, even though New York State had passed strong anti-discrimination laws in 1895, 1905, and 1909. Fronc describes the Committee of Fourteen's undercover tactics as an effort "to protect [. . .] the morality of white women, [who] were portrayed as 'victims'—of alcohol or seduction, or of their own bad judgment," gathering evidence of "intoxicated white women in black-owned establishments as justifications for sanctioning black proprietors."

**"NATIVIST" REFORMERS COMMITTED TO RACIAL SEGREGATION AND SUSPICIOUS OF RECENT IMMIGRANTS [POLICED] THE SEXUAL AND LEISURE HABITS OF IMMIGRANTS AND RACIAL MINORITIES.**

Social reformers were able to use undercover tactics successfully because they were allowed to conduct their own raids, make their own arrests, and use their sworn affidavits and reports as evidence, pursuing primarily a strategy of attacking the liquor licenses of the establishments they targeted, alongside criminal sanctions against individual purveyors of vice. This not only kept a state monopoly of undercover tactics from taking

root; it also meant that moral entrepreneurs could circumvent an unwilling police force. These private actors actually often ignored the police entirely, though they sometimes either served or competed with its local representatives, and sometimes deployed undercover tactics against them, by exposing police corruption in cities dominated by powerful political bosses.

In New York City during the Progressive era, for example, prosecutors who wanted to fight prostitution hired Pinkerton undercover agents, in the face of a recalcitrant and complicit police department that tolerated brothels in exchange for bribes. Periodic scandals and reform commissions brought the likes of Theodore Roosevelt to power as a New York police commissioner in 1892. Roosevelt took it as his mandate to eliminate brothels and to strictly enforce liquor regulations, including, most controversially, those that prohibited the sale of liquor on Sundays. In the face of resistance from the police rank and file, Roosevelt allied himself with social reformers such as the Reverend Parkhurst, who himself had gone undercover to document many brothels that New York police had claimed to know nothing about. Roosevelt was celebrated in the press for going undercover himself on midnight rambles with Jacob Riis and others to investigate and surprise police officers who frequented saloons and brothels while on duty.

Seen from a sociological point of view, American undercover tactics of the early twentieth century were a form of social control that supplanted or supplemented the exercise of police power in many spaces that were under-policed, and where law enforcement's presence was often ineffective, corrupt, or both. Sometimes the private and public sector worked together, sometimes in parallel, sometimes one used the other, and sometimes there was conflict between them. Still, these two forces were always in dialogue.

**AMERICAN UNDERCOVER TACTICS OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY WERE A FORM OF SOCIAL CONTROL THAT SUPPLANTED OR SUPPLEMENTED THE EXERCISE OF POLICE POWER IN MANY SPACES THAT WERE UNDER-POLICED, AND WHERE LAW ENFORCEMENT'S PRESENCE WAS OFTEN INEFFECTIVE, CORRUPT, OR BOTH.**

**THESE FEATURES OF** American policing had roots in the undercover tactics of other cultural milieus of the time, namely those of cultural elites who deployed undercover tactics for a variety of purposes, most unrelated to the search for evidence or criminal prosecution. American sociology and journalism of the late nineteenth century was practiced by the "down and outers," most famously Stephen Crane, Hutchins Hapgood, Jack London, and Nelly Bly, who dressed up as prostitutes, waitresses, and factory operators in order to secretly investigate and then write about what was happening among the burgeoning underclass. Undercover journalists posed as sweatshop workers, harried waitresses, and insane-asylum inmates, writing about their experiences in these and other roles with which the public could empathize. Social scientists, writers, and reformers frequently went undercover across class lines and variously configured racial divides—from the late nineteenth century through the 1950s—to develop vivid accounts of the lives and struggles of workers, tramps, the unemployed, and of ethnic, religious, and racial minorities.

Such accounts were themselves strategies for breaking down social barriers, as female sociologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries used undercover tactics to gain entry to male-dominated fields—including academia itself. Jennifer Fronc writes that this undercover technique "allowed them to do the work for which they were trained in graduate school. [These women] succeeded in authoring and publishing important articles that appeared in leading professional journals, and they preceded the Chicago School of Sociology by a decade." Examples include the work of Annie MacLean, who published "Two Weeks in Department Stores" in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1899, after a stint as a shop-girl in a Chicago department store.

Undercover tactics like hers eventually became mainstream in academia but were later rejected as "unscientific." In the 1950s, the Chicago School of sociology became known for pioneering new immersion methods of urban ethnography and interpretive sociology through the work of Everett Hughes, Lloyd Warner, and Herbert Blumer, who championed the now-classic methods of urban ethnography and interpretive sociology. Beginning in the 1950s, American sociologists started going undercover to observe gay sexual mores in public bathrooms; the practice of speaking in tongues in Pentecostal churches; and various millennial cults. Once conceived of as a form of participant observation known as "complete participation," the undercover method's fall from grace began in the late 1950s, even though deep immersion methods—without the use of deception or disguise—have been used more recently by sociologists such as Sudhir Venkatesh (2008), who has written about what it is like to be a gang leader, and Alice Goffman (2014), who has written about what it is like to be on the run from the police in the high-crime inner-city neighborhoods of Philadelphia.

In the United States, deep immersion and participant observation continue to be used widely both in journalistic and ethnographic investigations of inner-city life, from

undercover discrimination testers to undercover "field experiments" that social psychologists use to study, for example, the prevalence of cheating, as in the work of Dan Ariely. There are also American restaurant critics who don elaborate disguises to simulate the experience of ordinary restaurant customers, or, in the case of former *New York Times* restaurant critic Frank Bruni, go undercover as waiters in order to tell the public about what it is like to work in a restaurant. The list goes on: secret shoppers, TV shows like *Undercover Boss,* and private anti-crime initiatives—such as the TV show *To Catch a Predator*—use undercover tactics either to mimic the experience of ordinary members of the public; to reveal to the powerful what the workplace looks like to their employees; or to respond in an entrepreneurial manner to moral panics about sex offenders who prey on gullible children on the internet. Across the pond, the German journalist Guenther Wallraff became famous for using undercover tactics to expose the working conditions of Turkish migrant workers, and for taking a job with *Bild* to expose its muckraking tactics.

**FAR FROM BEING** the preserve of the state, American undercover tactics are an established technique for obtaining and revealing an "insider's view" of a variety of social milieus. They can be used by cultural elites to make the experiences of the underprivileged, the unsophisticated, or the ordinary accessible to others, and to invite identification and empathy across ethnic, geographic, cultural, and class lines in a heterogeneous society. The moral history of this kind of fondness for surveillance in America simultaneously highlights that Europeans view undercover tactics as a form of state surveillance—as a form of trickery practiced by the powerful against the weak. This is particularly poignant as issues of digital privacy remain at the fore of European minds, especially in Germany. Americans, more lax in their view of digital privacy, view undercover tactics not just as mineable sources of television entertainment, but also as an epistemological strategy to be deployed across all sectors of society, as the state struggles to keep pace with private variants of similar methodologies. □

This essay is derived from a chapter entitled "Undercover Populism," in the edited volume *Contemporary Organized Crime,* published by Springer in summer 2017.


# IN A NAME

Fiction by
Thomas Chatterton Williams

**WHEN THE INVITATION** came to spend the final weeks of spring at the Fuissé-Pouilloux literary retreat in Catalonia, it could not have seemed a more fortuitous proposition. I was 33 years old, a father, and barely hanging on in Paris. It had been a long and dismal winter, and I had thought my second book would have sold the previous summer. The first of the "mixed reactions" came in August, while we were staying with friends on an island in the archipelago south of Stockholm. I was still optimistic then, almost foolishly so, and—in moments that are now embarrassing to recollect—had allowed myself to count my next advance before it'd been cashed, let alone drafted.

We had been in Sweden for about a week. In the mornings, Shaniq'wa would start to stir and call out earlier than at home. I'd shush her softly and crawl out of bed so as not to wake Clotilde. With my toothbrush and toothpaste in my pocket, I'd coax Shaniq'wa from her crib, lifting her out of the blackened cabin and out onto the porch, the sunlight bright in the sky already. She'd squint and wipe her eyes as if she'd never seen daylight, and then bury her head in my shoulder. I'd keep her up high like that, in my arms, all the way to the main house, so tics wouldn't get to her. Clutching the little ebony baby doll my mother had bought her for Christmas, at my suggestion, its dark brown skin contrasting so demonstrably against her own chalky complexion, my daughter would reach around my neck and gesture at the electric blue waves lapping all around us.

"*Regarde, Papa! Ça, c'est un bateau*!"

"Yes, that's a big black boat, baby."

"*C'est un* bateau, *Papa*."

"Yes, it's also a boat, though."

"Eetz ah bote. Hahaha. Eetz ah booooottte."

"And over there, do you see those birds?"

"*Oui, je vois les oiseaux*."

I'd kiss Shaniq'wa's forehead and put her down inside the main house and light the stove for the first pot of coffee. She'd adapted well to the hard cheese and flatbread that was the Swedes' traditional breakfast. I'd set her up at the long table then walk out the back of the house, past Bjornsson's mother's canvasses stacked against the wall, past the rows of suede *chaises*, and the collection of large wooden bowls overflowing with bird skeletons (the house was made of glass, and they broke their necks against it almost daily), out across the unvarnished deck and huge flat rocks, down to the edge of the water, where I'd piss and brush my teeth—not in that order. It was oddly delightful, the slight brine of the Baltic with the sweet mint of the toothpaste. I'd move on and splash my face until it felt freshened, and watch Shaniq'wa, already big now and so conscientious in her tasks, through the immense glass panes as I rejoined her.

**THOSE WERE HAPPY** and, in retrospect, carefree days. When Ingrid and Bjornsson and their little girl, Oona, and, last of all, Clotilde, woke up, we'd employ the village mentality of childrearing, taking turns feeding ourselves and rubbing sunscreen on the girls and checking for tics and reading and eating some more, and, later—when the girls were napping or, after so many bedtime stories, asleep for the

evening—we'd hand-wash the dishes at the pump, the brackish water so cold the soap clotted, and barbecue and drink and sweat out the day's liquor in the sauna until, one by one, we dove nude into the freezing seawater. Even in the middle of August, it took your breath away. But when you climbed back on the jetty, stars on every patch of black above, your skin would tingle and the last thing you'd want to do was put on a thread of clothing. When you did, you'd feel new again, and that sensation lingered. We'd sit there and talk about what we hoped to achieve through the absurd work of telling stories. Ingrid and Bjornsson were filmmakers. Clotilde was also a writer.

At some point, we'd say our goodnights and pair off back to our cabins at separate ends of Bjornsson's mother's island. As we were reading in bed one night, Clotilde mentioned that Ingrid had told her she'd been invoicing Bjornsson for her time and labor as the family's primary caregiver, and also for the opportunity cost—all those lost wages and even retirement plan contributions she was not making—every month since giving birth to Oona. "*T'imagine?* She goes: 'He can't just fly to China making documentaries while I raise our daughter and lose my body and my foothold and then one day, when he gets bored, he'll leave me for someone younger.'" Clotilde cackled. "*C'est hallucinant!*"

I looked up from my book, a slim volume by James Baldwin. "Even *Bjornsson* has that kind of income?" Poor Clotilde, she couldn't invoice me even if she wanted to. She held me in her eyes and smiled gently. "We don't care," she whispered. "It's not so sexy, a contract." We kissed, and I felt very grateful to my wife in that moment. Through the netting of the Pack n' Play, I could see Shaniq'wa's perfect little head of golden cotton candy, the head we'd made together which had always surprised me, resting motionlessly in the distance. I lifted Clotilde's nightgown and lowered myself slowly on top of her.

The next morning, after breakfast, while Shaniq'wa played with Oona and Ingrid by the water, I used Bjornsson's mobile broadband to check my email. There was a message from my agent in New York. I had been waiting for it with impatience for the better part of two weeks, but now I had an ominous feeling. Until then, it had been like when I was a teenager applying to Harvard—so long as the application was pending, I could still be accepted. My chest clenched at the salutation, the formality of which let me know I would not be back in the black, at least not that autumn and probably not even that winter.

Tommy Hilding, *Turner View,* 2016. Oil on linen, 70 × 100 cm. Image courtesy Galleri Magnus Karlsson

I closed my laptop and wandered into the woods beyond the outbuildings, up the hillside where you can survey

most of the island, through plots of wild blueberries and chanterelles, and down onto the far, rough, and uninhabited section. The views when contemplated in high spirits were stupendous. Even in a depression, they were compelling. Bjornsson's mother's taste was impeccable, and her ex-husband was loaded. She'd left the island mostly as nature had forged it, but here and there, she'd made some improvements: tree-branch sculptures, black teepees, and stacks of heavy boulders; the rational effect was both gratifying and gratuitous amidst all that natural splendor. It's strange what you can notice even in the middle of a disaster. I lay down in a thatch of purple moss where I could not be seen and began to worry.

I did the familiar tally. For the foreseeable future, there would continue to be more going out than coming in. Since moving to France, I had become inured to juggling credit. When the AmEx was due, I'd pay it with Discover then shift a chunk of that balance over to Bank of America whenever they were offering 18 months at zero APR. At some point, President Obama changed the law, and lenders were forced to disclose the payback timescales; I was, in turn, forced to confront the alarming math that dictated if I continued making minimum payments, the original sum I'd borrowed would balloon and get settled somewhere between when Shaniq'wa was driving and graduating from college. All of my own student loans were in deferment. Clotilde did not understand this, not really. And anyway, my credit situation was very much my own problem. It had nothing to do with the small inheritance she lived on.

It suddenly struck me that I would have to explain to the others at lunch that my novel hadn't sold, and they would induce that I was a failure. I did not want to think about that, because I did not want to think of them feeling sorry for me. After I collected myself and began the walk back to the main house, I used my phone to take what I knew would be a gorgeous photo of Bjornsson's mother's boat, an all-black Finnish number with a jet-propulsion engine. It was a remarkably fast and good-looking boat parked lengthwise along the jetty. In landscape view, I could get the boat, a portion of the sauna, and the high grass and wildflowers surrounding our minimalist Swedish cabin. The sky, like the water, was intensely blue and golden. I picked a filter that made the colors richer and adjusted for shadow. As I continued on, it sounds so stupid to say, my spirits lifted a little thinking about the likes I would garner for this picture.

I **HAVE HAD,** for some time now, an abiding fear that my wife fell in love with me at an artificial high-point, a stage in my life that seemed like a natural enough progression, but which, in retrospect, was really a stark aberration. She would not put it this way, not yet, but that doesn't make it less factual. It had seemed, for a brief moment when I met her, as though my first book might even be made into a movie! I can't even stand to remember that now. At that juncture, I was also having unusual success with women. The same week that I met Clotilde, I had had sex with three other people. I am sure that this affected my demeanor. I must have struck her as a man who was going places and had options. I do not hold any of this against her. I had drawn the same premature conclusions.

"America is crazy!" she'd marveled. "You can just sell a book like that, and they pay you like *that*!?" She looked at me with real admiration. "In France, that could never happen."

Though she's a writer, she'd been raised differently, with servants and even a stint in England. She'd had the kind of childhood that accustoms a person to certain things—and insulates them from others—on the inside, certain habits and reflexes that cannot just be discarded, not even when the outer situation changes. When Clotilde's father left her mother for his mistress, she was seventeen and fully molded. Her circumstances would not look like that again, but some bells won't unring.

When we started getting together, Clotilde did not earn very much money, and she did not know the true price of a drink, for example. She didn't seem to care, either—a genuine insouciance so strange to me it was intoxicating. On our first "date"—she laughed at that American word—she wore a sleek black dress she admitted was Balenciaga, and ordered Ruinart blanc-de-blancs by the glassful. I was in Paris and feeling like it really was a feast, awaiting the publication of my first novel, for which I'd been almost laughably overpaid, earning supplemental money as a social media consultant for a giant luxury conglomerate that put me up in a five-star hotel in Saint-Germain-dès-Pres.

I met up with Clotilde in the neighborhood she'd grown up in, between the Tour Montparnasse and the Luxemburg Gardens. We thought it funny to have drinks at the Closerie des Lilas, where a man plays the piano in a white dinner jacket and everything is priced triple because, once upon a time, Hemingway wrote this or that story on the veranda. I was expensing our dinner. Afterward, we went back to my room and spent an electric night in each other's arms, even though she was on her cycle. It was chaste in a way that actually brought us closer. For the next week we went out every night, and she smelled like perfume and cigarettes and wore incredible outfits. When my work ended, we moved out of my hotel into her modest walk-up on the other side of the river, in a side street off of the one with all the aging prostitutes in fishnet stockings. When I went to turn on the lights in her flat, nothing happened. She had not paid the utilities, but in the summer in France the sun doesn't set, not fully, until almost eleven—and in a few days she'd be with friends in Sardinia anyway. Would I like to come along with her? Lying in bed, sweating in the dark with no fan but with the big windows pushed all the way open, I bought a ticket to Alghero on my phone that same evening.

**AN EDUCATION, I'VE** half come to believe, is a disorienting and artificial—possibly even a devious—imposition. It snatches you out of one place and slaps you down in another, whether or not you're supposed to be there. It gives you permission to admire certain things, and leaves you suddenly,

alarmingly dissatisfied with and cold toward others, whether or not you are ready to live the consequences. My flaw, the main one—or this is how I flattered myself to perceive it—was that my own schooling, especially what transpired outside of the classroom, had left me overly fond of words and ideas—"new perspectives" I romantically learned to call them—and underwhelmed with stability, climate-controlled offices, and the laws of compound interest: all things that other people's parents, I've slowly come to understand, value even when their children pretend not to. I did not blame my own people who had done the best they could for me, but from time to time, I did fear I'd already not done my best for Shaniq'wa.

Shortly after she'd been born, my parents asked us—out of genuine bewilderment, and, I fear, also visceral disdain—why the hell we'd named our daughter Shaniq'wa. They were descended from sharecroppers, before that human chattel who worked plantations in Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Georgia, and God knows where else, to be honest. Judging from both of their tawny complexions, and my father's freckles and Shaniq'wa's blue eyes, they were also descended from some of the slave-owners. We know about as much about that branch of the family as we know to which tribes we're kin in Africa. Mama and Pop were of a generation of hard-working new-to-the-North, barely middle-class blacks who had accumulated more than anyone had before them, but who were nonetheless two missed paychecks removed from having to file for welfare—people for whom respectability and self-presentation were matters of life and death more than snobbery. "It was just a way of remembering," I told them. "We named her that so she won't forget where she comes from."

"That is *not* where she comes from," my father—a quiet man who never to my knowledge took a vacation—protested.

"We wanted to challenge society's oppressive conventions," I ventured weakly, but already I no longer really believed in what I was saying. I could not have explained how the name was also ironic.

"That girl's going to have a hard time applying to colleges," my mother cautioned.

"On the contrary," Clotilde said, trying to leaven the situation. "From what Thomas"—she always pronounced my name the French way, *toe-mah*—"tells me, it may even help her!"

Mama cut her a look that happily I do not think she noticed, because she was nursing. I saw it, though, and it was one more of those times when I wondered where my education had left me. □

# THE TIDE WAS ALWAYS HIGH

## Listening to Los Angeles

by Josh Kun

**MUSIC AND MUSICIANS** from Latin America are inextricable from the development of Los Angeles as a modern musical city. The musical life of this dispersed and dynamic metropolis has been and continues to be shaped by immigrant musicians and migrating, cross-border musical cultures. They have not only helped determine the sonic landscape of the city's musical urbanism; they have also been active participants in the making of the city's modern aesthetics and modern industries.

The music of Los Angeles and the music of Latin America have been interwined since the very birth of the city, in the eighteenth century. As the American ethnomusicologist Sidney Robertson Cowell reminded, back in the 1930s, there was, in fact, no Anglo-Saxon music in Los Angeles until the mid-nineteenth century; before then, "Americans were numerically few and transient." The original music of Los Angeles belonged instead to Gabrielino Indians, Mexican vaqueros, and Spanish friars and mission bands long before it began sounding like anything else. "Twenty years after the discovery of gold," the mid-century journalist Carey

Vlanka, *Calaveritas*, 2015. Courtesy Creative Commons

McWilliams wrote, "Los Angeles was still a small Mexican town."

For all of the demographic and cultural shifts that were to come over the next hundred years, to make music in Los Angeles—whether it be surf rock, bebop, gangsta rap, or cosmic canyon folk—has always borne an echo of that small Mexican town and has always meant, to some degree, engaging with the sonic traditions and experiments of Latin American music and the musical histories of immigrant Latin American musicians. This is both by virtue of its location and history (Mayor Eric Garcetti likes to call LA "the Northernmost city of Latin America") and by virtue of its multi-immigrant populations (a city that has always been a key hub for immigrants from across Latin America).

There is no music of Los Angeles without mariachi and *banda* and *son jarocho,* without bossa nova and samba,

To make music in Los Angeles—whether it be surf rock, bebop, gangsta rap, or cosmic canyon folk—has always borne an echo of that small Mexican town.

without mambo and cha cha cha and salsa, without Latin jazz helping West Coast jazz and its sound, without R & B and rock tuning "south of the border" or "South American Way." How could we listen to LA (Los Angeles) without the music of LA (Latin America)? How could we listen to Latin America without the music of Los Angeles? The city's distinctive musical urbanism is unthinkable without Latin American migrant sounds and migrant musicians. "Boom in Latin rhythms bigger than ever in LA," the jazz magazine *Down Beat* declared in 1954, but the truth is that the boom was always booming, the tide was always high.

Los Angeles, we might say, has a Latin American *cadence.* Inspired by Ralph Ellison's now famous aside in *Time* magazine that America is "jazz-shaped," Robert G. O'Meally, the celebrated founder of Columbia University's Center for Jazz Studies, has convincingly written that there is a "jazz cadence" embedded within the experiences of twentieth-century American culture—a jazz "effect" or jazz "factor" that has informed speech, style, dance, poetry, film, and politics to such a degree that jazz emerges as "the master trope of this American century: the definitive sound of America in our time." There is a wider argument to be made elsewhere that the musical styles of Latin America have similarly "shaped" American culture and politics in the twentieth century—the mariachi cadence of American culture, the mambo cadence, the samba cadence—but within the history of Los Angeles, the Latin American cadence is hard to ignore: among the city's most consistent beats, its most influential set of rhythms and melodies are those that have arrived after traveling through a century or two of cultural contact and musical creativity in the Americas.

In John Fante's classic Los Angeles novel *Ask the Dust,* published in 1939, the Italian immigrant protagonist Arturo Bandini struggles to survive LA and its one song that never leaves him alone: "Over the Waves." Played repeatedly in the novel by a small group of musicians at the downtown Columbia Buffet restaurant, it scores his embattled relationship with the waitress Camilla—a "Mayan Princess"—and, by extension, his embattled relationship with the Mexican roots of the city. It's the soundtrack to his awakening to Latin American Los Angeles and to his own position as a down-and-out writer living on oranges in his Bunker Hill apartment. The only other hint of music in the novel is also tinged with Latin America: a Central Avenue nightclub called Club Cuba.

"Over the Waves" began its life as "Sobre Las Olas," a European-style waltz written in Mexico by the composer and violinist Juventino Rosas. As scholars Gaye T. Johnson and Raul A. Fernandez have documented, Rosas took the song to New Orleans for the 1884 New Orleans World Cotton Centennial Exposition sugar expo and both he and the song stayed on, introducing the latter's cross-border, cross-continental swells to both the classical and jazz repertoires of early-twentieth-century New Orleans. As "Over the Waves," it became a staple for the city's working musicians, and most likely found its way to Los Angeles as New Orleans and other Southern musicians—such as Jelly Roll Morton (who went on to play in Tijuana, Mexico) and Leon Rene (who wrote "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" beneath the palm trees)—began to migrate west in the 1920s and 1930s.

By the time Bandini couldn't escape it, "Over the Waves" was a migrant song that had become an LA staple, music from Latin America that had traveled over borders and represented, however covertly, the histories of all those who traveled over the waves to make Los Angeles their home. Even though Fante didn't point it out, "Over the Waves" was a musical prompt to ask the dust, to ask history for answers, to listen to what decades later the Chicano-led band Rage against the Machine would call the Battle of Los Angeles: the music of empires clashing.

No wonder that of the few city statues in Los Angeles dedicated to musicians, three are from Mexico: revered composer and singer Agustín Lara and ranchera idols Lucha Reyes and Antonio Aguilar. While Lara's statue hearkens back to the 1930s and 1940s, when he was beloved by Mexican and Mexican American audiences in Los Angeles, the statues of Aguilar and Reyes are in direct dialogue with the contemporary moment. The working-class and immigrant-conscious genres that they helped popularize in their songs and feature films—*ranchera, banda, norteño*—are

among the most popular and most commercially successful in twenty-first-century Los Angeles among both immigrant communities and Latina/os born and raised here.

Beyond Mexican Los Angeles, though, the wider story of the musical interconnection between Latin America and Los Angeles has been less robustly told. That the city's rock, pop, jazz, funk, and hip-hop cultures all can trace some roots to Latin America is an open secret among musicians and fans, but one that has been little documented by scholars and journalists. Much of that other history lives in the liner note essays of LPs, in band personnel credits and musicians' union session archives, in the oral histories and memoirs of label execs and musicians, and in the small print of

So much of the music we have come to know as belonging to Los Angeles [. . .] has come over the waves and over the borders of the Americas.

*Billboard* magazine calendar blurbs, nightclub ads, and micro concert-reviews. What they collectively reveal is that so much of the music we have come to know as belonging to Los Angeles, as being of Los Angeles—be it Ritchie Valens work-shopping "La Bamba" in a Silver Lake home studio (belonging to Del-Fi Records' Bob Keane) or Lalo Schifrin putting bongos at the foundation of the *Mission: Impossible* theme, or even the Beach Boys wearing huarache sandals—has come over the waves and over the borders of the Americas. □

This essay is adapted from the Introduction to *The Tide Was Always High: The Music of Latin America in Los Angeles* (University of California Press, 2017), edited by spring 2018 fellow Josh Kun. A collection of essays, interviews, photographs, and album covers, the volume is a companion to six public concerts that Kun has curated across Los Angeles, as well as a series of online playlists, as part of the Getty Foundation initiative Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA. For more information, visit tidewasalwayshigh.com

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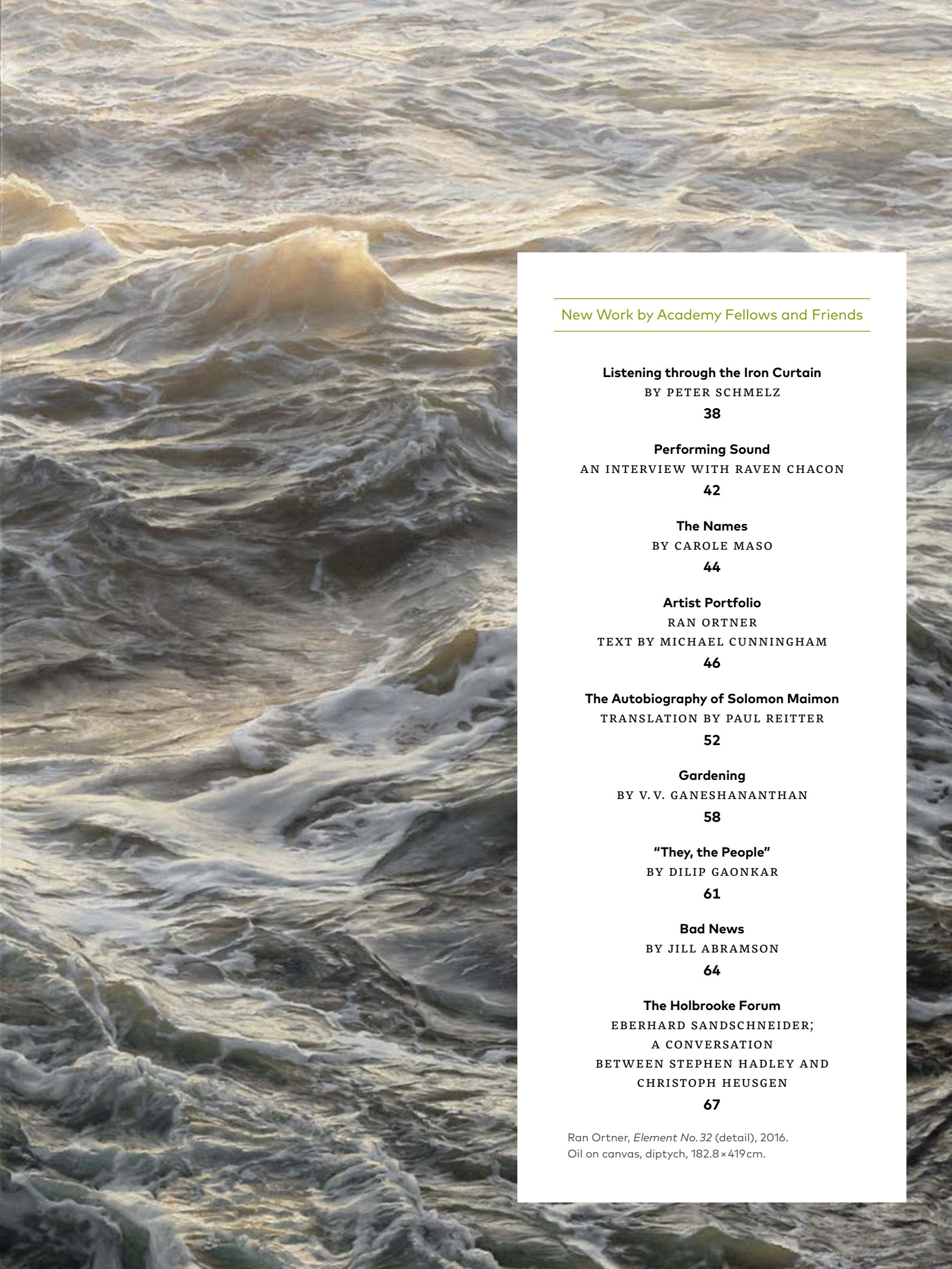


New Work by Academy Fellows and Friends


**Listening through the Iron Curtain**
BY PETER SCHMELZ
**38**

**Performing Sound**
AN INTERVIEW WITH RAVEN CHACON
**42**

**The Names**
BY CAROLE MASO
**44**

**Artist Portfolio**
RAN ORTNER
TEXT BY MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM
**46**

**The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon**
TRANSLATION BY PAUL REITTER
**52**

**Gardening**
BY V. V. GANESHANANTHAN
**58**

**"They, the People"**
BY DILIP GAONKAR
**61**

**Bad News**
BY JILL ABRAMSON
**64**

**The Holbrooke Forum**
EBERHARD SANDSCHNEIDER;
A CONVERSATION
BETWEEN STEPHEN HADLEY AND
CHRISTOPH HEUSGEN
**67**


Ran Ortner, *Element No. 32* (detail), 2016.
Oil on canvas, diptych, 182.8 × 419 cm.

# LISTENING THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN

## An intimate history of musical exchange

by Peter Schmelz

DURING THE TENSEST days of the Cold War, from 1961–1968, a German musicologist and Südwestfunk radio journalist named Fred Prieberg corresponded actively with the Ukrainian conductor Igor Blazhkov. The two men had found common cause in their interest in the newest, most difficult of contemporary music, from serialism to aleatory devices and everything in between. Prieberg, based in Baden-Baden, had caught wind of young composers experimenting with these avant-garde techniques in the Soviet Union, and had heard that Blazhkov was the man to contact about them.

Blazhkov was certainly a prime mover and shaker in the unofficial musical scene in Kiev at the time—indeed in the USSR as a whole. Possessed of seemingly boundless curiosity and energy, he maintained ties with the leading figures in Moscow, Leningrad, and Tallinn, and he corresponded with towering figures of contemporary music in Europe and America, among them Igor Stravinsky and the Austrian-born Ernst Krenek. Blazhkov held particularly high hopes for his friend the composer Valentin Silvestrov, who was just then beginning to compose using Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone system, which he and his fellow composers had gleaned from books they had received from further West—primarily from West Germany but also from Poland, thanks to the Warsaw Autumn festival. Blazhkov and Prieberg wrote often about Silvestrov, and Prieberg did all he could to arrange performances and publications of Silvestrov's music, often on West German radio stations.

The exchanges between Blazhkov and Prieberg stand out from other moments of cultural exchange during the Cold War. Evidence suggests that officials in Moscow were aware of the contact between the two men, but often it seems that Prieberg and Blazhkov's activities flew under the radar. They frequently used code, referring to Silvestrov as "your friend, the young composer," but just as often they did not. Their correspondence shows the assumptions on both sides about the power of music and the messages it could and did convey during the Cold War. And in so doing, their unique exchange illuminates what I call an "intimate history," an unofficial personal connection encouraged by the peculiarities of life during

René Wirths, *Stuhl* (2-parts), 2007. Oil on canvas, 135 × 200 cm. Photo: Jochen Littkemann. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Michael Haas.

the Cold War, a conflict played out as often in the imagination as in official political interactions.

WE JOIN PRIEBERG, Blazhkov, and their friends in August 1963, when Prieberg wrote to Russian pianist Maria Yudina about Silvestrov. Prieberg observed, in a letter, "Gradually here they are beginning to be interested in the music of Valentin [Silvestrov]; it is purely musical interest, I try to impede all the rest." Prieberg's "the rest" implied the dangers of excessive foreign interest in Soviet artists, which had been clear since Boris Pasternak was awarded—and ultimately forced by the Soviet leadership to decline—the Nobel Prize for literature in 1958. The interest of Western listeners was never purely musical.

But as Silvestrov and other young Soviet composers were heard more widely outside the USSR, they also encountered, for the first time, criticism of their compositions from non-Soviet sources, much of it betraying the larger sociopolitical and aesthetic assumptions lurking behind the ostensibly "purely musical interest." More specifically, the new music was consistently heard in relation to the Cold War. Representative is the letter of September 4, 1964, from Prieberg to Blazhkov, which reports on recent and upcoming performances of Silvestrov's

music, notably at the Berliner *Festwochen*, where "no undue publicity is made, and for the program book I have written but few sentences in the form of a short biography stating quite optimistically that it is possible to compose like this in the USSR and that 'Western influence' means influence from Warsaw and Prague . . . (I hope this will be true in the long run)." The bulk of this letter concerned the judgment of someone who loomed large in the German debate over new music, Theodor Adorno, whose influential *Jargon of Authenticity* was published that year. Relaying his critique of Silvestrov's music, Prieberg continues,

> Adorno wrote me about his piano pieces. He thinks that Valentin is extremely gifted yet he feels that it would be a pity if Valentin would repeat for himself the musical development after Schoenberg. This is exactly what makes me uneasy. He should by no means imitate the idiotic fads of certain of our young composers, e.g., in regard to "aleatoric" techniques. Musical creation has certain limits. To go beyond these is artistically irresponsible and, in his situation, even unwise as it might provoke rage in Mr. Tikhon [i.e. Khrennikov, the head of the Union of Soviet Composers].

Following this capsule summary of Adorno's 1955 essay "The Aging of the New Music," Prieberg launched into his own evaluation of Soviet musical politics. Here, he further reflected his own preconceptions about his role as musical "importer" of advanced Soviet music:

> For the time being, [Silvestrov's] pieces and their quality have provided me with the reasonable foundation to tell the public: the USSR has composers who can be superior to ours in the field of contemporary music, and surely this is what Tikhon [Khrennikov] would like to hear. Perhaps this is the way to induce him to grant "export licenses" for partitions.
>
> But how weak is my foundation if Valentin goes to the extreme of composing in the short-lived trend of aleatorics that cannot be justified by any critic. I want him to understand me correctly, and this is a cordial and friendly advice due to my experience with our musical scene.

Prieberg then advised Silvestrov through Blazhkov "to concentrate on the development and intensification of the style of the trio [Silvestrov's *Trio for Flute, Trumpet, and Celesta,* 1962], for instance; this seems to be a good point of departure." (Not coincidentally, Silvestrov had dedicated the trio to Prieberg.) Prieberg then warned, "No imitation, please; at his musical standard there are no great models for him to be found here. For Valentin, there is a personal way of development." The letter conveyed Prieberg's assumptions in capsule form: about musical modernism, history, innovation, audience expectations, Cold War cultural competition, and authentic "Russian" or "Ukrainian" music. Blazhkov passed along Prieberg's (and Adorno's) comments to Silvestrov.

Though it is unclear what either Ukrainian musician made of them, the combined responses of Prieberg and Adorno trapped the young Soviet between two competing models of artistic production, West and East. Criticized from all sides, Silvestrov apparently adopted the attitude recommended by fellow Russian composer Edison Denisov (named by his radio-physicist father after the great American inventor), who wrote in a 1965 letter to Blazhkov of the reviews of his own Paris premieres: "All of them are of a very low professional standard (although also positive-condescending). Tell Valya [Silvestrov] not to pay them any mind." In early September 1966, Denisov went further, writing to Blazhkov, "I don't trust Prieberg very much. He writes about our music in a way that plays right into Khrennikov's hands." Apparently Silvestrov heeded the advice: his compositions from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s made ample use of the "aleatorics" that Prieberg so severely scorned.

Undeterred, Prieberg reported still seeking a publisher for Silvestrov's music in his January 8, 1965, letter to Blazhkov: "As for publishing Valentin's works I am in contact with a publisher; if I could be sure to get more and all of his compositions, I myself would found a publishing agency for young music from USSR . . . a nice idea, isn't it? But, of course I would have to have also works by the other composers, so that expenses are not higher than the reward." (Market forces consistently tempered Prieberg's ambitions.) Along with the letter, Prieberg included a tape of the "Bremen performance" of Silvestrov's music (presumably *Five Pieces for Piano*) by Maria Bergmann, a staff pianist for Südwestfunk radio. Blazhkov replied, in his letter of February 28, 1965: "We listened [to] the tape with a great joy. And Valentin was glad as a child. It is an enormous stimulus for his creative work."

Through Prieberg and Blazhkov, Silvestrov was able to gain something that he and many other young Soviet composers lobbied for whenever they could in the 1960s: performances. In fact, the "first public performance of Silvestrov's works in the USSR" came only on December 8, 1965, when Blazhkov conducted the premiere of *Spectrums* (*Spektry,* 1965) for orchestra. The young Soviet composers wanted to hear their music in order to continue developing artistically, but because of their perceived stylistic indiscretions they had few opportunities. As a result, they stuck to less noticeable forms—for piano or smaller ensembles, precisely those groupings that Prieberg and Western publishers found so unmarketable. For on January 25, 1963, Prieberg had noted to Blazhkov that he was shopping Silvestrov's scores around, but that the publisher "Dr. [Hermann] Moeck seemed to me more interested in orchestral pieces which have a better market here."

Yet perhaps because of this prodding from Prieberg, mediated by Blazhkov, Silvestrov began writing larger compositions in the second half of the 1960s. One of these, his gigantic

Symphony no. 3, *Eschatophony,* was awarded a Koussevitzky Prize in 1967 and was performed in Darmstadt the following year; his *Hymn,* for orchestra (1967), won second prize at the International Gaudeamus Composers' Competition in 1970. *Eschatophony* had to wait another eight years for a performance in the Soviet Union, on October 2, 1976, in Kiev.

Prieberg pushed the apolitical message of Soviet music in West Germany, but in the USSR, Blazhkov's promotion of Silvestrov was not without political pushback. In 1963, Blazhkov and his wife, Galina Mokreeva, had been forced out of their positions in Kiev. Blazhkov fortunately found employment in Leningrad as an assistant conductor of the Leningrad Philharmonic, under Yevgeny Mravinsky. Mokreeva had begun graduate work in music theory at the Leningrad Conservatory, researching a dissertation on Stravinsky. By mid-1965, Blazhkov had become extremely active in his new post in Leningrad, and his correspondence with Prieberg became more sporadic. Although Khrushchev had been forced out of office in 1964, ending the Thaw by some reckonings, Blazhkov was feeling optimistic: he had already had success programming new, unofficial Soviet music, including the landmark premiere of the pioneering unofficial composer Andrey Volkonsky's important song cycle *Laments of Shchaza,* in late April 1965.

In his lengthy letter of September 28, 1965, Blazhkov updated Prieberg on the creative and personal lives of his *confréres* and urged him to adopt a new project: "It seems to me that you must work at new book on young Soviet composers solely." By the letter of September 10, 1967, Blazhkov apparently had taken on that hitherto uncompleted task himself. In his letter from October 5, 1966, Blazhkov reminded Prieberg of his intent to find publishers for the young Soviets: "Could you renew your negotiations with Dr. Hermann Moeck as well as with the UE [Universal Edition]? I think [Silvestrov's] *The Spectrums,* [Denisov's] *The Sun of the Incas* [1964], and [Volkonsky's] *The Laments of Shchaza* could adorn their business." Universal Edition published the *Laments of Shchaza* in 1970, and the *Sun of the Incas* in 1971; *Spectrums* was only recently published by Belaieff.

Silvestrov's *Serenade* from his *Triad* (*Triada,* 1962) appeared in 1968 in the collection *New Soviet Piano Music,* edited by Rudolf Lück and published in Cologne by Gerig. Upon hearing of Prieberg's (limited) involvement with the project, Blazhkov urged him (in vain) to cut the works by Reinhold Gliére, Dmitry Kabalevsky, and Georgy Sviridov from the collection: "These pieces are very mediocre and, in addition, they have nothing in common with the title 'New Soviet Piano Music.'" Blazhkov also asked (again in vain) that the other two movements of Silvestrov's *Triad* be included, in addition to Volkonsky's *Musica Stricta* and Zahortsev's *Rhythms.* Prieberg justified the "several really mediocre pieces" that Blazhkov had noted, demonstrating an awareness of the musical market similar to that in his January 8, 1965, letter: the publisher "had some business reasons, one of them being the idea that the Russian State Publisher should be pleased (for some intended cooperation the nature of which I do not know), the other being the expectation that not all of the buyers are friends of avant-gardistic styles nor able to play complicated music." For perhaps the first (but not last) time, the young Soviet modernists were stymied by the fickle tastes of the open market. The world was not black and white: what was condemned in the USSR was not necessarily welcomed with open arms in Europe.

What happened next? The year 1968 was a crucial turning point in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The promises of Khrushchev's Thaw came crashing down with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Although the musical chill did not last long—exchanges like Prieberg and Blazhkov's initiated changes that had become irreversible—Blazhkov suffered severely. In 1968 things turned tragic for him and Mokreeva, in no small part due to their advocacy of new music. He was fired from his post for performing difficult works by difficult composers, Silvestrov among them. Later that year, Mokreeva, feeling increasingly hemmed in and depressed, committed suicide. In the years that followed, Prieberg and Blazhkov gradually lost touch. Prieberg's idealistic preconceptions about freedom of expression and musical style were counterpoised by Blazhkov's hopes about foreign publication and performance as well as by naïve official Soviet ideas about acceptable and unacceptable music and the results of criticism, just or not. How else to explain the missteps Soviet officials made with Estonian composer Arvo Pärt and Russian composer Volkonsky? Denunciations that attempted to silence them only drew the eager attention of foreigners such as Prieberg.

But this was the little-mentioned flip side of the "Pasternak effect" that Prieberg cited so frequently. The Iron Curtain had become rather porous by the 1960s, and information, although intermittent, flowed nonetheless. Competing worldviews collided and fed one another as acceptable ensembles, techniques, and styles were heatedly debated. Yet the Cold War and its rhetoric of freedom suffused everything, rising to the forefront in many of Prieberg's pronouncements, as we have seen. The intimate side of musical exchanges filtered and fused the larger concerns about agency, identity, self, and other that fueled the broader conflict. Private networks of exchange reveal the malleability of seemingly hard and fast distinctions, chief among them those separating political and apolitical, freedom and constraint. Networks like those between Blazhkov and Prieberg uncover hidden contours of the Cold War and inform our understanding of the fluid networks of informal information exchange becoming increasingly, and alarmingly, powerful today. □

# PERFORMING SOUND

Photo: Trevor Duke

## An Interview with Raven Chacon

*Originally from the Navajo Nation, Raven Chacon is a composer of chamber music, performer of experimental noise music, and installation artist. He is a member of the Indigenous art collective Postcommodity, founded in 2007, and has also served as composer-in-residence for the Native American Composer Apprentice Project, where he taught string-quartet composition to hundreds of American Indian high-school students on reservations in the Southwest. In spring 2018, Chacon is the American Academy's fellow in music composition.*

**Berlin Journal:** In reference to your 2001 work *Report*, you speak of the weapons used as mechanisms for musical resistance. What does today's musical resistance look like? What can it do?

**Raven Chacon:** Today's musical resistance looks like a stage with a diverse ensemble of performers. People of color and women performing sound. It does not matter if the instruments are violins, drums, or shotguns, nor does it matter which end of the dynamic spectrum they are performing. Their very presence on the stage, when there was no place for them before, is the resistance. And even more so when the sounds they make aren't for everybody.

The effect is different for different audiences. Some are afraid or confused as to why these people are making music. They have not seen people like this produce such challenging sounds. If they accept what they are seeing and hearing, they may want to assign extra-musical meaning for why these people are onstage. There should be no questioning of why they are onstage. They may try to link the performers' identities or heritages to the sound, but this is not always necessary.

And yet others will see new worlds by seeing these performers (who look very similar to themselves) onstage, performing music most people would consider to be "noise." New possibility will be revealed to younger musicians and composers, who have always been told that every sound has already been made, but are now seeing that that has been a lie.

**Berlin Journal:** Speaking of protest, the Dakota Access Pipeline inspired tens of thousands of people to descend upon Standing Rock in opposition. You were among the protesters. Why was this such a meaningful event?

**Raven Chacon:** I was at the Oceti Sakowin camp this fall, among the water protectors, but not necessarily as a protestor. I needed to go there as an Indigenous person alive in the twenty-first century. I had to go because I am not sure when that many Native people will congregate again. I am not sure when that many Native people will eat together in my lifetime. I am not sure I will be able to attend, if and when that many people from so many places are bought into the same space to pray. For the first time in a long time, the world remembered how many of us there can be.

**Berlin Journal:** You have created a body of work that is astounding in its variety, including chamber music pieces for traditional instrumentation, land art, noise pieces, and work on instruments of your own creation, as well as a wide array of collaborations. How would you describe the elements uniting your oeuvre? Or does such a question overvalue aesthetic coherence over diversity of expressive means?

**Raven Chacon:** Almost every work I am involved in utilizes sound as its primary carrier of metaphor. I have been fortunate to collaborate with a variety of artists so that sound and music can align with the forms that they are working in. There is no conscious (to me at least) effort to unite these works visually or formally; making sound or sometimes even more specifically, noise, is the end goal. I prefer to work in collaborative situations, as these allow me to experiment in different mediums, to constantly learn new technologies, and to find new ways to use or not use sound.

**Berlin Journal:** With your artist cooperative Postcommodity you created *Blind/Curtain* (2017), an installation for the Neue Galerie at documenta14 that acted as a threshold for audiences to "cleanse themselves of the outside world, and prepare their hearts, minds, and spirits for engaging the transformative experience of documenta14." Please tell us a bit more about what motivated the work—and if it worked.

**Raven Chacon:** *Blind/Curtain* is a welcoming for all visitors into one of the main venues of documenta14. It is a border, existing for those who are conscious of borders, and invisible to those people who are usually oblivious to them. While acting as a cleansing portal for those who enter, it also demarcates the line that exists in all art institutions that implies inaccessibility to what is housed inside the building. Art museums, concert venues, and lecture halls are not always welcoming.

**Berlin Journal:** What are you looking most forward to in Berlin?

**Raven Chacon:** I have visited Berlin a few times and I am in awe at the soft pace of a city with so much creative energy. I look forward to connecting with the multiple music and art communities that exist in Berlin. I look forward to learning from the diverse presences of people who will be attending American Academy. I look forward to creating new work that can only be created there. □

# THE NAMES

Fiction
by Carole Maso

I named my child Mercy, Lamb.

Seraphina, the burning one.

I named my child the One Who Predicts the Future though I never wanted that.

I named my child Pillar, Staff.

Henry, from the Old High German Haganrih, which means ruler of the enclosure, how awful.

I named my baby Plum, Pear Blossom, Shining Path.

I named my child Rose Chloe—that's blooming horse. I almost named her Rose Seraphina, and that would have been a horse on fire.

Kami, which is tortoise. The name denotes long life.

Kameko—tortoise child.

Kameyo—tortoise generation.

So she might live forever.

And Tori—turtle dove.

I named my child Sorrow, inadvertently, I did not mean to. In the darkness I named her Rebecca—that is noose, to tie or bind. In the gloom, I named my baby Mary—which means bitter, but I am happier than before and name my baby Day and Star and Elm Limb.

I named my child Viola, so that she might be musical. And Cecilia, patron saint of music, so she might play the violin.

Vigilant was the name of my child. Daughter of the Oath. Defiance. I name my child Sylvie so that she will not be frightened of the sunless forest.

I named my child War, by mistake. That would be Marcella or Martine. I named my child Ulrich—Wolf Power. Oh my son! After awhile though I wised up and passed on Brunhilde, Helmut, Hermann, Walter. And Egon—the point of the sword. I did not value power in battle and so skipped over Maude.

Instead I named my child Sibeta—the one who finds a fish under a rock. Sacred Bells, and Ray of Light. And Durga—unattainable. Olwynn—white footprint. Monica—solitary one. I named my child Babette, that is stranger. I named her Claudia: lame—without realizing it.

How are you feeling Ava Klein?

Perdita.

I named her Thirst. And Miriam—Sea of Sorrow. Bitterness. And Cendrine—that's ashes. But I am feeling better now, thank-you. I named my child God is With Thee, though I do not feel Him.

I named her Isolde—Ruler of Ice. Giselle—Pledge and Hostage.

Harita, a lovely name, derived from the Sanskrit denotes a color of yellow or green or brown, a monkey, the sun, the wind and several other things.

I named her Clothed in Red, because I never stopped bleeding.

I named my son Yitzchak—that's He Will Laugh. And Isiah, Salvation.

I named him Salvation. And Rescue. And Five Minutes to Midnight.

I named my daughter Esme, the past participle of the verb Esmer, To Love. I named her She has Peace, and Shining Beautiful Valley. I named my baby Farewell to Spring, just in case.

I named my child Ocean, for that vast, mysterious shifting expanse. I named her Marissa-that's of the sea—because naming is what we do I guess—there is a silliness to us.

I named my child Cusp and Cutting Edge and Renegade, to protect her from critics.

I named my child Millennia, because the future is now—whether we like it or not.

It is a distinct pleasure to be here on this earth naming with you. They lift a glass:

New Year's Eve and the revelers. Dizzy, a little more than tipsy. At the edge of what unbeknownst to them has already happened, is already happening. It gives them a sepia tone. In their paper hats and goblets and blowers and confetti. *Happy*—that old sweet and hopeful *New* —there is not one day that I have not thought of you my child—*Year.* And time passes. As if we had a choice.

A strange photographed feeling. The black hood over the box on its legs. That wobbly feeling comes from champagne and last things, as the new century moves into us—1900.

Time immemorial—so they say.

What is to come unimaginable.

I named my baby Many Achievements, Five Ravens, Red Bird. I named her Goes Forth Bravely. Beautiful Lake. Shaking Snow, Red Echo, Walking by the River.

And we relish the saying. While we still can. And in the saying, inhabit our own vanishing, in the shadow language, its after image, a blue ghost in the bones, the passage of time, intimacy of the late evening—seated by a fire—embers.

Pipe smoke when you were a child comes from under the crack in the door, letting you know that Uncle Louis was near. The distant sound from your nursery of the revelers—they come in to peer at you in your crib in the eerie masks of Victoriana on the dying year's last eve. Louisa and Herman move toward the lamplight. Oohs and aahs and then quiet. All disperse: a proper German gentleman, an American with a handlebar moustache, a chorus girl, a rabbit-faced widow, a bursar or stationmaster, a man in a turban, a geisha—a chic Orientalism. A sultry gypsy girl. They meander through the Ramble, weaving a little, with the odd premonition that they are all playing their parts—on this elaborate stage, the world hurtling forward, the year on the verge of turning. Snow begins to fall. The lights twinkling. They lift a glass.

New Year's Eve and we dream—of a music, a book never seen before, at the edge of its obsolescence—the light pale opal. On the shards of story and sound. What is left now.

On the last day of the last year of the last one thousand.

And the dead stream by with their names. And all the ways they tried to say—

*Clint Youle, 83, Early Weatherman on TV*

*H.S. Richardson, Heir to Vicks Cold Remedies*

*Hazel Bishop, an Innovator Who Made Lipstick Kissproof*

*Linda Alma, Dancer in Greek Movies*

*Walter O. Wells, a Pioneer in Mobile Homes*

The future is already with us, whether we like it or not. Its advance implacable, and the revelers, having rested up that afternoon begin their foray. To play out the passing of time—thrilled, a little frightened, tinged with melancholy, struck as they leave now by the intense desire to stay.

"To earn one's death," writes *Mary Cantwell, 69, Author,* "I think of it as a kind of parlor game. How, I shall ask my friends would you like to earn your deaths? And how would I like to earn mine?"

And we are charmed. I named my baby The Origin of Song— and then The Origin of Tears. Angel Eyes and Angel Heart. And Sweetie Pie and Darling One.

We've relished the naming—eased by it. And all the other games we made up, and all the things we thought to do. New Year's Eve and the revelers…

At the end of the century a whisper. The Berlin Philharmonic plays seven finales in a row.

And the year 2000 is issued in, scraps of story and sound. That beautiful end-of-the-century debris.

We were working on an erotic song-cycle. It was called: *The Problem Now of the Finale.*

Now where the sense of key is weaker or absent altogether, there is no goal to be reached as in earlier finales—as a closing gesture then, what, what now?—a joke, a dissolve, a fast or slow tearing, intimations of a kind of timelessness, the chiming of bells, a wing and a prayer—Perhaps, a solemn procession toward—what then?

New Year's Eve and the revelers.

Another sort of progress.

I named my child Farewell to Spring, just in case.

How strange the dwindling—pronounced as it is on this night where we deliberately mark its passage. Happy New Year. Lost in the naming, in the marking of time as it slips—distracted from the strangeness for a minute.

It's been a privilege. And how quickly all of a sudden . . . Pipe smoke when you were a child.

Or the alarming forced jollity of a Shostakovitch finale—

*Where are you going?*

*Where have you gone?*

I named her Century. I named her Bethany—House of Figs. I named her Lucia to protect her from the dark. And Xing—which is Star. Dolphin, Lion, Lover of Horses.

I named her Arabella—Beautiful Altar, and Andromeda—Rescued.

My child was made almost entirely of blood in the end. She slipped like Birds through my hands. They say ordinarily such a child is not named.

A Flock of Birds. Bells that Descend. A Rose on the Open Sea.

The pages of the baby name book ragged. Nevertheless—I could not pass up

Mercy.

Tenderness.

Lamb.

I wish I could decipher the Silence. Understand its Whims. The century a Chalice of Heartbreak. We put our lips to it and whisper.

*What now?*

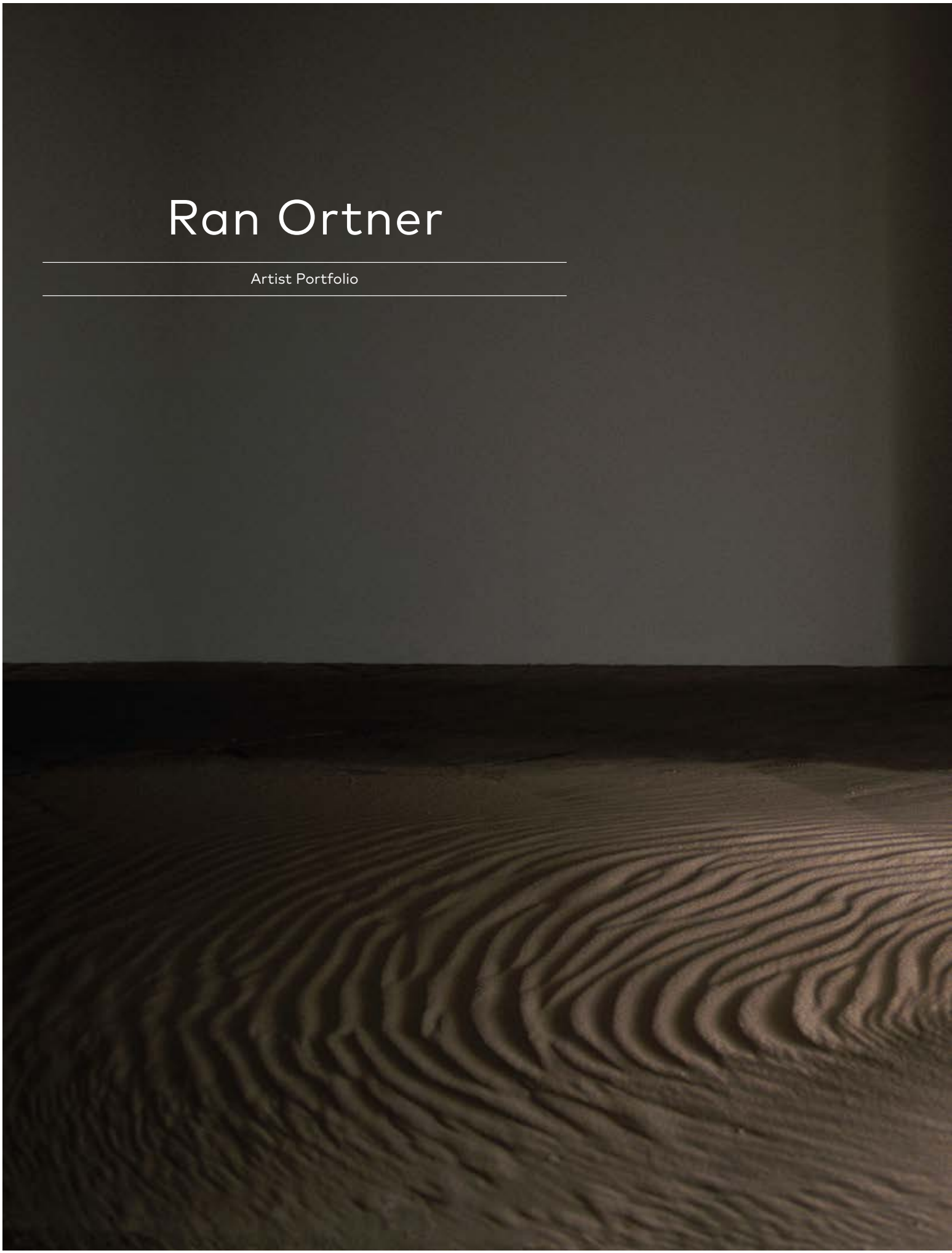
*What then?*

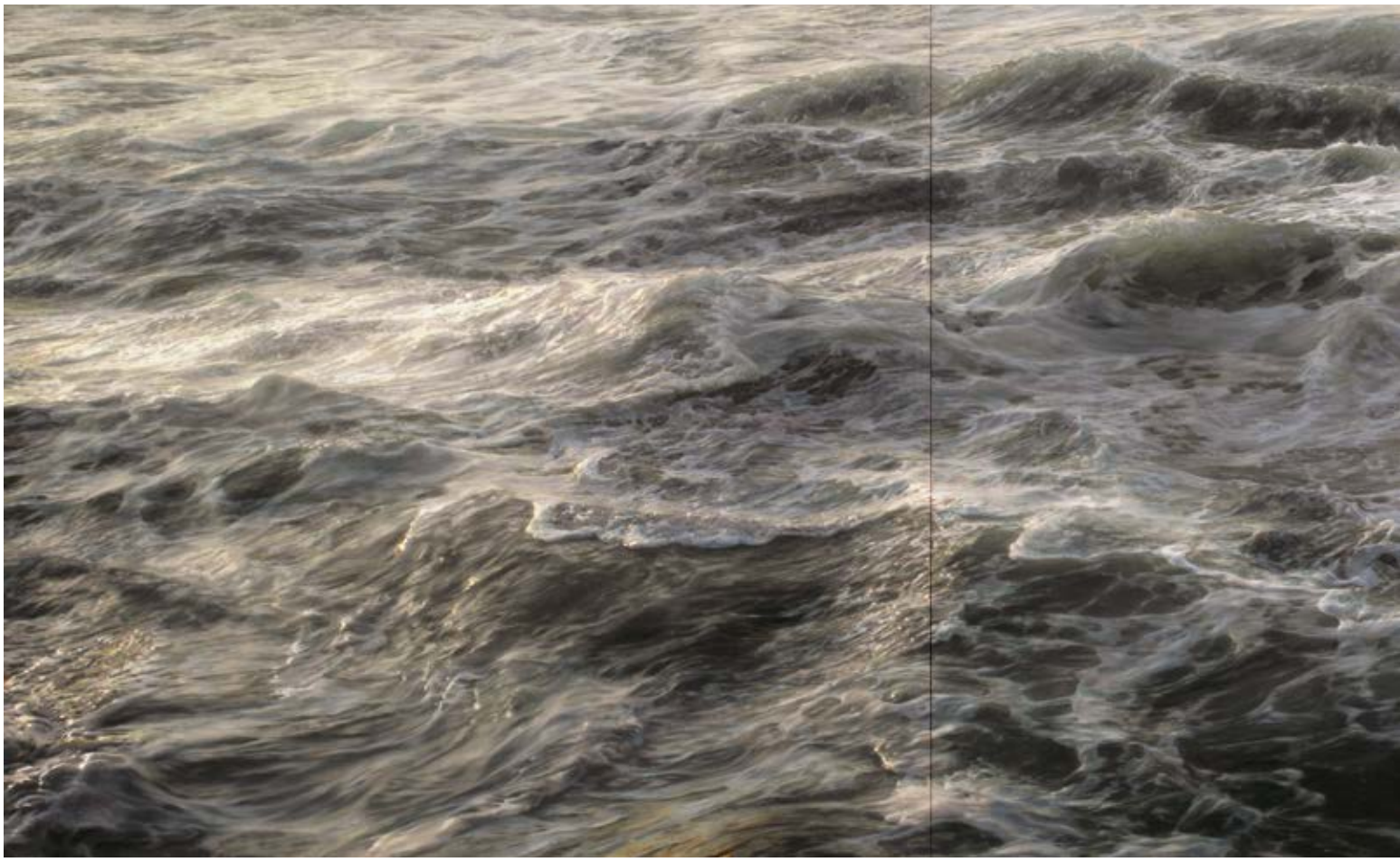
And Bela—derived from a word that means wave—or a word that means time—or a word that means limit. It is also indicative of a type of flower, or a violin. □

This work first appeared in *Conjunctions: 34,* "American Fiction: States of the Art."

# Ran Ortner

Artist Portfolio





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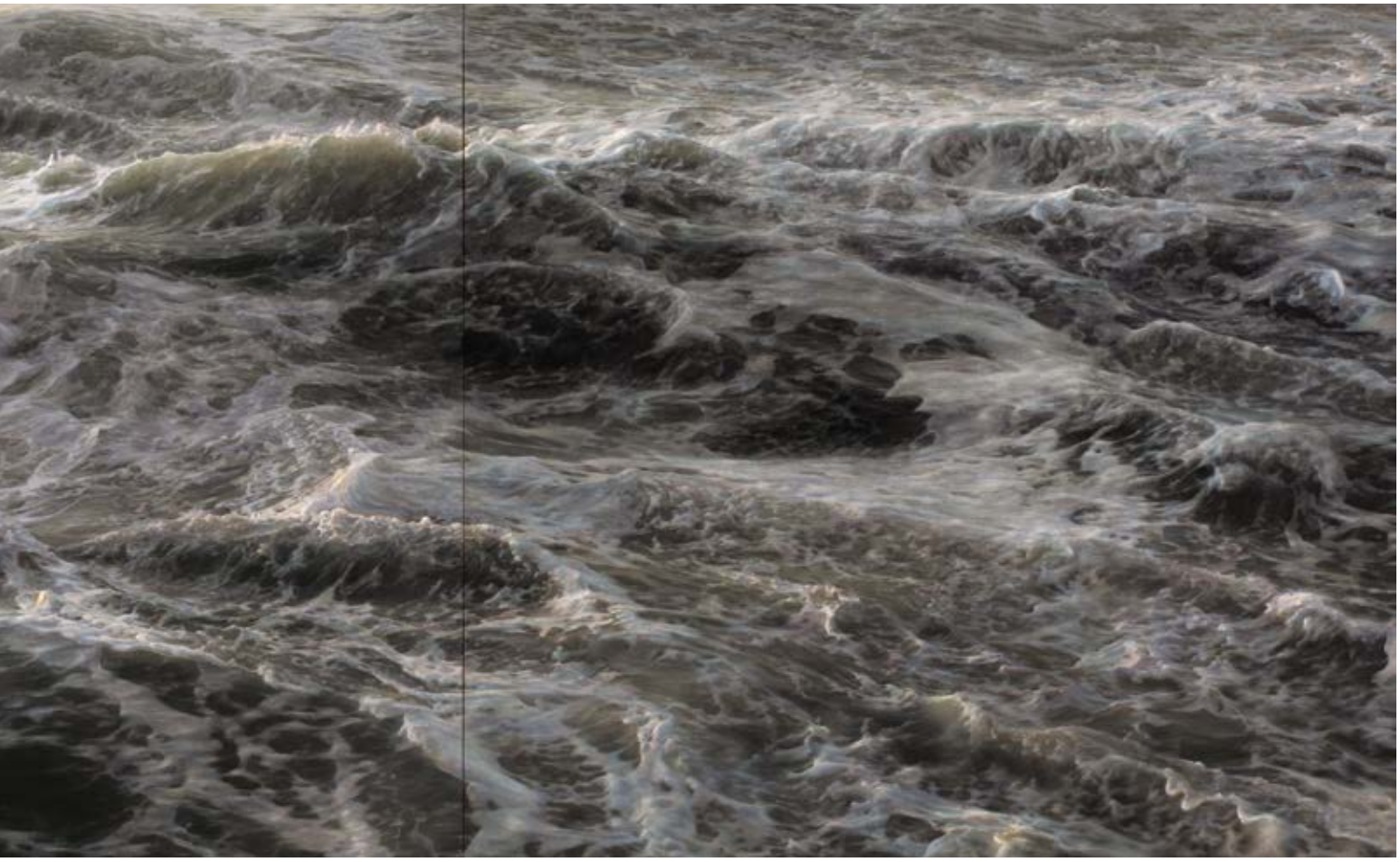


[3]

# These, This

## Considering Ran Ortner

by Michael Cunningham

We're talking about wonder and obliteration.

We're talking about how it can be difficult to distinguish the one from the other.

"Our age not only does not have a very sharp eye for the almost imperceptible intrusions of grace, it no longer has much feeling for the nature of the violences which precede and follow them."
– Flannery O'Connor

Artists are here to tell us that we do in fact see what we think we see, and, at the same time, that what we think we see is always more complex, more remarkable, more terrifying than our eyes are able to admit.

"There is one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak to some hidden soul beneath." – Herman Melville

It seems that the oceans will be the first to signal our last end.
It seems that, even now, the water is beginning to take us back.

And yet, there's beauty in it. Strange, don't you think? Or, maybe, not so strange: the allure of submergence, our desire to be devastated, to be freed even of our bodies.

Those are, after all, pearls that were his eyes ...

Aren't we at least a little bit in love with that which would pull us under?

Aren't we witnesses, all of us, to our own vanishing worlds?

Ran said to me the other night, when we were in his studio together, "It's not the ocean, it's the ocean seen."

It's the ocean contemplated as intently as a monk contemplates the Holy Word. It's the ocean worked and reworked until it looks more like itself than it would if we were standing on the beach, looking right at it.

It's the ocean so furiously remembered that it's kept alive.

Ran wrote to me, in an email: "I feel I am looking very directly at the heightened moment, at the moment that's fully insisting. It's the insistence of beauty, the dispassionate nature of this insistence, and it just keeps coming, like a freight train."

It just keeps coming.

Like a freight train.

**[SPREAD, PAGES 46–47]**
*Drift,* 2000. Fan, bag, 1000 pounds of sand

**[PAGES 48–49]**
**[1]** *Element No. 3,* 2011. Oil on canvas, triptych, 182.8 × 594.3 cm. **[2]** *Element No. 27,* 2016. Oil on canvas, 53.3 × 83.8 cm. **[3]** *Element No. 24* (detail), 2017. Oil on canvas, diptych, 121.9 × 264.2 cm

**[RIGHT]**
*Release,* 2001. Five-hundred pounds of sand pouring from the wall

All images courtesy the artist.

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SOLOMON MAIMON

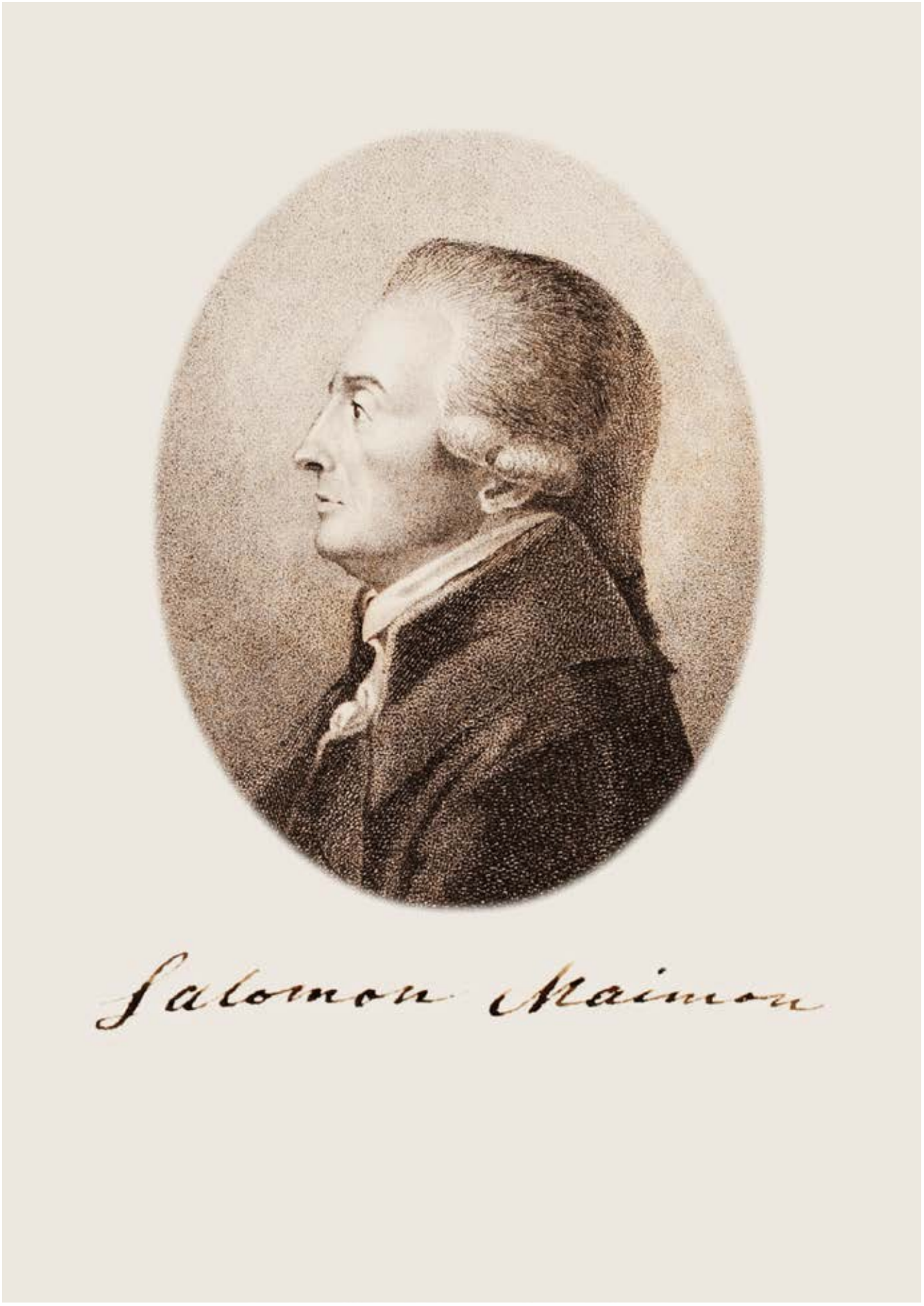
Introduction by
Yitzhak Y. Melamed and
Abraham P. Socher

Translation
by Paul Reitter

## INTRODUCTION

**MIDWAY THROUGH** George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), the title character, a Jewish orphan raised as an English aristocrat, wanders into a secondhand bookshop in East London and finds "something that he wanted —namely that wonderful piece of autobiography, the life of the Polish Jew Solomon Maimon." Eliot, who had translated those more famous Jewish heretics, Benedict Spinoza (who Maimon had read closely) and Heinrich Heine (who had read Maimon closely), left an annotated copy of *Salomon Maimons Lebensgeschichte* in her library.

Contemporary readers of Maimon's autobiography included Goethe and Schiller, but it made the greatest impression on nineteenth-century Eastern European Jewish readers who had suffered a similar crisis of faith and were struggling to modernize Jewish culture or find their feet outside of it. Mordechai Aaron Guenzberg (1795–1846) and Moshe Leib Lillienblum (1843–1910) both saw Maimon as their great predecessor, the archetype of the modern Jewish heretic who had described the pathologies of traditional Jewish society and made a successful—or almost successful—break with it. Both of them patterned their own




William Arndt, *Salomon Maimon*, pre-1814. Originally published in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*.

influential Hebrew autobiographies after Maimon's *Lebensgeschichte,* as did the Yiddish philologist Alexander Harkavi (1863–1939), a generation later.

When the soon-to-be radical Nietzschean Zionist Micha Yosef Berdichevsky (1865–1921) left the great Yeshivah of Volozhin, in the 1880s, one of the first books he turned to was Maimon's autobiography. Prominent German-Jewish readers included the novelist Berthold Auerbach, who based a character upon him, the pioneering historian of Hasidism Aharon Marcus (Verus), and the twentieth-century thinkers Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, and Leo Strauss, all of whom had their first serious exposure to Maimonidean philosophy in the pages of Maimon's autobiography. Arendt went on to list Maimon as the first modern Jewish intellectual to adopt the role of the "conscious pariah," a role she saw as later having been taken up by Heine and Franz Kafka, among others. As an editor at Schocken, Arendt also helped bring Maimon to English readers by publishing an abridgement of an already-abridged nineteenth-century version of Maimon's autobiography. When the Jewish loss-of-faith genre was Americanized by Chaim Potok, in *The Chosen* (1967), he explicitly modeled his brilliant, troubled Hasidic protagonist on Maimon. Potok had read the Schocken edition as a young man and then gone on to write a philosophy dissertation on Maimon before turning to fiction.

Historically speaking, Solomon Maimon stood at the cusp of Jewish modernity; he passed through virtually all of the spiritual and intellectual options open to European Jews at the end of the eighteenth century. Literarily speaking, he is the first to have dramatized this position and attempted to understand it—and thus himself. His autobiography is not only the first modern Jewish work of its kind, it also combines an astonishingly deep knowledge of almost every branch of Jewish literature with an acute and highly original analysis of Judaism, its political dimensions, and its intellectual horizons.

Solomon Maimon, it is generally agreed but still subject to some dispute, was born in 1753, in Sukoviborg, a small town on the tributary of the Niemen River, near the city of Mirz, in what was then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Since Jews of that time and place did not commonly take surnames, his given name was simply Shelomo ben Yehoshua (Solomon son of Joshua). Indeed, he did not take the name of the great twelfth-century Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maim (Maimonides), until he was close to thirty years old, and studying at the liberal Gymnasium Christianem in Altona, and then only in more or less formal German contexts, although one such context was the present autobiography, with which he fully introduced himself to the literary world.

The autobiography, simply titled *Salomon Maimons Lebensgeschichte*, was published in Berlin in two volumes, in 1792 and 1793. It was edited by his friend Karl Philipp Moritz (1756–1793), with whom he collaborated in editing a unique journal of psychology, parapsychology, and the social sciences, *Gnothi Sauton, oder Magazin zur Erfahrungsseelenkunde als ein Lesebuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte* (roughly: "Know Thyself, or the Magazine for Empirical Psychology for the Learned and the Unlearned"). Maimon's autobiography began as a contribution to the journal, as an anonymous case study of a Polish Jew named "Salomon ben Josua," focusing on the social and economic arrangements under which he grew up as the grandchild of a Jewish leaseholder of the leading Polish-Lithuanian aristocrat, Prince Karol Stanislaw Radziwill (1734–1790). It was only after writing these "fragments" of his life that Maimon found himself composing an account of how, in "striving for intellectual growth [. . .] amidst all kinds of misery," he had become an influential, if idiosyncratic, contributor to the philosophical literature of the German and Jewish enlightenments.

As the *Autobiography's* many readers over the last two centuries will attest, it is by turns a brilliantly vivid, informative, searing, and witty, even hilarious account of his life as a Talmudic prodigy from—as he put it in a letter to Immanuel Kant—"the woods of Lithuania," a literally preadolescent husband, an aspiring kabbalist-magician, an earnest young philosopher, a bedraggled beggar, an urbane Berlin pleasure-seeker, and, eventually, the philosopher of whom Kant would write, "None of my critics understood me and the main questions so well as Herr Maimon." In fact, some of the incidents and encounters Maimon narrates are so entertaining and incredible that one is tempted to read his book as a picaresque novel, a Jewish *Tom Jones.* Yet, in virtually every instance in which it is possible to verify an incident, source a quotation, or identify a figure to whom he has coyly referred only with an initial—the drunken Polish Prince R., the charismatic "New Hasidic" preacher B. of M., the supercilious Jewish intellectual H., the censorious Chief Rabbi of Hamburg, as well as far less famous individuals—Maimon's account checks out.

The only previous English translation of Maimon's *Lebensgeschichte* appeared in 1888. The translator, a professor of Moral Psychology at McGill University named J. Clark Murray elided a few difficult passages in the first volume of the autobiography and cut the preface and ten chapters on the philosophy of Moses Maimonides with which Maimon had prefaced the second volume. He also cut the comical, puzzling allegory with which Maimon concluded his autobiography. These chapters were, Murray wrote in his preface, not "biographical" and "excite just the faintest suspicion of 'padding.'" Although Murray's translation has been reprinted, pared down, excerpted, and anthologized for well over a century now, Paul Reitter's new translation is, astonishingly, the first complete accurate English translation of Maimon's autobiography into English.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

**MAIMON WAS A LINGUISTIC** shape-shifter whose level of German proficiency changed according to the occasion and who was very aware of the sort of scrutiny to which his German was subjected, especially from German Jews. Indeed, one of the most famous scenes in the *Autobiography* involves Maimon recounting how upon reaching Berlin for the first time, his broken speech, unpolished manners, and wild gesticulations resulted in his cutting a bizarre figure, like a "starling" that "has learned to say a few words." What breathes out of Maimon's evocation of the scene isn't so much resentment as an air of superiority and passive-aggressive delight. Having slyly alluded to Aristotle's definition of man (i.e., the "talking animal"), Maimon tells of how he, the underdog, bested Markus Herz, his cultivated and thoroughly stunned Jewish partner in debate. For Maimon himself, though, the outcome should not have been surprising. While his outsider status caused him no small measure of hardship, and while the *Autobiography* frequently ridicules the Eastern European Jewish culture into which its author was born, Maimon was also critical of the Jewish acculturation he encountered in Berlin, seeing it as intellectually limiting. It may be in part for this reason that there can be something mocking in Maimon's use of German colloquialisms and formal expressions. Language was the key vehicle of acculturation, and Maimon's, as Hannah Arendt suggested, was a pariah's acculturation. One could even say that it has elements of what other theorists would call colonial mimicry.

In the translation, I have tried to convey this. I have also tried to avoid the great temptation that attends retranslation. Or, more specifically, I have tried to avoid the temptation that attends retranslation when, as is the case here, a key text has been translated just once and without as much fidelity as one might reasonably hope for: to write in reaction to the existing translation. Whether I have succeeded, or to what degree, is of course for readers to judge.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## CHAPTER 18: LIFE AS A TUTOR

**MY FIRST JOB** as a family tutor was an hour away from where I was living at the time. I worked for the miserable farmer I., in the even more miserable town of P., for a salary of five Polish thalers. The poverty and ignorance of the population were indescribable, as was the crudeness of its lifestyle. The farmer was a man of about fifty, whose whole face was grown over with hair ending in a thick, dirty, coal-black beard. His speech was a kind of muttering, comprehensible only to the farmers with whom he had dealings every day. He not only spoke no Hebrew, but also not a word of Yiddish; he could only speak a Russian dialect, the common language of farmers in the region. Add to this scene a wife and child cut from the same cloth and also his home, which was a sooty shack, blackened inside and out, with no chimney. Instead there was just a small opening in the ceiling that served as a smoke vent. The hole was carefully closed as soon as the fire was extinguished, so that the heat wouldn't escape.

The windows were narrow strips of pinewood laid over each other crosswise and covered with paper. The dwelling had one space: living room, drinking room, dining room, study, and bedroom all in one. Imagine, as well, that it was kept very hot, and that the wind and the dampness—ever-present in winter—would send the smoke back into the room, filling it with fumes to the point of asphyxiation. Blackened laundry and various filthy articles of clothing are hanging from rods placed along the length of the room, so that the vermin suffocate from all the smoke. Over here sausages have been strung up to dry, their fat steadily dripping down onto people's heads. Over there are tubs of bitter cabbage and red beets (the staple of the Lithuanian diet). In a corner, the jugs filled with drinking water stand next to the dirty water. Dough is being kneaded, the cooking and baking are being done, the cow being milked, etc.

In this splendid dwelling, farmers would sit on the bare floor—you wouldn't want to sit any higher if you didn't want to die of smoke inhalation—and drink brandy and make a racket, while the people doing housework would sit in a corner. I would sit behind the oven with my dirty, half-naked students, translating an old and tattered Hebrew Bible into Russian-Jewish dialect. Taken together, they made up the most magnificent group in the world. It deserved to be drawn by a Hogarth, sung by a Buttler.

My readers can easily imagine how terrible this place was for me. Brandy was the only means available to help me forget my troubles. On top of all else, the Russians—who were rampaging through Prince R.'s lands at the time with an almost unimaginable brutality—had a regiment stationed in the village and neighboring areas. The house was constantly full of drunken Russians engaging in every possible act of excess. They smashed tables and benches, threw glasses and bottles at the maids' and housekeepers' heads, etc.

To cite a single example, a Russian was stationed as a guard in the house where I was working; he was charged with making sure that the house wasn't plundered. One time, he came home very drunk and demanded something to eat. He was given a bowl of millet that had butter mixed into it. He pushed the bowl away and shouted: It needs more butter. A large container full of butter was brought. He shouted: Bring a second bowl of food. Another bowl was brought immediately, whereupon he dumped all the butter into the bowl and then demanded brandy. He was given a whole bottle, which he emptied into his food. Next, he called for large quantities of milk, pepper, salt, and tobacco, which he dumped in and began to devour. After he had eaten several spoonfuls, he started swinging his fists wildly. He grabbed the innkeeper's beard and repeatedly smashed his fist into the innkeeper's face, causing blood to gush out of the man's mouth. After that, the Russian poured his marvelous mush down the innkeeper's throat and raged on until he was overcome by his drunkenness, at which point he collapsed to the ground in a stupor.

Such scenes were common all over Poland. Whenever the Russian army passed through a place, they took a guide, whom they kept until the next town. Instead of having the mayor or a local magistrate choose one, they tended to grab the first person they saw. Young or old, male or female, sick or healthy—it didn't matter, since they already knew the way from their special maps and were simply looking for another chance to brutalize people. If the person they took didn't know the right way, they wouldn't let themselves be steered off course. But they would beat the poor *guide* until he or she was half dead, *just for not knowing the right way*!

**I, TOO, WAS ONCE** snatched up to be a guide. Even though I didn't know the right way, I managed to guess what it was. Thus I arrived at the correct place feeling fortunate, having been punched and elbowed in the ribs many times, and also given the warning that if I led the soldiers off course they would skin me alive (something the Russians were capable of).

All the other jobs I had as a family tutor were more or less the same.

During one of them, a remarkable psychological event took place, with me as its protagonist. I will describe what happened when I reach the right point in my story. But an event of the same kind—which occurred at a different time, and which I merely witnessed—should be recounted here.

The tutor in the neighboring village was a sleepwalker. He rose one night and went to the churchyard with a volume of Jewish ritual laws in his hand. After spending a while there, he returned to his bed. The next morning, he woke up remembering nothing about what had taken place during the night. He went over to the chest where he always kept the volumes locked up, with the intention of getting out the first part, the *Orach chayim* (The way

to life), which he read every morning. To his astonishment, only three of the four parts, bound as separate volumes, were there, the missing part being the *Jore deah* (Teacher of wisdom): All four had been locked safely in the chest.

Because he was aware of his condition, he looked for the missing part everywhere, until he finally searched the churchyard and found the *Jore deah* opened to the chapter *Hilchoth Eweloth* (Laws of mourning). He saw this as a bad omen, and he went home deeply disquieted. When asked why, he related what had happened, adding: "God only knows how my poor mother is doing!" He asked his employer for a horse and permission to ride to the next town, where his mother lived, so that he could find out how she was. To reach the town, he had to pass through the place where I was working as a tutor. When I saw him riding in a state of dismay—he wouldn't dismount even for a short time—I asked him what was wrong. It was then that I heard the story I have just described.

I was struck not so much by the particular circumstances of the incident as by the general phenomenon of sleepwalking, which I hadn't known about. The other tutor assured me, however, that sleepwalking is common, and that one shouldn't necessarily attach a deeper meaning to it. Only the episode with the *Hilcoth Eweloth* chapter of the *Jore deah* had filled him with foreboding, he said. He rode off, and when he got to his mother's house, he found her sitting at her loom.

She asked him why he had come. He said that he hadn't seen her in a while and simply wanted to visit. After resting a while, he rode back without incident. But he remained uneasy and could not stop thinking about the *Jore deah, Hilcoth Eweloth*. Three days later, there was a fire in the town where his mother lived, and the poor woman died in the blaze. When the sleepwalker heard about the fire, he cried out in anguish over her horrible death, then rode straight to the town to see what he had foreseen. □

This article is derived from spring 2018 fellow Paul Reitter's forthcoming translation of *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon*, to be published by Princeton University Press in spring 2018.


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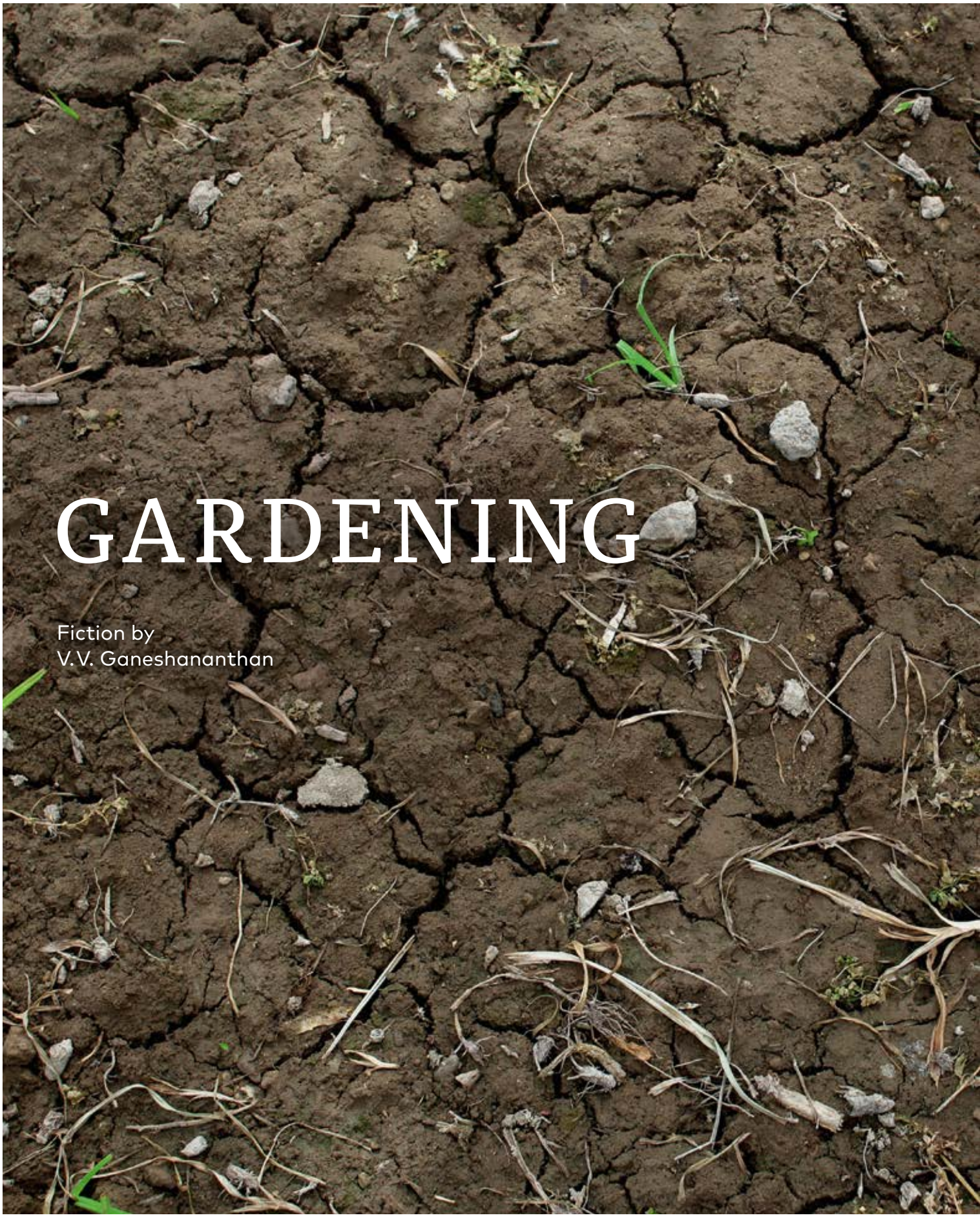

# GARDENING

Fiction by
V. V. Ganeshananthan

Nooriyah Ali, *Crack Me Up*, 2015. Courtesy tookapic.com

The boy in the rough-grown garden near the well, running after the vanishing snake, stumbles over the bone instead, and his first instinct is to tell his older sister, who always knows more than him and is kind enough to share her knowledge, who knows who to tell and when to keep quiet. The rules are the rules are the rules—meant to be broken, meant to be ignored, meant to be a mosquito net of protection over some other, secret system, he is beginning to learn.

He could tell her, and that would be one system of rules. Or, he could step to the left and keep going and never say a word, and that would be another. He could tamp soil down over the exposed curve that isn't a twig and isn't a fallen rake and isn't a stone. He could keep following the snake and singing the snake-song he has just now composed, but he has paused for too long, and now the snake is gone around the bend, and his toe has already discovered this undeniable obstacle, the edge of which he recognizes as part of the same scaffolding that holds his own head together. He has seen the bones of a fish and the bones of a dog but not the bones of a person, and yet, he is certain, this is a human skull, at the edge of the land that belongs to the well near the house that is now his family's home again.

They have returned here after some years away, the house having been occupied by the movement and also by the army, so it is not a house that he is old enough to know, although someday the job of keeping it will fall to him. Perhaps the house belonged to this garden-person while his family was gone. He pushes his toe at the dirt and scratches until he has uncovered more. He has just begun to excavate the jaw when his mother calls him from across the way, where she has drawn her bucket of water and handed it to his sister. They don't think anything of him playing in the sand, which has always been his habit. As he gets up, he tries to catch his sister's eye, but she does not see his questioning look.

Come, his mother says, and as the two women walk across his path his sister reaches out for his hand, and he walks away from the head in the dirt without so much as a backwards glance because although he would gladly ask his sister what to do, he does not want his mother to see what he has found. At least not yet. Years from now, he will recognize this as the first time he truly lied to her. His omissions before this were childish, unimportant ones: the extra rice gone from the pot, the spoon liberated to become a childish cricket bat. This lie, a lie with good intentions, is different.

That night they eat rice and vegetables and his mother and sister talk about eating chicken. His sister, seven years older than him, talks about how she likes to suck the marrow from the bones. There are different words for different kinds of bones—he recalls his mother chiding him to be careful not to choke on the small fish ones—and fumbling, he asks if there is a special way to name the bones of the human head.

His sister looks at him strangely. The human head? she asks.

My head, he says, tapping it.

Are you going to be a doctor? his mother asks laughingly.

He hadn't thought of such a thing. Yes, he says, smiling, and her smile gets bigger. Why not, he says, and it gets smaller again. Through the closing door of her contracting mouth he sees that she knows something about his future.

The next day, when they return to the well, a stray dog is licking at the skull and he has to shoo it away. The flat, damaged top of the head is tongue-wiped clean and pretty. He begins again: the jaw, the neck, a few fingers rising out of the dirt in the same fashion that he sometimes sees trees reach out of lagoons after rain. He puts his own fingers next to these fingers and both sets are the same size. A child, then, perhaps one about his own age.

Because he doesn't hear his sister calling, she comes up behind him and catches hold of his wrist. What are you doing? she asks. He stands up quickly between the skull and his sister, but she yanks him forward. Come, she demands, and then her jaw falls as she sees his discovery. Aiyooo, she says softly, drawing it out. Come away from that, thambi. Amma won't like for you to touch that. Come away! When did you find this?

He admits everything as though he is the one who has put the skeleton there. Should we tell Amma?

It should have been plain to him before, he sees now—when someone is hurt, you tell your mother—but his sister looks uncertain and troubled. She retrieves a fallen branch from a nearby palm. Laying it over the skull gently, she lets the leaves drape over the brow like hair. Come away, she says.

Later that night, in the room they share, they lie hot and restless. He can hear her shifting back and forth. Should we tell Amma? he asks again. He thinks the answer is no, but he wants to know why. He isn't old enough to know why, he guesses. Maybe it is someone from their family, or maybe it is someone from the army, or maybe it is someone from the movement, or maybe someone from the movement or the army put that person there. He doesn't know what the other possibilities are. He is about to ask her when she turns over in the dark and turns away from him so that she faces the wall. He flickers his torch at her, playing the dim light on the wall above her head.

Don't, she says, and when he asks why, she doesn't answer.

The next day, he is resolved to tell his mother, but his sister offers to go to the well by herself, so that their mother can pay a visit to an old neighbor. And when he goes to walk with his sister, she is already gone. Ahead of him and longer-legged, she has beaten him to the spot. Go, she instructs him gruffly when she sees him. She kneels in the dirt, her old skirt's black fogged with dust. He refuses, sticking to her side. She is bigger and stronger than him, and digs furiously. She huffs as the breeze blows grime back off the skeleton into her face. Why has she stolen his discovery? She is already at the shoulder, the elbows, the collarbone. Was he so far behind? A ribcage grows from the ground like a bush.

What are you doing? he cries.

We have to move it, she says, a fearful determination on her face. Do you know what happens if someone sees this? They could take our house again.

Who?

But she doesn't answer.

When they returned to the house, which was new to him but familiar to his mother and to his sister, a soldier came to check on them and to offer help. His mother refused. Them, she hissed later. Them!

The soldier had smiled at him, and he had not been able to help smiling back, although he saw the man's gun resting on his skinny shoulder. Don't smile at soldiers, his sister told him after, and then added, or, you should smile, but not too much. Which was it? he wondered. What do they want? he asked. We don't know, his sister said. You or me or Amma or the house, or nothing. We never know. We just wait to see what they will do.

What happens if someone sees this? he asks again now, looking at the bones.

I don't know, his sister says, and looks up and meets his eyes. Soldiers might come here. They might dig. They might say the movement did it. They might even ask us to leave again so that they can investigate.

What if, what if the body belongs to someone we know, he asks his sister.

It might, his sister said sharply. Would you go? Play somewhere else?

Instead he comes around the curve of her arm and starts digging beside her.

Where are we going to put it?

She puts her hand, like a soft, muddy paw, on his arm, and for a second they are both stopped in the dirt. We can burn it, she says softly, and when he looks over, there are tears in her eyes. She is remembering their father probably, his pyre burning. He doesn't remember their father. Their mother is all the boy has ever known. The only law he wants to follow.

You don't want to tell her, he says.

His sister is weeping now, but still working at the body, the little limbs so like his own. She has moved the palm branch to a pile of small sticks. Rolled up pieces of newspaper underneath. It's the beginning of a fire, he sees.

She knows, his sister says finally. She knows. I told her. Go back to the house. She asked me to burn it. □

# "THEY, THE PEOPLE"

## Overlooking the populist complaint

by Dilip Gaonkar

First, it has been called a parasite: it feeds on its host, democracy—especially liberal democracy, the normative default mode of being democratic today. The Italian political scientist Nadia Urbinati has described it as a pathology, a perversion that disfigures liberal democracy, a disease for which there is no cure. This is because it pays no heed to liberal constitutional values: the rule of law, separation of powers, and minority rights. It is impatient with liberal institutions and procedures; it prefers acclamation to deliberation. It is deeply suspicious of the representative system that engenders a gap between the elected and the electors, the governors and the governed. It sees this gap as the mechanism that corrupts the ruling elite, the power elite, and makes them indifferent towards the "common people" and the common good. It wants to bridge this gap with a transformative leader who would embody the will of the people, the "real people." It longs for the unity of one people, of the sons and daughters of the soil. Hence, its rhetoric is moralistic, exclusionary, and anti-pluralist.

Second, it has been cast as a shadow (by political theorist Margaret Canovan) that accompanies democracy; more ominously, as a specter (by political theorist Benjamin Arditi) that haunts it; or, as a *pharmakon*—the poison/drug that both debilitates and cures democracy when it strays from its promise to serve the people in their three constitutive avatars—the sovereign, the common, the national. Political scientist Paul Taggart has described it as a chameleon, adept at taking on the shape and colors of the national-cultural context in which it manifests. It is so historically mutable and culturally variable, it is said to have an unresolved Cinderella complex (Isaiah Berlin)—a shoe in search of foot to fit. It is an empty shell (Yves Mény and Yves Surel), filled with shifting social content and volatile public passions dictated by a given political conjuncture. It is a "thin-centered ideology" (Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Kaltwasser) with a single core conceit: "the people," whose referent remains elusive, an empty signifier (Claude Lefort).

Finally, it is the political, not "politics as usual." It is counter-hegemonic and remains anti-institutional even when it partakes in electoral politics and aspires to seize the state. It begins with a "demand" in the name of the people against a "wrong" festering within the body politic (Ernesto Laclau). It is not directional; it is not cumulative. It has no grand narratives. It comes and goes but never fully disappears. It is agonistic. It is politics understood as rhetoric. It is politics imagined as a sensuous, performative aesthetics that makes the "missing people" visible, the "silent people" audible (Jacques Rancière). It is an unwieldy repertoire of democratic forms, styles, rituals, and practices to hail and to constitute the people defiantly in the face of the paradox of self-authorization (Jason Frank), the paradox of constitution making (Carl Schmitt), the paradox of the peoplehood as such.

Such are the mystifying formulations and characterizations of populism, especially of the resurgent "new populisms," offered by some of the leading political theorists of our time. Alas, despite their variety, all of these orientations tend to understate a major concern: the social question—the actual widening wealth and income

inequality between the elites and the masses, especially those whom imagine themselves to be the hardworking and patriotic middle-class. And who might they be? For, unlike liberals, socialists, or conservatives, populists today rarely self-identify as "populists." Hence, "populism" and "populists" are designations bequeathed by their political opponents, liberal critics, sociological analysts, and historical interpreters. The below adumbrates some of the durable tenets and origins of these "new populisms," and a what its critics neglect.

Since populism is said to be chameleon-like, the critical discourses that analyze populist movements tend to be highly situated. Currently, one speaks of "new populisms" rather than populisms as such, even though such preoccupation with the latest sightings of the populist specter narrows our historical understanding. The newest manifestations are obviously Brexit and the 2016 US Presidential election campaigns of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. But the temporal frame of "new populisms" is, of course, somewhat wider. In Europe, especially in the economically advanced and democratically mature countries, anxieties about resurgent populisms have been palpable since the beginning of this millennium. There is an extensive scholarly literature on movements mobilized by ultra-right ethno-nationalist groups and parties that pivot on opposing market globalization driven by new technologies, financialization, and liberal immigration policies, movements led by figures like Jean-Marie Le Pen and his daughter, Marine (of FN), in France; the late Pim Fortuyn (of now-defunct PFL), in the Netherlands; the late Jörg Haider (of FPÖ), in Austria; and Nigel Farage (of UKIP), of the Brexit campaign. The list can be extended to include anti-globalization and anti-austerity protest movements from the Left, such as those initiated by the Indignados, in Spain, which has given rise to a new political party, Podemos, partly led by Pablo Iglesias Turrión, and to the now-ruling Syriza party in Greece, led by Alexis Tsipras. There are also assorted hybrid formations like Italy's Five Star Movement started by Beppe Grillo, a comedian and blogger.

The shared temporal horizon for these new populisms, both from the Right and the Left, is the current phase of globalization and its discontents, popularly imagined as beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989. Their resurgence is directly linked to how globalization has transformed the political and cultural landscape in advanced democratic societies in Europe and the United States, and how it has made many people on the Right feel, to borrow a phrase from sociologist Arlie Hochschild, like "strangers in their own land," while many others on the Left feel like a new class of "precariats," spawned and ignored by the neoliberal gospel of global free-market and nation-centric governmentality.

The populist complaint has remained remarkably unchanged despite its varied historical manifestations. To begin with, the social question today, while rooted in growing economic inequality, has additional cultural, political, and affective ramifications. Declining income has been compounded by deeply felt status anxiety, especially among white men, which is often accompanied by racist, ethno-national, patriarchal, and hetero-normative rhetoric. Finally, there is a pervasive sense of powerlessness, the loss of political agency and citizen efficacy, for many living in complex Western societies dominated by high finance, smart technology, and expert knowledge. Anger and resentments are palpable. They are directed not only at minorities and immigrants who are allegedly "cutting the line" and "stealing the jobs," but also at ruling elites, with their cosmopolitan tastes and technocratic mindset, and who seem indifferent to the plight of, to borrow Paul Taggart's phrase, the "people of the heartland."

Even though populism is said to be chameleon-like, rhetorically adept at adjusting to variable sets of sociohistorical exigencies, its ideational content can be simply stated with a few interlocking propositions. First, the invocation of the doctrine of popular sovereignty: people are the sole source of political authority and legitimacy in a democracy. The rationale for the existence of any polity, especially one democratically elected, is to serve the people as a whole by promoting the common good and collective welfare. Second, the current government and the ruling elites have failed over an extended period of time to discharge their duty. Instead, they have subverted the democratic system itself, including the constitution, to promote their own class interests,

**"Populism" and "populists" are designations bequeathed by their political opponents, liberal critics, sociological analysts, and historical interpreters.**

at the expense of the general public interest. Third, it is time to take the government back from the conniving elites and to restore the primacy of the people. The power of the elites, to the extent it is not eliminable, should be severely curbed and carefully monitored.

The populist complaint is thus decidedly anti-elite, even though most of its demagogic leaders come from the elites, as has been the case since the time of the Roman Tribunes. There are two complementary aspects to this anti-elitism: the generic and the sociohistorical. Generically, populists harbor an abiding suspicion that a representative democracy in a complex modern society has inexorable oligarchic tendencies. It serves the elites, protecting their privileges and property before attending to the needs and demands of the common people. Further, these oligarchic tendencies become acute and highly visible in periods of major

socioeconomic transition and transformation, as is the case today under the long, unfolding shadow of capitalist globalization. Predictably, the new populists of every ilk and persuasion stand opposed to the globalization endorsed and promoted by the ruling elites. They dismiss pro-globalization arguments that promise enhanced prosperity via growth and enlarged freedom via mobility and accessibility as a self-serving hoax perpetrated by the elites. They don't exactly deny that there has been massive worldwide growth in productivity and services. But, because the dividends from

**Predictably, the new populists of every ilk and persuasion stand opposed to the globalization endorsed and promoted by the ruling elites.**

that growth have been distributed so unevenly, the populists don't have to resort to their typical hyperbolic, sometimes ugly, rhetoric to make their case against the self-aggrandizing elites.

In the last instance, the rationale for the populist complaint, how it is framed and reframed at a given time and place, rests on the intensity of the social question and how the elites are addressing or evading that question. Populism is a reliable and indispensable mechanism for curbing and regulating the power of the elites, a mechanism looked upon favorably by some classical Republican thinkers like Machiavelli and Jefferson. The latter famously said that the well-being of a republic depends on periodic revolutionary outbursts by the people to control the elites: "What country can preserve its liberties," Jefferson wrote to William Stephens Smith, from Paris, in 1787, "if the rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance?"

No political theorist writing about the new populisms can avoid the social question. But, often enough, the focus of much contemporary analysis shifts from the sociohistorical contexts that spawn these movements to a critique of their rhetoric: what populists, especially their demagogic leaders, say and do. The shadow/specter thesis is intrigued with mapping the unresolvable tensions between the promise of popular sovereignty and the functioning of a representative system. The political-agonistic thesis takes the social question as its starting point, but quickly leaves it behind to theorize what it takes to be the "political," the quintessential act of making people visible and audible, of which populism is a paradigmatic vehicle. In both cases, the social question—a thoroughgoing analysis of the underlying factors that give rise to populism—fades into the background, and the critic is held captive to the nasty oratory he is somehow satisfied to deconstruct as a disfiguration of the democratic endeavor. In so doing, the social question that initiates and propels populist movements on a recurrent basis is both acknowledged and ignored.

To be sure, the social question, whether conceived narrowly, in terms of widening social inequality, or broadly, in terms of the rapid unraveling of the existing order of social stratification, is very much at the forefront of macroeconomics, sociology and the social sciences generally. Thomas Picketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013) unleashed a massive cross-disciplinary discussion of wealth and inequality in academia, which was quickly picked up and amplified in policy circles and in the public sphere—and, of course, all over social media. But such amplification can be reductive: the political slogan used during the Occupy movement, "We are the 99 percent," gives a distorted picture of elite formations: they are far greater than one percent and their composition is much more varied.

Populism and the social question have had parallel careers since the near-universal acceptance of the doctrine of popular sovereignty, in the aftermath of the great late-eighteenth-century revolutions. Populist movements, whether as embryonic eruptions or as full-fledged political campaigns, rarely materialize in the absence of serious socioeconomic upheaval, resulting in unmistakable duress for a sizeable portion of the people. Lawrence Goodwyn's masterful history of the agrarian revolt in the United States during 1880s and 1890s, *The Populist Moment* (1978), unequivocally establishes this causal link, which has been reiterated in many other historical and sociological studies of populisms of the past. What constitutes a state of socioeconomic duress might vary significantly across time and place, especially in contemporary affluent Western societies, which are witnessing a resurgence of populisms in their midsts.

Political theory cannot contribute much to our understanding of new populisms if it remains content to simply disclose and deconstruct what we already know about populism: its ideational thinness, its normative emptiness, and the variability of its social contents. Political theory must instead give an account of the structural tensions inherent in representative democracy, the inescapable tension between the elite and the masses—not simply in terms of disciplining the volatility of the latter with constitutional mechanisms (as proposed by James Madison in *The Federalist Papers*), but in curbing relentless encroachments by the former of what was once deemed common, an encroachment permitted by law, facilitated by governmetality, and encouraged by markets. In an age when elites have inured themselves to critique, often under the alibi of meritocracy, we are in urgent need of a theory of elite formations and their formidable powers. □

# BAD NEWS

## Thoughts on a fragmented media

by Jill Abramson

In his first book, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology,* published in 1961, the German-American historian Fritz Stern stressed the importance of what he called a new type of "cultural malcontent," which brought "the intrusion into politics of essentially unpolitical grievances." How prescient he was, considering what would happen on the night of the 2016 Presidential election.

Stern focused on the role of intellectuals in creating the climate and framework for totalitarianism. But today, the new technologies of the internet—which had such promise to connect the world, and create common bonds and understanding—are more the culprit fueling extremism and polarizing the electorate. The advent of so-called fake news is a symptom of this polarization, where common agreement over what constitutes a verified fact has been lost, and people who want to exploit the extremes or simply make money off of it, manufacture false news stories. Explosive headlines make these fake stories go viral—shared en masse by people with a propensity to believe the ridiculous if it conforms to their particular political bias.

Most of the news junkies gravitate toward the ends of the political spectrum. Liberal America turns to CNN, MSNBC, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post,* and the *Guardian*. The

Right turns to Fox News, the Daily Caller, and Breitbart, a conservative news site that was relatively unknown until the last election and was headed by Trump adviser Steve Bannon, one of the leaders of the American nationalist right-wing. During the election, Fox and Breitbart saw their audiences explode because of their singular focus on Donald Trump.

Though neither side can understand the views of the other, they do have something in common: their interest in, or commensurate horror over, how Donald Trump is making the news media a fortune. Over the span of the ten days that saw FBI director James Comey fired, and the appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller, the *Times* and *Washington Post* both published investigative scoops that drew millions of clicks, breaking all recent records. Magazines that put Trump on the cover fly off the shelves. This gets the attention of advertisers, who then spend more of their money on news.

For better or worse, "Trump equals profits" is the powerful equation that took hold during the campaign. The head of one of the US broadcasting networks was quoted as saying, "Trump may not be good for America, but he's great for CBS." As he stepped up attacks on "the failing *New York Times*," the newspaper added 308,000 new paying digital subscribers.

WHEN FRITZ STERN was writing his first book, there were only three television networks in America: NBC, CBS, and ABC. Americans got their news each night from more or less the same place. This created a common meeting place for folks in living rooms across the county, a common experience from which to draw material to debate and discuss. Television became what was then known as "the cool fire."

Today, the news media has wildly fragmented. The audience for broadcast news has fallen dramatically, cable does not have nearly as many viewers as it once had, and a lot of people have turned off the news altogether. In print, local newspapers have gone out of business, regional ones have shed both staff and quality, and the few with global reach, like the *Times*, have been battered by disappearing print-ad revenue, losses for which digital revenue does not compensate. This grim picture forced the Graham family to sell the *Post* to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, an internet billionaire. (He's been a wonderful steward so far, but there aren't many like him.)

But where have the advertising dollars gone that used to support newspapers? Primarily


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to Google and Facebook. Forty-four percent of Americans use Facebook as their main source of news, and it has very quickly become the world's biggest and hungriest news platforms. Almost every news organization wants to distribute its content to Facebook's 1.28 billion daily users.

But when articles unfurl, chosen by an algorithm that shows you only news you will like, readers are no longer getting their news from a single, trusted outlet where human editors choose the hierarchy of what's important. This feeds a syndrome called "the filter bubble" where news is shared on social media by friends, family, and other like-minded sources only. Some say this is democratizing the news and putting choices in the hands of readers. But it also means that most citizens paying attention to news are getting only a very narrow band of information that conforms with their pre-established thinking. This means the common ground where people once tried to understand differing points of view is drastically shrinking. The constriction in the number of quality news organizations has fueled fragmentation of what's left of the industry.

The term "filter bubble" stems from the title of a book written by Eli Pariser, a founder of MoveOn.org and the website Upworthy.com. It concerns how personalization features, especially on Google and Facebook, use algorithms that feed users only the information they want to see based on personal information about the user, such as what they like to read and how they vote. This means many people only see or get information from news sources or people who see the world like they do. A person who believes that Barack Obama was born in Kenya may never see the news that his birth certificate says otherwise. Someone involved in MoveOn.org will never be exposed to the conservative arguments against immigration or tax reform. This not only stokes a polarized population, it means people can get false information and see it validated time and time again by like-minded sources.

More broadly, this means society no longer operates according to a common or agreed upon set of facts. In the era of social media, everyone can live with the illusion that the world sees things his way because one's personalized pipe of inputs makes it seem that way.

At a time when a fragmented populace distrusts the legitimacy of all authority and institutions, especially the news media, what can be done?

For one, quality news can survive and prosper if readers pay for it. Reader-based revenue is a far better business model than advertising. The "news must be free" dogma of the early internet must be overruled. The success of the *New York Times'* digital subscription plan is proof that if you create a unique, superb news product, with stories that can't be found everywhere else, people will indeed pay for it.

Second, because commodity news isn't valuable, news organizations should stop duplicating daily news coverage, crowding into the same government press conferences to record the same, canned statements. Instead, use and fund wire services; focus on original reporting; collaborate more. Some competition is healthy, but the best news organizations can work together on difficult investigations. (Imagine if the *Times* and the *Post* were working together to get to the bottom of how Russia interfered in the 2016 election.) Have town hall meetings where readers can talk directly to editors and reporters so that journalists don't miss underlying trends in the country, like the rage that fueled the election of Donald Trump. Connect with readers via social media.

In the political sphere, the government must be reformed, starting with outlawing the secret dark money that's almost succeeded in creating Republican, right-wing hegemony in Washington, DC. Lawmakers should be forced to live in the capital so that they actually see and talk to each other in order to reestablish some measure of comity between the two parties. There should also be required town hall meetings so that lawmakers hear real constituents, not only their wealthy contributors. Voting should be allowed on weekends to enhance turnout. Restrictive voter laws must be overturned. Gerrymandering must be outlawed.

Finally, technology. The big social platforms like Facebook and Google are the biggest publishers the world has ever known. They are not neutral platforms. They must police fake news and violent content, which they are beginning to do. They should be required to give financial support to the news organizations that support them. They have sucked billions in ad revenue away from all news organizations, so perhaps it's time to pay them back. If the big tech companies don't show better citizenship and support for the institutions necessary for democracy to survive, it might be wise to have them broken up, much in the way muckrakers forced the breakup of Standard Oil in the last century.

THESE IDEAS ARE no panacea. But positive change does usually come after times of trouble—something Fritz Stern knew all too well. He had lived through five of Germany's worst years and then lived the best kind of American life. Although one of his masterworks is entitled *The Politics of Cultural Despair,* he himself was no pessimist. He wrote searchingly about Germany's darkest moments and the cultural and intellectual poisons that caused a catastrophic political sickness, but he did more than almost anyone to promote American-German reconciliation. Fritz would want us to suggest some things we can do to improve political and cultural life, and so we should. □

This essay is derived from the 2017 Fritz Stern Lecture, "Protecting and Preserving Quality News and Information," delivered by the author on May 23, 2017, at the American Academy in Berlin.

# THE HOLBROOKE FORUM

Questions about the future of political order were at the heart of projects and events hosted by the **Richard C. Holbrooke Forum** over the past year. The Forum's flagship Global Triangle Project took off with a one-day seminar at the Academy on May 5. Comprised of two dozen international participants from academia, business, and foreign policy, the workshop examined how the expanding world of digitalization is altering traditional geopolitical balances of power, notions of statecraft, and standards of legitimacy. Participants included representaives from the newspaper *China Daily*, the Mercator Institute for China Studies, Chatham House, Nokia Networks, Stanford and Fudan universities, the Council on Foreign Relations, and PricewaterhouseCoopers. In a wideranging discussion, led by former US ambassador to Germany and Academy co-secretary **John Kornblum**, key topics centered around the movement of China into global digital network-building, the global supply chain, blockchain technologies, cloud-optimized connectivity, IT sovereignty, and concerns about privacy in the liberal West.

Subsequent to this robust discussion, the project was renamed the Digital Diplomacy Project, and it will continue in autumn 2017 with a high-level seminar in Talinn, Estonia, one of the most highly digitalized countries in the world and which sits on one of the world's most visible geopolitical fault lines, between Russia and the West. Among the outcomes of this workshop were several articles, one of which is featured here, by **Eberhard Sandschneider**, of Freie Universität Berlin, who discusses the major trends that will shape the future of international affairs.

On the eve of Donald Trump's January 20 inauguration, the Holbrooke Forum hosted a conversation entitled "Post-Atlantic Europe," with **Vali Nasr**, dean of the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, and **Thomas Bagger**, then-head of policy planning at the German foreign office. The question was what strategic impact the new president would have on transatlantic relations and European security. This issue is ultimately one of survival for Europeans, who rely on the US to guarantee their security in the Old World and to uphold a global, rules-based order they themselves are unable to keep intact. What if the US security guarantee, administered through NATO, becomes obsolete? Panelists were cautiously optimistic that Trump would not question such a basic tenet of US foreign policy, but a degree of uncertainty remained.

Similar questions were analyzed by **Stephen Hadley**, former US national security advisor, and the Holbrooke Forum's Distinguished Visitor in June. In a conversation with **Christoph Heusgen**, chancellor Angela Merkel's principal foreign-policy advisor, Hadley gave important insights into American politics under the new administration. Excerpts of their conversation can be found in the pages ahead.

– Jan Techau

# Drivers of Global Change

What happens when digital disruption meets geopolitics?

by Eberhard Sandschneider

**IN RECENT YEARS,** black swans seem to be everywhere. No wonder, then, that in the face of accumulating crises and unexpected shocks, the debate about the state of global affairs has been gaining momentum. Uncertainty and unpredictability seem to prevail. Asymmetric security risks, conflicting economic interests, growing social cleavages, and the unpredictable effects of digitalization add up and require new approaches to managing global risks.

The current world order is falling apart, and it is challenging political and business leaders alike. This paper offers a perspective on the core drivers of these developments. It argues that the post-1989 world order is in an interstitial stage of transformation; it is characterized by the rise of new powers and the relative decline of established powers. Perhaps more importantly, these developments are driven, inspired, and accelerated by two major trends in change: geopolitical ambitions and digital disruption. That we must deal both of these trends against the background of accelerating complexity is clear. Though the solutions are less obvious, they will be decisive factors in the future global order that is still taking shape.

Moreover, the developments arising at the crossroads of both of these trends will be decisive for the future performance of all political systems—democracies and autocracies alike. Nothing is given: neither the survival of democracies, nor the persistence of autocracies. Both democracies and autocracies still operate on the basis of enduring political structures, decades old and unable to absorb the exponential increase in technological change. Creating and maintaining legitimacy, as a requisite of political stability, provides a fundamental challenge to both types of political systems. What at first may seem Darwinistic translates into numerous fundamental challenges to be discussed below.

First, we will look at major aspects of the world order presently undergoing a transformation. After a brief analysis of both geopolitical trends and expected impacts of disruptive technologies, we turn to the core question of what happens when geopolitics meets digital disruption.

## TOWARDS A POLYCENTRIC WORLD ORDER

Ever since the end of the Cold War, global power structures have encountered major changes. In 1989, the third breakdown of global order in the twentieth century (after 1918 and 1945) did not lead to a major restructuring of global institutions. The combination of democracy and market economy seemed to form the conceptual basis for economic and political success well into the twenty-first century. Nearly three decades later, things have turned out to be fundamentally different. Contrary to the high-flying hopes of 1989/90, about the beginning of an era of Western supremacy after the defeat of communism, the vulnerability of Western democracies has been continuously rising, leading to insecurity, growing economic uncertainty, intensifying social unrest, and a potential domestic destabilization in many countries hitherto regarded as unshakable.

Today, we realize that the world order we believed victorious in the Cold War has been subtly dissolving over the last two and half decades. This process has reached a point where we must acknowledge that yesterday's bipolar order is being replaced by a world order many regard as multipolar. Indeed, multipolarity is often praised as the solution to pending difficulties of military, economic, and political cooperation. Things may, however, turn out to be different—and much more dangerous.

It is not only the usual suspects—the US, China, Europe, and perhaps Russia—that might form the backbone of a future stable world order. Many other regional powers are increasingly acquiring the capacities to irritate existing power arrangements. Asymmetry and the negative effects of globalization form the background of a transformation that, in the end, might produce a polycentric world order.

Polycentrism means that actors traditionally never counted as important players in international relations have developed the capacity to influence global relations in an unexpected and over-proportional way. Power centers thereby multiply and add to the plethora of new risks and challenges. Emerging economies form the core of these new power brokers, while disruptors like North Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and perhaps even countries like Venezuela and Qatar are further examples of this type of newly influential actor. And, of course, the traditional powerbrokers—former global or regional hegemons (such as China, Russia, the US)—are still around and unwilling to be replaced in their power positions.

The challenge lies exactly in this polycentric structure of a global and networked world. How do we manage a global order that has a dozen or more regional power centers, all in more or less open competition with one another? By definition, structures that are hegemonic, bipolar, or limited-multipolar are easier to control, and can be kept more stable at lower costs than the almost incalculable effects typical of polycentric structures. Unpredictability is not only a characteristic of Donald Trump, it also applies to the upcoming new world (dis-)order. Polycentrism is nothing to hope for; it is the problem, not the solution.

These structural changes in global politics can only be understood properly if the mutually enforcing effects of two dominating trends of our time are taken into account: developments that reinforce each other at the crossroads of geopolitics and digital disruption.

Where both trends intersect, they create a jolt to traditional thinking that will help create a new set-up of power and order in a networked world. Wherever they clash or collide, they will change the face of global politics deep into the twenty-first century.

## GEOPOLITICS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF POWER

Geopolitical thinking was a defining element of the containment policies characteristic of the Cold War period. Today, we have to face the consequences of new forms and levels of competition between global powers, which are typical of intensified geopolitical competition. Here's the most prominent example: While President Trump declares his intention to "make America great again," his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, has proclaimed the same ambition for his own country—calling it, more mildly but certainly no less decidedly, the "Chinese Dream." Both presidents underline their respective ambitions to compete for global dominance. But whereas the American president prefers to concentrate on the "US alone," seemingly negligent of major aspects of America's global interests and ambitions, his Chinese counterpart does precisely the opposite.

China's Silk Road initiative—One Belt, One Road (OBOR)—is a clear indicator of these ambitions. Interestingly, China seems to be concentrating on a Eurasian, land-based strategy to balance the US dominance of the oceans. But China also concentrates on cyber and space in order to improve its asymmetric capacities of power projection. At a closer examination, OBOR is more than just a twenty-first century version of the traditional Silk Road. Instead, it is a highly ambitious network of land and sea-based lines of connectivity that are based on infrastructure. It also entails markets, value chains, strategic partnerships, and, not least, security aspects that stretch from the Chinese Pacific coast to the European shores of the Atlantic. In other words: OBOR is China's geopolitical strategy to outmaneuver the US, the West, and any other competitor on the country's path to global leadership.

China's focus on the Eurasian landmass is just one indicator that, despite all aspects of globalization, geography still matters and competing geostrategic interests are core drivers of conflict. At the same time, the scope of OBOR's ambitions underlines the need to understand new mechanisms of power.

### "Comprehensive Power"

While many geopolitical debates still refer to "power" as traditionally defined, the effects of digitalization have a complementary effect: power is morphing into a more complex set of determinants. Though power and interests remain the major driving forces of nation states even in the twenty-first century, power currencies—the basic ingredients of the credibility and exertion of power—have been undergoing dramatic change.

Power used to flow predominantly from military capacities. Today, other factors form the basis for global impact: economic performance, innovation capacities, financial stability, market size and access, political and social stability, and digital-communication capacities. In order to grasp the geopolitical shifts of our time, the traditional understanding of power has to be extended towards a notion of "comprehensive power," formerly not regarded in a security or power perspective. This argument is augmented by the fact that communication is becoming an ever more important part of political power—both in its domestic and global effects. What traditionally used to be propaganda has morphed into media control, hacker attacks, and fake news. Indeed, communication technologies are bridging the gap between traditional power arrangements and the growing effects of digital disruption in other parts of politics and society.

## DIGITALIZATION AND THE EFFECTS OF DISRUPTION

"Digital disruption" has become one of the most favored catchphrases of our times. Driven by exponential change, nearly all aspects of human life will be directly or indirectly affected by digital developments that are at once easy to describe but difficult to assess and understand. Most experts on digital technologies agree that their impact on human development will be as decisive as the invention of language, printing, or electricity.

Beyond the individual level, policies that will be mostly and fundamentally affected by digitalized technologies run the spectrum of human life: food production and nutrition (GMO), environmental protection, energy production and storage, water supply, security, health, disaster relief, communication, learning, and, last but not least, all aspects of global, national, and local governance. In all these fields, disruption will challenge existing structures of decision-making. Permanent upgrading, sharing, filtering, and interacting in a hitherto unprecedented way will fundamentally influence the functionality of traditional political and social institutions. It is exactly here where new forms of power and their digital drivers demonstrate their explosive impact.

The debate about digital disruption is driven by an extreme amount of semantic overlap and technological uncertainty. In Silicon Valley, representatives of tech companies pretend to be able to change the world for the better—if only the world was willing to listen. Tech optimists concentrate primarily on the potential positive effects, neglecting the negative consequences any technology might lead to if misused by perpetrators of ill intent. The world is thus ever more skeptical about the loss of jobs due to robotics, the loss of human control due to artificial intelligence, and the loss of reliability due to the growing

speed of complexity, not to mention risks like terrorism and cyber-attacks, which take advantage of these new technologies. Concerns over the disrupting effects of data and algorithms are an integral part of the big hopes for a technologically improved future.

Of course, in the Schumpeterian sense, technological innovation could be a highly welcome instrument to promote economic development. Certainly, any technology today, as in the past, has both strengths and downsides. And it is exactly these downsides that are responsible for the negative effects of rogue players, protectionists, populists, and nationalists who pretend to offer simple solutions for highly complex problems and their effects.

Managing accelerating complexity thus becomes a preeminent task for political and economic actors around the world. Both geopolitical and technological changes are inspired by speed. Reaction time to crises and unforeseen events is practically zero, adding to the strain of making the right decisions at the right time. That's the big difference between the past and the present: unprecedented acceleration caused by digitalization has become the primary factor for understanding and managing global risks.

## IN NEED OF ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES

The widespread belief that politicians will be able to better foresee upcoming events with the help of digital technologies, especially big data, is also an illusion. This is one of mankind's oldest wishes: to foretell the future. Most likely, it will come to pass. While technologies may soon be able to predict individual human behavior and derive successful marketing strategies, the same expectation does not necessarily apply to global developments. Polycentrism does not permit for the prevention of unpredictable shocks.

It is understandable that foresight exercises, scenario-building workshops, and trend forecasting are very much en vogue. Finding signals in a sea of noise à la Nate Silver has become a mission for media consultants, think tanks, and intellectuals the world over. Individuals and leaders alike seek increased orientation, and spend a lot of money and energy on the desperate attempt to forecast the future so that they might make the right decision in the present. While thinking out of the box—via alternative expectations and strategies—is a permanent necessity in times of upheaval, accelerating complexity turns the future into a permanent present. Exponential developments transform possible events tomorrow into real risks and opportunities today. A reversed strategy might make more sense: instead of desperately trying to forecast future risks, a more promising strategy should be to train and strengthen present reaction-capacities, adaptability to unexpected developments, and attempts to improve sustainability and resilience.

In a world driven by accelerating complexity at the crossroads of digital disruption and geopolitics, the core ingredients to maintaining social and political order are speed, resilience, and adaptability to exponential change. Whether democracies are best prepared to meet these challenges is one of the biggest challenges of our times. Few things are certain in this respect. As the strategic thinker and technologist Banning Garrett writes, "The worlds of 2025 and 2035 are likely to be discontinuous with the present, especially as a result of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics, which will be applied to a huge variety of businesses and other technologies as AI becomes a utility and the world is wired up by the Internet of Things. These and other technologies will be hugely disruptive throughout society, from the lives of individuals to the fate of businesses, the restructuring of cities, and the activities and organization of governments."[1] Societies and governments seeking to respond effectively to these challenges will have to develop new adaptive capacities to use the positive and mitigate the negative effects of these developments.

For both democracies and autocracies, the basic rule is simply this: only change provides stability and survival. While democracies have been much better than any other type of political system to manage these challenges, there is no guarantee for the future. Caught between the Scylla of authoritarian competition and the Charybdis of popular dissatisfaction with the output performance, democracies will have to deliver convincing solutions if they want to survive in a polycentric world. Many may not like the idea, but performance and efficiency will be more important in the future than legitimacy, mass participation, and a rules-based decision-making system were in the past.

Based on these considerations, four core challenges, explained below, stand out as drivers of global change. As they originate at the crossroads of geopolitics and digital disruption, the strategies to deal with them will be decisive factors for the positioning of nation states, the survival of political systems, and framing of the upcoming world order.

**1. Competition for the rules of the game.** The competition about rules of the game (starting with trade, but also affecting security, development, climate, etc.) is gaining relevance as a direct effect of the world order's morphing towards polycentrism. China certainly is the first and foremost candidate to challenge Western values and rules. But China is not alone: Russia, India, Brazil, and many others also want to have their share of global decision-making. And none of these countries is automatically willing to accept the rules, values, and interests of the West (if the latter still exists at all). As one Brazilian diplomat put it, "If you do not give us a seat at the decision-making table, we will build our own tables." The process of alternative institution building is in full swing. The Asia Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) is just one prominent example demonstrating how China is challenging the supremacy of the West by creating institutions in competition to Western-dominated IMF

and World Bank. In the field of security cooperation, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) demonstrates a similar purpose. There is no guarantee that Western rules and values will prevail in this competition.

**2. Understanding the importance of value chains.** A second challenge rarely mentioned in this context: the management of value chains, based on free trade and open markets, will gain importance—despite President Trump—and not only in an economic but also a geopolitical perspective. In this respect, China is rapidly moving into a leading position and again OBOR may serve as the most striking example. The ultimate goal of the Belt and Road Initiative is the establishment of global value chains. This initiative attempts, as Bruno Macaes writes, "to create a set of political and institutional tools with which China can start to reorganize global value chains and stamp its imprint on the rules governing the global economy."[2] And China—as initiator and promoter of the strategic concept—is uniquely positioned to use OBOR in order to pursue its own interests. What we may see here are the first steps towards a transnational industrial policy. The competition for the best model of regional integration has already begun—without the EU even realizing it has.

**3. The need for continuous innovation.** On the micro-level, capacities of innovation will be the major driving forces of global power. Based on a new and comprehensive understanding of power, future great powers will have to live up to the requisites of innovation and technology. Access to innovative capacities will be a decisive factor for the positioning of nations, while innovation cycles are becoming shorter and shorter, again challenging the adaptability of political systems and their capacities to regulate (mostly exponential) technological progress.

**4. Seeking identity despite growing complexity.** Finally, providing orientation in an ever more complex world, based on identity, history, and culture will be a challenge for political stability and successful statecraft in all types of political systems. Here, democracies still may have advantages, but those who offer simple solutions are actively challenging the very basis of (not only) Western values: racism, nationalism, ideologies, and, last but not least, fundamentalist religions, are thus undermining the foundations of a rules-based global order.

In sum, the world will have to live with unstable structures, increasing volatility, and likely also a further decline of global, regional, and national security. The answer to managing these new global risks will not be found in a new grand strategy of whatever origin, but rather in the willingness and ability of decision-makers to pragmatically deal with risks as they arise. Pragmatism is perhaps the only answer to geopolitical upheaval and digital disruption. □

**1** Banning Garrett, *Technology's Impact on Jobs.* Manuscript, August 2016, 45.

**2** Bruno Macaes, *China's Belt and Road: Destination Europe.* Carnegie Europe, November 9, 2016.

# Trump and Transatlantic Security

*New challenges and old grievances have put the transatlantic security partnership under considerable strain in recent years. Terrorist threats, hybrid warfare, cyber security, and traditional issues such as deterrence and territorial defense dominate the agenda. At the same time, Atlanticism seems to have lost much of its political self-evidence for many observers and parts of the public since the election of President Trump. Against this backdrop, the Richard C. Holbrooke Forum brought together Stephen Hadley, former national security advisor to President George W. Bush, and Christoph Heusgen, chief foreign-policy advisor to the German chancellor, to discuss the challenges facing the transatlantic partnership today. The following is an edited excerpt from their June 1 discussion at the American Academy, "National Security at Risk: Order and Disorder in the Atlantic Space."*

**Christoph Heusgen:** When you and I worked together, back in 2005, during the second Bush administration, when one talked to someone in the White House and then to someone else in the State Department, you would more or less get the same response. It is my impression that the White House works differently now: what kind of answer you get depends on whom you talk to. Do you think this can work? How should we deal with it?

**Stephen Hadley:** The Trump administration has been in power less than four and a half months. It came in as a political insurgency and a populist movement that believed most of the policies over the last two decades were a mistake, and that the elites in the country had betrayed the American people. The current White House has a variety of power centers: there's the Bannon faction, which is the keeper of the commitments of the campaign. There's a chief-of-staff function; there's the vice president; there's the NSC; there's the National Economic Council; and then there's the family, Jared and Ivanka. Lots of different voices are speaking to this president, and he likes it; that's clearly part of his management style.

President Trump is pretty comfortable firing people when things aren't working. He went through three campaign teams. He's going to throw people out until he gets a group of people that works for him. So, with the transition for this new administration, which usually takes six or


Christoph Heusgen and Stephen Hadley. All photos: Ralph K. Penno

eight months, it is going to take a year before we really know how it is going to operate.

**Heusgen:** But while they are testing things out, what happens to transatlantic relations? Are they in danger?

**Hadley:** I read the speech President Trump gave at NATO in Brussels, which everybody said did not reaffirm the Article 5 commitment—that an attack on one is an attack on all. Well, he spoke at an event to celebrate Article 5, and NATO's invocation of Article 5 that was triggered after the 9/11 attack on the United States. So, the president's appearance there, I would have thought, was by itself an indication of his support for Article 5. The fact that he didn't say it should not raise any doubts in anybody's mind about this administration's and the American people's continued commitment to NATO and to Article 5.

But I will also say that I thought your chancellor got it right. She was committed to the transatlantic relationship and to a good relationship with the United States, but that Europe needs to do more and take more responsibility for its own future. I agree with that. I think you agree with that. Donald Trump would agree with that.

My question to you, Christoph, is this: could this be an opportunity to really refocus on the aspirations of the European Union? Recommit to it and then really take it to the people of Europe and get them to recommit to it, too? The only politician in Europe I know who could do that would be Angela Merkel, and she has a potential partner in Macron.

**Heusgen:** There are a few things we have to do on Europe. One thing is the bureaucracy of Brussels. The Brussels institutions are doing a very good job at managing the European Union. The problem is that the people in Brussels are sometimes totally detached from reality in member states.

We have to concentrate on the issues people are most concerned about, such as security at home. We have to work so that the people in Europe feel secure. Everyone believes that the Schengen Agreement, which keeps our borders open, is fantastic, but to keep them open we have to be sure that we protect our external borders. This is a project that everybody will agree to do.

Foreign and security policy is the second issue where people also say, "Yes, there's an advantage if Europe works together." This is the next project we have to work on together, and the French are very open to it.

The third is economic and monetary union. We hope that President Macron will be able to do what many presidents tried but could not achieve: reforming the French economy, the French labor market, the pension system. So if Macron succeeds in putting Germany and France again at eye-level, I think that would make it much easier to convince the Germans to say, "OK, we are ready to deepen the monetary union and have a European monetary government, or something along those lines."

**Audience member:** Let's assume all the pundits are right, and leadership of the West is turning from America to Germany. What chances of success do you give them?

**Hadley:** I think being president of the United States is one of the toughest jobs in the world, but being chancellor of Germany is right up there with it. Chancellor Merkel will have the challenge and opportunity to try and put the future of Europe on a firm foundation. To ask her to also become the leader of the free world, on top of that, is not going to happen. It's unfair to ask. I don't think the apparent American step-back is going to go to the point of abdication. I may be wrong, but I don't think it will get to the point where Angela Merkel has to lead both Europe and the free world at the same time.


**Audience member:** I'm interested in the supposed Russian strategy of meddling in elections and supporting populist movements. How should transatlantic partners deal with this?

**Hadley:** What would be a good day for Vladimir Putin? He wakes up and he learns that a fissure has opened up between the United States and Europe. He shows that the Article 5 guarantee of NATO is a paper tiger, and the EU breaks up. Russia basically signs up some sympathetic regimes in some of the central and eastern European countries and, before you know it, Russia has reestablished a sphere of influence in Central and Eastern Europe. That would be a great day for Vladimir Putin. I don't think it will happen. The United States and Europe together are taking steps to ensure that it does not happen.

Our counterparts in Russia now say Russia is an alternative to the West. Lavrov, as foreign minister, spoke about moving into a post-Western world. I think Putin really believes he is the defender of conservative orthodoxy in the face of a declining West. That means a more problematic Russia over the long term, and managing Russia is going to be a huge challenge going forward. Neither the United States nor Europe is going to be able to do that successfully on its own. We're going to have to do it together.

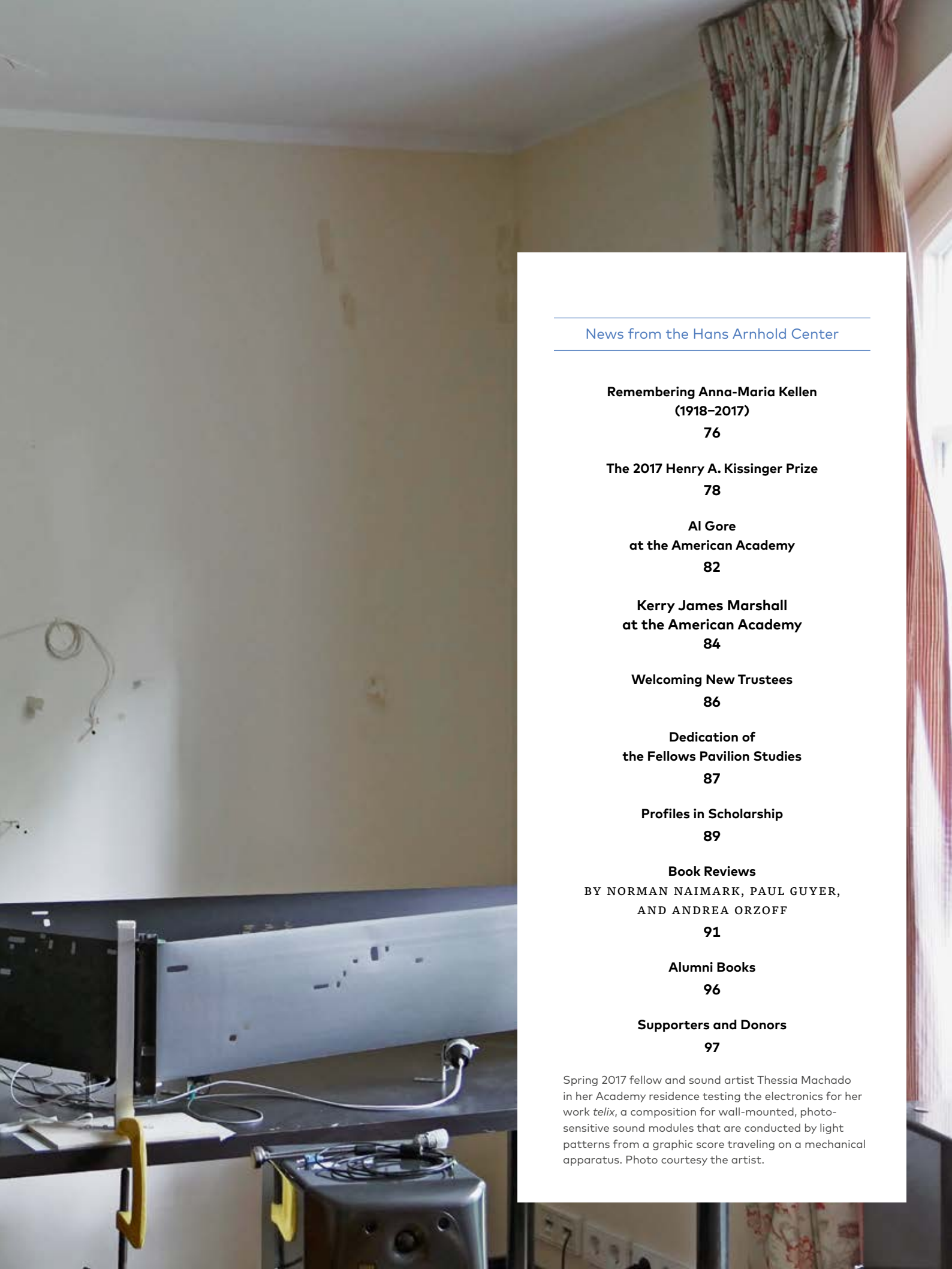
**Audience member:** But isn't the real problem that some of the new US administration is thinking the same ways Russians do, with its explicitly pro-Russia policies? Isn't that echoed in the "America first" slogan?

**Hadley:** I don't know what "America first" means, and I don't think, quite frankly, a lot of the people that use that phrase do either. Does it mean, "It's going to be American first," as in: I'm going to defend American interests? Well, what leading politician doesn't tell their people they're going to defend their country's interests—German interests or French interests? That's what we all say and what we all do.

President Trump talks about values, but then he steps away from standing up for freedom and democracy on the grounds that we don't want to impose on other people's national decisions. That's not the United States. My worry is not the "America first" slogan; my worry is what Trump narrowly considers American interests: protecting America from attack, economic growth, and creating American jobs. Well, that is a very short-term view of American interests. It's not the view of its interests that America had for the last 70 years, which was a more long-term and more enlightened view: working with our European allies to maintain a rules-based international order based on free markets, freedom, and democracy. We did that, at enormous cost, for seven decades, and I would argue it brought a period of unprecedented peace and prosperity. That's the conversation I would like to have with President Trump and the people around him. That's what I am worried is at risk. There are people around President Trump who understand that in their bones. But there are also some people around him who reject it and who talk about dismantling the international order. That's very worrisome.

That's one of the reasons it is terribly important for European leaders to come and talk with the administration, President Trump, and people at all levels. You know, these values matter, and this international system of rules, alliances, and institutions has kept the peace. One of the reasons we have disorder now is because that system is fraying; it's under attack from the new authoritarians and from transnational threats like ISIS. We need to come together and create a revised and revitalized rules-based international order. That's the conversation I think we need to be having with this new administration. □


NOTEBOOK



News from the Hans Arnhold Center


**Remembering Anna-Maria Kellen (1918–2017)**
**76**

**The 2017 Henry A. Kissinger Prize**
**78**

**Al Gore at the American Academy**
**82**

**Kerry James Marshall at the American Academy**
**84**

**Welcoming New Trustees**
**86**

**Dedication of the Fellows Pavilion Studies**
**87**

**Profiles in Scholarship**
**89**

**Book Reviews**
BY NORMAN NAIMARK, PAUL GUYER, AND ANDREA ORZOFF
**91**

**Alumni Books**
**96**

**Supporters and Donors**
**97**


Spring 2017 fellow and sound artist Thessia Machado in her Academy residence testing the electronics for her work *telix*, a composition for wall-mounted, photo-sensitive sound modules that are conducted by light patterns from a graphic score traveling on a mechanical apparatus. Photo courtesy the artist.

Photo: Annette Hornischer

# REMEMBERING ANNA-MARIA KELLEN (1918–2017)

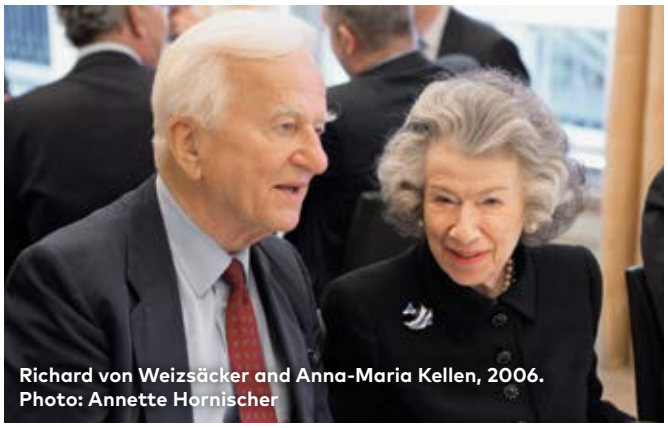
On Sunday, April 9, 2017, the American Academy in Berlin lost its founding benefactor and primary source of inspiration, **Anna-Maria Kellen**, who died in New York City, at age 98. Her enormous philanthropic support of the American Academy—housed in her childhood home—has, from the outset, been a cornerstone of this institution, its mission, and its programming, and the Academy mourns her passing. Anna-Maria Kellen is survived by her two children, Marina Kellen French and Michael M. Kellen; four grandchildren, Andrew Gundlach, Annabelle Garrett, Christopher Kellen, and Caroline Kellen; and eight great-grandchildren.

Anna-Maria Kellen (née Arnhold) was born in Berlin in 1918. She attended the Mommsen Lycée and continued her studies at the University of Lausanne, École de Louvre, and Sorbonne. Nazi Germany forced her and her family to flee in 1933, first to Paris and then to New York, in 1939, where she was reunited with her future husband, Stephen M. Kellen, whom she had met and courted in Wannsee, and who was now a banker in her father's firm, Arnhold & S. Bleichroeder. The two married in New York City in 1940.

The American Academy was founded in 1994. The Kellens became the driving force behind the transformation of Anna-Maria's childhood home into the Hans Arnhold Center. After being contacted by former US Ambassador to Germany Richard Holbrooke and Professor Fritz Stern, they immediately grasped the importance of a lasting American cultural and intellectual presence, as the last of the Berlin Brigade departed the reunified capital. The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation donated the founding gift of $3 million to refurbish the Wannsee villa, and they would remain the Academy's primary benefactors. Throughout the years, they have provided support for the Academy's programming, including funding for Anna-Maria Kellen Berlin Prize and upkeep of the villa's grounds and gardens. Anna-Maria's personal care for the Academy was also expressed in more subtle ways, from her selection of the institution's logo to her meticulous arrangement of centerpieces at Carnegie Hall fundraising dinners. Her legacy of giving continues through her daughter, Marina Kellen French, and her son, Michael M. Kellen, as well as through her grandson Andrew Gundlach, and niece, Nina von Maltzahn, all of them Academy trustees.

Anna-Maria Kellen's support of the American Academy is but one example of her enormous civic and cultural philanthropy: she was the chairman of the Third Street Music School Settlement, a regent of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and an honorary trustee of the Parsons School of Design and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. She was on the Cancer Research Institute board of trustees from 1962 to 2009, served as a member of the City of New York's Commission for Cultural Affairs from 1978 to 1988, and was also a co-chair for the New York Mayor's Award for Arts and Culture from 1983 to 1988. A fellow of the Frick Museum, Kellen also served as a member of the Director's Roundtable of the Morgan Library, The Circle of the National Gallery of Art, the Chairman's Council of the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Metropolitan Opera, and L'Association des Amis des Art Decoratifs, in Paris. In Berlin, she was known for her financial support of the Berlin Zoo, the Französisches Gymnasium (her husband's alma mater), and the Berlin Philharmonic. For her decades of philanthropic leadership, Kellen received a Spirit of the City Award from the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the Distinguished Service Medal from The New School for Social Research, and the Chevalier de l'ordre des Arts des Lettres by the French Republic. In 2009, she received the *Verdienstorden des Landes Berlin*, from then-governing mayor Klaus Wowereit. □

Anna-Maria Kellen, Sir Simon Rattle, Marina Kellen-French, John French, Carnegie Hall, 2006. Photo: Michael Dames



Richard von Weizsäcker and Anna-Maria Kellen, 2006. Photo: Annette Hornischer

Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen at the Rotes Rathaus, Berlin, 2002. Photo: Mike Minehan

Anna-Maria Kellen at the American Academy, 2006. Photo: Annette Hornischer


Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen at the dedication of the Hans Arnhold Center, 1998. Photo: Joachim Schulz

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN BERLIN MOURNS THE PASSING OF DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

**Chancellor Helmut Kohl**
*1930–2017*

**Kurt Viermetz**
*1939–2016*


Wolfgang Schäuble and Henry A. Kissinger

Academy chairman Gahl Hodges Burt

Lawrence H. Summers

All photos: Annette Hornischer

# THE 2017 HENRY A. KISSINGER PRIZE

## Honoring Wolfgang Schäuble

On the evening of June 20, 2017, the trustees of the American Academy awarded the 2017 Henry A. Kissinger Prize to Germany's federal minister of finance, **Wolfgang Schäuble**. The prize, awarded annually to a renowned figure in the field of international diplomacy, recognized Schäuble for his decisive role in fostering transatlantic dialogue, shaping an increasingly integrated Europe, and effectively responding to today's global challenges. It also honored Schäuble's four decades of political engagement, which has significantly shaped German reunification, advanced the European idea, and promoted the European-American partnership. "As a national leader for three decades," Henry Kissinger said in his remarks, "Wolfgang has contributed wisdom, perspective, and decisiveness to his country, to his continent, and the world. He has done that with a personal warmth his reserved nature tries to obscure but never succeeds in obscuring." Former US treasury secretary Lawrence H. Summers delivered the evening's laudation, remarking that he was "optimistic that with the kind of indomitable spirit that Wolfgang brings to everything he does, that the challenges of this moment will be met. [. . .] His enduring values and character are an inspiration to us all."

Minister Schäuble delivered a stirring acceptance speech before the audience of 350 distiguished guests, which began with a European refrain heard often during the run-up to the G20 meeting in Hamburg: "I think it's really important that we know our responsibilities in Germany and in Europe," Schäuble said, "not only for our own future, but because the stability of a globalized world is a precondition for the success of any nation state and any continent." His speech underscored the importance of the transatlantic relationship and the efforts necessary to galvanize the values of liberal democracy: "We should continue, even in difficult times," Schäuble said, "to stand together, to know we have these common values. Who else stands for human rights, the rule of law, separation of powers, representative democracy, social stability, and environmental sustainability? The West is inconceivable without these values and principles. These values connect us together, of this I am sure. If you look all around the world, why are dictators so nervous when they are confronted with some wind of change? Because they know that Western values enjoy high attractiveness all over the world. Therefore, we need to stick to our values a little bit more. [. . .] I have to underline that it is only by taking a multilateral approach that we have any chance of solving the major problems in the world." □

The 2017 Henry A. Kissinger Prize was generously supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Robert Bosch GmbH, Ceberus Deutschland Beteiligungsberatung GmbH, and BMW Group.


Nicola Bruning, Richard Gaul, Josef Joffe


Maggie Bult and Jan Techau


John C. Kornblum, Christian Schmidt, C. Boyden Gray


Martin Indyk and Wolfgang Malchow

Wolfgang Schäuble and Henry A. Kissinger


Lawrence H. Summers and Wolfgang Schäuble

Henry A. Kissinger, Katharina Galor, Michael Steinberg

All photos: Annette Hornischer

# AL GORE AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY

On the evening of August 7, the American Academy in Berlin hosted a reception and dinner for former-US vice president Al Gore, who was in Berlin for the European premiere of his film *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power*. The film was screened for 800 guests at Zoo Palast the following night, followed by a panel discussion, moderated by Dirk Steffens of ZDF, with Mr. Gore, Academy co-secretary John C. Kornblum; actor Hannes Jaenicke; head of the World Wildlife Fund Germany, Eberhard Brandes; and Barabara Hendricks, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety. The screening and discussion were organized by Paramount Germany, in partnership with the environmental ministry, WWF Germany, and the American Academy.

The private dinner at the Academy on August 7—highlighted by a screening of the film's trailer and a discussion of pressing environmental issues—included, among a dozen additional guests, trustees John Kornblum, Nina von Maltzahn, Volker Schlöndorff, and Christine Wallich; Sandra Breka of the Berlin office of the Bosch Foundation; founder of Plant-for-the-Planet, Felix Finkbeiner; former German foreign minister Joschka Fischer; co-managing directors of Paramount Germany, Tobias Riehl and Florian Ritter; David Mike Reinert from the US Embassy; Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter and Jochen Flasbarth, from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety; and Konstantin Mettenheimer, whose generosity helped to make the evening possible.

It was especially meaningful for the American Academy to host Mr. Gore at the Hans Arnhold Center: not only did he screen his 2006 environmental documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth,* at the Academy, a day before the official German premiere; as vice president of the United States, he announced the founding of the American Academy in Berlin, on September 9, 1994, via satellite from Washington, DC, at the conclusion of the New Traditions Conference. □

Lothar and Nina von Maltzahn, Volker Schlöndorff, Al Gore, John C. Kornblum

All photos: Ralph K. Penno


Felix Finkbeiner and Al Gore

Al Gore, Hannes Jaenicke, and Volker Schlöndorff

Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Toe Painter)*, 2015. Acrylic on PVC panel, 152.4×152.4 cm. Private Collection. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner, London

# KERRY JAMES MARSHALL AT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY

From April 21 to May 1, 2017, the American Academy in Berlin hosted Chicago-based artist Kerry James Marshall as the inaugural Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitor. In the spirit of Max Beckmann, who spent the final years of his life teaching in the United States, the visitorship was conceived to bring to Berlin eminent visual artists from the US for sustained interaction with students, the art world, and the general public.

Marshall, whose celebrated retrospective MASTRY had travelled from The Met to LACMA by late April, led a master class at the American Academy on April 21, with art students from Bard College Berlin, Freie Universität, and Universität der Künste; on April 26, he delivered a lecture to a private audience at the Academy that included the visitorship's key donors and organizers, followed by a dinner in Marshall's honor. On April 27, he made a studio visit and gave a talk at the Universität der Künste, and, on April 28, he sat down at the the auction house Grisebach with Chris Dercon, the new artistic director of the *Volksbühne*, for a public discussion about his body of work and contemporary art in America.

Grisebach was a major force in making the Max Beckmann Distinguished Visitorship a reality. On November 30, 2012, they hosted a fundraising auction, with the support of Beckmann's granddaughter Mayen Beckmann; artworks were generously donated by eminent American, British, and German artists, among them Richard Artschwager, Tacita Dean, Thomas Demand, Jenny Holzer, Alex Katz and Julie Mehretu.

On the occasion of Marshall's inaugural visit—which resulted in extensive coverage in the German media—Grisebach exhibited two of the artist's recent works—*Untitled (The Toe Painter)* and *Untitled (Pink Towel)*—generously loaned to the American Academy by gallerist David Zwirner. □

Kerry James Marshall with art students and professors from Bard College Berlin, Freie Universität, and Universität der Kunste

Angela Choon, Mary Ellen von Schacky-Schultz, and Mayen Beckmann

Kerry James Marshall speaking to the audience at Grisebach

All photos: Annette Hornischer


Max Beckmann. "Braunes Meer mit Möwen". 1941. Oil on canvas. 55.5 × 95 cm. Göpel 566.
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2017. Estimate EUR 1,200,000–1,500,000

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Members of the board of trustees at the spring 2017 meeting. Photo: Annette Hornischer

# WELCOMING NEW TRUSTEES

At the fall 2016 and spring 2017 board meetings, the trustees of the American Academy in Berlin elected four new members: Michael M. Kellen, Pascal Levensohn, Nader Mousavizadeh, and Andrew Wylie.

**Michael M. Kellen** is the son of Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen, the founding benefactors of the American Academy in Berlin. He is currently the director of First Eagle Holdings, Inc., and vice chairman of its subsidiary First Eagle Investment Management LLC. Prior, until January 1, 2016, Kellen served as co-president and co-chief executive officer of Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder Holdings, Inc. (as of April 15, 2016, First Eagle Holdings, Inc.). He joined the firm in 1978 as the portfolio manager of an offshore US equities fund and later served as director of research, sales, and trading. In 1987, Kellen co-founded the First Eagle Fund of America, a US registered mutual fund, which he managed until 1991. In addition to his current supervisory role in the conduct of the asset management business, he also manages the Kellen Family Office and its investments. He is also president of the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation and the Denise and Michael Kellen Foundation, a trustee of the Cancer Research Institute, a member of the board of overseers of Weill Cornell Medical College, and a member of the board of advisors of the Department of Ophthalmology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

**Pascal Levensohn** is the founder and managing partner of Levensohn Venture Partners LLC and the CEO of Generation Strategic Advisors LLC, where, since 1996, he has advised a select group of multi-generational family organizations on direct technology investments and philanthropy. Levensohn was elected to the board of the National Venture Capital Association (NVCA) from 2007–2011. He is also a faculty member and mentor of the Kauffman Fellows (2006–present), where he teaches best practices for VC-backed company board members. He is the co-author of the first Chinese college textbook on venture capital: 投 学 *Venture Capital: Theory and Practice* (2011) with Professor Liu Manhong of Renmin University of China (2011). In 2016, Levensohn joined the advisory board to the rector of the University of Applied Sciences Salzburg, where he is also a guest lecturer on entrepreneurship. A life member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Levensohn is a former co-chairman of the Socrates Society Forum of the Aspen Institute (2007–2009) and a former chairman of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation's Business Leadership Council (2007–2008).

**Nader Mousavizadeh** is co-founder and co-CEO of Macro Advisory Partners. He has spent the past twenty years working in leadership positions in global institutions at the intersection of geopolitics, policy, and markets. From 2010 to 2013, Mousavizadeh was chief executive of Oxford Analytica, a leading global analysis and advisory firm. Prior, he

was an investment banker at Goldman Sachs, in the Financial Institutions group in New York and in the executive office in London. Before entering the private sector, he served at the United Nations, first as a political officer in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1996, and, subsequently, in the executive office of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, from 1997–2003. Mousavizadeh has published articles and essays in the *Financial Times, New York Times, Times of London,* and *Foreign Policy,* and writes a regular column, "Compass," for Reuters. In 2012, he authored, with Kofi Annan, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace,* and is the editor of the *Black Book of Bosnia* (1996). Mousavizadeh co-chaired the Richard C. Holbrooke Forum workshop "The Global Migration Crisis," with Harold Koh and Michael Ignatieff, and he is a member of the Geopolitical Risk Council of the World Economic Forum, which elected him as a Global Leader for Tomorrow.

**Andrew Wylie** is one of the world's most influential literary agents and the president of the Wylie Agency, which he founded, in 1980, in New York City. The Wylie Agency, which has had a London branch since 1996, represents nearly one thousand writers, statesmen, and estates, and advises companies internationally. A list of clients is available at www.wylieagency.com. □

# DEDICATION OF THE FELLOWS PAVILION STUDIES

Following the spring 2017 board meeting, on May 16, the Academy's trustees and spring 2017 fellows convened at the lakeside Fellows Pavilion for an early-evening unveiling of its seven named studies. The pavilion, designed by architecture firm Barkow Leibinger, based in Berlin and New York, was made possible by the Ellen Maria Gorrissen Stiftung, the descendants of Hans and Ludmilla Arnhold, and fourteen additional benefactors. The American Academy extends a special thanks to trustee Regine Leibinger and Frank Barkow for their invaluable support and professional expertise.

At the ceremony, Regine Leibinger and Academy chairman Gahl Burt addressed guests and recited from a letter from spring 2017 fellow Harry Liebersohn—a University of Urbana-Champaign cultural historian and one of the many fellows who has been able to enjoy a pavilion office space—who wrote that the building "enhances the work of art and learning that takes place inside." Guests were then invited to tour the studies, each of them—thanks to the generosity of their funders, below in parentheses—dedicated to an array of figures important to the Academy, two of whom were present, Gerhard Casper and Gary Smith.

The studies were named after four German writers and philosophers: Harry Graf Kessler (Sal. Oppenheim-Stiftung), Erich Kästner (Henry Arnhold), Walter Benjamin (A. Michael Hoffman), and Hannah Arendt (C. Boyden Gray); a politician: Helmut Kohl (Kurt Viermetz); a former president of the American Academy: Gerhard Casper (C. Boyden Gray), and the Academy's founding executive director: Gary Smith (Manfred Bischoff, Stephen B. and Ellen C. Burbank, Gahl Hodges Burt, Hans-Michael & Almut Giesen, Dirk and Marlene Ippen, John C. Kornblum, Kati Marton, Volker Schlöndorff, and Peter Y. Solmssen). Thanks to these donors and to the pavilion's generous funders, fellows have a quiet space by Lake Wannsee for independent scholarship. □

Architect and trustee Regine Leibinger speaks to the board and fellows about the Fellows Pavilion. Photo: Annette Hornischer

Gahl Hodges Burt and Gerhard Casper


Molly Antopol, Hans-Michael Giesen, and Stephanie Harrell


Mark Pottinger and Almut Giesen


Nina von Maltzahn

All photos: Annette Hornischer

Photo: Sophie Maaß

# GET SMART

In 2017–18 the American Academy's library service and Daimler go bold: since August 2017, a vibrant red **smart forfour** has provided a means of transport for the library team to retrieve books and documents for Academy fellows from Berlin's prodigious network of libraries and archives. Since 2012, Daimler's support has contributed to the success of many research projects pursued at the American Academy, which is grateful for this meaningful commitment. Look out for the Academy's smart heading to libraries and archives throughout Berlin. □

# PROFILES IN SCHOLARSHIP

### ANNA-MARIA KELLEN FELLOWS

**Peter Schmelz** (Fall 2017)
*Associate Professor of Musicology, Arizona State University*
Schmelz is studying the roles of non-state networks in cultural exchanges of music across the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. He reveals how various cultural figures—including Russian pianist Maria Yudina, Ukrainian conductor Igor Blazhkov, and West German musicologists Detlef Gojowy and Fred Prieberg—worked within and around the systems of their respective countries to advance their own political and aesthetic agendas.

**Kira Thurman** (Fall 2017)
*Assistant Professor of History and Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan*
Thurman's project traces the history of black classical musicians in Central Europe from the 1870s to the 1960s, including the Afro-Cuban Jimenez Trio playing Mendelssohn in 1870s Leipzig; Afro-Caribbean Rudolph Dunbar conducting the Berlin Philharmonic's first post-WWII concerts; and African-American soprano Grace Bumbry, who, in 1961, became the first black singer at the Bayreuth Festival. Thurman argues that the presence of black musicians performing the works of "great German masters" complicated audiences' understandings of national identity—and who had the right to express it.

### AXEL SPRINGER FELLOWS

**Aglaya Glebova** (Fall 2017)
*Assistant Professor of Art History and Film and Media Studies, University of California, Irvine*
Glebova examines five iconic yet little-studied projects completed by Soviet avant-garde artists—El Lissitzky, Vladimir Tatlin, Vera Mukhina, and Boris Ender—in the years following Stalin's rise to power. She argues that, despite the stringencies of "totalitarian art," they succeeded in radically expanding pictorial means with their ideals of movement and mobility, including across national and ideological borders.

**Christian Ostermann** (Spring 2018)
*Director, History and Public Policy Program; Woodrow Wilson Center*
Ostermann is working on a biography of Markus Wolf (1923–2006), the longtime foreign intelligence chief of the German Democratic Republic. Based on newly available sources, the biography will provide a unique prism to explore important facets of German and international history in the second half of the twentieth century: German-Russian relations, the Cold War in Europe and the global South, and the development of the GDR.

### BERTHOLD LEIBINGER FELLOW

**Nancy Foner** (Fall 2017)
*Distinguished Professor of Sociology, Hunter College and Graduate Center, City University of New York*
Foner examines how post-1965 immigration has reshaped the demographic contours and social life of the United States. Though focused on contemporary life, her project is infused with a historical sensibility for how changes generated by past immigration help to explain transformations in the US today.

### BOSCH FELLOWS IN PUBLIC POLICY

**Dilip Gaonkar** (Fall 2017)
*Professor of Rhetoric and Public Culture; Director, Center for Global Culture and Communication, Northwestern University*
Since Plato, Gaonkar argues, Western discourse has harbored a deep anxiety about collective political agency—the *demos*. His Academy project charts the trajectory of persistent anti-democratic thought about political crowds in the West, while also exploring the extent to which non-Western thinkers, including intellectuals in the global South, have been drawn to these long-held suspicions.

**Josh Kun** (Spring 2018)
*Professor of Communication and American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California*
From the US-Mexico borderlands to contemporary Europe, Kun's project explores what he calls "the migrant sound"—the impact of displacement, relocation, deportation, and immigration on the aesthetics, communication networks, and formal and informal industries and markets of contemporary global music practices. What, he asks, has been the impact of an estimated one billion migrants on the way music is made? How is immigration to Berlin shaping the city's cultures of music?

### DAIMLER FELLOW

**Jacqueline Ross** (Fall 2017)
*Professor of Law, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*
Ross compares how the United States, Germany, Italy, and France conceptualize and execute covert policing operations. Drawing on 300 interviews with law-enforcement officials conducted since 2001, her project focuses on investigations into organized-crime rings and emerging areas of undercover policing: sting operations against suspected terrorists, cyber-infiltration, and the use of undercover tactics against human trafficking.

### DIRK IPPEN FELLOW

**Kristen Monroe** (Spring 2018)
*Chancellor's Professor of Political Science, University of California, Irvine*
Monroe asks how Germany's twentieth-century experience can help illuminate the warning signs for democracies under stress, and how people can learn about democratic threats and respond positively to them. Based in part on interviews with German-Jewish exiles from Hitler's Europe, her project explores the importance of the narratives people construct to both help them understand politically traumatic experiences, and compose a meaningful life after political trauma.

### ELLEN MARIA GORRISSEN FELLOWS

**A.L. Steiner** (Fall 2017)
*Multimedia Artist, Los Angeles and Brooklyn*
A self-described "skeptical queer eco-feminist androgyne," A.L. Steiner is working on the first monograph of her body of work, which ranges from collaged digital photographs to installation, videos, and performances. To produce the monograph, Steiner—who ethically objects to the systems and resources of the traditional publishing industry—will use digital print-on-demand systems and biodegradable, post-consumer supply-chain materials.

**Ran Ortner** (Spring 2018)
*Artist, Brooklyn, New York*
Ortner is taken by our primordial underpinnings—the fundamental, the elemental, the traces of time, the reverberating insistence of life. His work finds physical forms of these preoccupations in the oceanic and its infinite representations. Ortner will work on large paintings on the back of coarse rugs, and sculptures made of base materials, including steel, glass, and sand.

### HOLTZBRINCK FELLOWS

**Özge Samanci** (Fall 2017)
*Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Department of Radio, TV, and Film, Northwestern University*
Samanci is working on a new graphic novel, "Not Here but Everywhere," which sees two characters develop in parallel: on the odd pages of the book, it tells the story of Helen, a 40-year-old American professor of art history currently teaching in Istanbul. On the even pages, it tells the story of Deniz, a 25-year-old Turkish graduate student in biochemistry at a small college in Athens, Ohio. With each turn of the page, the characters' stories progress, in two different cities, side-by-side, each in relation to the other.

**Thomas Chatterton Williams** (Fall 2017)
*Writer, Washington, DC*
A frequent contributor to major American publications, Williams explores what it means to be a black man of mixed-race heritage with a white-looking toddler daughter. In Berlin, he will continue work on a personal narrative that will offer a powerful argument against the way race is defined in the United States.

### INGA MAREN OTTO FELLOW IN MUSIC COMPOSITION

**Raven Chacon** (Spring 2018)
*Composer, Performer, and Installation Artist, Albuquerque, New Mexico*
Navajo Nation composer and music educator Raven Chacon will begin the work of composing a series of collaborative works for Indigenous woman musicians. His work during the residency will also include writings on the role of sound at the Standing Rock camp and other recent and current protest demonstrations. In addition to this work, Chacon will also be developing new sound installations and performance systems.

### JOHN P. BIRKELUND FELLOWS IN THE HUMANITIES

**Barbara Nagel** (Spring 2018)
*Assistant Professor of German, Princeton University*
Nagel takes up the study of affect in order to develop a historically nuanced, formalist argument about German emotions. Through the prism of realist and modernist writers such as Adalbert Stifter, Theodor Fontane, Robert Walser, and Franz Kafka, she seeks to understand German realism as a literary phenomenon and as part of the cultural history of social sublimation in nineteenth-century Europe.

**Paul Reitter** (Spring 2018)
*Professor of German, Director of the Humanities Institute, The Ohio State University*
Humboldt Universität's archives provide Reitter's project the material to examine interactions between the humanities and bureaucratic rationalization, secularization, and democratization in nineteenth-century Germany. From a set of specific historical reconstructions detailing the ways in which German administrative and academic orders helped or hindered one another, Reitter aims to better understand contemporary crises of the humanities in American universities.

### MARY ELLEN VON DER HEYDEN FELLOWS IN FICTION

**V.V. Ganeshananthan** (Fall 2017)
*Writer; Assistant Professor of English, University of Minnesota*
Ganeshananthan is working on her second novel, *Movement*, which draws on a decade of research on the Sri Lankan civil war, as well as her experience as a member of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. The novel tracks its protagonist, Sashi, from her time as a young medic in northern Sri Lanka in the late 1980s to her career as an emergency room doctor in New York City in 2009. As the war hurtles to a brutal conclusion, the lessons of her history move her to a questionable act of political theatre.

**Carole Maso** (Spring 2018)
*Writer; Professor of Literary Arts, Brown University*
Maso is working on a novel-in-progress called "The Bay of Angels," which incorporates a myriad of forms: fiction, essay, memoir, poetry, and graphics (drawings, photographs, maps). It is an encyclopaedic project, traversing time and space and utilizing a variety of genres and strategies to create resonant and overlapping narrative fields.

### NINA MARIA GORRISSEN FELLOWS OF HISTORY

**Andrew Hicks** (Spring 2018)
*Assistant Professor of Music and Medieval Studies, Cornell University*
Hicks's Academy project seeks to reframe the history of medieval Persian musical culture through a focus on the technical vocabulary, poetic imagery, artistic visualizations, and philosophical metaphors of music and musical experiences in medieval Persian literary traditions. It spans the period from the disintegration of the Samanid Empire, at the end of the tenth century, to the rise of the Timurids, near the end of the fourteenth century.

**Amy Remensnyder** (Spring 2018)
*Professor of History, Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence, Brown University*
Remensnyder is writing a microhistory of the tiny Mediterranean island of Lampedusa to explain how, over the centuries, it became a space of Muslim–Christian cooperation and trust. Relying upon a wealth of primary sources—sailors' logs, portolan charts and maps, chronicles, epic poetry, and consular correspondence—the project offers deep historical perspective on the current refugee crisis by tracing the genealogy of the outsized role played in that emergency by small islands that politically belong to Europe but that geographically hug the coasts of North Africa and Turkey.

### SIEMENS FELLOW

**Ussama S. Makdisi** (Spring 2018)
*Professor of History and Arab-American Educational Foundation Chair of Arab Studies, Rice University*
Makdisi disputes two narratives about tolerance in the modern Middle East: the first idealizes harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims; the second stresses a continuity of sectarian strife between allegedly antagonistic religious communities. By historicizing both, Makdisi provides historical perspective on the contemporary sectarian tragedy—including in war-torn Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq—uncovering a complex but now obscured culture of social coexistence in a region rich in religious diversity.

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*Fall 2017 Distinguished Visitors and Guest Lecturers*

### JOHN W. KLUGE DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Roger Cohen**
*Author and Op-Ed Columnist,* New York Times

### KURT VIERMETZ DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Nicholas Eberstadt**
*Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy, American Enterprise Institute*

### RICHARD VON WEIZSÄCKER DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

**Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak**
*University Professor, Columbia University*

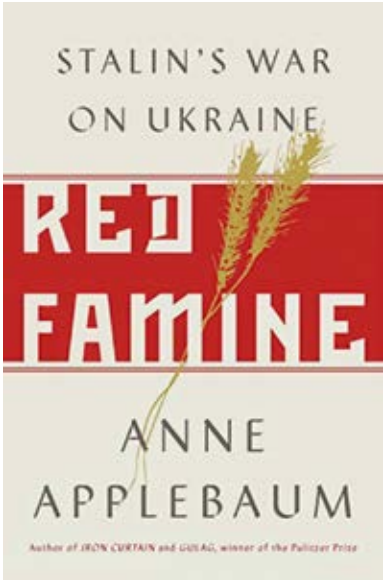
### VISITING ARTIST

**Saleem Ashkar**
*Pianist*

### WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE

**Kati Marton**
*Author and Journalist*

# BOOK REVIEWS




## RED FAMINE: STALIN'S WAR ON UKRAINE
BY ANNE APPLEBAUM

Doubleday
September 2017, 464 pages

A review by Norman Naimark

With the publication of *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, journalist, and historian Anne Applebaum has inaugurated a new stage in the historiography of the 1932–33 Ukrainian famine, known as the *Holodomor*—literally "the hunger-extermination." Her elaborately documented, comprehensive history has benefited from Ukrainian and Russian archives on the subject, which since 1991 have been accessible, for the most part, to Ukrainian and Western scholars, and from Harvard's resource-rich Ukrainian Research Institute. Like Robert Conquest's 1986 masterpiece *Harvest of Sorrow,* which set the standard for understanding the Holodomor, Applebaum's study is written in seemingly effortless, accessible prose, and her many years living in and writing about Eastern Europe have sharpened her sensitivities to what is important in the history of Soviet-Ukrainian relations. All of these elements have combined to produce an exceptionally readable book that evidences mastery of the recently published rich Ukrainian historical literature and document collections.

Applebaum's tack in understanding the Holodomor is to follow two interrelated, sometimes indistinct stories that dominate relations between Moscow and Ukraine in the post-revolutionary period. One is the development of Ukrainian national consciousness after 1917 Revolution and the civil war that ensued. The shift in Soviet policies towards "indigenization"—in the case of Ukraine, Ukrainianization—after the fierce fighting during the civil war was viewed by Moscow as a way to gain Ukrainian loyalty to the Soviet cause. The promotion of Ukrainian language, culture, and history in the mid- and late 1920s was meant to bring Ukraine into conformance with Moscow's policies while allowing Ukraine the chance to proceed to modernize, guided by a Ukrainian Communist Party that represented its people and their road to socialism.

When Stalin seized control of the Soviet political machine and inaugurated the "Second Revolution" (collectivization and the First Five-Year Plan), in 1928, and when his plans ran into obstacles in Ukraine and elsewhere, Ukrainianization was perceived as a threat to Moscow's goals. Stalin, as was his wont, launched an attack on his alleged Ukrainian opponents: Ukrainian political and cultural leaders were removed from office; Ukrainian cultural institutions were closed down; and even the newly formulated Ukrainian alphabet was banned from use. Applebaum makes clear that the timing of the attack on the Ukrainian national elite, the arrest, deportation, and shooting of Ukrainian writers, politicians, and educational figures (some 200,000 altogether), which took place concomitantly with the Holodomor, in 1932–33, was not coincidental. It reflected rather a concerted effort on the part of Stalin and his cronies to curtail what they felt were dangerous trends towards Ukrainian independence that had emerged initially during the civil war but that had, in their view, accelerated during the period of collectivization.

The second story Applebaum explores is Moscow's war against the peasants of the Soviet Union, especially against Ukrainian peasants. From the communists' point of view, during the civil war, the Ukrainian peasantry aligned with a variety of "counter-revolutionary" forces. Villages were subjected to the Ukrainian variety of "war communism," which meant forced requisition of their grain by "committees of the poor" (*komnizamy* in Ukrainian, *kombedy* in Russian). Violence in the Ukrainian countryside, indeed throughout the Soviet Union, was fierce and unremitting; the lessons that the Bolsheviks—above all, Stalin—drew from peasant rebellions was the need to crush, once and for all, the peasants' ability to resist. Only this would ensure the future of the proletarian state.

In 1928, the forced-collectivization campaign was meant to safeguard the productivity of agriculture, based on more efficient, large collective farms and machine tractor stations, where peasants could share the benefits of technology. But it was also based on the desire to destroy the kulaks (in Ukrainian, *kurkuli*), who the Bolsheviks claimed were the ringleaders of peasant resistance, and to transform the peasantry itself into controllable agricultural workers on

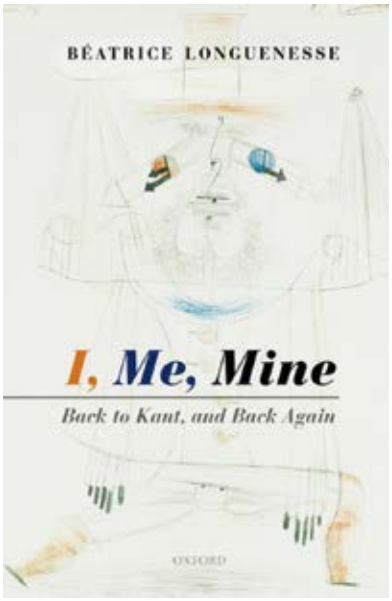
Soviet collective farms. Applebaum demonstrates that the resistance to collectivization was notably more widespread and intense in Ukraine than in other parts of the Soviet Union. Part sincere, part feigning, Stalin also expressed worries to his comrades that the Ukrainian uprisings in the countryside would attract Polish revanchist intervention. "We could lose Ukraine," Stalin wrote to his deputy for Ukrainian affairs, Lazar Kaganovich, in August 1932. The result, then, in Applebaum's narrative, was a fierce, bloody, and brutish attack on the Ukrainian peasants, sometimes by external forces, sometimes by Ukrainian brigades of *Komsomol*, policemen, and local ne'er-do-wells, which resulted in the peasants' collectivization and the ideological and physical "elimination of the kulaks as a class."

By early 1932, collectivization had wreaked havoc in the countryside, disrupting regular agricultural cycles and destroying well-established methods of planting, harvesting, and distribution. In the face of brutally forced requisitions of their grain and property, the peasants sometimes resisted by denying the state their meager belongings: slaughtering their own animals, burning their own grain, and destroying their own homes, all while trying to flee the villages to find relief. The horrific famine of 1932–33 throughout the Soviet Union was the result.

The two crucial questions in connection with the Holodomor are: 1) Was the famine in Ukraine worse than in the rest of the Soviet Union? 2) Did Stalin and the Kremlin leadership intentionally target Ukraine for harsher treatment than other parts of the Soviet Union? Applebaum engages these questions patiently and systematically, and answers both in the affirmative. In November and December 1932, Stalin, she writes, "twisted the knife further in Ukraine, deliberately creating a deeper crisis," launching "a famine within a famine, a disaster specifically targeted at Ukraine and Ukrainians." Kazakhstan and the Penza district of Russia were also hit hard by mass starvation. But only in Ukraine did the requisition quotas rise when the incidence of sickness, death, cannibalism, and necrophagy became more evident. Death rates in Ukraine were higher; Moscow's indifference to, indeed resentment of, Ukrainian peasant suffering was more pronounced. One reads Applebaum's moving account of the famine and suffering with deep sadness and a feeling of historical mourning. There was no need for four million Ukrainians to perish in that dreadful way. She writes, "The history of the famine is a tragedy with no happy ending."

Applebaum leaves the "genocide question" to the book's epilogue. *Was the Holodomor an act of genocide?* is a question she calls "wearyingly controversial," especially in the Russian and Ukrainian context. She does not believe that an answer to the question is important to the historical understanding of the Holodomor. At the same time, she makes apparent that she does think the Holodomor and the events surrounding it were a targeted attack by Stalin on the Ukrainians and their national existence. In this sense, she does agree that the 1932–33 famine was genocide. And, in any case, the "facts" of the Holodomor are becoming more widely accepted: "That the famine happened, that it was deliberate, and that it was part of a political plan to undermine Ukrainian identity."

It goes without saying that the Ukrainian translation of *Red Famine* will be of the utmost importance for the development of the Ukrainians' ongoing attempts to absorb the lessons of these terrible events into their sense of national purpose. But, as Applebaum rightly insists, the Holodomor was not about Russians versus Ukrainians; it was about the perfidy of the Stalinist Soviet state and its resentment of and inability to accept Ukrainian distinctiveness. Applebaum did the besieged Ukrainian nation a great favor in publishing this fine book. Maybe even the Russians will learn from it. □




## I, ME, MINE: BACK TO KANT, AND BACK AGAIN BY BÉATRICE LONGUENESSE

Oxford University Press
January 2017, 257 pages

A review
by Paul Guyer

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, §89, Ludwig Wittgenstein quotes St. Augustine: "What is time? If no one asks me what it is, I know; but if I am asked to explain it, I do not know." (*Confessions*, XI.14) The idea is that we can *use* a concept perfectly well—for example, tell time—without being able to give a perspicuous account of it, but that the task of philosophy is to provide the latter. The same might be said about the concepts of the self and of self-consciousness: we refer to ourselves all the time, but that does not mean we have a perspicuous account of what the self is and what it is to be conscious of oneself. So the nature of self-consciousness is a puzzle for philosophers.

In her challenging new book, Béatrice Longuenesse aims to solve this puzzle, with the aid of several writers, among them Jean-Paul Sartre

and Sigmund Freud, and, above all, Immanuel Kant—an interpretation of whose thoughts about the self and self-consciousness in his epochal *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, revised 1787) forms the heart of her work.

Unlike Augustine on time, however, Longuenesse is not talking about our ordinary conception of self-consciousness. In ordinary language, saying that someone is "self-conscious" might mean that he is somewhat embarrassed, by, say, having shown up in jeans to an event where others are wearing tuxedoes or formal gowns, or perhaps that someone is unusually self-aware in a positive sense, e.g. more than normally sensitive to her effect on others. Longuenesse is not talking about self-consciousness in either of those senses, but of something more general: namely, being conscious that one is a particular conscious being and being aware that one is the particular conscious being that one is, with the particular history of mental states that one has had. We may suppose that unimpaired human beings are all self-conscious in this sense, although whether every such human being has the *concept* of self-consciousness, with a name for it in their native tongue, is another matter.

About this topic, Longuenesse makes two main claims. First, and this is the point of her extensive discussion of Kant, she argues that we all actually enjoy two forms of self-consciousness: on the one hand, what Kant calls "transcendental apperception," a consciousness of ourselves *as thinking*, or a consciousness of the *activity of thought* itself, which must be the same in all of us, and, on the other hand, what Kant calls "empirical self-consciousness," a consciousness of the particular conscious states—perceptions, thoughts, feelings—that we each have, and of their history. This is part of what differentiates us from each other, along with our different bodies and their histories.

Longuenesse finds a similar two-level theory of self-consciousness in Freud's distinction between "ego" and "id," although I do not myself think that Freud's ego is a consciousness of thinking as such—rather, it aligns with Kant's empirical self-consciousness; the challenge for the Freudian patient is to bring the suppressed memories, desires, etc. of the id into the light of that ego. Second, and here Longuenesse draws again upon Freud, she aims to *naturalize* Kant's account of self-consciousness, that is, to present Kant's theory as a scientific rather than metaphysical theory. In the final chapter of the book, she also argues that because Kant develops his *moral* philosophy as a kind of theory of self-consciousness, attempting to derive the fundamental principle of morality (what Kant calls the "categorical imperative") as entailed simply by thinking of oneself as a rational being, the principle of morality must also be at bottom an empirically grounded principle accessible to science rather than one that can only be defined and established by a special "metaphysics of morals," as Kant himself claimed in his *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). This is the most radical of Longuenesse's claims, although she makes clear that the present book only introduces this claim without fully developing or defending it.

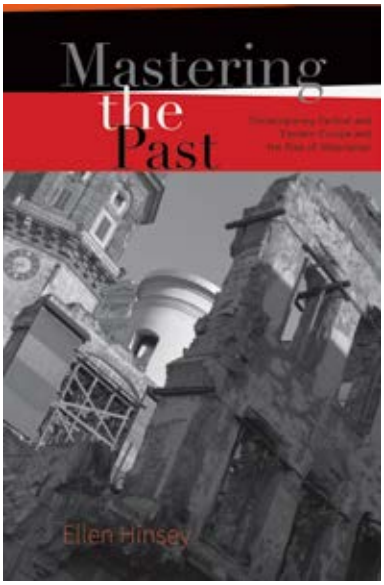
Longuenesse focuses on two sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason:* "Transcendental Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding" and the "Paralogisms of Pure Reason." In the first of these, Kant tells us something about what self-consciousness *is*, and in the second something about what it *is not*, namely consciousness of a simple and indissoluble, therefore immortal substance—in Kant's view, we have *moral* grounds for *believing* in personal immortality, but no *theoretical knowledge* or *proof* of such a thing. However, Kant's aim in the positive phase of his argument is limited.

Longuenesse, who has taught in the United States for many years, indeed at such bastions of analytic philosophy as Princeton and NYU, was educated in France, and she shows her French roots in treating Kant's theory as an exercise in phenomenology—the philosophical school led by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Sartre—the aim of which is a careful *description* of the structure of our consciousness of objects and of ourselves. But, in my view, Kant was not aiming at a complete description of self-consciousness for its own sake. Rather, like the founder of modern French philosophy himself, René Descartes, he wanted to use what he took to be a self-evident fact about self-consciousness to prove a further point. Descartes wanted to use what he took to be the fact that one cannot be wrong in thinking that one is thinking, because even doubting that one is thinking is an act of thinking, to derive a standard of certainty—the "clearness and distinctness" of an idea—to show that our belief in the existence of God is also certain, and then from the benevolence of God to derive the reliability of our (mathematical) representation of nature. Kant instead wanted to use the fact that self-consciousness takes the form of *judgment* and the further fact that we are conscious of the *unity* of our mental states ("apperception") to show that all of our consciousness is subject to judgment and therefore to the characteristic *forms* of judgment and the *categories* associated with them, such as the categories of quantity and quality, but, above all, the relational categories of substance, causation, and interaction—what he needed to accomplish his self-appointed task of refuting what he took to be David Hume's skepticism about the rational necessity of these categories.

Thus Kant needed to say only so much about self-consciousness as is necessary to prove this point, and this did *not* require him to claim that we are always conscious of ourselves as thinking, as Longuenesse supposes. In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant did indeed hold that we must be *aware* of a "function" that unites our various mental states into single experience (A 108). But he

eliminated this remark in the second edition of the *Critique*, replacing it with the claim that it must always be *possible* for one to add the thought "I think . . ." to any particular representation, which does not imply that one always does or must, and does not imply that one must do this on the basis of an awareness of the *activity* of thinking. Elsewhere, Kant explicitly *denied* that it is an "experience that we think," implying that we may have some sort of *concept* of ourselves as thinking beings but not an immediate *awareness* of ourselves as thinking. The claim that we are conscious of the activity of thinking is thus omitted from Kant's final argument that the categories must apply to our experience of all objects, because that turns on the supposition that it is a *judgment* that all my mental states comprise the unity of a single self and that all *judgments* must employ certain logical forms that can in turn be applied to their objects only if the objects are *conceived* or *conceptualized* in certain ways.

This is important, because it bears on Longuenesse's second project, namely that of "naturalizing" Kant's theory of self-consciousness and, beyond that, his derivation of the moral law. This project is key, because the tenor of contemporary philosophy, at least in the US, is decidedly naturalistic. But we must also be clear about what the project is, because naturalism can mean at least two things: admitting no *entities* not allowed by natural science, or using no *methods* not allowed by natural science. Excluding theoretical proof of a separate soul, as Kant did, is a step in the former direction. But Kant's attempt to prove that the fundamental principles of natural science itself as well as of morality are what he called "synthetic *a priori*," that is, universally and necessarily true but also informative, seems to go beyond what might be assumed to be the empirical methods of natural science, which never yield more than probability. Here, Longuenesse owes us a fuller account of how naturalistic methodology can be reconciled with Kantian ambitions, and she has indeed promised that for future work. One thought that might be pursued here is that science itself includes non-empirical methods—namely, mathematics—so perhaps science's reliance upon mathematics might be a model for understanding its reliance on other non-empirical principles as well. Longuenesse's further thought on this issue will be of great interest. □




## MASTERING THE PAST: CONTEMPORARY CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND THE RISE OF ILLIBERALISM
BY ELLEN HINSEY

Telos
March 2017, 208 pages

A review
by Andrea Orzoff

Readers of the *Berlin Journal* will no doubt know the origins of this elegant book's title. *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or the process of "mastering the past," initially referred to the two Cold War Germanies' engagement with their responsibility for Nazism. Perpetrators needed to be punished, but how many, and how to contend with the quiet masses of collaborators, however defined? How to grant justice to victims? Perhaps most importantly, how to shape a collective understanding of that past so that the coming generations understand both what their elders did and how to avoid repeating their errors? An early 1990s truism about post-communism offered a homespun variant on this theme: it was easy to make fish soup out of an aquarium, and very difficult to make an aquarium out of fish soup. The soup was generally understood to be communism, or sometimes dictatorship; an often vaguely understood liberal democracy was the aquarium. "Mastering the past" was to be part of the murky transition from one to the other.

Ellen Hinsey's concise, evocative new book offers flashes of insight into the journey from the joyous days of 1989 to the increasingly tenuous state of democracy today in the loosely defined region understood as Eastern Europe's "northern tier," or East Central Europe: Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, with Ukraine, Germany, and Russia looming on the edges. Her text combines reportage with interviews, essays with historical narrative, without hewing to a standard chronological format. Yet the reader is never disoriented. Rather than updating the book or trying to draw a more standard historical timeline, Hinsey has maintained her work as a set of snapshots, something of a time capsule, preserving each moment's confusions and fragility.

The author's observations shed light on the larger structural shifts that these countries have shared over the past twenty years. Post-communist East Central Europe's process of "mastering its past" has been slowed by a collective historical hangover. Outside of Poland, the region lacks a history of widespread democratic civic engagement. But in Poland, as elsewhere, the

urban–rural divide is significant: the current ruling party, Law and Justice, gained power in part by aligning itself with Radio Maryja, a popular far-right radio station affiliated with a larger set of organizations and institutions, most of them outside Warsaw and Krakow. These rural areas were disproportionately affected by the economic difficulties of the transition from communism, and eventually abandoned what Hinsey calls "the political economy of patience" to vote for far-right parties. Widespread corruption throughout the region slowed Central and Eastern Europe's ability to modernize; an absence of transparent institutions and regulations limited ordinary citizens' abilities to participate fairly in the new economy, while privileging members of the Communist *nomenklatura*, even under capitalism. Democracy was tainted by the oligarchs, organized crime groups, and ex-Communists who used it to vie for power.

Hinsey's interlocutors emphasize the importance of *Geschichtspolitik*, the politics of history, in which tendentious victim-narratives about the past are used by would-be leaders to mobilize a sense of shared resentment and, often, xenophobia. Pyotr Stolypin, the Katyń Massacre, the different visions of Poland voiced by Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmówski, the Jedwabne atrocities, the Treaty of Trianon, and the legacy of Václav Havel are only some of the historical flashpoints mentioned here, shaped and reshaped by antidemocratic leaders and thinkers. In a set of conversations at the heart of the book, Hungarian philosopher and dissident Ágnes Heller highlights the danger of imposed historical truth: "Cultural memory can be manipulated, and one's personal myths become entwined with the collective myth."

Unsurprisingly, the region's would-be autocrats have various shared tendencies as well. They have a relatively uniform set of enemies, for one thing: the EU, often personified by disparaging references to "Brussels," joined by the United States, international NGOs, and a caricatured version of liberal democracy. Liberalism is viewed as inherently destructive, decadent and relativistic, allowing the dangerous thought that all nations (and peoples) are inherently equal. Thus anti-liberalism is recast as the defense of the nation. Since the autocrats identify themselves with the nation, in what Heller refers to as a "tribal conservatism," anti-liberalism is their only refuge. Viktor Orbán becomes a useful example of the leader who tries to craft a "central political field of force," or utterly unified power in the hands of a single party, yet with an external façade of democratic practices and institutions, allowing that party to claim a popular mandate. Speedy constitutional changes, control of the media, increasingly brutal and xenophobic public discourse, and endemic corruption become frustratingly ingrained.

The hopes of organizers and intellectuals throughout the region are similar. Their goals are to craft a new political system based on transparency and professionalism, which helps citizens by "enlarging the scope of democratic freedoms." They seek an unflinching, realistic assessment of their countries' histories, warts and all, and, in particular, a blunt engagement with the horrors of the twentieth century. They hope for a greater range of political parties and a free media. They describe this as wanting "normal" politics, elections, a "normal" government and judiciary. Critics hope the international community will aid them from the outside by forcing their states to comply with the international agreements they have signed, and with what they term "international norms of behavior." Yet the road towards those goals is long. "We are trying to encourage civic participation [. . .] in general, so that a new political class can emerge. The problem is that we have to start from the ground up."

Hinsey's gift for the telling detail deepens her readers' engagement with these places and peoples. There are too many examples to list in a brief review, but just a few will do: The Czech general whose ability to converse with Hinsey in French is overwhelmed by his memories of the Velvet Revolution, echoed by her own recollections of sooty 1989 Prague versus the shiny surface of today's beautifully renovated jewel-box of a city. Two near-simultaneous conversations in Moscow before the 2012 election, with one interlocutor proud of Russian freedom and the other recounting stories of Putin's party offering bribes and rides to the polls. The near-collision of two military orchestras, both playing Chopin's *Marche funèbre*, before the gates of Warsaw's Presidential Palace, as the country mourned the death of Lech Kaczyński and the 93 others who died in the 2010 crash of the presidential plane at Smolensk airport. Václav Klaus's Salieri-style efforts at Havel's funeral to laud himself as the wiser politician. These and other powerful anecdotes linger in the imagination.

Not since the 1930s have analyses of "the rise of illiberalism" seemed so urgent, whether in the United States or in Central and Eastern Europe. Hinsey works to avoid pessimism or dismissal, ending each of her narrative chapters on something of a hopeful note. But the book's revealing last words are those of a tipsy German anchorwoman celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Wall at the Brandenburg Gate in 2009: "History and justice, we live with those subjects every day. In fact, we are sick of them." □

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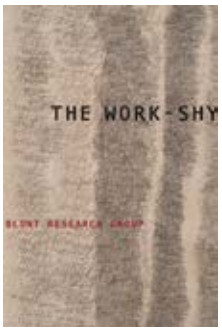


*The Work-Shy*
Blunt Research Group
(Wesleyen Poetry Series)
Wesleyen, 2016, 160 pages

Fall 2012 alumnus Daniel Tiffany is one of the masterminds behind *The Work-Shy*, described by publisher Wesleyan University Press as "a poetic archive of subcultures rooted in the lives and language of the unsettled." *The Work-Shy* painstakingly reconstructs a chorus of voices rescued from hermetic "colonies" and fragile communes, from the first youth prison in California to asylums for the chronically insane (voices mined, for example, from the Prinzhorn Collection, in Germany, and the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, in New York). Painful facts emerge about "sterilization mills" in California, where thousands of individuals became subject to compulsory eugenics procedures, and about the terror of solitary confinement. Interpretive poems in *The Work-Shy* "translate" these fragments into a wider field of social conflict, excavating the voices and fugitive knowledge of the repressed anew. *The Work-Shy* is published under the collective, anonymous authorship BLUNT RESEARCH GROUP.

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