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DOES CHURCH TEACHING CHANGE?
JOHN W. O'MALLEY

SHOULD WE EAT ANIMALS?

THE CASE OF BISHOP BRANSFIELD

FICTION BY WILLIAM GIRALDI

CRISIS AT THE BORDER

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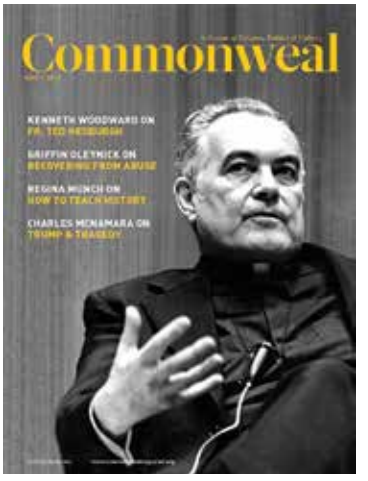
LETTERS

A debate on Christian flesh, a story about Fr. Hesburgh

BODY LANGUAGE

I'm grateful to John Cavadini for his characteristically thoughtful reading of my book *Christian Flesh* ("Wounds & Caresses," June 1). Some brief responses:

First, about patterns of action that comport with Jesus-cleaved flesh and those that don't. This is always a matter of degree, of more and less. "Comporting with" is a spectrum-concept rather than a toggle-concept. Cavadini seems to prefer the toggle: that some patterns of action just don't, in any respect, comport. That's a mistake, I think. The only (kind of) action that wouldn't comport at all would be purely evil; that, given the axiom that evil is privation, would have to be a non-action. This is one of the problems in speaking of actions as *malum in se*. (There are deep waters here, the waters of the chaos-flood.)



As to natural law. It's not a phrase I like, being redolent of an unconsidered paganism, as is evident in the tendency of its apologists to assimilate merely local *mores* to its content; it's also implicated with excessively rigid nature/grace distinctions. But I agree with Cavadini, of course, that there are commonalities between Christian and non-Christian flesh. Christians don't cease to be human, and there are patterns of action that comport well (and badly) with being human, just as there are those that comport well (and badly) with being Christian. There's overlap, but non-identity; and the analysis of flesh-as-such with which the book begins, and which Cavadini summarizes adequately, shows what some of the overlaps are.

As to sacramental theology. Cavadini's thought is too dichotomous here. It's not that either we are incorporated into the Body of Christ by baptism, or that we have our flesh transfigured by it; both are true, and it's part of the point of the book to pay attention to the second. To ignore that second is, *inter alia*, to make it difficult to give sense to the difference, honored scripturally and in canon law, that baptism makes to marriage. And (I hope) to attend to the second is to make possible some genuine advances in moral theology, which I detail in the parts of the book addressed to clothing, eating, and caressing.

As to the Eucharist (and cannibalism). Scripture and tradition do make it possible to speak of the consecrated host as Christ's flesh. I do think that I'm eating Jesus when I eat the host, Jesus fully and really present in the flesh. Perhaps Cavadini doesn't think this? If I didn't think that, and act as if I thought it, I wouldn't bother with it for a moment. Neither would I think, as I do, that some things I can do with and in my flesh makes such eating improper for me. The Eucharist is the making-present of flesh for eating. It can also be spoken of, and is typically spoken of, as the making-present of body for eating. Does any of this amount to cannibalism? I find myself unable to care about that question: it's a matter of stipulative definitions only. Again, it's part of the point of the book to explore what flesh-talk gives us on this topic, not to erase body-talk. Again, there's a tendency toward the either/or in Cavadini's comments on this. Why?

And on Christology. To say that Jesus is "a double-natured person, a divine-human person," as I do, just is Catholic orthodoxy: one person, two natures. Cavadini's way of putting things (human flesh belonging to a divine person) tends to divorce the personhood of Jesus Christ

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from what he is, which is "two natures which undergo no confusion (&c)," as Chalcedon says. Brief Christological formulations, mine and Cavadini's both, can always and easily enough be called into question if they don't serve the theological interests of the questioner. I could wish that Cavadini, as questioner, had shown more awareness of the wide and beautiful possibilities of speculative theology within the bounds of orthodoxy.

Is Christianity a sect? Yes, if that means that not everyone's flesh is cleaved to Jesus' in baptism. Yes, if that means that there are patterns of action proper to Christian flesh that aren't proper to pagan flesh (I discuss, *inter alia*, celibacy and fasting under this rubric in the book). No, if that means that Christian flesh isn't human flesh (but the book is explicit in its rejection of that view). From a Christian point of view, I think, there are three subkinds of human flesh: pagan, Jewish, and Christian, each with its own proprieties and intimacies. No Gnosticism there, no elitism; just a sober statement of the state of things. Does Cavadini think otherwise? It'd be hard, I think, to give a properly Christian defense of thinking otherwise.

Addressing and elucidating disagreements such as these is among the things theology is for; I'm grateful to Cavadini for doing theology with me. Providing space for disagreements such as these is among the things *Commonweal* is for; I'm grateful to the magazine and its editorial staff for doing its part.

PAUL GRIFFITHS
Bryson City, N.C.

JOHN CAVADINI REPLIES:

Thanks for the response to my *dubia*. I will rely on the original review as my primary reply, for to my mind the issues I raised were deflected, rather than treated, in the response to my review. But here are a few observations in direct reply: To say that a given act (not "pattern of actions") is *malum in se* or intrinsically evil is not the same as saying it is "purely evil." This is a deflection. Rape (including rape of children) and the direct deliberate killing of the innocent, for example: Do these ever "comport" with "human flesh"? If not, are all things "licit" for "Christian flesh"? To dismiss natural law as a traditional element of Catholic moral theology without saying it is being dismissed or on what grounds, and to replace it with a reliance on two passages from 1 Corinthians which are themselves highly contested, seems questionable as theological method. To see the "wide and beautiful possibilities of speculative theology" is not the same as engaging in idiosyncratic reflection without accounting for foundations. And of course there is a place for "flesh" language in sacramental theology and ecclesiology, but my point was that the language that is dominant in the tradition and in the Bible is "body" language, and preserving the balance protects us from the thinning of sacramental language into an ambiguous physicalism (for the Eucharist) and an unduly sectarian theology (of the church, meaning one that emphasizes the church's separation from the world rather than its "ordering toward" the world). It is the preservation of sacramental language as such that preserves us from the dichotomizing that Griffiths ascribes to my review—the charge of dichotomizing is a deflection. As for cannibalism, the early Christians were faced with this charge and they did not have the luxury of "not caring," nor does a theology teacher facing questions from a first-year class have the luxury of deflecting the question. With regard to Christology, the language I used is not "Cavadini's language" but drawn from authoritative tradition. The person of Christ is the divine person of the Word (reference given in review), who is intimately united with the flesh proper to His human nature, and thus the Incarnation is itself the foundation of all mediatorial (non-dichotomous) sacramental language. Jesus is not a "divine-human person," as this language has no standing in the tradition. Nor is it correct to say that "what Jesus Christ is" "is two natures which undergo no confusion," etc. He is "one and the same Christ, Lord, and only-begotten Son to be acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion." It is the imprecise use of language that tends to separate the "personhood" of Jesus from "what he is," thus undercutting the sacramental theology derivative from Christology. Speculative theology is only as compelling as the distinctions it carries forward, without confusion, change, division, or separation. Well, at least without the first one!

A PERSON FULLY REALIZED

A year after Ken Woodward graduated from Notre Dame ("History or Hit Job?" June 1), Father Ted Hesburgh and I toured every African university south of the Sahara in the summer of 1958. I got to know him well and Woodward's assessment of him rings true. Here is one telling story.

We met on campus shortly after graduation and I went first to New York City, carrying some of his luggage. When we met a few days later, he asked, "Where is the Mass kit?" Entrusted with a small, indispensable suitcase containing his means for saying Mass, I had left it on the New York Central railroad.

He could have been furious but instead said simply, "Let's go find it." Sure enough, the attendant in Grand Central Terminal greeted us with a big grin and said, "I been waitin' for ya, Father!"

The Hesburgh I knew was fair and even-tempered, companionable and at ease, a talker fascinated by science, ready to explain space exploration or atomic energy in thirteen countries in five languages. He said Mass and his office faithfully but never seemed pious or preachy.

Hesburgh inspired some of us in student government to take seriously Monsignor John Tracy Ellis's call to cast off the anti-intellectualism of American Catholics, as Woodward noted. Indeed, few of us were intellectuals. We nonetheless launched modest "intellectual discussion groups" in the dorms and began to rethink where we were going. Then barely forty, Hesburgh was setting Notre Dame on a fascinating and almost entirely favorable course upward. He did the same for me.

Hesburgh was a good and faithful priest but I experienced him first as a man, with a big brain and spirit. "The glory of God is a human person fully realized," Irenaeus wrote. That seems appropriate when considering Ted Hesburgh.

JERRY BRADY
Boise, Idaho

Cross the Bridge

Much has been written, in these pages and elsewhere, about how the sex-abuse crisis has undermined the credibility and moral authority of Catholic bishops. Their many failures in addressing that crisis have diminished their ability to bear prophetic witness to the Gospel at a moment when this country is in desperate need of it. The mostly self-inflicted wounds to episcopal authority will not heal overnight, as at least some of the bishops appear to understand. It takes a long time to build trust, and longer still to rebuild it.

Now another crisis could provide an occasion for the bishops to show that they are more than just company men preoccupied with institutional self-preservation—if only they would recognize this opportunity and seize it. The Trump administration's vicious mistreatment of undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers, most of them Catholics from Central America, demands a vigorous response from the church's leadership. That response cannot be limited to carefully modulated expressions of even more carefully qualified disapproval—nor indeed to any mere expression: it must also involve actions. If, in the abuse crisis, the U.S. bishops got in trouble by trying too hard to protect themselves and the material resources of their dioceses, in this crisis they can succeed only by taking risks and making some serious sacrifices.

Among the things they may have to surrender is their cozy relationship with the GOP. Afraid of alienating a party they still want to influence, and grateful to it for its official opposition to abortion, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has so far been unwilling to denounce Trump's border policies as emphatically as it denounced the Obama administration's contraception mandate. The latter was treated as an existential threat to the Catholic faith in America, while the former has too often been lamented as if it were just a lapse of judgment, perhaps a little excessive. The circumstances require something much stronger.

Something like what Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, did on June 27. First, he led a group of migrants who had been denied entry to the United States across the Good Neighbor International Bridge into Ciudad Juárez. Then, after speaking and praying with priests and activists gathered there, Seitz walked with seven other migrants back across the bridge into El Paso, where they were met by border officials. The bishop reports that a "tense" exchange followed, but in the end these migrants were all allowed to enter the country.

Before crossing the bridge into Mexico, Bishop Seitz spoke the following words:

> A government and society which view fleeing children and families as threats; a government which treats children in U.S. custody worse than animals; a government and society who turn their backs on pregnant mothers, babies, and families and make them wait in Ciudad Juárez without a thought to the crushing consequences on this challenged city.… This government and this society are not well. We suffer from a life-threatening case of hardening of the heart. […] In the America of today, is there no more Golden Rule? Have we forgotten the lessons of Scripture? Have we forgotten the commandment to love? Have we forgotten God?

That such questions now need to be asked indicates the gravity of the situation. This is not a time for the bishops to pull their punches or hedge their bets. This is a time for them to call on Catholics to do whatever it takes to assist those who are being rounded up in ICE raids or detained in wretched, dehumanizing conditions at the border; a time to demand that children separated from their families be reunited with them as soon as possible.

Whatever-it-takes may include civil disobedience; and if it does, then the bishops should lead by example. When seventy Catholics, including men and women religious, were arrested near the U.S. Capitol during a recent demonstration against President Trump's border policies, several bishops issued statements of strong support for them. So long as those policies remain in force, there should be more such protests all over the country, and the bishops themselves should participate, even at the risk of arrest. A few Catholic parishes and retreat centers have offered themselves as sanctuaries for families in danger of being separated by ICE agents. That is a good start. Now the bishops should collectively encourage Catholic churches throughout the country to do the same, and they should show they're serious about this by turning vacant diocesan buildings into sanctuaries and opening the doors of their own chanceries to those in need of refuge. This may entail serious legal complications. If it does, so be it. Bishops are pastors before they are property managers, and they must be ready to override the advice of their lawyers. It's time for them to join Bishop Seitz—to cross the bridge from cautious criticism of the Trump administration's cruelties to open defiance of them. ■

Rosemary Deen

Enchanter

MARIE PONSOT (1921–2019)

We mourn the death of our friend and colleague, the poet Marie Ponsot, who died at ninety-eight on Friday, July 5. Writing copiously but not publishing for almost twenty-five years at the busiest time of her life—for she had married a French painter, Claude Ponsot, and had seven children—Marie ended with seven books of poetry and most of the awards American poets seek, including the Poetry Society of America Shelley Award, the Frost Medal for life time achievement, and the Ruth Lilly Award.

Starting as a part-time teacher in the English Department of Queens College, Marie retired professor emerita. She taught graduate poetry workshops at Columbia, NYU, the New School, and the 92nd Street Y. She was a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She read the many entries for awards for PSA—read all she was sent, not just those by a favorite or student.

Aside from prominent honors, obscure but crucial work. She was for twenty-four years a member of the PEN Prison Writing Committee. She wrote the PEN Handbook for Writers in Prison, read the poetry entries, and tirelessly fundraised. (She was also briefly one of this magazine's poetry editors.)

Her teaching was as remarkable as her poetry. Margaret Shirk, a former student, observed, "Those who only know Marie as poet miss the significance of her life at Queens College, where she gave a whole legion of not poets, not people ambitious as writers, rather people needing to know how to write and succeed at it, the skills to write expository prose, the work of knowing and knowledge." These were students who couldn't pass a minimum-competency writing exam, students no one else wanted to teach. These she taught, using her knowledge and love of languages and literature, by giving them a body of work that everyone could do and no one could do wrong. In the pleasure and ease of incremental repetition, writing became the habit of art.

ROSEMARY DEEN

Marie was endowed with genius and its astonishing sweep, swiftness, and power. I once overheard a student call her a sorceress. Melodramatic, but telling. She was enchanting. We were all in love with her, and it was true love. She empowered us: thanks to her, we were more of the best of ourselves than we ever imagined we could be.

Marie once said in an interview, "Power over others is more than any human can bear or carry out." She knew that truth. She devoted her lifetime to discovering and developing ways of giving others power over themselves. She called it teaching. Or she called it friendship. Or mothering. Or poetry in its ease, plenty, and joy.

Enchantment is not easily controlled, and there was a good share of suffering in her life. Some desolation. That tempers. And if you learn juggling or write a sonnet every day, you may be able to throw things out, gain grace, or at least fellow-feeling. ■

Rosemary Deen *is the poetry editor of* Commonweal *and the author of* Naming the Light: A Week of Years.

Regina Munch

Cruelty's the Point

PUNISHING HUMANITARIAN ACTIVISTS AT THE BORDER

On July 2, federal prosecutors announced that they would retry Scott Warren, an activist with the Arizona-based humanitarian group No More Deaths (NMD), after a hung jury failed to convict him on charges of conspiracy and harboring migrants in the United States illegally. Warren's case first made headlines in January 2018 when he and seven other activists were charged with trespassing and littering in the course of their humanitarian work—providing stores of food, water, and other supplies along the treacherous desert routes through which migrants enter the United States, as well as recovering and helping to identify the bodies of those who died on the journey.

To activists and volunteers at the border, cases brought against humanitarian workers amount to a strategy of harassment by government and law enforcement to deter them from their work. The legal conflation of giving basic aid—in the charges brought against Warren, providing "food, water, clean clothes and beds"—with "harboring" migrants has been used to threaten other activists besides Warren with felony charges. NMD activists were targeted for observation by Border Patrol and federal officials in April 2017, the same month that then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions traveled to the Arizona border to order the prosecution of additional harboring and smuggling cases. At the same time, officials began criminalizing aspects of the activists' work—driving on roads or leaving "personal property" (specifically, water containers, food, blankets, and medical supplies) on federal land, and even going so far as to ban NMD activists from the wildlife refuge through which migrants were traveling—and where activists have located some of the 3,000 bodies that have been found throughout Pima County, Arizona, since 2000.

The case of Warren and NMD is just one instance in a broader trend. The same day that Warren's retrial was announced, Amnesty International featured his case in a report detailing harassment of activists, humanitarian-aid workers, lawyers, and journalists along the southern border—including threats and intimidation as well as illegal surveillance, searches, and detention.

Arguably, NMD and groups like it are providing a public service—recovering the remains of those who have died, working with law enforcement to identify them, and using private donations to reduce the deadliness of the desert journey. So why is the government doing everything it can to prevent their work?

In short, cruelty is the point. A strategy of "prevention through deterrence"—making crossing the border so perilous and grueling that people will choose not to attempt it—has dominated U.S. policy toward migration and the border for decades. (The same rationale lurked beneath the Obama administration's buildup of detention centers and the Trump administration's practice of separating children from their parents.) In the mid-1990s, after observing that migrants entered illegally most often in cities, Border Patrol and the Pentagon began to build up security in major ports of entry. Knowing that this would force someone attempting to enter the United States to take a far more dangerous route through the desert, government officials believed migrants would be deterred. Instead, it increased migrant deaths. In Pima County, where No More Deaths is based, the number of dead jumped from about twelve per year in the 1990s to 155 per year after the policy was implemented. Those numbers reflect only remains that were found and catalogued; the true number of dead is very likely higher.

For a brief time after these policies were established, NMD worked in conjunction with Border Patrol, informing them of aid drops and coordinating searches for missing persons. But the relationship soon changed. In January 2018, the group released a report cataloging instances of Border Patrol gleefully destroying water containers placed along migration routes, effectively condemning people to die of thirst and exposure; the report also cited cases of officers harassing volunteers as they deposited supplies and searched for bodies. Border Patrol officials deny the accusations, but it is clear that they were nervous about them: internal emails and text messages suggest that the report spurred the agency to target Warren quickly. He was arrested just hours after its release.

In an op-ed for the *Washington Post* during his first trial, Warren considered the implications of the case brought against him. As the government expands its definitions of "transportation" and "harboring" of people in the country illegally, a conviction in his case (or, as is now possible, in his retrial) would set a "dangerous precedent." What would these new definitions mean for Americans living with relatives of illegal status? Would it include sharing an apartment? Transporting them in a car? Merely knowing a person's whereabouts without reporting them?

Who is an alien? Who is my neighbor? Warren's answer is clear: "Whatever happens with my trial, the next day, someone will walk in from the desert and knock on someone's door.... If they are thirsty, we will offer them water; we will not ask for documents beforehand." ■

Rita Ferrone

Why the 'Metropolitan Plan' Doesn't Work

EXHIBIT A: BISHOP BRANSFIELD

The now-glaring weakness of the USCCB's 2002 Dallas Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People was that it made no provision for dealing with *bishops* who engage in sexual misconduct. In the wake of the scandal surrounding Theodore McCarrick, who had escaped the consequences of his abuses for decades, the American bishops realized this gap had to be closed. Without some mechanism for holding bishops accountable, the trust that the hierarchy hoped to rebuild after the devastating revelations of clergy abuse of children could never be achieved.

In the course of discussions in the months following the McCarrick revelations, two proposals emerged: an independent lay-run board could investigate a bishop and report to Rome, or a case could be referred to the metropolitan bishop of the region (a metropolitan is the bishop of the chief see of an ecclesiastical province, usually an archdiocese), who would oversee the investigation and send his findings to Rome. In either case, the pope would make a final determination of the fate of the bishop.

Not surprisingly, the latter option (first proposed by Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago) was the one favored by most American bishops and the Vatican. It decentralizes the work of investigating accusations. It avoids thorny practical questions about who chooses the members of the lay board. And, critically, it sidesteps the canonical "problem" of lay people in the church being placed in a position of authority over bishops.

The guidelines issued this spring by Pope Francis endorsed the "metropolitan plan." At their June meeting in Baltimore, the American bishops adopted it, though with some debate over whether lay involvement in the process should be mandatory or optional. They made it optional.

As if by an act of divine providence, however, the first trial run of a metropolitan-centered strategy to contain abusive bishops has provided a spectacular public demonstration of how this plan can fail. The case I am referring to, of course, is that of Bishop Michael Bransfield of the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia, who has been suspended from ministry over multiple allegations of sexual harassment and misuse of diocesan funds. Pope Francis put Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore in charge of the investigation. Lori is the metropolitan of the province in which the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston is located. The investigation was carried out, and the results sent to Rome. According to an article published in the *Washington Post*, however, that report had been redacted, on the order of Archbishop Lori, to hide the names of high-ranking prelates who had received substantial cash gifts from Bransfield during his tenure at Wheeling-Charleston. That list of gift recipients included Lori himself.

Compared with financial scandals in public life, the amount Bransfield spent on gifts, $350,000, was not an enormous sum. But given the poverty of West Virginia, it was both a slap in the face to the poor, and a tawdry way of cheating those institutions that serve the diocese. Bishop Bransfield was not indiscriminate in his pattern of giving. He gave monetary gifts to powerful cardinals and archbishops, and to young priests he hoped to seduce.

He was drawing on a fund derived from oil-rich land in Texas that had been deeded to the diocese decades ago—a source of revenue unknown to most people in the diocese. Rather than use that money to help the needy or support good works of the diocese, Bransfield used it to fund a luxurious lifestyle for himself and to line the pockets of other clerics who were in a position to do him future favors. The lifestyle expenditures included $1,000 a month on alcohol, fresh flowers delivered daily to the chancery to the tune of $100 a day, first-class travel, and a $4.6 million renovation of his residence.

To whom did all this money actually belong? Bransfield said, of the oil-rights income, "I own this." And he spent it accordingly. To avoid running afoul of tax law, which requires diocesan funds to be spent on charitable activities, he adopted a procedure known as "grossing up." Every time a check was written drawing on diocesan funds for what some have called "bribes" and others "palm greasing," he had that sum added to his salary. The money, in truth, did not belong to Bransfield. It belonged to the diocese. The fourth-century bishop and doctor of the church St. John Chrysostom would say it belonged to God, and its rightful destination was the poor. But it didn't get there.

Some of the gift recipients have been silent (Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop Peter Wells, and others). Some have been quick to denounce any suggestion of impropriety (Archbishops William Lori and Carlo Maria Viganò; Cardinals Kevin Farrell, Raymond Burke, and Donald Wuerl, among others). Some are sending the money back to the diocese, while others have claimed they gave Bransfield's gifts to charity. None of these responses, however, cleared the air.

Bransfield sent $29,000 to renovate Cardinal Farrell's apartment in Rome: Does it really seem plausible he did this out of disinterested charity, just at the point when Farrell was appointed to an important position in the Curia? Is there really no suggestion of currying favor in sending $5,000 to Lori as a personal gift—not quite "through the

Bishop Michael Bransfield in 2016

years," as Lori claims, but precisely on the occasion of his being appointed Archbishop of Baltimore and, therefore, metropolitan? Bransfield also gave cash gifts to young clerics from whom he wanted sexual favors. Catholics now recognize this as grooming behavior and have no trouble imagining that something was expected in return. Yet when significant sums of money are given to senior clerics, we're supposed to imagine there was nothing given in return.

The cultivation of favorable relationships through gifts to papal nuncios represents a particularly troubling problem. The nuncio is a key link in the chain of communication to the Vatican. Former nuncio Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò received $6,000 from Bransfield, and also was treated to a ride in a private jet at the cost of another $7,687 to the diocese. Viganò claims that in the United States gifts to the nuncio are common practice among bishops, and it would have been rude to refuse. At Christmastime, he said, the checks came pouring in—anywhere from $100 to $1,000. Viganò's predecessor in the nunciature, Pietro Sambi, received checks from Bransfield totaling $28,000. One cannot but wonder what consideration he received in return. A nuncio can influence appointments and either convey or suppress complaints. In Bransfield's case, this may well have been critical. His predatory sexual behavior was longstanding. His questionable financial practices in West Virginia had been raising red flags since at least 2012. Yet it was not until 2018, after he retired, that an investigation was initiated.

The *Washington Post* obtained leaked copies of both the original investigative report and the version that suppressed the names, and it detailed the whole affair in an article published on June 5, a week before the bishops' meeting at which the "metropolitan plan" was adopted. Lori did not deny it, but rather confirmed his role in the report's redaction in a written statement and a video that attempted to neutralize the impact of this revelation. He explained that he had decided to delete the names because they would be "a distraction." He apologized for this decision. In hindsight, he said, the names ought to have been included as a gesture of transparency, along with a note saying there was no *quid pro quo* for the gifts.

But on what basis could Lori claim that there was no reciprocity? The investigators were not charged with finding out what other bishops did after receiving Bransfield's gifts; they were investigating the bishop of Wheeling-Charleston—primarily his sexual misconduct but also his misuse of church funds. Neither Lori himself nor the investigators could know definitively that Bransfield received no special treatment from those bishops he showered with cash.

In fact, it seems likely that he did. Was Bransfield not repeatedly placed in positions of trust? Was he not promoted? Did he not proceed for years, unhindered by investigation despite complaints against him? Msgr. Kevin Quirk, rector of the cathedral in Wheeling and a close associate of Bransfield, said in the letter to Lori that finally precipitated the investigation: "It is my own opinion that His Excellency makes use of monetary gifts, such as those noted above, to higher ranking ecclesiastics and gifts to subordinates to purchase influence from the former and compliance or loyalty from the latter." How naïve Lori must think American Catholics are. At this point, the faithful are rightly skeptical of self-exonerating statements that bishops make after a scandal breaks or when they have been caught in an embarrassing position. We have been told half-truths or outright lies too many times.

The financial angle in this case is especially worthy of notice because Bransfield spent much of his career in positions where he handled considerable amounts of money. He was president of the Papal Foundation, an international nonprofit with an endowment of $200 million, which along with other financial irregularities was recently found to have no record of how $3 million meant for grant-funding was actually spent. Many checks were simply sent to nuncios in various countries, but no one knew where the money ended up. Before being named bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, Bransfield was rector for thirteen years at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception—the largest church in America—where he oversaw building projects and the acquisition of artwork involving donations of millions of dollars. He served on the shrine's Board of Trustees, as well as the Board of Trustees of St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia. He even served for a term as treasurer of the USCCB.

Of course, it is possible that he was prevented from cheating the National Shrine or St. Charles Seminary or the USCCB by means of rigorous audits. But that Bransfield's manner of handling money developed only after he became bishop of Wheeling-Charleston is as improbable as the idea that his acts of sexual harassment had no precedent earlier in his career (there were, in fact, complaints against him when he worked in a high school in Philadelphia, and during his time in Washington).

As the sex-abuse crisis has played out, observers have predicted that the next scandal will be the hierarchy's mis-

CNS PHOTO / GREGORY A. SHEMITZ

management of money, funds that bishops control with little or no accountability. Thanks to the Bransfield case, that can of worms is now officially open.

But the more immediate question is what to make of the "metropolitan plan" that has now been adopted in the United States as policy. Lori carried out the mandate to investigate Bransfield, yet he obviously wanted, at the same time, to protect himself and other members of the hierarchy from scrutiny. As metropolitan in charge of the investigation, he was in a position to do that. The structural question here raised is important: Shouldn't there have been another check on the investigation to ensure transparency and accountability?

Metropolitans, after all, are not *de facto* more trustworthy than other bishops. There have been well-documented scandals (including cover-ups and mismanaged abuse cases) involving metropolitans over the past twenty years—McCarrick, Wuerl, Neinstedt, Weakland, Mahoney, and Law, to name but a few. It's hard to have confidence that this era is behind us. The current USCCB president, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, also a metropolitan, is trailing a series of cases he is alleged to have mishandled. Bishops who have worked hard to do the right thing in response to the abuse crisis may resent being treated with suspicion, but sadly this is where we are. Trust is lacking for a reason.

The Bransfield case provides a clear example of how the investigation of a bishop is actually a sprawling matter, and not quite analogous to the investigation of a priest. What happens when pursuing the case of a brother bishop involves not only bringing that bishop to justice, but also publicly acknowledging questionable or downright discreditable actions by others? How far back in time ought an investigation go, and how far should it reach? It is difficult to believe that self-interest will not play a role in how a fellow bishop handles such cases. The crux of the objection to the "metropolitan plan" is that it is essentially a plan of self-policing.

Under such circumstances, there is no assurance of transparency. As this article goes to press, the Vatican has announced its disciplinary measures against Bishop Bransfield: he may not reside in the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston nor celebrate liturgy in public, and he must make some sort of "personal amends," the nature of which will be negotiated with his successor (there is no mention of financial restitution). Who is that successor? Lori's auxiliary bishop: Mark Brennan.

Would a system of checks administered by lay people work any better? Lori noted in his video that no one on the (lay) investigative team objected when he told them to leave the names out of the report. If true, this is a troubling fact. At the same time, one can't forget that in a system such as our own, where there is a grave disparity of power between clergy and laity, it is not always easy for those with less power to speak up against the wishes of the bishop in charge. Silence, in the Bransfield case, may not have signified consent. After all, *someone* leaked those two reports to the *Washington Post*.

Right now, as the sordid Bransfield episode demonstrates, the secular media is all that stands between us and the self-interested interventions of whoever happens to be in charge at the time. Obviously, this is not sufficient. Recourse to the airing of scandal in newspapers in order to solve internal problems of transparency and accountability is a confession of failure. The press remains critically important to a free society, but it should not be the first line of defense for those who want to see justice done within the church. We need a better system. ■

WEASEL

He thought little of the cattle-freight rumbling on its rails,
the paddocks of horses, the sheepfold always crammed
with living wool. Frost on the flatland coursed
beneath him, and the river faded offstage, and even
the cricket in the thorn and the tick on the rye envied,
he was sure, the moonlight on his silken pelt.

He heard the bell waking the household,
and the rooster's alarm, but he wondered
about the ordinary not at all, the hawk with her talon,
the snake with her long-arriving tongue,
all nothing compared with the single supple
arm of his talent with its legendary teeth.

When the hound loosed her ragged clamor,
and the rifle its seed, surely his hubris
was forgivable as he let his pursuit
see him in his tawny glamor, gazing back
with his inspiring profile to watch them coming on,
village and homestead, churchwarden and dandy,
all shocked at his bloody prowess but
harmless to his career in those storied days
when he seized without mercy,
killed at his leisure,
in the early hours of his glory when
he lived on what he thought he was.

—Michael Cadnum

Michael Cadnum has published more than three dozen books, both poetry and fiction. He is currently working on his next book of poetry, The Promised Rain.

Austen Ivereigh

Between Two Borises

WILL THE UNITED KINGDOM'S NEW PRIME MINISTER LEAD IT OFF A CLIFF?

Because I appeared on TV and seemed to know a few people in public life, the woman who became my wife in July 2010 was under the illusion that I was in some way famous. "At least no one will recognize you here," she told me with satisfaction as we went from a safari camp in Tanzania to a tiny beach island called Lazy Lagoon.

But then Boris Johnson swept in with his family, his blonde mop, his booming Eton voice, and his 1950s public-school exclamations. "Crikey, what are you doing here?" he asked while pumping my hand, adding: "How's the pope?" (Benedict XVI was coming to London a few weeks later, and I had been involved in the communication of the visit.)

While my wife rolled her eyes in that told-you-so way wives do, I shared jokes and reminiscences with the then-mayor of London, who this week becomes the UK's prime minister after winning the Conservative Party leadership on a promise he can't possibly keep: to take the United Kingdom out of the European Union by October 31.

I had gotten to know Boris, a little, a couple of years earlier, while leading a campaign urging an "amnesty" for long-term undocumented migrants. The campaign had been inspired by a call from then-archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who had in turn been inspired by the U.S. bishops' regularization campaigns. The United Kingdom was reckoned at the time to have close to a million long-term visa overstayers and asylum seekers.

Boris entered the picture because he was then editor of the *Spectator*, and commissioned from me an article that urged a one-off pathway to citizenship for those who had put down roots in the UK. Softened up by the arguments in my article, Boris later adopted the idea while running for mayor of London the following year, after meetings with the coalition of churches, mosques, and charities behind our Strangers into Citizens campaign.

By then, he had served for nearly a decade as a Member of Parliament for Henley-on-Thames, waiting for an opportu-

CNS PHOTO / TOBY MELVILLE, REUTERS

Boris Johnson speaks after being announced as Britain's next prime minister, July 23, 2019, at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in London

nity to move ahead but still best known as a columnist and TV celebrity. That changed during the mayoral campaign. At a hustings we organized for twenty thousand Londoners to hold the candidates to account, Boris was charming, funny, self-deprecating, and, in his chaotic way, exciting.

Unlike the left-wing incumbent, "Red" Ken Livingstone, who drily sought to claim our citizens' demands for decent housing and living wages as his policy achievements, Boris made us feel as if we were the protagonists of change. He was bumbling, even endearing; he had joie de vivre, energy, promise—and charm. He could scan a crowd and find a point of engagement almost by instinct. Spotting a fair number of hijabs in the crowd, he had spoken about his Turkish great-grandfather, Ali Kemal, and his respect for Islam. Afterwards, while Red Ken slipped away unseen, Boris went among the people, mobbed by Muslim mothers, exchanging jokes and posing for selfies.

I saw that night in Westminster Central Hall elements of a serious politician that have since become much clearer: ruthless ambition, a capacity to "read" the public's mood, and an ability to appeal to many different constituencies at the same time. When he won the mayoral election in a city that had long been in a Labour stronghold, he made the Tories sit up straight. When he won for a second time, many Tories became convinced he was the One.

Boris is not a charlatan. As mayor he did his best to deliver on his promises to us on living wages and housing and commissioned a report into a "migrant amnesty" that made use of our research and came down in favor of our proposal. It was our biggest success. He defends the idea even now, earning himself a slap on the wrist from anti-immigration hardliners.

Boris is hard to pin down ideologically. A libertarian who made his journalistic career out of poking fun at the authorities in Brussels, a socially liberal conservative who back in 2016 sniffed the national-populist wind and became the figurehead of the campaign to leave the European Union, he can be infuriating in his desire to please contradictory constituencies. The Boris who spoke proudly to the hijab-clad women at the London Citizens assembly back in 2008 is the same Boris who said women who wear niqabs look like letter boxes and bank robbers. But that, he added, wasn't a reason to ban them. Thus, Boris pulls off a dog-whistle appeal to those anxious about immigration and Islam, while at the same time defending pluralism and toleration.

The Boris who is proud of raising the living wage (another one of our Citizens campaigns) for the poorest began his conservative leadership campaign pledging to lower taxes for the wealthy. The Boris who as mayor promoted London as business capital of the world is the same Boris who dismissed business concerns about a no-deal Brexit with a Saxon expletive. Truth is, Boris can take almost any view of anything and plug it with passionate intensity, just as he sometimes argues himself to a standstill.

"There's always been two Borises," observed George Osborne, the former chancellor of the exchequer, back in May. "There's hard-Brexit Boris and the mayor who won Tory victories in a city that previously always voted Labour…. He likes to have two articles to hand." This was literally true in the case of the 2016 referendum. After a lifetime of equivocating over the UK's membership in the EU—along the way, arguing in favor of Turkey's admission to the EU—he wrestled with which way to jump in three separate newspaper columns—two making the case for Brexit, the third for Remain. Having made up his mind in February 2016, he threw his celebrity behind Vote Leave, and played a crucial role in its victory. But no one was more shocked the morning of the result, June 24. When the European Council president, Donald Tusk, famously said there would be "a special place in hell" for those who urged Brexit "without even a sketch of a plan," he surely meant Boris.

This ability to inhabit an idea, and to run at it courageously and quixotically while swatting away details and facts that get in its way—this is what makes Boris such a good newspaper columnist, and such a dangerous leader. After his case crumbles under the weight of contradictory evidence, he abandons it for something else, turning his new theme into a lifelong passion. Colleagues at the *Telegraph* recall him shutting himself away close to the deadline and working himself into a fist-pumping frenzy in order to make the case for which he was (for that moment, at least) the most ardent advocate.

Boris is all about the big idea, and the passion to believe it. Thus his victory this week: in the midst of my country's greatest political crisis in peacetime, a crisis brought on by an inability to confront the reality of Brexit, Boris points to the moon. "If they could use hand-knitted computer code to make a frictionless re-entry to Earth's atmosphere in 1969, we can solve the problem of frictionless trade at the Northern Irish border," he claimed on Monday in the *Daily Telegraph.* How? Don't ask. What matters is to wave our flags and recover our can-do spirit.

Even when he was a reporter in Brussels, penning hilarious *Telegraph* stories about the follies of the European Union, Boris was essentially an opinion columnist. What mattered was always the consistency of his narrative—the caricatures he drew of the ham-fisted and high-handed, the threat to the British way of life from control-freak bureaucrats—rather than the truth: the stories were almost always based on wild exaggerations or grotesque conclusions from the thinnest of rumors. Long before *Breitbart*, Boris knew what his readers wanted and gave it to them in spades.

Last week he did it again, brandishing a fish in a plastic wrapper that came, he said, from a "kipper smoker from the Isle of Man," who, thanks to EU rules, could only mail kippers using a plastic ice pillow: costly for his business, unnecessary red tape, and damaging to the environment. His audience of Tory faithful roared with delight. By the time it turned out that it was Britain, not Brussels, that made the mail-order kipper rules, people had moved on.

When we met Boris and his wife and four children on Lazy Lagoon Island in 2010, he was trying to make it up to her for an affair that had recently become public. He has since left Marina, to be with a woman much younger, whose furious row with him in June was recorded by a neighbor. It is the latest in a long series of public affairs and relationships. Those who know him say he is ruled by his feelings, and needs the intensity of affairs. Andrew Gimson, a friend and his first biographer, says Boris "takes a cavalier attitude to mere morality. The knowledge that he is being sincere is good enough for him."

The affairs—about which Boris has brazenly lied in the past—have each time threatened to finish him politically, but his supporters price in the chaos and the narcissism. Many in the Conservative Party say his mischievous streak will strike fear into Brussels, making them take his threat of a no-deal Brexit more seriously. Consumed, now, by the strange sub-nationalist faith that Brexit produces, they are convinced that Boris carries the magic elixir that has so far been wanting: he will get the kind of deal that Theresa May could not.

Emotion, in other words, is driving out facts, at a time that calls for coldly staring at hard, realistic choices. As former prime minister Tony Blair—who increasingly sounds like the only adult in the room—points out, Britain's Brexit rests on three mutually inconsistent positions: that the United Kingdom should leave the single market and the customs union; that the border between Ireland, an EU member, and the north of Ireland should be frictionless; and that Northern Ireland should be in the same relationship with EU countries that the rest of the UK will be in. The so-called "backstop," agreed upon by London and Brussels, was supposed to resolve this conundrum. To meet the British request that nothing should endanger the Irish peace process, Brussels agreed to let the UK remain in the customs union until the future UK-EU relationship was thrashed out.

But the backstop is anathema to the true-believer Brexiteers, and Boris says he will be asking Brussels to "delete" it, to have all the border issues discussed in a future negotiation—or proceed to leave on October 31 without a deal. The first cannot happen without the EU abandoning Ireland, which it will not do; and the second is not only irresponsible but unacceptable to Parliament, which will seek to block it. Britain, in short, is heading to a cliff edge ("cripes," as Boris might say) under a columnist-turned-politician intoxicated by his own vehemently held but reality-starved convictions. If ever anyone needed Pope Francis's maxim "Reality is superior to ideas" written above his head, it is Boris. ■

Austen Ivereigh *is the pope's biographer. His new book* Wounded Shepherd: Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church *will be published in the fall by Henry Holt.*

George E. Demacopoulos

The Pope's Relic Diplomacy

CAN A BONE SHARD MEND A SCHISM?

In June 594, Pope Gregory the Great received a letter from Constantina, the Byzantine empress, asking him to send the head of St. Paul to Constantinople so that she and others might benefit from venerating the bodily remains of such a great saint. St. Gregory denied her request, noting that it was not the custom of the Roman Church to dismember the bodies of the canonized.

A great deal has happened between Rome and Constantinople since the sixth century, but Pope Francis's decision last month to send the Ecumenical Patriarch an actual portion of the body of St. Peter should be understood as nothing short of remarkable. More than anything else, it is a clear indication of the pontiff's desire to advance the cause of Christian unity.

A point of clarification might help to demonstrate why Francis's unprecedented gift is so significant. Since late antiquity, the bishops of Rome have used relics to pursue diplomatic ends. But the relics they distributed were typically not the actual physical remains of the saints. Rather, they were a piece of cloth or metal that had come into contact with a saint's body. For most of its history, the Vatican collected the bodily relics of the saints; it was not a distribution center.

St. Gregory wrote more about the miraculous power of relics than any other early Christian writer. He was also the first pope to use the relics of St. Peter as a central piece of his international diplomacy. On more than a dozen occasions, the pontiff sent the filings of the chains that had bound St. Peter to secular and ecclesiastical officials, whether to get their support for a papal initiative or to thank them for having given it.

In the centuries after Gregory's tenure, Rome began to accumulate a large number of bodily relics. Some might say this was done out of devotion, others might argue that it was a strategy designed to assert control over popular devotion. Either way, only Constantinople possessed more relics than Rome…until it didn't. In the thirteenth century, crusaders sacked Constantinople and seized its religious treasure. Some of the looted relics went to monasteries and cathedrals across western Europe, but the majority went to Rome.

From the Crusades until the twentieth century, Christian East and Christian West suffered a prolonged state of hostility. In the Vatican II era, however, Orthodox-Catholic relations underwent a remarkable thaw. In 1965, Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras met on the Mount of Olives and rescinded the mutual excommunications, which had been in effect since the eleventh century. Following that breakthrough, papal diplomacy turned once again to relics, albeit this time as a correction of past wrongs: a portion of the body of St. Andrew the Apostle was returned to the Church of Greece; part of the body of St. Mark the Evangelist was restored to the Coptic Church.

In 2004, Pope John Paul II's final public act served as

CNS PHOTO / COURTESY ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople prays before a reliquary containing bone shards that are believed to belong to St. Peter, June 30, 2019, in Istanbul. Pope Francis gave the reliquary to the patriarch.

a poignant end to his lifelong commitment to Christian unity: he and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew co-officiated at a prayer service that witnessed the transfer of large portions of the bodies of St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John Chrysostom to the Christians of Constantinople. During their lives, both saints had served as Archbishop of Constantinople, but their remains had been in Rome since the Fourth Crusade. The event led to several additional high-profile encounters between the Ecumenical Patriarch and his papal counterparts: Pope Benedict traveled to Turkey in 2006, Bartholomew attended Francis's inauguration in 2013 (the first Ecumenical Patriarch to attend a papal inauguration), and in 2017 both Francis and Bartholomew joined Pope Tawadros II of the Coptic Church in Cairo for an unprecedented prayer service.

Whereas those endeavors involved extensive coordination and planning, Pope Francis's decision to offer the Petrine gift to his "brother" Bartholomew appears to have been an impromptu decision that he made during evening prayer. According to reports, the pontiff told Archbishop Job, Bartholomew's representative, that he was giving the relics of St. Peter to the Ecumenical Patriarch because he thought "it would be better for them to be kept in Constantinople."

Pope Francis's gift of bodily relics of St. Peter is so remarkable because, unlike the other recent relic exchanges, this is not a righting of a previous wrong, not a return to the Orthodox of something that was historically theirs. Rather, Francis's gift of Petrine relics to the Ecumenical Patriarch is significant because it is an unfettered divestment of a portion of what is arguably the Vatican's most precious religious treasure—the very foundation of its symbolic authority in the Christian world.

Not surprisingly, some of Francis's detractors quickly decried the gift as a capitulation to political expediency or, worse, an offering to heretics. Several (uniquely American) right-wing Catholic websites criticized the move as indicative of a pontiff who fails to understand how best to harness the power of the saints.

To be sure, in the Middle Ages, several popes used the relics and legacy of St. Peter as weapons in asserting their authority over other ecclesiastical and political leaders. But Pope Francis has turned the medieval paradigm on its head. In his hands, the relics of St. Peter function as a gift of genuine of Christian love: a true self-emptying of power and influence. Francis sees in Bartholomew a genuine brother. And with this act, Francis is signaling to the rest of us that he is willing to go further than his predecessors—even the sainted Gregory—to pursue reconciliation between the two Christian communions. To my mind, Francis is right to recognize that the case for Christian unity between Orthodox and Catholics requires a rejection of the notion, popular in the Middle Ages, that the saints and their relics are to be wielded as instruments of power. When the Ecumenical Patriarch had the opportunity to venerate the relics for the first time, he observed that "Pope Francis made a grand, fraternal, and historic gesture." He then added that he was deeply moved by Francis's bold initiative.

American Christians are so subconsciously formed by a Protestant/post-Protestant outlook that even American Catholics and Orthodox typically fail to appreciate the religious and cultural power of the relics of the saints. On a recent trip to Romania, I was asked about religious observance in the United States. My interlocutor was not very concerned about liturgy, personal prayer, or fasting; he wanted to know whether American Christians had access to the bodies of the saints.

While many Americans may not understand the genuine significance of the bestowal of a relic of St. Peter, Pope Francis clearly does. ■

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IN A PALACE

Not through the high, the blank, the bronze-knobbed door
He comes home, weaned. What is the child,
Compared to everything that came before?

He'll guard these sunny reaches when he's more
Than a bare twentieth their age.
Today, his romps would gouge the floor.

In gilded frames is forebears by the score,
Like fools, wait for the wisdom of his eyes.
He now stares at the fountain. We deplore

His sheer, strange littleness
Compared to everything that came before.

—Sarah Ruden

Sarah Ruden has published several books, including, most recently, The Face of Water: A Translator on Beauty and Meaning in the Bible *and a new translation of Augustine's* Confessions.

Does Church Teaching Change?

The Development of Doctrine at Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II

John W. O'Malley

This article is an excerpt from When Bishops Meet: An Essay Comparing Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II, *published this month by Harvard University Press.*

Although the documents of the early councils of the church recognized that bad customs and bad teaching had to be uprooted, which is a form of change, they most characteristically betray a sense of continuity with previous Christian teaching and practice. They called for continuation and implementation of ancient customs and ancient traditions—*antiqua lex, antiqua traditio.*

The documents of the medieval councils very much follow the same pattern. Although they in fact deal with the twists and turns in culture and institutional structures of their day, they lack a keen sense of discrepancy between past and present, and thus the councils never felt the necessity to address the discrepancy directly. Only with the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century and then the Reformation early in the next century did this ahistorical mindset receive its first serious challenges. The Council of Trent was, therefore, the first council that had to take those challenges into account.

The Council of Trent

Luther saw his doctrine of justification by faith alone as the very core of the Gospel message. To reject it was to reject Christianity itself. As he began to experience hostility from the church hierarchy and from theologians concerning his teaching, he concluded that the church had not only failed to proclaim the Gospel but had proclaimed its antithesis, the heresy of justification by good works. The church had betrayed the teaching of Christ and had thereby ceased being the true church. In the course of the centuries, the church had changed, Luther maintained, and changed radically for the worse. Between it and the congregation of Christian faithful founded by Christ yawned a gap of many centuries. The church of his day was discontinuous with the teaching of Christ and the apostles.

When the bishops convened at Trent in 1545, they soon realized that justification was the key doctrinal issue at stake. After seven months of sometimes acrimonious discussion, they were finally able to articulate a statement that won their overwhelming approval. Neither at this nor at any other point did the council explicitly discuss whether the church had failed to proclaim the true doctrine. The prelates at Trent assumed that church teaching was continuous with the teaching of the Gospel, and they therefore simply affirmed or implied that what they taught was orthodox and true to the tradition.

In the early twentieth century, the important English historian and philosopher R. G. Collingwood designated this style of historical thinking "substantialism," and he saw it as the chief defect of the ancient Roman historians. Livy, for instance, took for granted that Rome was an unchanging substance that sailed through the sea of the centuries without being affected by it. Christian thinkers inherited this tradition and without examining it applied it to the church.

By the time of the council, however, an awareness of living in particularly evil times gripped many Europeans. Their times were the worst of all, the low point in a long process of decline from a purer and more authentic past. The church, they believed, was not exempt from this process. For Catholics and especially for the bishops gathered at Trent, the upheavals in the wake of the Reformation confirmed and exacerbated the awareness of a pervasive darkness. On at least three occasions, the bishops at the council lamented how calamitous were the times in which the council was taking place. They therefore accepted the idea of change for the worse, but they did not see it applying to doctrine, which somehow was immune to the historical process.

They did see change as applying to the discipline of "the

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Pope Paul VI makes his way past bishops during a session of the Second Vatican Council, 1964.

CNS FILE PHOTO

clergy and the Christian people." The expression implies that the morals and mores of the people living within the institution of the church had declined, but not the institution itself, and most certainly not its doctrine. The documents of Trent rest, therefore, on an operative distinction between the church and its members. The former exists unchanged and apart from the contingencies to which the members are subject.

The council directed its changes therefore to the members, especially the clergy who occupied the three official pastoral offices in the church—pope, bishop, pastor of parishes. In trying to enforce changes in the behavior of officeholders, the council did not see itself as innovating but, rather, as restoring former norms and practices.

What was required to counter the evils of the age was a recovery and restoration of the healthy ecclesiastical discipline of the past. The reforms of Trent for the most part consisted, therefore, in strengthening or significantly reformulating older canonical regulations, especially as those regulations related to the clergy. The council restored, revived, and called back into operation the good norms of the past—*restituere*, *innovare*, *revocare*.

In actual fact, however, the council made changes that were innovations, not simply a burnishing of past laws. The decree *Tametsi* is the clearest example of such innovations. It stipulated that henceforth the church would consider no marriage valid unless witnessed by a priest. The council intended the decree to stamp out the abuse of so-called clandestine marriages—that is, the exchange of vows between the two partners with no witness present. Such marriages made it possible for one of the spouses, usually the man, to deny later that a marriage had taken place and to abandon his wife and, often, his children.

There was no precedent for *Tametsi* in the entire history of the church, a fact of which the bishops at Trent were aware. They were aware, therefore, that sometimes measures had to be adopted that were real changes from past practice and standards of behavior. The debate at Trent on *Tametsi* was heated, however, because it did not concern merely sacramental practice but seemed to have doctrinal implications.

The problem was this: If the consent of the spouses constituted the sacrament, which everybody agreed was the case, how could the church legitimately declare a consented-to union invalid? Did the church have the right and the authority to impose a condition on the validity of marriages that intruded on the partners' exchange of vows, the constitutive element of the sacrament? How could the church declare invalid in the future marriages that in the past it had recognized as valid, even if forbidden? The bishops discussed these objections and somehow came to the conclusion that they could pass the decree. At Trent, therefore, the problem of doctrinal change lurked in the shadows, poised to strike in the open at any moment.

But when Trent treated doctrine directly, it spoke clearly and declared, "No change!" It reformed mores, but it "confirmed" doctrine. In reaction to Luther, no previous council ever insisted as explicitly or implied so regularly that the present teaching of the church was identical with that of the apostolic age and that there had been no change in it in the intervening centuries. When the council affirmed that in the Catholic Church "the ancient, absolute, and in every respect perfect faith and doctrine" of the Eucharist had been retained unchanged, it was only making explicit for one of its doctrinal pronouncements what underlay them all.

Vatican I

In Italy by the middle of the fifteenth century, new critical methods for dealing with historical texts had developed. The Italian humanist Lorenzo Valla led the way. In his *Adnotationes in Novum Testamentum*, he showed how the Latin Vulgate failed in many instances to convey the sense of the original Greek text, and through philological criticism he showed that the document known as "The Donation of Constantine" was a forgery. With these works Valla founded the discipline of philology and in so doing gave impetus to a newly keen sense of anachronism. He thus sowed the seeds of what developed into modern historical consciousness.

The critical approach to historical texts and to the past that Valla and later humanists such as Erasmus pioneered caught on, gained momentum, and reached a culminating turning point in the nineteenth century. It was a century in which awareness of historical change began conditioning scholars' approach to virtually every text in every discipline, including sacred texts. It was, moreover, the century of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Evolution, development, progress, change—these words marked the culture of the age.

The Enlightenment of the eighteenth century had largely rejected any role for the past in prescribing norms for the present, and it had thrown history's goal into the future. The

liberal philosophies of the nineteenth century assumed that progress was inevitable in virtually every aspect of human life and endeavor. The world moved forward in a process of change for the better, as Darwin showed. To the delight of some and to the horror of others, Darwin seemed to reduce the story of Adam and Eve to a naïve fable.

The Bible as well as the history of the church now came under newly skeptical criticism in the universities, which revived in the nineteenth century after a long period of stagnation. Germany was the revival's epicenter, most especially the University of Berlin. Sharpening the methods pioneered by Renaissance humanists, Leopold von Ranke trained generations of talented students in rigorous methods of historical analysis and textual criticism.

This development, long in the making, moved the discipline of history from its former base in rhetoric and moral philosophy to more controlled methods of research, which at a certain point began to be described as scientific. The methods professed objectivity in evaluating evidence and freedom from contamination by apologetic concerns. They likewise professed freedom from what the maintenance of received opinions might require. For professional historians, these methods spelled the end of substantialism. Every historical reality had a history. Simply by being historical, each and every historical reality changed—at least to some degree. As did other scholars of the era, Catholic exegetes and historians felt the impact of such methods and had to reckon with them. At Vatican I in that regard, Catholic bishops had to deal with historical objections to the doctrine of papal infallibility—that is, the pope's prerogative to declare with absolute finality that a truth is divinely revealed and must be believed by all faithful Catholics.

When on June 26, 1867, Pius IX made known to bishops and pilgrims present in Rome his intention to convoke a council, he described its purpose in the most general terms: to review the problems facing the church and to find appropriate remedies for them. He established commissions to prepare the agenda, which resulted in a wide range of topics for the council to deal with. Among those topics, however, was none dealing with the popes' infallibility. But because the Catholic press, especially in France, had carried on such a vigorous campaign for it before the council opened, the early emergence of infallibility at the council as the issue that would dominate it was almost inevitable.

A sizeable minority of bishops coming especially from Germany, Austria, and Hungary opposed defining the doctrine and based their objections in large part on historical grounds. According to those bishops, the doctrine lacked historical foundation in the church's doctrine and in the church's practice. According to them also, there were instances where a pope had taught a heterodox opinion. Among those most adamantly opposed to infallibility on such grounds was Karl Josef von Hefele, bishop of Rottenburg, who had already published several volumes of his highly respected history of the councils.

Leaders of the majority at the council tried to show, however, that the supposed instances of papal fallibility could be explained or were irrelevant. The assumption that the church and especially its teachings did not change had by the nineteenth century become axiomatic in most Catholic circles, which to some extent was the legacy of the Council of Trent. According to this assumption, the present church related to the past through a bond of virtually unqualified continuity.

In this mode of thinking, historical arguments were irrelevant in the face of seemingly irrefutable texts from Scripture or later documents of the church. The abstract and ahistorical method of the Scholastic system of theology further helped shield doctrine from historical contingency. A historical naiveté that took the present situation as the norm for interpreting the past and that projected present practice and understanding onto it also contributed to this substantialistic mode of thinking.

The clearest statement of the majority's stance on the matter occurred in the *Relatio* (explanatory notes) that accompanied the first draft of the infallibility decree:

> As has without exception been shown above from the most important texts [*monumentis*], the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff is a truth divinely revealed. Therefore, it is impossible that it can ever be proved false by any historical facts. If, however, such facts are brought forward to oppose it, they must themselves be deemed false insofar as they seem opposed.

In their wording, neither of the council's two decrees—*Dei filius* and *Pastor aeternus*—directly engaged with the historical issues that were germane to them, but the statement in the *Relatio* reveals the mindset that underlay them. Although Vatican Council I shut its eyes to the problem of change, the problem did not go away. It exploded onto the scene with the Modernist crisis some decades later.

In the late nineteenth century, advocacy among Catholics of a sometimes-undiscriminating adoption of the new historical approach to sacred texts and sacred doctrines became part of the amorphous phenomenon known as Modernism. The inclusiveness of the seemingly all-encompassing label "Modernism" suggests why it is difficult to find a common thread linking so-called Modernists to one another beyond their desire to help the church reconcile itself with what they thought was best in intellectual culture as it had evolved into the present. However, a general though not universally accepted premise of the movement (if it can be called that) was the pervasiveness of change and the need to come to terms with it.

The storm broke on July 3, 1907. On that day, the Holy Office issued the decree *Lamentabili* condemning sixty-five propositions supposedly held by the Modernists. Two months later, Pope Pius X (r. 1903–1914) followed up with his encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis*. For the sweep of its accusations, the accusatory style of its language, and the severity of its provisions, *Pascendi* had few, if any, precedents in

the annals of the modern papacy. A veritable purge followed, which, besides the damage it did to Catholic intellectual life, confirmed among many Catholics an already pervasive readiness to ignore change. The Catholic Church, it was often proudly said, does not change.

Vatican II

Despite the severe measures taken by the Holy See against exegetes and church historians accused of being Modernists, a relatively small but well-trained number of Catholic scholars in the early decades of the twentieth century continued to apply historical modes of research and analysis to ecclesiastical texts and to problems in church practice. As surveillance over such scholars diminished, their numbers grew, and their methods began to receive a positive or at least tolerant reception. When in 1943 Pope Pius XII published his encyclical *Divino afflante spiritu*, he validated historical and archeological methods for the study of the Bible, which was an implicit validation of similar approaches for other areas of sacred studies. Bit by bit, scholars began to show that every aspect of church life and teaching had been affected by change.

For winning acceptance of the idea that change affected even doctrine, no book was more important than John Henry Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, published in 1845. The book appeared, therefore, fourteen years before Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. Like Darwin's work, it reflected the preoccupation of the age with evolution, development, progress, and the implications of the historical process.

By using different analogies, Newman showed how teachings evolved while remaining true to their origins. Teachings were both continuous and discontinuous with their earlier articulation. The book, still the classic in the field, put the problem of change in doctrine on the stage of theological discourse to a degree unknown before. Although published well before Vatican Council I, it had no significant impact on the council's debates, but in the decades leading up to Vatican II most Catholic bishops and theologians accepted its basic premise in some form or other.

In France in the middle of the nineteenth century Prosper Guéranger, abbot of the monastery of Solesmes, set in motion a movement in which critical methods were applied to liturgical texts. By the middle of the next century liturgical scholars were calling for changes in how the liturgy was celebrated to bring it more into conformity with what they saw as its true character, which had been obscured by accretions through the centuries. Pope Pius XII responded to them in part through two decrees, in 1951 and 1955, in which he completely reorganized the liturgies for the last three days of Holy Week to bring them in line with liturgists' recommendations.

The stage had thus been set for Vatican II to take a stance on the problem of change radically different from that of the two previous councils. The bishops and theologians at the council accepted the reality of change as a matter of course. Their only questions were about how to explain it, about how far it could legitimately go, and what the criteria were for making changes.

Change—the word appeared in the first sentence of the first paragraph of the first document the council published, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, "On the Sacred Liturgy." The sentence stated that the council intended to adapt to contemporary conditions those aspects of the liturgy that were subject to change (*mutatio*). *Sacrosanctum concilium* thus sounded the first note in what was to be an underlying and pervasive issue at the council.

> While development of doctrine implies further movement along a given path, *ressourcement* says that we are no longer going to move along Path X. We are going back to a fork in the road and will now move along a better and different path.

This keener sense of historical change took three forms in the council, captured in three words current at the time—*aggiornamento* (Italian for updating or modernizing), development (an unfolding or evolution, sometimes the equivalent of progress), and *ressourcement* (French for a return to the sources). A basic assumption undergirded the council's employment of these three modes in which change might take place: the Catholic tradition was richer, broader, and more malleable than often perceived in the past. The bishops who appropriated that assumption did so not as an abstract truth but as a license to undertake a thorough examination of the status quo. They reacted against interpretations of Catholic doctrine and practice that reduced it to simplistic and ahistorical formulae. They reacted against substantialism.

Of the three terms, interpreters of the council and especially the popular media most often invoked *aggiornamento* to explain what Vatican II was all about. The term, generally attributed to Pope John XXIII, equivalently occurred in his charge to the council in his opening address, in which he told the fathers of the council to make "appropriate changes" (*opportunis emendationibus*) that would help the church in its pastoral mission.

In principle, *aggiornamento* was nothing new. The church had perforce always adapted to new situations. In recent times, the Vatican adopted microphones and amplifiers before the House of Commons and typewriters before the British Foreign Office. But in at least four regards the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II *was* new. First, some of the changes

made in its name touched upon things ordinary Catholics assumed were normative, such as Latin liturgy, and hence they had a startling impact. Second, no previous council had taken *aggiornamento* as a broad principle rather than as a rare exception.

Third, the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II related not to modern inventions or polite conventions of society but to certain cultural assumptions and values of "the modern world," the most basic of which—such as liberty, equality, and fraternity—stemmed most directly from the Enlightenment. These were assumptions and values that Vatican Council I implicitly rejected and, hence, the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II marked a turn in the road. Fourth, the broad adoption of deliberate reconciliation of the church with certain changes taking place outside it provided an entry point for a more dynamic understanding of how the church functioned.

Dynamism was even more relevant to the concept of development, which was by definition a movement—a movement to a further point along a given path. It was a cumulative though sometimes also a pruning process by which the tradition of the church became richer or perhaps clearer than before. Development suggested progress, which was itself a word the council did not hesitate to use. *Dei verbu*m, "On Divine Revelation," stated that the tradition of the church stemming from the apostles "makes progress in the church and grows" (*proficit et crescit*, n. 8). Tradition is not inert but dynamic.

Although the idea that tradition evolved won broad acceptance at the council, it was not without its problems, the most acute of which occurred in the debate on *Dignitatis humanae*, "On Religious Liberty." Since the French Revolution, the popes had repeatedly condemned religious liberty and separation of church and state. But proponents of them at the council argued that they were legitimate developments of church teaching, an argument that to their opponents seemed like legerdemain. Development was supposedly movement to a further point along a given path, but *Dignitatis humanae* seemed to jump off the given path to forge a new one.

Proponents of the change defended their position by making use of *ressourcement*. They maintained that popes in condemning separation of church and state were reacting against a specific historical situation that no longer prevailed. To discover how the church could now legitimately adapt to the new situation, it had to "return to the sources." In past tradition, it would find the fundamental truths that could guide it in the present situation. In this case, those truths were the church's consistent teaching that the act of faith had to be free and that for all individuals following their conscience was the ultimate moral norm.

Unlike development, a theory first straightforwardly proposed in the nineteenth century, *ressourcement* had enjoyed *avant la lettre* a truly venerable history in the Western church, beginning in the earliest centuries but emerging most notably with the Gregorian Reform of the eleventh century, the campaign of popes and others to restore older canonical traditions. The reformers understood the changes they fought to implement as a restoration of the more authentic practice of an earlier era, which implied a mandate to reinstate it.

Ressourcement was in its Latin form the motto of the great humanists of the Renaissance—*Ad fontes*! Return to the sources was, moreover, what motivated the Protestant reformers as they sought to restore the authentic Gospel that in their opinion the papal church had discarded and perverted. It lay behind Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni patris* (1879) initiating the revival of the study of Thomas Aquinas. In fact, it lay behind virtually every reform movement in the church and society in Western culture at least up to the Enlightenment.

In the mid-twentieth century, return to the sources, now explicitly under the neologism *ressourcement*, drove much of the theological ferment in France that played such a major role in Vatican II. At the council virtually all the participants accepted the validity of the return-to-the-sources principle. Disputes over it arose only when it seemed to be applied too radically. Those who balked at such application had a point because *ressourcement* had more potent implications than development. While development implies further movement along a given path, *ressourcement* says that we are no longer going to move along Path X. We are going back to a fork in the road and will now move along a better and different path.

Development and *ressourcement* are both about corporate memory, the memory that is constitutive of identity. What institutions wittingly or unwittingly chose to remember and chose to forget from their past makes them what they are. The great battles at Vatican II were battles over the identity of the church: not over its fundamental dogmas, but over the place, relevance, and respective weight of certain fundamental values in the tradition.

Vatican II did not solve the theoretical problem of how an institution by definition conservative handles the problem of change, nor was it the council's intention to do so. Councils are meetings that make decisions binding on the church. They are not meetings that solve theoretical problems, even though they must deal with the practical implications of such problems.

What is special about Vatican II in relationship to the two previous councils is, therefore, that it made its decisions with full awareness of the reality of change and full awareness that that reality affected the church in all its aspects. For a council to act with such an awareness of change is itself a significant change. Underlying the boldness with which the council accepted the reality of change was the assumption that appropriate change did not mean losing one's identity but, rather, enhancing it or salvaging it from ossification. If such change achieved its goal, it entailed a process of redefinition that was both continuous and discontinuous with the past. ■

Aurelio Arteta Errasti, Countryman with a Cow and a Calf, *c. 1913–15*

Selves Are Not Food

Christine Korsgaard's Case for Animal Rights

Paul J. Griffiths

In her new book, *Fellow Creatures: Our Obligations to the Other Animals* (Oxford University Press, $24.95, 272 pp.), Christine Korsgaard argues in this book that we humans have obligations to other animals because life can go well or badly for them: they are the subjects of their lives, and they therefore have an interest in how those lives go. Those facts about them give them a moral claim on us. Korsgaard, as the Kantian she is, makes this claim by saying that we ought to treat animals—all of them, severally and collectively—as ends in themselves and never merely as means to our ends. The burden of *Fellow Creatures* is to explain the underpinnings of this thesis, and to show some of its practical implications.

Philosophers have devoted considerable attention to these questions during the past forty years or so. Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation*, which makes a case similar to Korsgaard's though from a utilitarian rather than a Kantian point of view, was published in 1975 and has been the subject of passionate debate ever since—it's the kind of book that causes people to change their lives. There have also been distinguished contributions by Wittgensteinians such as Stanley Cavell. Tom Regan's *Case for Animal Rights* dates from 1983, and went into a second edition in 2004. Lori

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Gruen, Clare Palmer, Jeff McMahon, and many others have made substantial and serious contributions to the developing anglophone discussion. Korsgaard herself, perhaps the most distinguished Kantian of her generation, began to write on the topic about fifteen years ago, and this book organizes and develops positions sketched in various essays published during that time.

Novelists, too, notably J. M. Coetzee, especially in *Disgrace* (1999) and *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), have shown, grimly and unforgettably, what the relations between human and non-human animals look like when they're ordered around industrial-scale slaughter, and what our apparent insouciance about that arrangement suggests about us. Margaret Atwood, in her dystopian MaddAddam trilogy (2003–2013), dramatizes our genetic manipulation of non-human animals and how this contributes to the descent of our world into chaos. Anthropologists, ethnologists, and primatologists, notably Frans de Waal, have explored similarities between us and other primates, with an eye to reordering our sense of ourselves. There's a massive literature from almost every angle on the question of human exceptionalism—what, if anything, is unique to our species, and does it, whatever it may be, justify the way we relate to members of other species? There are activists, lobbyists, and political pressure groups attempting to transform law, policy, and public opinion on matters having to do with the relations between human and non-human animals. And, perhaps most pressing at the moment, it's increasingly evident that our current methods of producing and consuming animal protein are, in addition to the slaughter they involve, contributing to the rapidity of climate change and to the concomitant extinction of species. These are matters that exercise many people, and questions about how we humans should treat non-human animals are by now unavoidably implicated with them.

And it's not only people who write books and make laws and engage in political activism. Everyone, in one way or another, has to do with non-human animals, whether by eating them, hunting them, farming them, living with them as pets, killing them when they appear where they're not wanted (a mosquito on your skin, a cockroach in your kitchen). Among the middle classes, reliably lively dinner-table conversations can be had about meat-eating, factory farming, pet-keeping, and so on. And among the things Christians seem to care most deeply about, at least in Europe and the United States, is the eternal destiny of their pets. That's a feature of our time and place and mode of social organization.

Korsgaard's topic, then, has purchase and relevance. And her book is a very good one. It can be instructive to professionals in the field, and to anyone prepared to give it time and patience even without being knowledgeable about the interpretation of Kant and Aristotle. She writes, mostly, in such a way as to make each chapter capable of being read as an independent essay, and when this isn't the case she clearly indicates where to turn in the book for further elucidation. And she writes, above all, with clarity and care. As every philosopher knows, to get your readers to see what your distinctions come to and what work they do is just about the whole game. Korsgaard is very good at that. She also shows enough of herself to readers to make them, or at least this one, like her: she dedicates her book to the five cats (named) with whom she's lived during the past thirty-five years; and she includes, surprisingly for the kind of philosopher she is, occasional confessions of moral failure and moral compromise on her part.

For Korsgaard, to be an animal, human or not, is to be sentient. If you are sentient, that means, roughly, that it seems like something to you to be you. A capacity for pleasure and pain is a minimal version of this. More elaborate versions include a sense of having a life extended in time, and of being related to a world external to yourself in ways more complex than simple pleasure or pain. But the minimal version of sentience is sufficient for being an animal, and also sufficient for having interests and a point of view. To have those is to have a self, to be the subject of a life, and that, in turn, is to have moral standing as the animal you are. All this is, in short, what it is to have animal life: you have an interest in what's good for you, and you act in accord with that interest.

All this is true, writes Korsgaard, of both humans and non-human animals. It isn't, however, true of all living creatures. She thinks it isn't true of plants, for instance, and that it may not be true of some living things we ordinarily classify as animals. It's clear, though, that these are empirical questions for her: if experimental evidence showed that some living things we ordinarily classify as plants are sentient in this sense, she'd say of them what she says of animals. And if it turns out that, say, planaria or oysters aren't sentient in this sense, she would not apply the argument of this book to them. Although she isn't especially interested in worries about whether particular living things are sentient or not, it is clear from by-the-way discussions and examples that she thinks sentience belongs to many (most?) simple animals. The book includes an affecting discussion of arachnids, including dust mites, which, she allows, are possibly, even probably, sentient.

All selves are sentient and all sentient creatures are selves. For Korsgaard, however, not all selves are persons. To be one of those, you need to be rational, and that means that you need to have, or be capable of having, or be the kind of creature that could have (all these subjunctives indicate the delicacy of the position) what she calls a "normative self-conception": the capacity to ask, and sometimes to answer, the question of whether the reasons for your actions are good ones, and to order your life in accord with answers to that question. So far, this is just Kant. Like Kant, Korsgaard thinks that human animals are rational in this sense, and that, probably, no other animals are.

So Korsgaard is an exceptionalist about humans: she thinks we have properties and capacities that non-human animals

lack. But she doesn't do what most human exceptionalists do, which is to link her exceptionalism to some objective scale of value. Quite the contrary. All value, for her, is "tethered," by which she means that all value is value for some person or some self. The universal value is that all selves should get whatever is good for them, but the particulars of what's good for one kind of creature won't, ordinarily, be the same as the particulars of what's good for another. Humans are not, in this view, objectively more important or better than spiders or tigers; we're different from them, as they are from one another, and so what's good for us is also different from what's good for them. What's uniquely good for us is to develop and live in accord with a normative self-understanding; what's uniquely good for a spider is success at web-spinning and fly-trapping. The only way humans could be more important than all other creatures, Korsgaard writes, would be if what's good for us were what the world was for. And she considers that idea massively implausible, part of what she calls an antiquated teleological (she might also have said "theological") view of things.

Kant thought that humans have no reason to treat non-human animals as ends and may therefore treat them as means. Korsgaard differs from him on this, and thinks that had he seen more clearly the implications of his own position he would have agreed with her. She deploys the resources of Kantian theory to develop it. What this development amounts to is the claim that sentient non-human animals are valuable precisely because they are *selves*. It isn't, as utilitarians like Singer would have it, just that their experiences are valuable, and that our task is to minimize the pain we bring them and maximize the pleasure; they're not exchangeable receptacles for pain and pleasure. No, it's *them*, the sentient creatures themselves in all their particularity and variety, that place a moral claim on us, and the content of that claim is that we may not treat them merely as means. We must treat them as ends. We must understand that each of them has a life as important to it as your life is to you: for each animal self, her life "contains absolutely everything of value," as yours does for you. And we must act in accord with this understanding.

Korsgaard has much of interest to say about what it means to act thus, more than I can review here. First, she addresses several responses to the question of the relations between human and non-human animals with which she differs. She disagrees with those who argue that we should, if we can, abolish animal predation, whether by altering predators genetically or by removing them in some other way (she likens this view to gentrification). She disagrees with those who advocate a radical separation of human animals from all others, with the aim of having only "wild" animals in the world. She disagrees with those who advocate the domestication of all non-human animals, and with those who advocate the extinction of the human species in favor of non-human animals. The utopian nature of these projects (other than the last) should be obvious enough.

Korsgaard also takes positions on narrower questions with possibly non-utopian answers. She thinks that we should not eat animals, whether or not they're raised and killed humanely. That's because we can get on quite well without doing so, and to involve ourselves in an economy that takes sentient creatures' lives so that we may eat them is to treat these creatures as means rather than ends. Similarly, and for the same reason, we should never do painful or lethal experiments on them for our benefit. (She includes in her analysis of this question an utterly convincing discussion of the place of animal experimentation in the discovery of insulin.) She thinks that in certain very limited cases we may put non-human animals to work for us—as guides, for rescue, for some kinds of police and military work, and so on. But this may be done only when it is arguably good for the animal in question, which will most often be because of a long process of coevolution that makes work with and for humans part of what seems good to the animal. We should never, she thinks, put undomesticated animals to work in this way—as, for example, the U.S. military has tried to do with dolphins. She thinks we may live with certain kinds of animals as companions, on the double ground that by so doing we may give them a life that is good for them, and that sharing our lives with them may be good for us. She is, on this, self-revealing about the compromises involved in living with and caring for obligate carnivores like cats, who must be fed meat in order to live.

I find myself in agreement with much of this, and instructed by all of it. I'm convinced that it's possible to derive these positions from Kantian axioms, and that it's a good thing to do so. I'm also convinced—and now I write as a Catholic theologian—that there's much here that Catholic Christians ought to embrace, both at the level of conclusion, and at the level of distinction and argument. Still, I want to raise some doubts about the book, and to suggest some extensions to and applications of its conclusions that I think Korsgaard would be unlikely to accept.

First, there's the question of how Korsgaard's position applies to the question of abortion—that is, to the question of the conditions under which it's proper to take the life of those things (there's no uncontroversial label for them) that come into being via conception in a woman's womb and ordinarily grow there for nine months or so until they're born into the world.

With respect to the question of what the fetus (that's what she calls it) is, Korsgaard's overall position seems to allow four possibilities. One is that the fetus doesn't live at all: it's inanimate. The second is that it does, but that it's not sentient, being in this way more like a houseplant than an arachnid or a cat. The third is that it lives and is sentient, being therefore a self and the subject of a life. And the fourth is that it lives and is a person, being in this like Korsgaard and you and me. If the fetus is, at any stage of its life in the womb, a creature of the third or fourth kind,

then for Korsgaard it would, at that stage, have the moral status common to all such creatures: it may not be treated by us as a means rather than an end, which also means that we offend against our duties to it when we take its life.

Korsgaard's relaxed and generous approach to the question of when we should consider a creature sentient makes the first two possibilities implausible. We can dismiss the thought that the fetus is simply inanimate at once. And the thought that it's animate but not sentient would require someone following a Korsgaardian line to assimilate it to plants and (perhaps) bacteria and the like, which would look like special pleading, to put it mildly. Both the third and fourth possibilities are a natural fit, however; and both entail the position that killing a fetus is at least as wrong as killing a cat, and perhaps, if the fourth is followed, as wrong as killing you or me.

This isn't, however, what Korsgaard seems to think. She offers nothing like a full-dress treatment of abortion, and when she does discuss it in passing (in a thousand words or so) she's not trying to convince anyone of anything about what a fetus is, or about when and how and if it becomes a person. She raises the issue only to point out that taking the moral rights of creatures to be atemporal—that is, believing it's possible to do something that damages a creature that doesn't yet exist (I can in this sense damage my great-grandchildren)—doesn't entail anything about when a creature thus damaged comes to be. And about that she's abundantly right.

But the lexicon and syntax of her discussion of abortion stand in significant tension with the deepest and most systematically worked-out aspects of her own position. She mentions, and at least entertains, the view that there's a right to abortion during the earlier stages of pregnancy. She's attracted by the view that a decision about when to treat fetuses as persons is like the decision about the voting age—that is, the establishment of an arbitrary bright line that doesn't reflect any biological or metaphysical reality. But she doesn't take that line about other forms of life. With respect to those (cats, dolphins, mosquitoes, oak trees), she thinks that there are truths in the order of being about whether they're sentient and whether they're persons, and that those truths are capable of being arrived at by empirical study. She says none of this about abortion and, as far as I can tell, that is because she makes a special case of human fetal life without offering any reason to do so.

A position on abortion consistent with her assumptions would be that the moral claim of a fetus depends on its sentience, that it's an empirical question when that sentience begins, and that our criteria for assessing and acting upon the moral claims of fetuses ought to be no different than those for assessing and acting upon the moral claims of any other creature.

Second, there's a problem about tragedy and its proper accompaniment, lament. Korsgaard, unlike many Kantians and arguably unlike Kant, rejects the thought that *ought* implies *can*. That is, she does not agree that having a duty to do something—in this case, to treat sentient creatures as ends rather than means—entails that it is possible for us to perform that duty. This means she embraces a tragic sense of life, a sense that sees life as confronting us with duties that are beyond our capacity to perform. And she's quite right to do so; her position requires it. We could do some of the things she thinks we should: we could stop eating sentient creatures, and killing them for food; we could stop lethal or painful experiments upon non-human animals; and we could, perhaps, stop living collectively in such a way that the habitats needed for survival by some animals cease to exist. I agree with her that we should do all those things—and that we could, even if it's deeply unlikely that we will. But we also kill small sentient creatures just by walking about and breathing and gardening, and this we cannot stop. We cannot remove ourselves from nature's charnel house, and we cannot stop adding to the piles of corpses in it. Even Jain monks, who employ whisks to remove small things from the paths they tread and masks to prevent inhaling them, can't succeed in what they aspire to, which is to refrain from taking any sentient life. This is tragic, and Korsgaard goes far toward acknowledging this.

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But she doesn't get as far as she should, given her own understandings. Her work is, by and large, free from the tone of lament that would be appropriate to its argument. Having a moral duty of the kind she sketches and being unable to perform it ought to be, for a Kantian, a matter for wailing and gnashing of teeth. It means that we can't act in accord with the goods we perceive and legislate for

ourselves, and that begins to call into question the very foundations of the system: What good, we might ask, is rationality, if it demands the impossible and thus leads us to despair? I wish there were in Korsgaard's work a greater degree of responsiveness to this question, and some engagement with what the rejection of ought-implies-can suggests for the fabric of a Kantian moral life.

Christians acknowledge, or should, that in a fallen world, there are many things we ought to do that we can't, many evils—including death of all kinds—as yet irremediable. We have an eschatology and an understanding of creation and fall that make sense of this parlous state of affairs, no part of which is available to Kantians. With Augustine, we lament our necessities; and we might, though we rarely do, include in our table-graces lament for whatever has died in order that we might eat (including plants). But these are features that distinguish Christianity from Kantianism. Moral lament is a guest ill at ease among Kantians. Korsgaard's positions require that it be invited in, but she does vastly too little to make it at home. Her tone is too optimistic.

Third, there's a problem about God and hierarchies of value. This isn't a problem internal to Korsgaard's system. She's right that, in the absence of a set of theological and teleological assumptions she doesn't share and doesn't seriously entertain, it isn't possible to find sense in the idea that the flourishing of humans is in some objective sense more important than the flourishing of non-human sentient creatures. And she's right in saying that all value is "tethered" as distinguished above. A counter-view would have to claim that the good of human creatures is also the good of all other creatures, that they find what is good for them exactly in what is good for us, because the whole cosmos centers upon what is good for humans.

This view seems, on its face, implausible, and I agree with Korsgaard that it is false. But it has a significant lineage: on some readings of Christianity, it is just what Christianity claims. The triune Lord of Christian confession, the one who called everything into existence out of nothing, arguably established everything in just that way. Among the many possible evidences that can be marshaled in support of this view, there's the fact that this Lord is incarnate precisely as a human being; and that all non-human sentient life is presented in Scripture as ordered to, and named by, human creatures. Why not then say that all creaturely good—what's good for all non-human creatures (except the angels)—is their rightly ordered relation to us?

Korsgaard briefly comments on the existence of views like this. In a note, she mentions that the Christian philosopher Linda Zagzebski once asked her whether it would make a difference to her anti-hierarchicalism if human creatures were more important to God than non-human sentient ones. Korsgaard responds that, absent further argument, there's no reason to think that being created for some purpose by a third party (God) entails that the purpose in question should be important to those created for it. If an evil demon had brought humans into existence as crocodile fodder, that wouldn't make being eaten by a crocodile good for us, and it wouldn't remotely suggest that it ought to *seem* good to us. This response is right if God is thought of as a third party, as a being like others with a point of view and interests and powers—a being, that is, who exists in essentially the same way that we do. But it's not right if God is understood as Christians understand the Lord—as the one in whom all creatures participate according to their kinds, and who gives being to them by fiat, out of nothing. That God, the Lord, isn't a third party; that God's interests aren't extrinsic to what creatures are, but are constitutive of them. There is, on this view, no divergence between what's good for a particular creature and what it's made by the Lord to be, because there are no truths about creatures other than those given them by the Lord's creative act. That's the fully Christian view, and Korsgaard's critique doesn't touch it.

She is nevertheless right, I think, that what's good for non-human sentient creatures isn't explicable only in terms of their relations to us. Rather, Christianity is better construed as saying that the created order has goods proper to it, as a whole and in its parts, that belong to what it is independently of any relations it has to us. This is perhaps easier to see in the case of so-called wild sentient creatures than in the case of so-called domesticated ones. The whale, the elephant, and the python are what they are independently of us, and glorify the Lord, therefore, by existing and seeking what is good for them independently of any relations they might bear to us. This is compatible with a hierarchical view in the order of being: it can still be said that we are more intimate with the Lord than they are, and that we are made in the image and likeness of God in ways that they aren't. But this doesn't mean they exist only for us.

Christians differ with one another about this, and the view summarized in the preceding paragraph is a minority report. It is in significant ways compatible with what Korsgaard has to say—though there remain deep incompatibilities.

Finally, should Christians do as Korsgaard does, and renounce both the eating of sentient creatures and the performance of experiments on them? Yes, we should, to the extent that we can, and Korsgaard is very helpful in getting us to see why. Sentient creatures have lives and interests and concerns; their lives and interests and concerns are as important to them as ours are to us; and what is good for them is not reducible to what is good for us. When we can—and we often can—we should refrain from killing them and eating them and experimenting on them; and when we can, we should seek and advocate what, as it seems to us, is good for them. So refraining and so seeking would glorify the Lord. And even when we can't do these things, we should try to remain aware of our unavoidable failures by lamenting them. ■

Workers of the World

Fiction

William Giraldi

Vin's bogus suicide scrawl lay pinned beneath an ashtray filled with an alp of smashed Camels—we saw it on the folding table when we entered his garage. Vin is our cousin and he'd hired my brother Ralph and me to remodel the three-million-dollar beach monstrosity he'd bought in Jersey just north of Belmont.

I'd recently and just barely graduated from Rutgers with a psychology degree I couldn't see the point of. I'd read the scribblings of Misters Winnicott and Fromm but couldn't tell you how one differed from the other. I'd also been dished the yawning theory which declares that every problem in my orbit, from the struggling pistons of my heart to traffic clots in central Jersey, could be blamed on my mother. This was convenient: neither Ralph nor I had seen or spoken to our mother since we were freckled grade-schoolers trying to figure out long division and what it could possibly mean for us. She went poof on our father and us without any warning I could discern, after which Ralph and I saw her twice and never again, though my dreaming life was full of her. Ralph was bitter. I was not, though I was in the bad-taste habit of telling people that she was a virgin in a convent.

My brother is an artistic carpenter and doesn't mind bragging about this, all those wood skills he learned from our dad. I had not learned them, but Ralph was giving me this charity-work for the summer, mocking me when I screwed up, which was often, and lauding me when I pounded in a ten-penny nail without bending it, which was not. We started at six each morning, and for someone who'd just spent four years in college cocooned in bed till ten, this was downright unholy. I had to learn what a soffit is, a gable, that hanging a door requires shims, that two-by-four studs are spaced every sixteen inches in a wall, that spackle takes a full day to dry. I loathed every day of it, but my prospects were pretty dismal. Anyone can tell you that an undergraduate degree in psychology is well-nigh worthless except to go to grad school, which interested me not at all.

It was still dark that August morning. We could hear the waves swishing onto the sand, and I clicked on the fluorescent lights in Vin's garage. The hood of his new Cadillac—his second in as many months—was still warm, which told me he'd been wide-eyed all night and recently returned after some excursion to god-knows-where with god-knows-whom. Ralph went to the table, yanked the note from underneath the ashtray, read it, and said: "No way." He then handed it to me, adding: "S.O.B. has really flipped his lid this time."

Four years earlier, Vin had begun to slip, chemically. He was tagged with bipolar II and fed Lithium, and then Zoloft, and then new pills I'd never learned the names

William Giraldi'*s newest book is* American Audacity.

of, all of which refused to get along with his odd blood. He'd become the batty ill one in our family, so we were no longer jolted when he lay catatonic in bed for a week, or began dating the Mexican food-delivery woman, or came home in a new Corvette or Cadillac he couldn't afford, or announced to everyone that he was becoming a priest, a copy of Aquinas under his arm. His many millions were hostage in numerous real-estate ventures, which had begun imploding and dissolving one by one, sometimes two by two, and this didn't help. This absurd beach house he'd hired us to improve had been bought during another burst of mania.

Because I'd read all the relevant names in college, my family made the error of looking to me to help mend Vin's blighted mind, to somehow rescue him. When I tried explaining that one majors in psychology mostly by default, only when one can't get any traction in anything useful, employable, they wondered why I'd borrowed a fortune for a degree it would take half my life to pay back. It was, I saw, a good question.

Vin had addressed the note to Ralph. It began this way: "I'm bummed it has to be you who finds me, cousin, but you've always been the mighty one in our family."

I said: "Holy moly."

"Goddamn guy snapped his cap."

We went to the back deck and patio we'd just built the week before and there we spotted Vin hanging from a second-story window. The dawn had yet to breathe out its brighter hues but I could see that Vin was wearing his flannel shirt, paint-stained jeans, and Yankees cap.

Ralph said: "Jesus in heaven."

I couldn't say a thing.

When we approached the side of the house we saw that Vin had concocted an impressive dummy and dressed it in his work clothes. He must have spent half the snoozeless night crafting this thing.

I said: "Son of a bitch."

Ralph scratched at his stubbled scalp and looked only moderately relieved. The first hint of tardy sun glowed now at the ocean's rim and I saw that the back gate had been swung open, the same gate and fence I'd spent three medieval days scouring with the electric sander, priming with clear coat, and painting white. Out there on the sand, walking down to the water, were footsteps, but no footsteps returned, and no sign of Vin.

Ralph said: "The psycho drowned himself?"

We rushed to where waves spread on the shore and Ralph hollered out for Vin. I trotted over to the wall of wet rocks to see if he was hiding on the other side, wading waist-high. Way out there were men on boats who knew nothing about us or how this day would unfurl.

A gray jogger came past and I said: "Sir, you see a guy in the water? About my height? Crazy-looking?"

He shook an indifferent head and kept jogging. I dashed over to Ralph and looked into eyes wider than I'd seen since our father had told us that our mother was gone. Although the morning was still a welcome sixty-five, dots of sweat had showed up on my lip. I began rehearsing ways to tell Vin's mom, our too-rich aunty who'd always been sweet to me, that her son had gone to slumber in the Atlantic.

Ralph said: "Look," and pointed up at Vin's house. In an upper-floor window was the silhouette of someone in front of a shadeless lamp.

"Bastard's up there laughing at us." Ralph began striding and I followed.

I loved Vin for a lone reason that had zero to do with blood. When our father was killed falling from a roof, Vin didn't leave my side for three days and three nights. Between his death and resurrection, Christ spent three days giving tips to the no-doubt grateful damned. Vin was like that: he slept nights on the floor beside my bed, and as I seized with grief he reached up his hand to squeeze mine. He fetched my flavorless food and took all my weeping phone calls. You cannot buy that breed of devotion. There's a word we could use more of.

So I couldn't guess what I'd do now when we found him. Ralph, though, was incensed, I could see. With such roving weathers inside him, he was likely to backhand Vin. Going through the patio door into the kitchen—it took me eight tries to get that door on right—I was surprised to see a tear plummet from Ralph's mustache.

Working with him five, often six days a week was a mild perdition I probably deserved. He was forever promising to can me because I had no knack for carpentry or building of any sort. Indoor plumbing was a mystery up there with the grace of God. Ralph said I was not our father's son, and very far from the carpenter Christ was, and how could I counter that? I was a clumsy one, yes, and couldn't tell 1/16th from 1/8th on a tape measure.

Because he was two years older, and because our father was dead, Ralph considered it his familial duty to teach me sundry lessons about living and what it leads to. Lessons, he was adamant, that are impossible to pick up on a university campus.

Never mind that I'd trekked to almost every state in our land, and to Iceland and Sweden, too, while he had never even left the New York/New Jersey tag-team. To him I was still an inept clod because I'd never been a member of the workforce. I didn't care to see the workers of the world unite. So I suppose I was not a real American in that regard: I did not buy the dogma that declared hard work the avenue to happiness.

In the master bedroom upstairs we found Vin so drug-smacked that his eyes had gone into swollen slits. He was there giggling at us and right away Ralph grabbed him.

"The hell is your problem? You think you're funny?"

"Ralph," he said, giggling. "Ralph, Ralph, cousin."

I wedged myself between them and told Ralph to ease down, while Vin was saying: "It was a joke, guys, a joke, wasn't it good?"

"No, Vin," I said, "not good. You scared us. No one wants to be scared."

He said: "People watch horror movies to be scared."

Ralph: "Life ain't a horror movie, stupid."

"Depends who you ask, cousin."

"You need goddamn help," Ralph said. "You think I wanna cut down my dead cousin at six o'clock in the goddamn morning? On a goddamn *Friday*?"

"The dummy's good, ain't it?"

"You're the only dummy I know. And I ain't a babysitter. I'm here because I have to earn a living. Not like some of us. I don't have a sugar mommy and I don't have time for these goddamn games."

He said: "Relax, cousin, let's have some coffee. I'll make some downstairs." He put a joint to his lips and pulled on it hard, his face inflating, going redder as he tried to keep all the smoke in.

"I ain't having coffee with you," Ralph said. "I'm outta here. And you're giving me a day's pay, too, for this goddamn aggravation. I don't care."

"Come on, Ralph," I said. "Calm down. Nothing's broken here."

"*He's* broken," and he pointed hard at Vin. "You two Sallies can play games all you want, but I'm outta here."

He stomped down the steps, mumbling colorful aspersions. Vin didn't hear; he was working with crossed eyes to fire the joint plugged into his face. The lighter zipped and zipped but offered no flame. I told Vin that I hoped he was driving me home, now that Ralph was gone, and he replied with Neolithic grunts I took to be yes or probably. He was dressed in a wrinkled white button-up, black Rutgers sweatpants—a gift from me on a birthday long ago—and costly leather loafers with no socks. He looked hideously unslept, and I could tell from his posture alone that he was unshowered.

"Vin, are you taking your meds?"

"Yes I am. I crush 'em and snort 'em, you know. Faster effect."

"Please don't snort Lithium. Give me your doctor's number. I'm calling her about this."

No work would get done this day. Vin had trouble keeping track of our hours anyway and so ended up paying us the same wage each week whether we put in forty hours or four-and-a-half. He liked helping us, too, if "help" is the word we want. Ralph said it gave him a sense of purpose, something to bond over with his cousins. He had nothing else important to do; he'd never needed a job—something else that irked my brother into fits of icy ridicule.

But when he worked with us, sweating over everything, we had to babysit him in case he lost his hand on the Bosch table saw or else shot himself through the face with a nail gun. He and I weren't so different in that regard. Ralph was always babysitting me, too, calling me *dipshit* and *dolt*. One of his favorite lines was: "Let me hear you say, *Would you like fries with that, sir?*"

Ralph also liked calling me "moocher" because I lived with our grandparents. When I explained to him that they had *asked me* to live with them after I graduated because they needed company, because they were numb with puzzles from Walmart and only each other to blink at, and because they missed my father with a fanged grief that would not go, Ralph flicked me in the forehead with his pointer finger. I'm the baby grandchild, and Ralph railed against the reality that Gram still doted over me.

Most of the time on the job, I couldn't savor the sandwiches and chocolate Gram packed for me in the mornings because Ralph would raid my lunchbox when I wasn't looking. He would leave the Hershey wrappers and empty zip-lock bags and juice bottles for me to find. His girlfriend of six years had recently left him when he balked at buying her a ring. He was now getting acquainted with the blunt force of regret and wasn't satisfied unless he could make everyone in his orbit as afflicted as he was.

Instead of brewing us coffee that day, Vin sat in the kitchen booth and looked out the window at the water. A house such as this, with that vista, would

have done oodles toward my contentment. But not Vin. He was quiet now, having a moment, whatever a moment meant for him. His eyes were misted, though not from drugs. The mania was pausing.

"Shit, I'm sorry. Ralph is pissed. I'm sorry."

"He'll get over it."

"I can't sleep. I walk around this house all night, from window to window."

"You'll be alright. We have to call your doctor."

"I scare myself," and in another minute he was sobbing there in silence. I handed him a napkin, he lay down in the booth, and soon he was asleep.

I found his doctor's number on his phone and tried to get ahold of her. But of course it's not possible to get a doctor on the phone. The answering service was, like all answering services, impotent.

At this time in my life there was a woman I loved. For some of us, there's always a woman we love. I don't say that as a boast but more as an admission of radical weakness, since I hadn't yet learned to be alone, hadn't learned that the only cure for loneliness is solitude.

Myra had just turned thirty-two, eight years older than me. Her husband, Louis, was living somewhere else at the moment, Myra thought with a man, and I didn't meddle. He was gone for now and that was good. I'd met Myra on her front porch one morning at the beginning of that summer. Ralph and I had got a referral from another builder who had too much work, and Myra hired us to install new kitchen cabinets. My unconscious had an agenda that first day, I suppose, because when Ralph and I returned home to his garage after eight hours of removing her old kitchen, we saw that I'd left a Makita battery drill there. Ralph called me "shit-for-brains" and ordered me to go back and get it before it disappeared. I drove the ten minutes across town and listened to Springsteen growl about a road called Thunder.

Myra answered my knock in a beauteous mess of tears.

I said: "I'm sorry if this is a bad time."

"What is it?" she said, wiping paths of mascara from her cheeks.

"I left our drill in your kitchen."

"Drill?" She squinted at me just then as if trying to understand what on earth a drill could possibly mean to her life.

Ten minutes later we were sitting on her screened-in back porch, daiquiris on the table between us. That's when I heard all about Louis and the man he was probably living with. She'd been waiting to tell someone about the shameful deception she'd suffered, and, as she swiped at her eyes with the bottom of her shirt, I heard it all. To reciprocate, to show her that hardship rejects no one, I told her about Vin, though I said nothing about our parents.

"He should see somebody. My father's a physician in Princeton. I can get you a referral for somebody good."

And then, with no segue: "How old are you?"

"Twenty-four."

"Ah. Twenty-four."

Ah? What was that *Ah*? From where did it come and to where would it lead?

"And how old is your brother?"

"Two years older than me. He's just about the best carpenter in central Jersey."

"I heard that. Your parents must be pretty proud. I admire a builder. What's the opposite of a builder? Destroyer, I guess."

There was no invitation to a second drink or to anything else that day, though already I could feel the gale coming up in me. I was there with her for only an hour, and when I left there were no kisses, not the faintest embrace. At her front door, I took her hand and squeezed it in a way that meant the world would soon right itself for her, though I knew that wasn't true. And when I got back to Ralph's garage that day, I realized that I hadn't even looked for the drill in Myra's kitchen.

From the next day on I would go to Myra's place each evening for daiquiris, and in two weeks' time we'd be lovers, speaking somewhat seriously about a future that might make room for us.

I told Vin about Myra. He said: "I'm so happy for you, little cousin," and he was. If nothing else, he was skilled at keeping secrets, which was important because if Ralph knew about Myra and me he would consider it some kind of breach, a threat to his reputation as a professional. On the day of the bogus suicide note, Vin drove me home after we both slept two hours. Myra and I had been on for two months at this point. She'd got me a referral from her father for Vin, and I had the name of a Princeton psychiatrist plugged into my phone, someone with a history of fixing nuts like Vin.

We had an hour's drive from the Jersey beach to our hometown, just north of Princeton, and I dialed Doctor Franz. Vin kept saying: "I already have a doctor."

"Shut yourself. We're getting you a new doctor.

No more fake suicide notes and dummies for you." At which point he asked me again if the dummy was really as impressive as he thought it was.

He dropped me off at my grandparents' and after I showered I went to Myra's, and we went to bed with the urgency of finality, though I didn't know it then. Later, over a back-porch meal of blackened grouper and rice, Myra told me that Louis had wept at her through the phone that morning.

"What did he say? Between the weeping."

Her eyes were wet now too and she put down her fork and had a bit of trouble swallowing.

"He's confused," she said.

She looked past me into the backyard where finches were elbowing each other at the feeder, and her silence made my stomach shift.

"He sure is," I said. "Are *you* confused?"

"He wants to see me."

My hands had innumerable nicks on them from all the wood and brick of my days, the screws and nails I would soon disown.

"I'm eight years older than you, Ronny. I'm still married to him."

"We've had a nice summer. These past two months have been nice."

"Very nice," she said.

"Are you telling me something here?"

"Dessert?" she said. "I bought a chocolate layer cake."

"You didn't finish your fish."

"Neither did you. You didn't finish either."

I thought of Vin, if he'd keep his oath to see Doctor Franz, if his blood would ever behave.

I said: "I'm going outside to smoke."

"You don't smoke."

"I do in emergencies. I have a pack in my glove box."

"Where's the emergency?"

"Right here," I said.

When I went onto the front porch, my chest in a somersault and smoke on my mind, I saw Ralph down there by the curb, leaning up against his van. My guts kicked and I thought: this day began with Vin's dummy hanging from a second-story window and will end now with my getting dumped by my married girlfriend and fired by my marred brother. But that look on Ralph's face was not one of malice, not an announcement that I'd just been caught, but rather one of placid acceptance, even calm. As I went to him, I had lots of trouble meeting his eyes, though no trouble nodding the nod of the guilty.

"How long have you known?" I said, glancing back at Myra's house.

"All summer. You could have told me."

"No, I couldn't have."

"So you're laying a woman we worked for. So what?"

"Don't say that. I'm not just laying her."

"I know," he said. "That's why I didn't mention it."

"What are you doing here?" He looked dejected to me, and because of that, more brotherly than I'd seen him since the funeral. And I think I understood, before he answered my question, that the reason he was here had heaps to do with him and not much to do with me.

"I just came from Vin's. He said he's seeing a new doctor tomorrow who's gonna change his life. He's dumping all his beer down the sink."

"Why did you go to Vin's? You hate Vin."

"No I don't, Ronny. You went to college and you can't see that?"

The storm in my stomach briefly settled. The scent of shampoo, soap, and deodorant fumed from my brother like incense. Someone was cutting a lawn on the next block.

"Do you need anything from me right now? I'm kind of busy with the end of something here."

"I had a nasty feeling that you weren't all right. I don't know why that is."

"I'm fine, Ralph."

"Is this serious?" he said, nodding to Myra's house.

"Maybe not anymore."

Then he said he'd pick me up Monday morning, the usual time. We had to finish the staircase on Vin's beach house. He touched my shoulder, got in his van, and drove away. At the end of Myra's street, he didn't make a right turn toward his house, but rather a left, toward St. Ann's cemetery, where our father is buried. I didn't know if he was headed there, but I preferred to think so.

Things were mostly back to normal on Monday. Ralph hadn't undergone any real transformation. None of us ever do, or at least not for long. But whatever moved between us during those few minutes in front of Myra's house was enough for me, until the following month when I said goodbye to him and my grandparents, fled our town, and ambled into the right life, the one that was waiting for me.

When I turned to go back inside I saw Myra standing in the window between parted curtains. I stopped there on the walkway to return her stare. She half smiled and raised her hand to me, slowly, in a gesture of either hello or goodbye, be mine or be gone, I didn't know which. ■

Ruin of St. Dunstan-in-the-East church garden

CAMIMAGE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Altair Brandon-Salmon

Trees Where Columns Stood

LONDON'S MEMORIAL CHURCH RUINS

Laurence Olivier's camera pans across an abstract, Technicolor land of painted hills and wooden windmills, crops grown unkempt, trees and bushels covering ploughs, clover running amok. We see a tumbledown stone house with two peasant children in rags before the camera finally rests on a fairy-tale castle, like an illustration from a medieval book of hours. The Duke of Burgundy (Valentine Dyall) sonorously declaims:

> Should not in this best garden of the world,
> Our fertile France, put up her lovely visage?
> Alas, she hath from France too long been chased,
> And all her husbandry doth lie on heaps,
> Corrupting in its own fertility.
> *(William Shakespeare,* Henry V, *V.ii.36–40)*

This scene, near the end of Olivier's 1944 film version of *Henry V*, becomes a potent metaphor for Britain in the midst of war: its major cities reduced to smoking rubble, willow herb and fleabane taking root in the debris, bombsites turned into impromptu gardens. The British government commissioned the film, and it premiered November 22, 1944—less than six months after D-Day. London must have seemed a wild, ruined garden to the audiences watching this scene. Whole swathes of the metropolis lay "on heaps," destroyed by the Luftwaffe's bombs.

The wreck of the nation's capital, however, also led to the creation of unexpected vistas. Writing in 1945, the architect Hugh Casson thought a bombed building could be "a place with its own individuality, charged with its emotion and atmosphere, of drama, of grandeur, of nobility." A group of influential figures that included T. S. Eliot, Kenneth Clark (director of the National Gallery), and the economist John Maynard Keynes argued that a few of these ruins—specifically, destroyed London churches—ought to be preserved as war memorials. Otherwise, they warned in a 1944 letter to the *Times*, "no trace of death from the air" would be left "to remind posterity of the reality of the sacrifices upon which its apparent security has been built. These church ruins, we suggest, would do this with realism and gravity."

Even before the war was over, people were already thinking about how it should be remembered. Remarkably, in the blaze of rebuilding that transformed London during the postwar period, making it the city we know today, the people who signed that letter to the

Christ Church Greyfriars, also known as Christ Church Newgate

Times got their way: the church ruins were preserved.

I encountered them for the first time as I was wandering the streets of the City of London, where half a dozen churches remain as hollow shells, potent physical reminders of the Second World War in the financial heart of London. These carefully preserved ruins are surrounded by glass-and-steel skyscrapers, which are themselves testaments to the destruction of the Blitz, often built on spots razed by aerial bombardment. Working for the summer in the City, I escaped the office on warm evenings to find these puzzling, evocative relics.

The stone walls of St. Dunstan-in-the-East are covered in dark green creepers. Down the nave, there are small trees where columns once stood. In the day's last shoots of sunlight, it seems like an oasis of peace. In a short, anonymous article published by *Country Life* in 1945, one critic neatly summed up the themes suggested by the garden in St. Dunstan-in-the-East. The church operates, he wrote, as "a memorial of the actual destructiveness of war, partly as the shrine of a memorial garden and partly for aesthetic contrast with the streamlined buildings of the new City." It is the "aesthetic contrast" that is most striking today. Surrounded by gigantic office blocks spread out over more than a square mile, the church now sits in a district synonymous with international finance. Most of the City's generic architecture is as impersonal as the digits and codes that propel trade across the globe to New York, Frankfurt, Tokyo.

It was a relief, then, to discover the humanely scaled St. Dunstan-in-the-East, hinting toward a past the City seems eager to forget. As one traces the gray paving, it's hard to imagine the torrent of high explosives that rained down in 1941 and consumed the church's interior. In March 1942, the architectural historian J. M. Richards described the morning after a bombing, noting "that peculiar air-raid smell of wet charred wood" and "the blundering gait with which we picked our way over puddled streets criss-crossed with hoses on dark winter mornings…the familiar houses we saw splintered with impressive thoroughness into a spillikins heap of dusty timbers."

The chill must of winter seemed very far away on that summer evening I spent in St. Dunstan-in-the-East. Yet in Richards's language, we can reach back to a moment when the church was not a quiet lunchtime spot, but another fresh ruin joining tens of thousands of others. The high steeple, designed by Christopher Wren, was badly damaged by the bombing and had to be restored in 1953. The garden itself wasn't planted until 1967, but it followed the principles advocated in the rich and fascinating booklet *Bombed Churches as War Memorials*, issued by the Architectural Press in October 1945.

In the booklet's foreword, the Very Reverend W. R. Matthews, then the Dean of St. Paul's, claimed that "the devastation of war has given us an opportunity which will never come again." This optimism echoed sentiments expressed during the war itself. The country would turn bombsites into social housing and hospitals, with a few churches left as memorials to the carnage of the home front. (As Brian Foss has pointed out, it wasn't until September 1941 that frontline casualties

LATITUDESTOCK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

outnumbered civilian deaths in Britain.) The short booklet is full of halftone illustrations, architectural plans, and garden plans, showing how to transform destroyed buildings into "ruins." In one article, Hugh Casson argued that "every stone—whether fallen or in place—is a fragment of the past, part of the pattern of history." Churches such as St. Dunstan and Christ Church, Newgate Street, scarred by the Great Fire of London and the Blitz, are now living monuments not just to the bombs and fires, but to London's long history of transformation. Casson worried about a time when "all traces of war damage will have gone, and its strange beauty vanished from our streets...and with their going the ordeal through which we passed will seem remote, unreal, perhaps forgotten." These precious City survivals are meant to be a guard against forgetting. They embody the trauma and mass destruction that are all too easy to forget in placid twenty-first century Britain. Apart from these ruined churches, you will find only small brass plaques marking the spots where historic buildings once stood before being annihilated by "Enemy Action."

Christ Church, Newgate Street, near the London Stock Exchange, is perhaps the most visible of the ruined churches in the City. It was one of the churches identified by the Architectural Press as worthy of being preserved in its desolation. The landscape architect Brenda Colvin proposed that the plants and flowers at Christ Church should mirror those seen blooming spontaneously amid bombed houses, and all three writers in the booklet—Casson, Colvin, and the Czech architect Jacques Groag—were in agreement that the garden should be wild and disheveled. Casson emphasized "how much pleasanter would these garden ruins be...than the usual little municipal park with its geometrical patterns of unfriendly asphalt and forbidden turf." Well, the City of London Corporation was never going to allow messy patches of grass and weeds. The new garden, opened in 1989, is tidy and tasteful, not at all what the contributors to *Bombed Churches as War Memorials* had in mind. Christopher Woodward, in his 2001 book *In Ruins*, regrets what he dubs the "corporation aesthetic" of the Christ Church ruins, wishing that they were instead "a little wilder." Today Christ Church is a pleasant and tranquil corner of the City of London—but it is not really a bombsite, nor a hidden urban wilderness.

The mournful quality of London's ruins is instead best caught in another book by the Architectural Press, *The Bombed Buildings of Britain*, first published in 1942 and then followed by an expanded edition in 1947. It is an obituary for England's cities, containing hundreds of photographs of broken Gothic churches, demolished Georgian terrace houses, shattered palaces and museums. Compiled by J. M. Richards and John Summerson, both major architectural historians and theorists, it records "buildings whose loss is more profound than any transient beauty in their swansong can compensate for." The book is an elegy of an urban landscape disintegrating before the authors' eyes, as the Luftwaffe and later the V-1 and V-2 flying bombs relentlessly pulverized it. The book's images of smashed stone and wood are a powerful metaphor for the tens of thousands of civilians who perished from the night raids and the random death visited upon the English metropolis.

Richards writes that "storm and lightning, the death-watch beetle, Cromwell's troopers, the speculative builder, mere obsolescence—and now German bombs," have all contributed to the destruction and renewal of the country, an almost natural process, as certain as the changing of the seasons. It cannot be prevented, only accommodated and recorded. Buildings become like trees, with their centuries-long lifetimes. St. Dunstan-in-the-East is now a battered, three-century-old tree stump, surrounded by the charmless saplings of the new City. ■

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Celia Wren

It's Not Just Us

'DREAMLAND' & 'CALL MY AGENT'

The cast of Dreamland

Comedy is not supposed to travel well. It's perhaps for that reason that, at a moment when world television is more accessible than ever to American audiences, the international shows garnering much of the attention have been dramas (the cinematic German detective drama *Babylon Berlin*, for instance, or the gripping Israeli thriller *Fauda*). But two can't-miss series from abroad demonstrate that comedy isn't always lost in translation from one language or culture to another. The priceless Australian workplace satire *Dreamland* and the endearing French showbiz-industry comedy *Call My Agent!* parlay contemporary social foibles into plotlines that are both telling and hilarious.

Now airing on a number of local public-television stations around the country, distributed by American Public Television, *Dreamland* is a side-splitting spoof of 9-to-5 culture. The setting is the (fictional) Nation Building Authority, an Australian government organization focused on major infrastructure projects. As the down-to-earth Tony (Rob Sitch) and Nat (Celia Pacquola) strive to complete container terminals, highway-upgrade projects, and other essential public works, their time and energy are regularly siphoned off by the harebrained schemes of their bosses, Jim (Anthony Lehmann) and Rhonda (Kitty Flanagan). Trendy office practices—wellness programs, safety audits, muffin platters, a morale-building employee talent show—keep getting in the way of real work.

Dreamland (titled *Utopia* in Australia) benefits from terrific pacing: each comic moment works well in part because it gets brisk, matter-of-fact framing for just a fleeting moment before the story moves on. The humor also benefits from grounding in a real phenomenon: the business world's veneration of spin and branding. Again and again, the series shows us Tony and Nat's common sense colliding with, and losing to, the rash, buzz-generating initiatives proposed by Jim and Rhonda.

In one episode, the bosses insist on reannouncing a high-speed rail project that experts have pronounced unviable. Their naysaying does not deter Rhonda: 95 percent of Australians approve of the fast-train idea, she says. As for the other 5 percent, who are they? "Engineers, economists, experts in transport logistics…" Tony ventures. "The lunatic fringe!" Rhonda retorts. "Real people love it!"

Dreamland mostly sticks to its characters' office ordeals. For a workplace comedy that also makes hay with private life, you can turn to *Call My Agent!* (French title: *Dix pour cent*), about the professional and personal tribulations of a set of talent reps. The series streams on Netflix.

The driven yet mishap-prone agents at the boutique firm ASK in Paris struggle with family and romantic quandaries that generate gossip and goof-ups, in and out of the office. That's particularly the case after Camille (Fanny Sidney), the illegitimate daughter of high-powered agent Mathias (Thibault de Montalembert), joins ASK as the assistant to Mathias's ambitious colleague Andréa (Camille Cottin), who does not know about Camille's blood connection.

Amidst their personal turmoil, the ASK team members scramble to cope with the neuroses, career crises, and volcanic egoism of the high-profile artists they represent. In the show's central gimmick, every episode features a real star making a cameo as an exaggerated version of him or herself. (French celebrities apparently have an excellent sense of humor.) In one plotline, the workaholic Isabelle Huppert gets herself into a fix when she signs up to film two major movies at once, in defiance of exclusivity clauses. In another, Isabelle Adjani pleads with her agent, Mathias, to get her a gig on *Game of Thrones*.

As with *Dreamland*, the comedy in *Call My Agent!* pivots on our recognition of a broad cultural phenomenon: in this case, it's our society's adulation of fame. Because celebrities have such visibility and cultural clout, it's all the funnier to see their doppelgangers absorb kooky hits to pocketbook and self-esteem. *Call My Agent!* combines this overarching theme with subsidiary aperçus about media and showbiz, as when Camille has to edit a Wikipedia page to make an actress look younger. Or when Mathias, seeking to fix the tax-debt problems of actress Audrey Fleurot, wrangles her a made-for-clickbait film role as a militant-environmentalist stripper, even though she is too out-of-shape for the pole dance the role requires.

The entertainment-industrial complex that *Call My Agent!* skewers is increasingly an international one, a point reinforced by that not entirely farfetched joke about Isabelle Adjani on *Game of Thrones*. The business-school groupthink skewered on *Dreamland* also crosses borders. Indeed, despite a resurgence of xenophobia and nationalism around the world, people in every part of it are increasingly subject to the same economic and cultural forces. Brilliant shows like *Dreamland* and *Call My Agent!* show us the lighter side of this steady globalization. ■

BECK MEDIA / NETFLIX

John Cotter

Danses Macabres

Abel and Cain
Gregor von Rezzori
translated from the German by David Dollenmayer, Joachim Neugroschel, and Marshall Yarbrough
NYRB Classics, $24.95, 864 pp.

"When I think back on myself," said Gregor von Rezzori in a 1991 *Salmagundi* interview, "I shiver with disgust." This is true of most thinking people, but perhaps especially for the author of *Abel and Cain*, twin novels composed from the 1960s through the 1990s, now available as a single volume for the first time in English. These novels tell the story of the scriptwriter Aristides Subicz, challenged by an international book agent to describe his own life story in three sentences. Subicz's rebellion against that mandate drives him to write the story of the European twentieth century as an autobiography and, in so doing, explore the mechanics of complicity: the way whole societies rationalize their butchery, the way the zeitgeist marionettes our arms and legs, our horror at the work of our own hands.

Born in a contested province of Romania/Ukraine, Rezzori made his name as a writer after World War II thanks to the burlesque *Tales of Maghrebinia* (a kind of Mandeville's *Travels* of Eastern Europe) and his *Idiot's Guide to German Society*. Rezzori wrote serious work alongside these entertainments, bristling all the while at how much more attention the entertainments won him. Though he can be both grimly and frivolously funny, nothing could be more grave than the themes Rezzori isolates in his major novels—*An Ermine in Czernopol, Memoirs of an Anti-Semite,* and *Abel and Cain*, the just-published omnibus volume of *The Death of My Brother Abel* (1976) and its posthumous sequel, *Cain. The Death of My Brother Abel* is already a long book (675 pages in this edition), and *Cain* only complicates matters: stories don't tie up, compromised characters compromise themselves more elaborately, sublimated guilt floats toward the surface. The combined novel is sticky, comfortless stuff: stories about a reality where "everyone carries the murderer inside himself and is simultaneously a murderer's victim"; where "the demonic, you see, can be

SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG PHOTO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Members of Romania's Iron Guard, 1940

tackled with neither medication nor scalpels"; where the most famous stories are the most clichéd, those soothing to "healthy folk sensibility"; and in which a March day of fine weather in 1938 can witness "the illumination of total emptiness."

The narrator, Subicz, is born into the childhood of a Bond villain. The illegitimate son of a courtesan in Bessarabia, he's raised by a family of Nazi-sympathizing mystics and petit bourgeois in Vienna. A strange old uncle educates him on the casually sinister etiquette of café society and the world of his mother's lovers, frivolous tycoons like Bully Olivera, "a tiny, roly-poly, mercurial South American who played outstanding polo and poker and, it was said, owed his immense fortune to the slave labor of entire tribes of half-starved, lice-ridden Indians." Learning at their feet, Subicz develops decadent tastes and a conscience like a maze. He learns by heart the "morbid charms and kitschy beauty" of the fading Hapsburg Empire, charms that would be sanitized and standardized after the war into a kind of Disneyland Europe, a "supranational style" fit for American and Americanized consumers. The old empires have fallen; the murderous interlude of ethnic nationalism has given way to a new empire, "the same corrupt world, the same world of money—only in a cunningly new, brightly promising, insidiously abstract way." Subicz repeatedly quotes Matthew 25:29: *For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has.* Though Subicz lives above his means it isn't riches per se he longs for; it's literary glory.

From four overstuffed folders, in a hotel room in 1968, Subicz assembles his manuscript, the one the agent Brodney asked him to summarize in three sentences. *The Death of My Brother Abel* is comprised of the first three folders, *Cain* the last. The deeper Subicz digs into his own story, tossing up fossils and imploring our admiration, the more obvious it becomes that this story can't be told with the pulp gimmickry of show business. Instead, every time Subicz holds a trinket or a bit of bone up to the light, "every tale hatches ten others: hybrid cell growth that cannot be contained in any form." The narrative dashes backward and forward in time; it stutters, it returns to the same stories.

The most formative of these stories involves his first love. After his mother's suicide, Subicz commences a romance with the wealthy Stella Stern, Jewish and adventurous. Stella's complicit husband arranges for Subicz to travel outside a rapidly militarizing Reich, but Stella tries to visit her lover and is kidnapped into a concentration camp. Subicz spends the war wandering the bombed-out fatherland as a stateless person, a "*déraciné par excellence*" and "professional literary flunky." Stella dies in the camp. Subicz blames himself. In a sense, she saves his life: after the war, her husband lands Subicz an exculpating role testifying at Nuremberg. Had Stella not died in the camps, Subicz may not have been held so blameless. The irony eats at him. He takes Nuremberg to be a travesty where "outside, the people are starving, selling their little sister or their dead son's Knight's Cross for a carton of Lucky Strikes." As observed by Subicz, the proceedings amount to mere ritual; the revenge the occasion demands, the sense of justice, never fully arrives.

Later, in the rubble of Hamburg, Subicz falls in with a band of intellectuals with religious and humanistic ideas about how Germany can be rebuilt. No matter. Capital finds the ruined country: "the rubble fields are gilded, they once again have a tangible reality value. New buildings are sure to proliferate shortly: business fortresses, office palaces, tenement barracks." There Subicz befriends Schwab, a promising German writer too anxious to write a book of his own. Schwab takes a job at a publishing house, supports Subicz's work on a grand novel, falls prey to drug addiction, and dies.

The Schwab-Subicz relationship is clearly intended to be a major thread in the book, perhaps *the* major thread—which is why it's disappointing Schwab remains so much of a cypher. His most prominent roles are drinking and taking pills and listening to Subicz's often delightful monologues. In *Cain*, the novel becomes metatextual; the Subicz we know may be a complete invention of the real author, Schwab. Why? Because Schwab really is German, really is ground down by guilt, really is a forgotten man, a man who moved in lockstep with the zeitgeist; he invents Subicz as a literary character, a way of symbolically freeing himself from complicity. Right at the moment the reader yearns for some kind of resolution, the story becomes a house of mirrors.

Apart from the metafictional thread woven into it, *Cain* recapitulates much of *Abel*: more childhood ("our first impressions are not only our own: they are bathed in the light of our parents' heyday"), more of Subicz's life as a ladies' man (there are plenty of sex scenes in the Henry Miller mode, about which, suffice it to say, you probably had to be there) and more of Operation Gomorrah, which Subicz witnessed in 1943 ("I watched many roofs collapse into the honeyed light of the flames that fell from the rafters like a woman's loosened hair").

That echo of Paul Celan's "Todesfuge" is no accident ("your golden hair Margareta / Your ashen hair Shulamite"). Celan and Rezzori were childhood neighbors, though Celan was six years younger. The preeminent poet of the Holocaust and one of the preeminent novelists of complicity both came of age in a city called Czernowitz, in a province called the Bukovina, a regional capital of the Hapsburg Empire. In Rezzori's telling, once upon a time, the Bukovina pullulated with life. There were Germans, Italians, Ukrainians, Jews, Roma, and Romanians, all living and working in the "cynical harmony that is built on mutual aversion and common business dealings." Just as in our own multiethnic state, minority groups fall victim to needless prejudice. In Czernowitz it was the Jews who were most scorned, secretly hated, openly hated, or regarded—as Rezzori explains of the anti-Semitism

of his aristocratic forbearers—with ubiquitous suspicion and contempt.

This is the world of Rezzori's first masterpiece, *An Ermine in Czernopol*, published in 1958. In the fictionalized Czernowitz of the novel, children of a mid-level government official grow up enchanted in the way all children are enchanted, by the beautiful and terrifying strangeness of the world. The characters, at least at first, are the people of a fairy tale: a noble Hussar, his princess wife, a hunchbacked maid full of secrets.

The narrators of *Ermine* were too young to remember WWI, but know it anyway. In what today we might call a manifestation of epigenetic memory, Rezzori describes how he and his sister "carried the war inside us, the tumult of destruction and annihilation, the addictive obliviousness it contained." Unlike most of Rezzori's characters, this brother and sister are lucky enough to escape the bigotry that would otherwise be their birthright. The hate of the bigots of Czernowitz is not an ordinary hate. It is an anti-Semitism that, like American racism, didn't rise up as an afterthought but rather built the rest of society to suit it; the narrators of *Ermine* "came to converse with our friends in the first place, and only later, quite a bit later—did we find out that they were Jews. So we didn't make the usual discovery that *Jews are also people*, but rather the reverse, that *people are sometimes also Jews*." This is a revelation denied to their father, their aunts and uncles, the rising right-wing of the town.

To say *An Ermine in Czernopol* ends with disenchantment is a grotesque understatement. It ends with the "Petrescu-pogrom," an evening of murder and shattered glass inspired not by blood-libel, but by petty jealousy and the sheer pleasure of hating. Early in the book, describing the way the narrators' father ignores a caravan of Jews passing through town, the narrators show us a man "avoiding contact because he didn't want to give up an animosity of his own making." His disgust, absent a target at which to direct itself, would have pointed back at its maker: "His anger was setting the stage for his hate, and insuring that these people were worthy of his detestation."

Following the events of *Ermine*, the real Czernowitz witnessed the rise of Romania's Iron Guard, a fascist paramilitary group. Invading Russians "repatriated" the German population in 1940; not long after, the Iron Guard transported most of the Jewish population to camps and worked them to death, Paul Celan's family among them. When Russian soldiers returned, the town's remaining Jews left for Israel and the Poles were deported to Poland. Today, the city belongs to Ukraine: Ukrainians live there and a few Romanians too. The multiethnic home Rezzori knew is gone—only the buildings remain.

And what of the citizens who, if they didn't engineer all this human cleansing, at least allowed it to happen, even tacitly encouraged it? Rezzori made the mind of a bigot the subject of his subsequent major work, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*. Replete with the deceptive trappings of autofiction (the narrator's name is Gregor and his life story closely parallels Rezzori's), it tells the story of a young man so steeped in the hatred around him that he takes it in at a not-quite-conscious level. His best friend in childhood, several loves, two wives, and the whole of his social circle in 1930s Vienna are Jews (often accomplished, often wary), but Gregor can't shed his vestigial bias. It comes out in odd moments. A petty argument with his girlfriend turns, without warning, into an anti-Semitic tirade. He's angry at himself later—he sounded like his father. Shamefully, he comes to realize, "I basically thought the way he did. I hung on the threads of my background and upbringing like a fly in a spiderweb."

Self pity? What bigot would go without it? And then the Anschluss:

> … how could I have prevented what all the other Austrians obviously welcomed? I felt frightfully sorry for Minka and all our friends, but it was not my fault that they happened to be Jews, and in the event that they got into serious trouble I could use my connections with the SS to help them out again.

Contemporary American readers would need to be pretty self-deceiving to avoid reading these *Memoirs* with a kind of sickly guilt that crests, sooner rather than later, into stark recognition. It's not anti-Semitism per se we'll recognize, though we might. No citizen of a nation built on the oppression of black and brown people can fail to see a little of himself in Gregor. And therein lies Rezzori's great talent as a writer, and the source of our discomfort. He describes the way society manufactures bigots: the bigotry first and everything else only later, dependent on the bigotry for its existence. Without the bigotry, what's left of the self?

Like *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite, Abel and Cain* also climaxes in Vienna in 1938. There Aristides Subicz employs a word we rarely use anymore but maybe should: *zeitgeist*. Although after the war, "every single German claims never to have been a Nazi," Hitler and his lieutenants alone can't stand responsible for the events of 1938–45. That's why Nuremberg was a "catharsis that never happened." Those defendants couldn't have broken Europe on their own. What activates latent evil is what we carry—perhaps without knowing it, perhaps while loathing it—in our hearts.

Abel and Cain is more self-consciously literary than *Ermine* or *Memoirs*, which is saying a lot. If the archetype of the contemporary novel is a chase, Rezzori's novels are *danses macabres*. There are strange delights in these books; Rezzori is as eloquent as Nabokov, if more roundabout. Dip into anything he wrote, and you'll come to feel as though the book could go on sugaring your coffee all night, half making you sick with horror—and, worse, recognition—for a moment or two or three before unfolding more elaborate jokes, allegories, admonitions. Like his other books, *Abel and Cain* feels it could go on endlessly; unlike the others, it does. This is not a reason to avoid the book, but it's a reason to reach for *Ermine* and *Memoirs* first. ■

John Cotter *is author of the novel* Under the Small Lights. *His writing has appeared in* Guernica, Bookforum, *and* Electric Literature, *and will appear shortly in* Raritan *and* Washington Square Review.

Santiago Ramos

Father Land

My Father Left Me Ireland
An American Son's Search for Home
Michael Brendan Dougherty
Sentinel, $24, 240 pp.

As a Paraguayan immigrant growing up in the pristine suburbs of Kansas, I sometimes found my own cultural assumptions at odds with those of my high-school classmates. One of these assumptions was about the value of patriotism. Although committed to liberal values like democracy, freedom of expression, and resisting Yankee imperialism, I was nevertheless surprised by the coldness with which some of my friends spoke about love for one's country. "In order to be a good patriot," one of them told me, "you first have to visit or at least study every country in the world, and then make an objective decision." There was something off about that rational-seeming statement, but at the time I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Which team did my friend root for in the World Cup?

My classmates who were skeptical of patriotism thought of themselves as being on the Left. I could have easily found other, more conservative, people in Kansas who considered themselves American patriots. But the assumption that leftist politics is incompatible with patriotism is wrong. It does not hold, for example, in Latin America. In the 1970s, Paraguayan leftist activists committed themselves to "revolutionary nationalism" in tandem with "proletarian internationalism." Under Castro's reign, "Cuba Libre!" was often shouted together with "Viva Cuba!" For better or worse, political leaders of every stripe have draped themselves in the flag. Even in my youth, I believed there was something of value in this.

My Father Left Me Ireland is a book that goes into the depths of that "something." It is a memoir-cum-polemic written in the form of a son's letters to his once-absent father. Michael Brendan Dougherty was born in the United States to an Irishman and an Irish-American mother, but his parents never married. While his father returned to Dublin, Michael's mother raised her son alone in New Jersey. "Who were you, anyway?" Dougherty asks his father. "You were the man who showed up every few years. The man who wrote me letters about the latest developments in his household, the home in which I played no role."

Dougherty's mother had a rougher go of it than his father. Her choice to keep and raise the young Michael garnered the type of superficial respect that is doled out by members of the *bien pensant* upper-middle class to suffering mothers. But that respect, Dougherty argues, comes with little in the way of material solidarity from either neighbors or employers. Illness eventually forced Dougherty's mother to leave a good job at IBM, and she lived the rest of her life in dependent precarity. Dougherty got a good education in Catholic schools, but it came at a human cost that was paid by his mother. In a dark moment after his mother's early death, he thinks: "I still had this guilty feeling that somehow my existence ruined her life."

How to grow up under such conditions? How to find one's self and one's calling? This book covers a lot of subjects: fatherhood and its absence; motherhood, unnoticed and undervalued; consumerism; the Catholic faith; poetry and politics; authenticity; revolution; the meaning of sacrifice. But there is a thread running through these beads, and it is the author's spiritual development, which culminates in the discovery of his own vocation as a father. This development can only happen, Dougherty argues, within the context of a nation.

Dougherty, a senior writer for the *National Review*, takes great pains to define nationhood. He believes it consists of something more concrete than a Lockean social contract. A nation, he claims, is "a spiritual ecology that exists between" the living, the unborn, and the dead. Life is meaningful only within such a spiritual environment; the things that give life meaning—love, friendship, family, poetry, sports—become real only within a shared identity rooted in history and culture. Such an environment can be received only as a patrimony. "A nation exists in the things that a father gives his children."

But Dougherty's own personal history is somewhat at odds with this conception of nationhood: he did not initially learn much about Ireland from his own father. He had to seek this national homeland from afar, learning about his roots first through teachers, books, and family history.

In his teens and twenties, Dougherty claimed his Irish heritage in the mode of the "curator": someone who sees culture as another consumer product for life enhancement, like camping gear or surround-sound. The curatorial mode is the only way our "end of history" society can conceive of appropriating a culture, because it sees nations only as "technical and bureaucratic" entities. Such shallowness was hard to avoid during the 1990s. Dougherty argues that, after the Good Friday Agreement and the rise of the Celtic Tiger, Ireland itself caved into the temptation of commodifying "Irishness." (He is not a big fan of *Riverdance*, *Angela's Ashes*, or the cult of Guinness.)

Later on, though, Dougherty would learn more authentic modes of appropriating his heritage. He admires and imitates his mother's efforts to learn Gaelic through cassette tapes and language camps. He is indebted to a high-school teacher who revealed the treasures of Yeats and other Irish writers. Most importantly, he writes glowingly of Patrick Pearse, the Irish poet, teacher, and leader of the ill-fated 1916 revolt against the British.

Mt. Eagle on the Dingle Peninsula in western Ireland

Crucial as it was to his becoming more truly Irish, Dougherty's appreciation of Pearse is also the most morally questionable part of the book. It was Pearse who, on the eve of the Rising, declared: "We may make mistakes in the beginning and shoot the wrong people; but bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing." While this book discusses the conflict in Northern Ireland only briefly—too briefly for its own good—Dougherty has written about the Troubles before with moral clarity. He considers its instigators less noble than the tragic revolutionaries of the Rising. In one piece, he wrote that Irish nationalists during the Troubles depended on "the myth that the political and religious divisions that forestalled unity and political development in Ireland were entirely products of foreign government. Under the spell of these ideas, men waited outside doorways to put 9mm bullets in the heads of other men. For these doctrines, men addressed mail bombs to the wives of H-block prison guards." What makes Pearse different?

Dougherty acknowledges that there is something "truly mad" about Pearse, but the deep truth he embodies is that "the formation of character" requires sacrifice, and that "the only liberation worth having is one accomplished in sacrifice." Freedom is not to be found in liberal proceduralism, or in the idea of a nation as nothing more than a big shopping district. Freedom is won by the sacrifice of the few, and sustained in the kind of culture such sacrifices inspire.

There is of course a distinction to be made between sacrifice and political violence. That distinction brings others to the fore. Given the violence that nationalism often generates, why not also distinguish between national culture and the nation-state? Couldn't we have the former without the latter? Granted, such a view may seem impracticable, as empire now seems to be the only alternative to nation, and empires (like Rome) swallow up nations before eventually breaking apart. In any case, a book about the virtues of nationalism is bound to raise thorny geopolitical questions. What would Dougherty make of the tough cases: Quebec, Catalonia, Scotland, Palestine, the Basque region, Puerto Rico, and Black nationalism in America? And what exactly would a healthy and reasonable American nationalism look like, given that the United States is now in many ways more like an empire than a nation? How do we avoid all the sins that usually attend nationalism—resentment, xenophobia, and enervating nostalgia?

We can also draw a distinction between national identity and a deeper personal sense of self. I was struck by how similar Dougherty's experience is to that of a Latin American living in the United States—not only my own experience, but also that of friends from other places south of the border. Every nation seems to have its own poets, tragedies, and flavor of wisdom: in Paraguay we have Manuel Ortiz Guerrero, the suicide note that Pedro Juan Caballero scrawled on his cell wall, and unique expressions of kindness. As grateful as I am for the abundance and generosity of the United States, and as much as I have enjoyed the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the open highway, and warm Fourth of July evenings, part of me will always be rooted in a place I can now only visit. The same can be said for Dougherty, who does not live in Ireland. Here's a twist: Dougherty's book about nationalism points to an experience that is shared by many immigrants.

But it's also a universal truth that human beings—from Abraham to today's refugees and "economic migrants"—often *must* leave their country to be free and develop their personalities. Or, they often define themselves according to a higher ideal—a transcendent and perhaps international one. You are always more than where you come from. As a Catholic, Dougherty is himself part of a multicultural, cosmopolitan society, one that sees itself as somehow not fully of this world. As T. S. Eliot put it, our earthly home is "England"—or wherever—"and nowhere." And the "nowhere" is also a place of spiritual growth. ■

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BJØRN CHRISTIAN TØRRISSEN

Derek S. Jeffreys

The Purposes of Punishment

The Meaning of Life
The Case for Abolishing Life Sentences
Marc Mauer and Ashley Nellis
Featuring six portraits of lifers by Kerry Myers
The New Press, $25.99, 224 pp.

Some years ago, I visited El Manzano, a large prison in Concepción, Chile, and spent time talking with the warden, staff, and inmates. I asked the warden how much time murderers served in his prison. Chuckling, he assured me that he was tough on them, and proudly proclaimed that murderers often serve twenty-five to thirty years. His comment saddened me because a sentence that length pales next to those typically given in the United States. In our approach to life sentences, we are an international outlier. More than two hundred thousand people serve one of three forms of life imprisonment: some have received a life sentence without the possibility of parole; others have an opportunity for parole that may never materialize; still others serve "virtual" life sentences—they have been sentenced to so many years that they will die in prison. Few countries in the world have anything like this sentencing regime.

In their provocative book *The Meaning of Life*, Marc Mauer and Ashley Nellis expose the injustice and senselessness of our current approach to life in prison. The authors work for the Sentencing Project, an organization that collects data about the criminal-justice system, and they draw on their extensive experience to provide a rich empirical analysis of life sentences. A real merit of this book is that interspersed throughout the main text are the voices of inmates and their families; Kerry Myers, a man formerly incarcerated in Louisiana, has compiled their moving stories. We learn about people who made terrible mistakes in their youth that confine them to prison for life. Some killed in reaction to domestic violence or got involved in the illegal drug trade. Many of the inmates educated themselves in prison or developed important relationships. Some ended up being released after decades in prison, while others remain incarcerated.

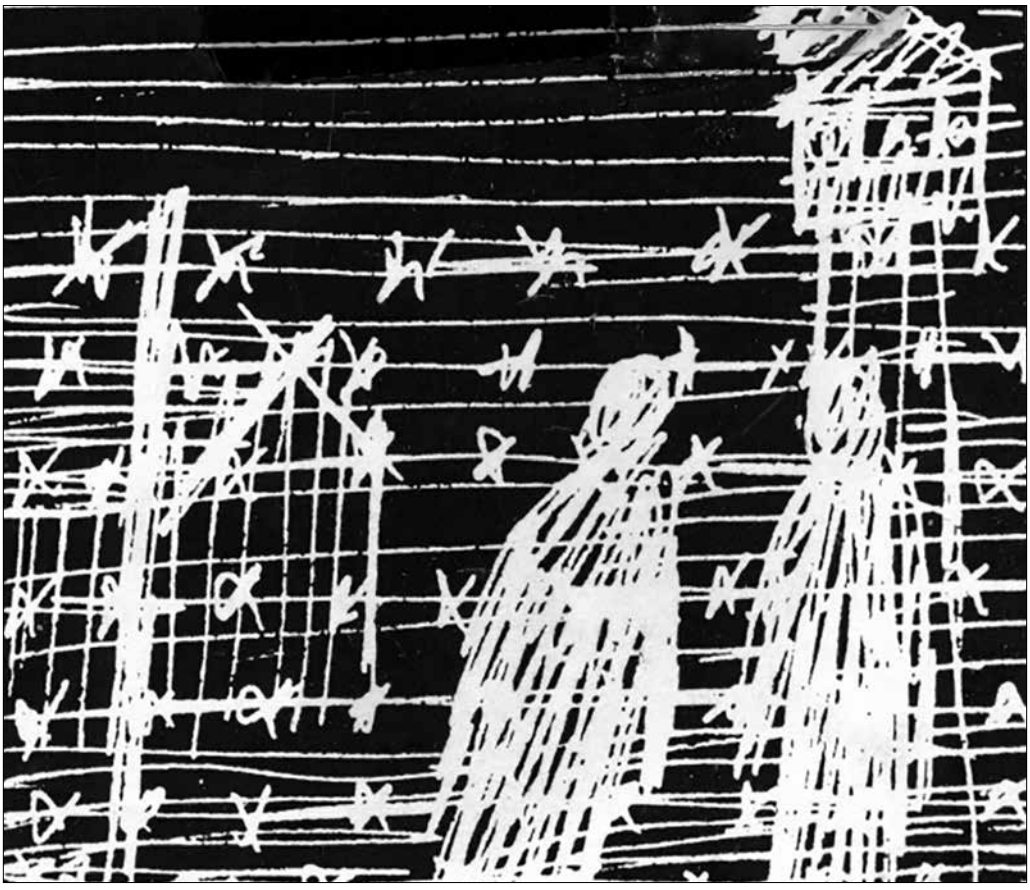
The authors use sentencing data to mount their case against the life sentence, providing statistics that can be hard to come by in our decentralized and secretive prison systems. They detail the extraordinarily punitive turn that criminal justice took in the 1980s and '90s. Before that, inmates receiving a life sentence were usually offered opportunities for parole after many years. However, for multiple reasons (increased crime in the 1960s, a "war on drugs," and racial bias), life-sentence policies became more draconian. States and the federal government enacted "mandatory minimum" sentences that sometimes required life imprisonment. Programming for those serving life sentences dried up, guided by the idea that such inmates didn't deserve it. Mauer and Nellis detail how opponents of the death penalty sometimes contributed to the drive for life sentences: they advocated for life imprisonment without parole as an alternative to the death penalty, and this resulted in more life sentences.

Like some other contemporary scholars, Mauer and Ellis argue that we cannot reduce our obscenely high incarceration rate without altering the long sentences given to those convicted of violent offenses. Even if we were to release all those sentenced for drug offenses, this dent in the prison population wouldn't be large enough to change our current situation. Discussing those convicted of violent crimes, Mauer and Nellis maintain that, from a public-safety standpoint, life sentences are irrational. Inmates who spend decades in prison tend to "age out" of crime, and help younger inmates positively change their behavior. In fact, murderers released from prison after many years have a lower recidivism rate than other inmates. Despite this evidence, we continue to hold inmates for their entire lives, causing unnecessary suffering and costing the state a great deal of money. As a result, prison systems will, in coming decades, confront a host of problems related to an aging prison population.

Mauer and Nellis's most radical proposal is to eliminate the life sentence altogether and replace it with a maximum sentence of twenty years. They acknowledge that this proposal will strike some as absurd; in a country where support for the death penalty remains high (54 percent of Americans support the death penalty for the crime of murder), a twenty-year sentence seems inadequate for the very worst of crimes. We react this way because we have been conditioned to accept long sentences as a normal feature of our penal environment. But the authors provide a detailed proposal for the twenty-year maximum that includes reentry services for those leaving prison after many years. They also recommend that we evaluate inmates at the end of their sentences to see if they pose a continued danger to society. If they do, we should keep them incarcerated but periodically return to an evaluation. In this way, no one would receive an automatic life-without-parole sentence, and inmates would have realistic opportunities for positive change and eventual release.

I believe we need to fundamentally reform our life-sentencing regime, and I share many of Mauer and Nellis's goals. I admire how powerfully they capture the pains of life imprisonment, a topic few authors consider adequately. But I was disappointed by their failure to sufficiently address ethical issues. A book about life sentences should discuss retributive justifications for them, but these never show up. Retributive think-

ers punish not to deter or reform, but only because the offender *deserves* to be punished. For these thinkers, punishments must also be proportionate to a crime; they spend considerable effort trying to determine the meaning of proportionality in particular cases. The authors do feature powerful stories of inmates caught up in situations that don't seem to merit a life sentence, but they stack the ethical deck somewhat by not considering harder cases of unrepentant mass murderers, serial rapists, or sex offenders. For retributive thinkers, these inmates are no longer fit to participate in society and should remain incarcerated until they die. Ultimately, I don't find retributive-justice arguments persuasive, but they deserve careful consideration because retribution plays a large role in public discussions of crime and sentencing. Yet Mauer and Nellis write as if it doesn't exist or is self-evidently false, a significant lacuna in their book.



ANTONUCCI

Just as importantly, Mauer and Nellis remain entirely uncritical about the meaning of rehabilitation. I teach in jails and prisons and worship with inmates, and I fervently believe that positive transformation is possible even for people who have committed terrible crimes. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, we held a rich public and academic debate about whether rehabilitation should be the aim of punishment. Thinkers on the left of the political spectrum discussed its coercive character, arguing that it unjustly forces people to adopt identities they may reject. Those on the political right explored the problems in ascertaining the efficacy of rehabilitation programs. Yet, Mauer and Nellis only mention this important debate in passing. Their volume is filled with confident assertions about the value of rehabilitation and claims about how treatment programs can positively change inmates. Too often, Mauer and Nellis assume that we can trust experts in the human sciences and penologists to act benevolently to help inmates. They ignore the dangerous power dynamics that exist between captives and those seeking to rehabilitate them.

This failure to consider complex questions about rehabilitation and retribution points to a disturbing trend among some contemporary critics of mass incarceration. Our current penal policies are a moral scandal and an affront to human dignity. But in seeking to dismantle them, we need to think carefully about the alternative structures we build in their place. Do we want to retain a retributive component of penal justice? Do we want to return to ideas about rehabilitation that are both conceptually and practically problematic? Responding to these questions should prompt deeper reflection about matters like retributive emotions, forgiveness, and the mysteries of moral character and redemption. Instead of this reflection, historians and critics of mass incarceration too often revert to uncritical and tired conceptions of rehabilitation. Or they ignore retribution, failing to take seriously the attitudes and feelings of many people who experience crime. If we are to move away from mass incarceration without replacing it with other problematic structures, we need to gain greater clarity about the nature and purpose of punishment. Unfortunately, while presenting laudable proposals, Mauer and Nellis do not provide enough of that clarity. ■

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Francis Oakley

Throne & Altar

Liberty in the Things of God

The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom

Robert Louis Wilken

Yale University Press, $26, 248 pp.

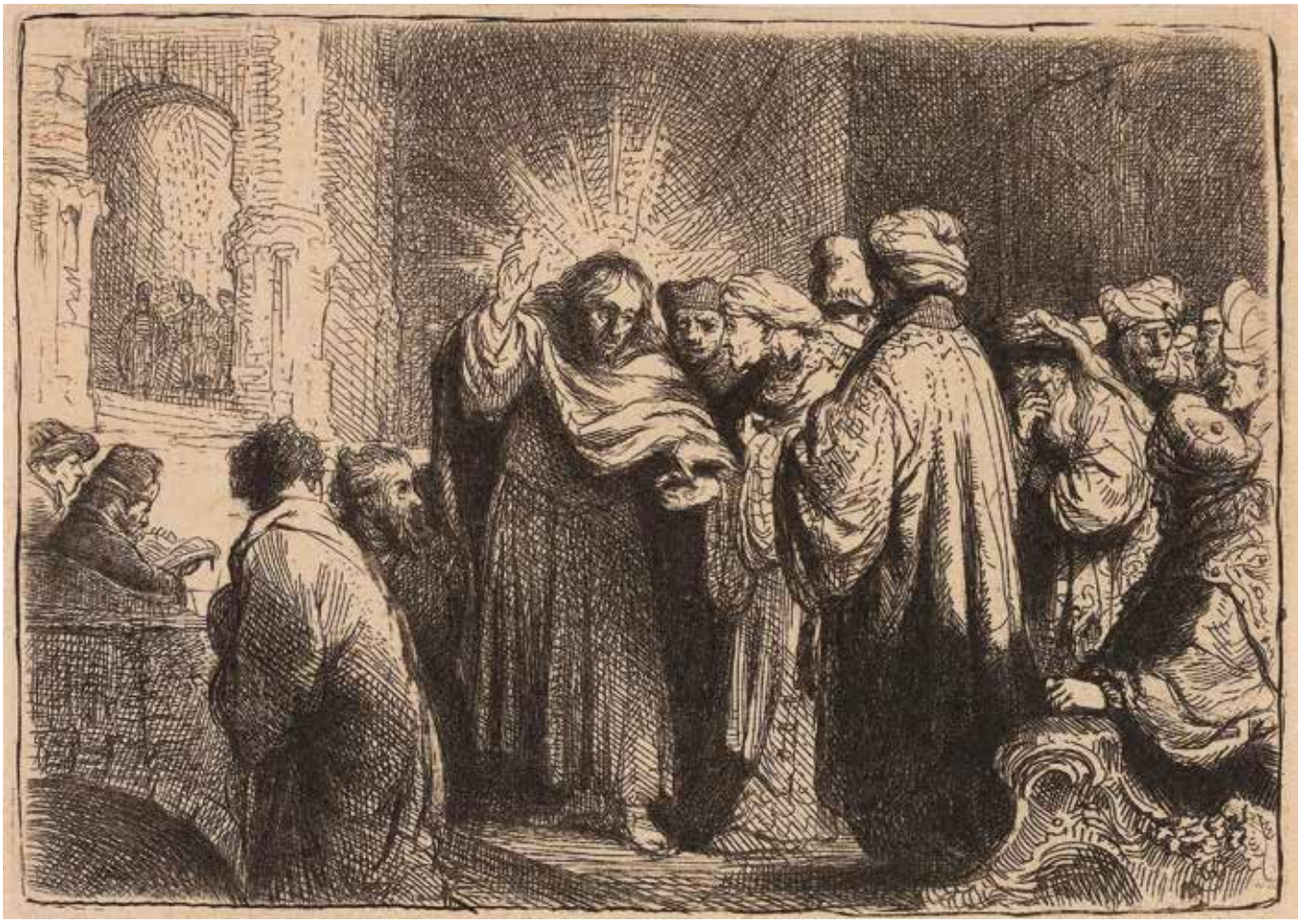
The title of this well-informed book is straightforward enough, but its subtitle—*The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom*—carries with it an element of surprise. Here the distinguished scholar Robert Louis Wilken sets his face firmly against what he dubs "the dominant narrative" concerning the rise to prominence in the European world of the commitment to religious toleration and freedom of religious practice. According to that narrative, such a commitment, far from being the deliverance of Christianity, represents its antithesis. Religion is "prone to violence," it says; Christianity is "inescapably intolerant." It was only in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when "the fanaticism of religious believers gave way to the cool reason of the philosophers," that the commitment to liberty of conscience, toleration, and religious freedom was able to move into the foreground. Catholics especially—at least those of us who are somewhat shamefacedly conscious of the fact that it was only at the Second Vatican Council that such principles were finally to receive formal ecclesiastical approbation—may be even more inclined than most to take that dominant narrative for granted. If that is indeed so, we would do ourselves a favor by reading this book.

It was thinkers like the English philosopher John Locke who had helped shape Thomas Jefferson's thinking when he became the author of Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom. But Wilken draws our attention to the intriguing fact that in Jefferson's personal copy of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and on the page where he says that one person's religion does not harm another, he inscribed a passage from the third-century Christian writer Tertullian to the effect that "one person's religion neither harms nor hurts another," that coercion has no place in matters religious, and that "every person should be able to worship according to his convictions."

In directing our attention to this fact Wilken is careful to disavow any intention of suggesting that Jefferson was somehow "influenced" by Tertullian. Instead, it is his purpose to emphasize the fact that early Christian writers like Tertullian, Lactantius, and Origen, members of a fringe religious minority subject to intermittent persecution for not aligning themselves with the officially established imperial cult, had not themselves lost sight of the distinction that the New Testament introduces between religious and political loyalties when it enjoins Christians to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's (Matthew 22:17–21, Mark 2:14–17; Luke 20:22–25). Their principled commitment to the freedom to follow one's conscience in matters of religious belief and practice would later inspire other individual Christian thinkers, even after Christianity itself had been transformed from the religion of a beleaguered minority into an officially established public religion enjoying the support of the Byzantine Empire in the East, of the later Roman Empire in the West, and of the kingdoms that succeeded it during the Latin Middle Ages and endured down into the era of the Protestant Reformation and beyond.

During those later centuries the dominant paradigm on matters religio-political was one or another version of throne-and-altar Christianity. And, along with it, the deeply lodged conviction on the part of the governing authorities, both temporal and ecclesiastical, Catholic and Protestant alike, that uniformity of religious belief and practice, guaranteed as need be by coercion and the suppression of dissenting elements, was nothing less than essential to the peace, well-being, and tranquility of any well-ordered society.

But it is with the persistence of the "subdominant" tradition, traceable back to such early-Christian attitudes as that of Tertullian, that Wilken himself is primarily concerned. Examining the views of individual Christian thinkers—ancient, medieval, and early-modern, Catholic as well as Protestant—he detects in a surprising number of them echoes of those early Christian affirmations of the inviolability of the individual conscience and the illegitimacy of coercion in religious matters. After the turbulence of the Reformation era, with the subsequent crystallization in France, the Netherlands, and England of enduring religious minorities, there was a recrudescence of the original understanding of the church as a voluntary association of the committed rather than a compulsory society imposed from above. Those arguing for tolerance and religious freedom had at their disposal a treasury of affirmations by sympathetic Christian predecessors, ranging from Tertullian himself and Pope Gregory the Great, through Aquinas and Bartolomé de las Casas, all the way down to such seventeenth-century religious separatists as Thomas Helwys, John Murton, and Roger Williams. Thus, in making his own case for religious freedom, the Quaker William Penn was able to lay claim to what he called a "whole cloud of famous [Christian] witnesses." And, though John Locke made no mention of these witnesses, they formed the background of the highly influential (if more secular) case he made in his *Letter concerning Toleration* (1689). For Wilken, indeed, Locke's ideas on religious freedom "cannot be understood without reference to Christianity," and "in his hands ideas first advanced by Christian thinkers come to be seen as reasonable without mention of origins."



Rembrandt van Rijn, The Tribute Money*, c. 1634*

Wilken lays out his own "subdominant" narrative not only with thoroughness, subtlety, and nuance, but also with a sober sense of the complexity of the story he is unfolding. That duly acknowledged, I trust it won't seem churlish if I conclude with a comment with which he may not be altogether sympathetic.

I am inclined to think that the revisionist narrative as outlined in Wilken's book would be more dramatic and stand out more clearly had he done two things. First, he could have emphasized more forcibly—as Jean-Jacques Rousseau did—the sheer novelty and revolutionary character of the New Testament's insertion of a sharp distinction between what we are accustomed to calling "the religious" and "the political." Second, Wilken could have made clearer exactly what it was that blunted the force of that distinction during the Roman era and subsequent centuries. It was nothing other, or so I would argue, than the age-old stubbornly persistent tradition of sacral kingship, along with the ideology that sustained it. For that tradition, with its extraordinary longevity and ubiquity, amounted to nothing less than the religio-political common sense of humankind, which was not easily subverted, despite the fact that New Testament texts and the later thinkers who resonated to their signal made it clear that this common sense harbored a way of thinking profoundly at odds with the Gospel. Thus the Book of Revelations polemicized mightily against the blasphemous divinization of the Roman emperor, and other texts (notably Luke 22:24–27) conveyed an oblique deprecation of the Hellenistic portrayal of the monarch as a "living law," political society's link with world order and therefore titled appropriately not only as "benefactor," but also as "shepherd," "mediator," and even "savior." It was in keeping with such New Testament texts when, in the late-eleventh century, Gregory VII broke with prevailing tradition and bluntly insisted that the German emperor Henry IV was simply a layman, nothing more, and the Gregorian reformers proudly proclaimed that "the age of priest-kings and emperor pontiffs" was over.

Such views turned out to be premature. If anything, the belief in the sacrality of kings was to intensify and deepen in the later Middle Ages, until, finally, it drew the papal office itself into its orbit: the popes now emerged as crowned, royal figures, wearing the imperial regalia, dubbed "true emperor" and "living law," bearing the pagan imperial title of "supreme pontiff," and presenting themselves as the true successors of Constantine. In the seventeenth century, the great English philosopher Thomas Hobbes was to describe the papacy as "no other than the *ghost* of the deceased *Roman empire* sitting crowned on the grave thereof"—an observation no less accurate in its fundamental perception for being derisive in its intent. Under such conditions it is hardly surprising that early Christian arguments in favor of toleration and religious freedom would continue to be marginalized. ■

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Nicole-Ann Lobo

A Brownsville Summer

Where We Come From

Oscar Cásares
Knopf, $25.95, 272 pp.

Does our place of origin determine who we are? The question confronts all those who leave their country for another, whether they ask it of themselves or have it answered for them in the place they arrive. And it haunts the people who inhabit *Where We Come From*, the new novel from Oscar Cásares, who in setting the action in the Texas border city of Brownsville also invites readers to consider the contemporary complexities of immigration, assimilation, and identity as experienced by an extended cast of compelling characters.

Key to keeping readers both engaged and oriented is the structure of the novel, which is built in four multichapter sections, so that Cásares can give all his characters proper attention across overlapping storylines. The narrative begins in a small home on the Brownsville side of the Rio Grande, inhabited by the aging Nina and her even older mother. Nina's life is altered the day the cleaning lady asks a favor: Could her daughter stay in the pink guesthouse out back for a few nights as she crosses the border to be with her husband? Nina's granting of the favor is a critical early moment in the book; word gets out to professional smugglers (coyotes), and soon there is a steady flow of immigrants coming to the guesthouse for shelter. Nina works to keep this arrangement a secret, not just from the authorities, but also from her mother and younger brother, Beto, who has no sympathy for those whom he derisively refers to as *mojados*.

When the coyotes are arrested, the influx of shelter-seeking immigrants comes to a halt. But then, two nights later, seemingly out of nowhere, a boy appears: twelve-year-old Daniel, alone, separated from the last group that had taken shelter there. Nina can't help but take pity on him, because the boy reminds her of Orly—her godson and great-nephew, who himself is about to visit Brownsville from Houston. Orly's arrival sets in motion a new series of events. Following some initial tentativeness, the two boys start to become close. It's through their developing relationship that Cásares begins to plumb more deeply the themes of his novel. How do radically different backgrounds affect the dynamics of relationships? How does place of origin result in differing applications of justice? Yet these ideas are dramatized through moments that feel true to a child's way of thinking: Why, Orly wonders, must Daniel be hidden in the guesthouse, eating alone, where no one can see him? Why, he asks himself, is Nina so worried that Beto, her own brother, would report Daniel?

These more intimate questions also get to Cásares's exploration of relationships *between* and *among* immigrants, and how anxiety about one's status can manifest itself as hostility toward others who have "not yet made it." *Where We Come From* captures not only the vulnerability of newly arriving immigrants, but also the anxiety of simply trying to acclimate, which can be long-lasting. These crises of identity are revealed in subtle ways: in disparate levels of education, in patterns of speech, in dietary preferences. Beto, who runs a pest-control company, is resentful of Orly's father, Eduardo, who went to college and now lives an upper-class life in the city. Beto's anger toward those who he feels have forgotten where they came from is evident in interactions with Orly; something as innocuous as Orly saying he "prefers" a certain type of taco over another can set Beto off. Will he be like his father, "one of those scholarship boys?" Beto jeers at Orly. "Then we

Oscar Cásares

JOEL SALCIDO

don't see you again except for when you pass through on your way to the beach." Yet even Eduardo, a wealthy film executive in Houston, struggles with how he feels he's perceived. One day, while he's mowing his lawn, a woman pulls over to ask his hourly rate; this prompts him to hire a landscaper.

Cásares also examines how first- and second-generation Americans grapple with belonging to multiple cultures. This disjointed identity is most directly expressed through the internal monologues of characters like Orly, who was born in America and feels only a tangential connection to his Mexican heritage. It comes out in moments when Orly contemplates what language to use when talking to a man who speaks broken English, despite Orly himself speaking imperfect Spanish—"if it weren't for his last name being Diaz no one would expect him to speak anything other than English." Orly's summer in Brownsville challenges him to reckon with his roots, a challenge made more urgent by the sheer fact of Daniel's presence in the house.

Cásares also takes time to depict the specific challenges new immigrants face upon arriving in America. In doing so, he lets us get much closer to who these people really are. Brief asides, presented in italic type, provide intimate looks into lives that might otherwise go unseen. For instance, we learn that an empty water jug blowing in the highway wind alongside Eduardo's car was once carried by an old migrant woman who died of dehydration in the desert. Orly recalls a beloved teacher who gave him a book of Pablo Neruda's poetry, and wonders why he hasn't replied to his emails; we're told he was deported after a chance encounter with immigration officials searching for his ex-partner.

Daniel's story is also told in italics. Each night, Nina calls phone numbers in Chicago to track down Daniel's father, as the young boy eagerly stands by. But while Daniel appears curious and persistent from the perspectives of Nina and Orly, in his own accounting we understand his loneliness and the isolation he feels in the pink guesthouse. We learn the backstory of his departure from Veracruz, Mexico, as well as his subsequent separation from the group of migrants he crossed with. Daniel misses many things from home, like loved ones, and the ability to walk outside without fear. Heartbroken, he muses: "Maybe being sent back home would've been better than being stuck and not arriving at either place."

By summer's end, the risk of sheltering Daniel has become too much. Beto issues an ultimatum, and Nina must choose how to proceed. Though there are no clear solutions to Daniel's immediate fate, there is a sense that some important answer has been arrived at. A Brownsville summer, which at the outset seemed dull and unpromising to Orly, turns into an opportunity for connection and self-discovery. As he learns from his time in the house on the border, there's nothing really deterministic about one's point of origin. "Nina wanted to show him where they came from, but where they came from is nothing more than that—where they came from. It isn't where his story ends, only where it begins." ■

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More than Cricket

Rand Richards Cooper

The best book I read last year was written in 1963—not exactly *au courant*. Still, few works better withstand the test of time than *Beyond a Boundary*, the rich, rewarding sports memoir by Trinidadian writer C.L.R. James.

Journalist, teacher, and novelist, pan-Africanist historian, and left-leaning political activist, Cyril Lionel Robert James is best remembered for *The Black Jacobins*, his 1938 account of the Haitian revolution. But he produced many other works, some of them groundbreaking. His 1932 pamphlet "The Case for West Indian Self-Government" was the first significant manifesto for independence in the British West Indies, and his 1936 *Minty Alley* the first novel published in Britain by a black Caribbean writer. Son of a schoolteacher, James was born in 1901, early enough to have relatives who recalled having been enslaved. From this modest family background, he rose to become an exemplary product of British colonial education. His varied and far-flung career included long sojourns in London, a 1939 meeting with Trotsky in Mexico, and fifteen years in the United States, capped by his 1953 deportation—and a study of Melville written while the author was detained on Ellis Island.

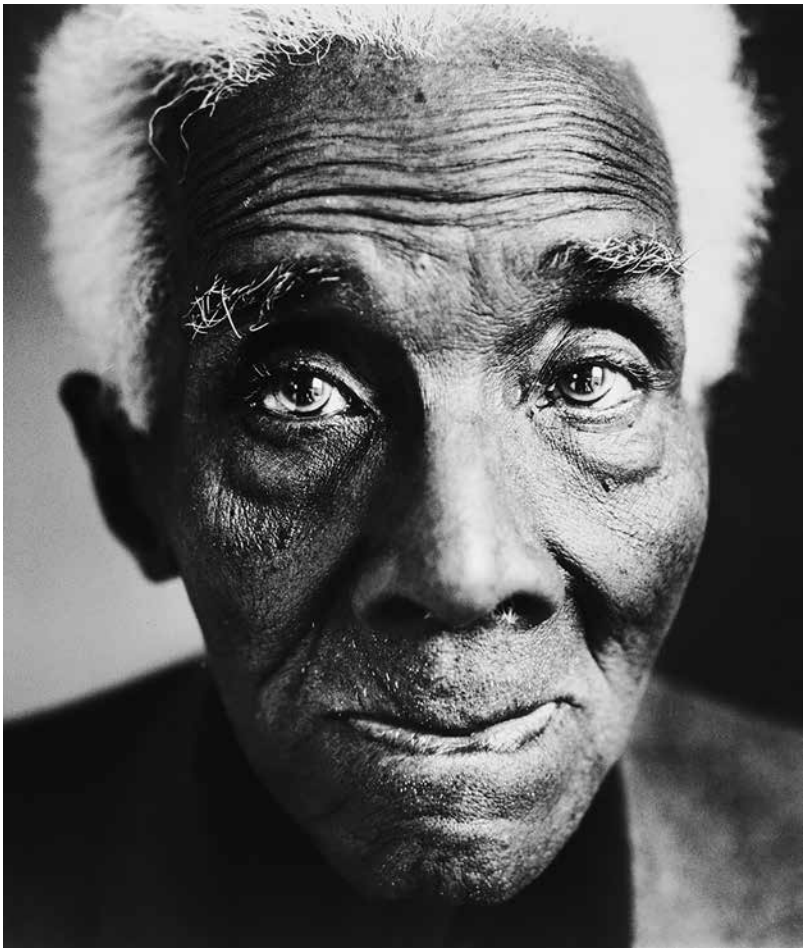
Yet it all began, as this memoir tells us, on a cricket field in Tunapuna, a town just outside Trinidad's capital, Port of Spain. James's family home was adjacent to the field, and as a small boy he would stand on a chair by the living-room window and watch, awed by the action on the pitch. Cricket is the explicit subject of *Beyond a Boundary*. But this is a book that examines one thing in order to draw conclusions about everything. James wasn't just watching cricket; he was studying it. His childhood passion for the sport and its heroes opens up broader musings, reflecting the process by which his recollection of those players and their exploits "ceased to be merely isolated memories and fell into place as starting points of a connected pattern." The connections he made were not merely athletic. "Watching from the window," he recalls, "shaped my strongest early impressions of personality in society." What we see in these pages is a social critic in the making.

The other source of those impressions was books. In boyhood James was a prodigious reader, and *Beyond a Boundary* teems with references to Greek mythology, Biblical stories, and the British novelists whose works he revered, especially Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. Reveling in the novelist's "sneer and gibes at the aristocracy," James reread the book obsessively—so often, in fact, that he quoted passages to schoolmates verbatim. Thackeray led him to other nineteenth-century novelists—Dickens, Tolstoy, Flaubert—who probed the interplay of the individual and society. Such reading turned James into "a British intellectual before I was ten, already an alien in my own environment." In his early teens, he won a scholarship to Queen's Royal College, the elite government school in Port of Spain (where, three decades later, he would be followed by V. S. Naipaul). At fifteen, he produced two pieces for the school magazine: a historical account of an Oxford-Cambridge cricket match a half-century earlier, and an essay entitled "The Novel as an Instrument of Reform." Thus did his first two publications establish the twin poles of his lifelong intellectual orientation.

James's love for cricket includes its showcasing of what he calls "elemental" human traits and postures—"attack, defense, courage, gallantry, steadfastness, grandeur, ruse." He is attentive to individual players and the subtle variations in their styles. Then there is the ethical dimension of the sport. *Beyond a Boundary* gives living meaning to the phrase, "it isn't cricket," in the person of James himself, who grew up imbued with what he terms "the cricket ethic" or "the code." "I never cheated," he writes; "I never argued with the umpire, I never jeered at a defeated opponent…. My defeats and disappointments I took as stoically as I could…. From the eight years of school life this code became the moral framework of my existence. It has never left me."

These reflections, offered by a man in his sixties, reveal how deeply formative British colonialism was on the character of its subjects. By the time James arrived in the United States in 1938, he had a decade of Marxist social criticism behind him, and his attitude toward the gentleman's code had become—at least in theory—contemptuous. Yet as he sat in the stands watching baseball games, he couldn't help feeling vexed by American norms of spectatorship. Disturbed by "the howls of anger and rage and denunciation which they hurled at players as a matter of course," at managers and players who argued with umpires and got tossed out of games, and at "young people [who] had no loyalties to school because they had no loyalties to anything," he glimpses a distressing image of societal deterioration. Americans were loath to take in James's criticisms. He recalls that "they looked at me a little strangely. I, a colonial born and bred, a Marxist, declared enemy of British imperialism and all its ways and works, was the last person they expected that sort of thing from."

Beyond a Boundary vigorously provides a hermeneutics of sport—a way of understanding not just sport's value to players, but also the ways in which it becomes a key for interpreting politics and society. Trotsky, James notes, had believed that sports distracted workers from politics—another opiate of the masses. James disagrees; instead he insists that cricket stands alongside art, science, and philosophy as a valid mode of apprehending the world. To prove his point, he uses cricket to sketch a sociology of the West Indies in the colonial era, with its racial caste system. Different clubs accommodated black, white, and mixed-race players; matches became proxies for race and class conflicts, the



C.L.R. James

STEVE PYKE / GETTY IMAGES

game giving expression to the deep tensions in colonial society. On the one hand were the rigid social hierarchies, and on the other, the game and its meritocratic reckonings: "on the cricket field if nowhere else," observes James, "all men in the island are equal." This disparity between the real and the ideal fascinated and perplexed him, presaging his years in England, when he focused his political ideas: "Cricket had plunged me into politics long before I was aware of it. When I did turn to politics I did not have too much to learn."

Two chapters devoted to the great nineteenth-century British cricketer W. G. Grace begin by chiding Trevelyan and other leading historians of nineteenth-century England for wholly omitting "the best-known Englishman of his time." James offers a corrective, arguing that Grace's life and career illuminate the Victorian era and investigating the process by which cricket was elevated to the status of a moral discipline. Along the way, James makes a case—progressive in 1963—for the style of social history he practiced himself. To understand the Victorian era, he says, we should pay less attention to intellectuals like Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, and more to broadly popular figures like W. G. Grace. If we do, "we shall know more what men want and what they live by," he insists, "in the lives that they themselves lived from day to day."

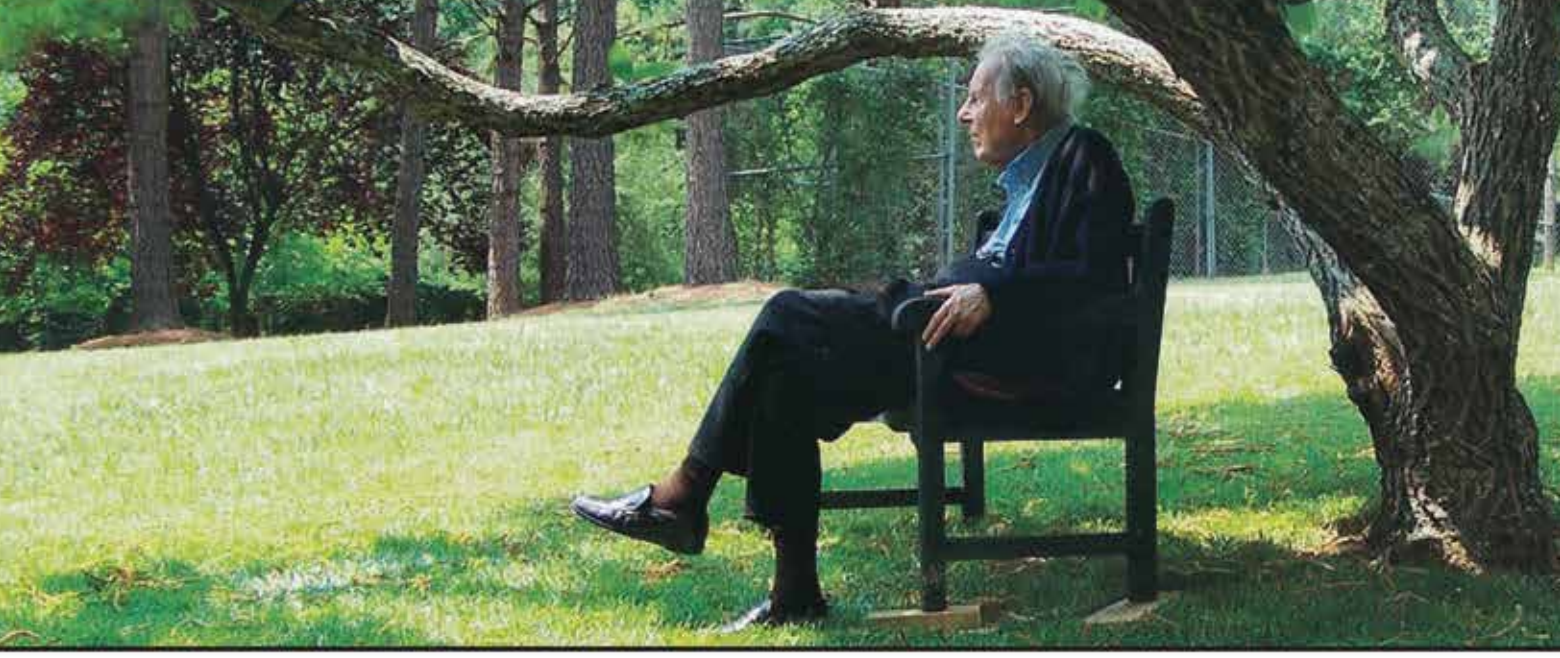
Written at a white-hot moment of Caribbean nationalism and published less than a year after Trinidad gained independence, *Beyond a Boundary* is hardly incendiary. Yet it is, indirectly and at times eccentrically, a political book, and more openly so toward its end. James hypothesizes that the Caribbean political outbursts of the late 1950s and early 1960s were sparked at least in part by cricket—specifically by the anti-nationalist political forces, the "rich whites and their retainers" who urged visiting English teams to not merely defeat local players, but to humiliate them. We learn of James's own campaign against the exclusion of black men from the captaincy of the West Indies team, and specifically his successful attempt to secure the position for the Barbadian star Frank Worrell. James is then heralded for his efforts by the new Trinidadian prime minister.

Throughout, *Beyond a Boundary* hits an insistent note of equality, pushing back repeatedly against racialist myths of the black as a "natural" (i.e., unthinking) athlete. James offers an appreciative survey of cricket luminaries down the decades, English and West Indian alike, black, white, and in between, from W. G. Grace and George Challenor to Arthur Jones, Wilton St. Hill, George John, Percy Tarilton, D. W. Ince, and James's fellow Trinidadian Learie Constantine, who went on to become a lawyer, politician, and the United Kingdom's first black peer.

There is a lot of inside cricket to wade through in these pages, and American readers may skim passages devoted to baffling analyses of this or that bowler's leg-glance from outside the off-stump. But as he writes about people, politics, and literature, James is unfailingly interesting. He is alert to paradox (as he is one himself); disagreeing with T. S. Eliot on the nature and use of memory, he remarks that Eliot "is of special value to me in that in him I find more often than elsewhere, and beautifully and precisely stated, things to which I am completely opposed." One can't help but be impressed by the high value James places on discipline in all areas of life, and (notably for a Marxist materialist) the wry respect he has for religion, recalling that he himself played cricket "with faith in the straight bat and the genius who presides over the universe."

Courtly, learned, both passionate and dispassionate in fine balance, as a writer James was animated by a fierce pride. It's the same spirit one sees gazing out from his remarkable dust-jacket photo in the 1983 Pantheon reissue of *Beyond a Boundary*. He was old and frail by then (he died five years later), but his presence remains vivid in the pages of a book that is at once nostalgic and passionately critical. "Hegel says somewhere that the old man repeats the prayers he repeated as a child," James muses, "but now with the experience of a lifetime." Both he and his luminous memoir deserve a renewed audience. ■

Rand Richards Cooper *is a contributing editor to* Commonweal.



THOMAS BERRY

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Leo Lefebure (Georgetown University)
Heather Eaton (St. Paul's University, Ottawa)
Brian Thomas Swimme (California Institute of Integral Studies)

John Grim (Yale University)
John Borelli (Georgetown University)
Kusumita Pedersen (St. Francis College, emerita)
Kathleen Duffy, S.S.J. (Chestnut Hill College)

Catherine Amy Kropp (Yale University)
Dan Scheid (Duquesne University)
Nancy Wright, (Ascension Lutheran Church, Burlington VT)
John Robert McNeill (Georgetown University)

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