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LETTERS

Bad translations, considering death and putting it off

A COMMON LANGUAGE

Gerald O'Collins and John Wilkins do an excellent job of pointing out the flawed preconceptions and resulting bastardized prose generated by *Liturgiam authenticam* ("English Is Not Latin," February 23). One quote from that document displayed for me the mindset that could produce such an embarrassment. Although they did not mention the group by name, one of the great accomplishments of the ecumenical International Consultation on English Texts was that by 1975 they managed to produce texts used in common by both Catholic and mainline Protestant churches. For the first time in almost five hundred years, the majority of English-speaking Christians in this country and around the world were worshiping in a common language.

That endeavor was not only ignored but denigrated in *Liturgiam authenticam,* for, as the authors quote, we needed to avoid "the manner of speech of non-Catholic ecclesial communities" in order that the Catholic faithful might not suffer "confusion or discomfort." In other words, we are back in the days of *admiration fidelium*, the astonishment of the faithful, where the people in the pews were to be protected from anything that would disrupt their "simple" piety.

The presupposition, of course, is that Catholics are still living in Christendom, or at least, in America, in the ghettoes we occupied until the 1960s move to the suburbs. Protestants are no longer the Other; they are members of our families whom we love and respect. And when we were brought together by family events in one another's churches, it was both an affirmation of our common baptism to be able to say the same words together and an encouragement to heal the last wounds that divided us.

The talk in the late John Paull II era and during Benedict XVI's pontificate of a "smaller, purer church" through the Benedict or Dominic Options is not, I think, Francis's vision of where Christ is calling his church to move today. One real step towards achieving the respect, openness and charity that marks Francis's vision would be to abandon the recent translation of the Gloria, the Creed, and the Sanctus which were imposed on us and go back to the texts that we share in common with our Protestant brothers and sisters. The whole Missal is a major project. Three texts that a lot of, if not most of us, still carry in our heads would be simple.

MICHAEL H. MARCHAL
Cincinnati, Ohio

TORTURED ENGLISH

I am grateful for O'Collins and Wilkins's article that dismantles the word-for-word literal translation of the Roman Missal according to the mistaken precepts of *Liturgiam authenticam*. But just as dismaying as these lexical sins are the syntactical ones.

Because of its declensions and conjugations, Latin can master a complex disposition of its clauses and phrases that English cannot. Part of the unintelligibility of the present translation is due to its attempt to torture English rhetoric into Latin syntactical forms. We spent a whole year in my Jesuit seminary working our way through *Bradley's Arnold,* which showed us ways to put Latin rhetoric into authentic English prose. Evidently the translators of the Missal were ignorant of this basic work. The result is unintelligibility created by misplacing the vocative, by the dislocation of phrases and clauses, and by overuse of relative clauses to produce lengthy and rambling sentences that good presiders break into two or more sentences. But the real problem of the present Roman Missal is not the translation. It is the theology. The sixteenth-century Missal was good for its time. In a time of religious wars, Catholics needed

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a hope of eternal peace in the final reign of God. In a time of a rejection of works done in faith, Catholics needed a vindication of works meriting eternal reward. In a time of hierarchical greed and theological ignorance, Catholics needed certitude about fixed forms.

This theology has undergone a balancing act in Vatican II, with its emphasis on the "here and now" reign of God, on the promotion of temporal justice, on an ecumenical acceptance of the gratuity of God's grace, and on the whole Pilgrim People of God at prayer. Contrast the theology of the four new Eucharistic Prayers for Various Needs with that of the Roman Canon.

In short, what is needed is not just a new translation but a new Missal that will be faithful to what is blessed in the old and recaptures the meaning of Jesus in the past seventy-five years of Catholic learning. A better translation is simply putting new wine into old wineskins.

L. JOHN TOPEL, SJ
Seattle, Wash.

ALL SCREWED UP

The O'Collins-Wilkins piece on the dangers of translation is not restricted to ecclesiastics. The wonderful Italian expression is *traduttore, traditore ("*the translator is a traitor"). A sense of humor helps in the secular world as well. A movie by the distinguished Italian director Lina Wertmüller was titled *Tutto a posto e niente in ordine* ("Everything in place and nothing in order"), but called *All Screwed Up* in America. My favorite example, which may be apocryphal, is that of James Thurber in Germany. He was approached by a lady who gushingly told him how funny he was in German, to which he answered: "Yes, it's true. My work loses something in the original."

HAROLD TICKTIN
Shaker Heights, Ohio

MEMENTO MORI

Terry Eagleton's piece on death ("Cast a Cold Eye," February 23) is praiseworthy in its own right. And it is also a stimulant for illuminating reflection on our own personal lives.

From our earliest years, each of us has

had now-deceased predecessors who continue to have large, distinct impacts on us. How do we respond to their impacts? With gratitude? Or indifference? Or prayer? Or with some some other set of attitudes? In short, how do we keep them in memory? And how ought we to do so?

Similarly, each of us has contemporaries who affect us in various notable ways. How do we deal with the prospect of their deaths? With grief? With relief? With pity? With enthusiasm? Or with some other set of attitudes? And again, how ought we to do so?

Of course, our attitudes are never definitively fixed. They change and we have some measure of control over how they do so. How do we exercise this control? How should we? No other part of our experience can substitute for the light that our responses to these deaths shed on who we are and what we stand for.

BERNARD P. DAUENHAUER
Montgomery, Ohio

BIG BANG QUERY

Paul Johnston's inquiring and provocative review of *Fashion, Faith, and Fantasy in the New Physics* by Roger Penrose ("In the Presence of Mystery," February 23) sets up an opposition between a doggedly atheist Big Bang theory and fundamentalist creationism. Doesn't Johnston know—even if Penrose doesn't—that the Big Bang theory was first framed by Father Georges Lemaître? This Belgian priest spent some time not only at MIT but also at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge (at the time a "hall" for Catholic priests). St. Edmund's has a small but fine Faraday Institute of Science and Religion, just now celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of Lemaître's theory of the expanding universe. His demurral, when Pius XII actually wanted to use Lemaître's notion of the Big Bang as a polemical proof of the existence of God, should hardly put the faithful padre in the atheist camp.

JOSEPH MASHECK
New York, N.Y.

SPREAD THE WEALTH

We can roughly calculate the benefit to the global community of the life-extending measures that Mary McDonough describes ("Cheating Death," April 13).

About one third of the world is poor with a life expectancy of sixty-four years, one third is rich with an expectancy of seventy-eight years, and the remaining third can expect seventy-five years.

Extending average life expectancy in the rich world by only two years and bringing the rest of the world up to that standard yields greater benefits than if we extended life expectancy of the richest third of the world to over one hundred years and left everyone else where they are. We don't need any new or expensive-to-develop medical or genetic technologies to do this, technologies that you know will only be available to those who can pay for them. Dozens of countries already have average life expectancies of eighty years or more.

If we would only share what we have with others.

JOSEPH DORAN
Pasadena, Tex.

Commonweal welcomes letters to the editor. Tell us what you think: letters@commonwealmagazine.org

Hold Out for Joy

"The only great tragedy in life," wrote the French novelist Léon Bloy, "is not to become a saint." Pope Francis quotes this judgment approvingly in *Gaudete et exsultate*, his apostolic exhortation "on the call to holiness in today's world." He also quotes a less dramatic formulation of the same idea in *Lumen gentium*, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: "all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord—each in his or her own way—to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect."

However one puts it, this is an idea that makes many of us deeply uncomfortable. We like our saints to be exceptions, the more exotic the better: an elderly Albanian woman in a sari, a wooden statue of a martyr carrying his head in his hand, a thirteenth-century Italian talking to the birds and rolling in the snow to stave off lust. *We* are not like that, thank goodness. We are just ordinary human beings, with ordinary human appetites and shortcomings. We aren't trying to be holy; we're just doing our best. Or, if not quite our best, then as much as can reasonably be expected. When we say, "I'm no saint," it's almost never an admission of failure, but instead an insistence on our full humanity, as if saints were somehow either more or less than fully human—eunuchs, maybe, or angels.

This is, according to Francis, both a failure of imagination and a failure of nerve. Near the beginning of *Gaudete et exsultate* he writes, "do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you, and you will be faithful to your deepest self." And near the end of the exhortation, he makes the point again: "[God] does not want to enter our lives to cripple or diminish them, but to bring them to fulfillment." Holiness should neither scare nor bore us.

Developing another teaching of the Second Vatican Council, Francis insists, again and again, on the *variety* of holiness. If all Christians are called to be saints, no two are called to be saints in quite the same way. Nor is most holiness conspicuously heroic; it's usually quite ordinary, growing through what the pope calls "small gestures." He offers an example:

> A woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbor and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone." This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step.

God calls us all toward perfection, but he knows we have to start from wherever we are and approach step by step. He also knows that even this gradual approach would be impossible without grace, and so he gives us as much of it as we are willing to accept. Francis warns against gnosticism and pelagianism, "two subtle enemies of holiness" that offer false substitutes for grace. Gnostics make an idol of explanations. They would dispense with grace by reducing the faith to a comprehensive set of ideas, forgetting that "a person's perfection is measured not by the information or knowledge they possess, but by the depth of their charity." Pelagians, for their part, try to replace faith with effort, as if they could, by sheer force of will, pry open the gates of heaven. To them it would feel like cheating to accept salvation as a gift. Lacking humility, they find grace superfluous.

Francis is characteristically blunt on the subject of humility: "humility can only take root in the heart through humiliations. Without them, there is no humility or holiness. If you are unable to suffer and offer up a few humiliations, you are not humble and you are not on the path to holiness." Naturally, we would all prefer to have our humility *without* humiliation, just as we would prefer to be sanctified without sacrifice. But this is what H. Richard Niebuhr called Christ without a cross. However various the ways of holiness, however modest or unlikely, they all have at least one thing in common: they must pass through Calvary. "At the core," Francis writes, "holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life." If we let them, these mysteries can draw us out of our comfortable inertia toward something larger—toward joy. The only great tragedy, Francis suggests, is to settle for anything less than that. ■

Paul Moses

The Bishops' Brief against the Ban

WILL THE COURT'S CATHOLIC MAJORITY CARE?

The U.S. Catholic bishops submitted a brief to the Supreme Court declaring that President Donald Trump's ban on migration from five Muslim countries was "blatant religious discrimination"—and the lawyer representing opponents of the measure reminded the justices of that line in oral arguments held Wednesday, April 25.

Attorney Neal Katyal referred to the bishops' strongly worded friend-of-the-court brief as Justice Samuel Alito pressed him for evidence that a "reasonable person" would view Trump's proclamation as discriminating against Muslims.

"This is a ban that really does fall almost exclusively on Muslims," Katyal said. "Look at the wide variety of amicus briefs filed in this case from every corner of society, representing millions and millions of people, from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which calls it, quote, 'blatant religious discrimination'"—

He was cut off, but the point was made before a court with five Catholic justices and one Episcopalian who was raised Catholic, Neil Gorsuch. The bishops' brief cited Trump's anti-Muslim tweets as evidence that the president's order "arises out of express hostility to Islam," and violates the First Amendment's free-exercise clause.

"Such blatant religious discrimination is repugnant to the Catholic faith, core American values, and the United States Constitution. It poses a substantial threat to religious liberty that this Court has never tolerated before and should not tolerate now," the brief says. "Having once borne the brunt of severe discriminatory treatment, particularly in the immigration context, the Catholic Church will not sit silent while others suffer on account of their religion."

The justices need to decide if the core element of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965—abolishing discriminatory national-origin quotas passed in the 1920s—is less important than a single paragraph in the same law that, according to the Trump administration, gives the president unlimited power over who can enter the country. However the court ends up ruling, the USCCB's brief is important in staking out an authentic Catholic position on Islam and immigration at a time when many anti-Islam voices are able to find a platform in Catholic media and institutions. And it counters the bishops' past failures to include discrimination against Muslims as a cause for their campaign for religious liberty, as seen in the statement "Our First, Most Cherished Liberty," which was issued before the 2012 presidential election. More recently, the USCCB released a statement in February 2017 urging Trump to fulfill his promise to protect religious liberty—but without mentioning his plans for immigration or his anti-Muslim comments.

In contrast, the legal brief filed in the travel ban case speaks loudly. It contains a primer on Catholic teachings on Islam, immigration, and the historical experience of American Catholics. It notes that the Second Vatican Council explained in *Nostra aetate* that the church holds Islam and Muslims "in esteem." It says that the mandate to welcome migrants "is deeply rooted in Catholicism," citing Scriptural passages (Exodus 23:9; Matthew 8:20 and 25:35; Romans 12:13). It quotes remarks Pope Francis made on his visit to the United States, as well as statements Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II made about the need to welcome refugees. And it provides a history of anti-Catholic discrimination, dating to colonial times, concluding, "Catholics' own experience with discrimination in the United States informs the Church's commitment to advocating on behalf of migrants and refugees of all religious faiths."

Solicitor General Noel Francisco denied that the travel ban reflected bias on Trump's part—he said at one point that Trump "has praised Islam." According to Francisco, the ban resulted from a thorough, country-by-country review by multiple government agencies using "neutral criteria." The countries that were barred had failed to provide information needed for national-security purposes, he said, adding that many predominantly Muslim nations had complied and were not included in the ban. Under the current configuration, the presidential order would bar visas to travelers from five countries where the population is more than 90 percent Muslim—Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen—as well as two others, North Korea and Venezuela.

Historically, the Catholic Church, Catholic politicians, and Catholic organizations have played an important role in the American immigration debate. The first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, pushed for the exclusionary immigration laws of the 1920s to be reversed, and that was accomplished after his death with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. When President Lyndon Johnson signed this act into law, he called it "one of the most important acts of this Congress and of this administration. For it does repair a very deep and painful flaw in the fabric of American justice." He called the old laws "un-American in the highest sense," and added: "today, with my signature, this system is abolished. We can now believe that it will never again shadow the gate to the American Nation with the twin barriers of prejudice and privilege." ■

Paul Moses, *a contributing writer at* Commonweal, *is the author of* The Saint and the Sultan: The Crusades, Islam and Francis of Assisi's Mission of Peace *(Doubleday, 2009) and* An Unlikely Union: The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians *(NYU Press, 2015).*

The Future of Academic Theology

AN EXCHANGE

Massimo Faggioli

The estrangement between academic theology and the institutional church is one reason many younger Catholics are now turning to neo-traditionalist circles for instruction. A new generation is re-examining what's happened in the church since the 1960s and reacting against the theology that came out of the Second Vatican Council. Some younger Catholics are also questioning the legitimacy of the secular, pluralistic state. This is why the concerns of academic theology are no longer merely academic.

Those who have contact with young Catholics—for example, college students—may have noticed that this theological anti-liberalism is not just coming from a few marginal intellectuals. Catholic anti-liberalism is part of a broader phenomenon, a new quest for Catholic identity that takes various forms. It may be expressed as an enthusiasm for the Tridentine Mass and a distaste for the *Novus ordo*. Or it may take the form of an interest in countercultural communities—in some version of the "Benedict Option." But it can also take the form of a theo-political imagination that rejects liberal democracy in favor of a new Christendom. Mixed in with this ideal is often a suspicion of those who come from parts of the world where Christianity is not the predominant religion.

Tridentine Mass

JOACHIM SPECHT

This rise of Catholic anti-liberalism marks a regression in the ability of Catholics to understand the problem of the state and of politics in our age. But it also says something about the state of Catholic theology, especially in the United States. I believe that the fate of Catholic theology in the Western world is inseparable from the fate of academic theology. In order to survive and flourish, theology needs universities, publishers, and journals. You can almost imagine the church surviving intellectually without academic theology, but I think it would be the poorer for it. Especially in the American political system, where there is no constitutionally established church, academic theology is part of a religious and ecclesial Catholic establishment. But we cannot assume the institutions that support academic theology will last forever. And for Catholic academic theology to be healthy, it cannot depend entirely on a few great institutions like Notre Dame, Boston College, and Georgetown; it also needs the many smaller Catholic colleges, many of which are now struggling to stay open.

The present wave of anti-liberalism does tell us something about what's happened to liberal Catholic theology and religious-studies departments in the past few years. As a faculty member in the theology and religious-studies department at Villanova University, I found what Archbishop Charles Chaput had to say after his recent lecture here significant. Someone asked him about the role of John Paul II's apostolic constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990) in Catholic universities today. He answered that the document, issued by the U.S. bishops in 1999 to implement *Ex Corde*, "had no teeth." This was as frank an acknowledgement of the estrangement between Catholic theologians and the church as one could ask for.

What happened in the years between the Land O'Lakes Statement (1967) and the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* emancipated theology from ecclesiastical control, but it also emancipated the Catholic Church from academic theology. There was a breakdown between bishops and theologians throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s having to do with the theology of sexuality. In 1979, a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith criticized *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*, a study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America and edited by Anthony Kosnik. Bernard Law, who was appointed archbishop of Boston in 1984, publicly criticized Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's Common Ground initiative, which was an effort to build bridges between different elements of the U.S. church, including academic theologians. Then there was the controversy about the new Catechism between the

mid-1980s and 1992. Many theologians feared the reduction of their critical academic work to catechesis; some also worried that the Catechism was nullifying the teachings of Vatican II "by forcing them into a conservative mold." All these developments led to even more separation between academic theology and the hierarchy. Today, few Catholic theologians who work in academia also advise their local bishop or help the bishops' conference draft its statements.

The work of Catholic theologians became less and less important to many Catholic leaders (bishops, public intellectuals, big donors), who instead turned their attention to initiatives that addressed the "culture wars." But even apart from ideology, there was a real turn away from contemporary Catholic theology toward Catholic culture. This means that many Catholic students in America learned about Catholicism not from theology professors, but from Catholic professors of literature, the arts, history, and politics. Such students likely do not appreciate the importance and coherence of theological thinking as such. The influence of the Catholic intellectual tradition on all the disciplines, not just theology, was one of the themes of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. But to many, this meant that one could get a Catholic education without studying much—or indeed any—current Catholic theology. Because of the left-right split that widened during the pontificate of John Paul II, many Catholics, including intellectuals and even academics, wrote theology off as a discipline corrupted by "liberal opinion." Catholic scholars of literature, art, history, etc., could teach a kind of Catholic studies that focused on the high cultural ideals of the Christian West and largely ignored or rejected post-conciliar theology.

As a consequence, some of the most prominent young commentators on current Catholic affairs have little formal theological formation, though they may know a lot about other elements of the Catholic intellectual tradition. And in a perverse reversal of fortunes, at the very moment many Catholic colleges and universities were freed from episcopal interference, they happily surrendered to the influence of corporate donors, who were eager to fund conservative projects on Catholic campuses—projects that often combined theological traditionalism with neoliberal or libertarian economic ideology.

This phenomenon should be a wake-up call for Catholic theologians in America, because in the long run it will threaten the intellectual vitality, if not the very survival, of academic theology at Catholic colleges and universities. There are at least two problems that theologians and religious-studies scholars teaching in a Catholic university have to face in light of the present Catholic moment.

The first problem is about the canon. Is there a canon of theology on Catholic campuses in America, or do we now have so many canons that the very idea of a canon has been lost? In light of the fact that Catholic theology in America is being displaced by other voices claiming to represent Catholic culture, should theologians have a clearer sense of what theology at a Catholic university ought to include? The tradition-minded students and professors who reject or just ignore post-conciliar theology certainly have some kind of well-defined canon, defined in part by its rejection of Vatican II and post–Vatican II theology. But I am not sure that post–Vatican II theologians themselves have a real canon. Their syllabi are usually a compromise between what they are willing to teach (because it is part of their research projects) and what students are willing to take (the credibility of theology departments depends partly on their ability to get a sufficient number of students to major or minor in theology). Too many theology departments try to remain "relevant" by offering courses that I fear will make theology less relevant in the long run. The anxiety for relevance means that Catholic theology is now often reduced to Catholic social teaching. At the same time, the growing irrelevance of academic theology is due to the fact that for a long time *aggiornamento* Catholic theologians thought that *aggiornamento* theology did not need to be defended because it was self-evident. The result is that today many conservative Catholic students instead major in "Catholic Studies," while many progressive Catholic students major in justice-and-peace studies.

The second problem is of what I would call a lack of *ecclesial commitment*—that is, a lack of awareness that the Catholic academic complex has its place also *within* the church, even if its integrity requires a certain intellectual independence. They need the church as much as the church needs them. Today, most members of the hierarchy have not done their studies in a secular university, and lay theologians seldom have the same *kind* of theological training their bishops have; not surprisingly, they feel alienated from one another. But the institutional church has a resilience to the vicissitudes of history that Catholic academia on its own probably does not. For example, the institutional church can ignore market forces in a way that academia cannot. Reintegrating academic theology with the rest of the church is made complicated by the choice—a very good one, which should not be reversed—to make departments of theology and religious studies on Catholic campuses more diverse by hiring non-Catholic professors. But ecclesial commitment in the sense I have in mind is not only about church membership. At a minimum, theologians and religious studies professors should be more aware of their duty to respond to questions that traditionalist or conservative Catholic students have and for which they often find no answer in liberal-progressive theology departments. More generally, theologians and religious-studies professors teaching on Catholic campuses ignore at their own peril the big shifts happening in church politics and in the relations between the institutional church and Catholic higher education. I believe that liberal Catholic theologians have to offer an alternative to the current neo-traditionalist vision of the Catholic tradition. But if we want to do that, we'll need to take into account the *ecclesial* dimension of

what we do. The idea that Catholic academic theology can thrive or even survive independently from what happens in and to the church is an illusion.

Massimo Faggioli *is professor of theology and religious studies at Villanova University. His most recent book is* Catholicism and Citizenship: Political Cultures of the Church in the Twenty-First Century *(Liturgical Press, 2017). He is a contributing writer for* Commonweal. *Follow him on Twitter @MassimoFaggioli.*

Michael Hollerich

Massimo Faggioli's discussion of what he calls "Catholic academic theology" hits home for several reasons. First, Massimo is my good friend and former colleague at the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul. It felt at times as though I were reading about my immediate neighborhood, no surprise given his history here. Readers may be interested to know that our department's central mission in the university is staffing a three-course theology requirement for our undergraduate student body of about 5,500 students. The remainder of the sixteen four-credit liberal-arts courses in the core consists of two classes in philosophy, two in English, three in languages, three in math and science, and one each in history, social sciences, and fine arts. Many students complete portions of the core before entering St. Thomas, though theology and philosophy have been immune to those shortcuts. The three-course theology requirement supports a large department of about twenty-five full-time faculty and perhaps as many adjuncts.

Our standing in the university will change, however, under proposed reductions in the core curriculum that would significantly reduce our share. Behind the proposed reductions are familiar factors like pressure from outside accrediting bodies to expand major offerings, student (and parental) anxieties about employment, and St. Thomas's expansion from a small college to a university with several professional programs. As my department looks at curricular Armageddon, we find ourselves on an island, so to speak, with our closest ally a similarly threatened philosophy department whose conservative profile doesn't make us easy partners. Other parts of the university respect our relatively high academic standing but generally regard us with incomprehension or disinterest. Which is not surprising at a university that can't or doesn't want to hire for Catholic identity. (A previous academic vice-president used to say proudly that he did not know the number of Catholics on our faculty.)

Before getting to Massimo's important observation about ecclesial commitment and academic theology, I want to add a little more context. Catholic academic theology is undergoing a severe stress test, and not just at my university. The stress is coming from two directions. From the institutional/budgetary/curricular side, our hold on the undergraduate curriculum is mostly circumstantial and historical, the continuation of a program approach that emerged after the Second Vatican Council, when schools like ours could still act as though we were a secure part of the Catholic educational archipelago. The cultural and social soil of the islands in that archipelago has been eroding for a long time now. These days it's disappearing faster than the Louisiana delta. As that happens, schools like mine are faced with the need to go big or go home—meaning that we have to turn more and more to pragmatic vo-tech educational goals, since we don't have the cultural prestige of Notre Dame or Georgetown to live off the moneyed elite able to afford us. That leads to hiring policies that further secularize the institution.

The other side of the stress test is coming from the character of those who are just beginning their scholarly careers or still considering graduate school. They do not have our experience of growing up Catholic, nor do they share our set of concerns about academic freedom and integrity. They are far more likely to be anxious about identity questions—what it means to be "Catholic" at all rather than something else. In a situation of market freedom, people choose the specific, not the generic. From the younger generation's perspective, we can look and sound like generic, dying, irrelevant mainline Protestantism shading toward nothingism. We need to ask

University of St. Thomas

RUNNER1928

SWEET POTATO ELEGY

The box-dry grit of root and spackled dirt
like some rock's underside turned up too long

betrays no hint of affability
or orange scarcely, nearly russet, whorled

into a joint of earth, plucked up by whom
I'll never know; it made it to this box.

The recipe you sent requires six
of "middle" size. I heft or fondle one

or two, my fingers small; these bulbous garnets
shuttling around in elbowed zags

refuse to match their contours in my hands.
The stones they've grown around are smooth and
gone.

I used to think a tumor like a stone
or tuber could be lifted from the land

it lodged in. This was not so. Sweet orange flesh
of future bloom, you'll spread your steaming funk

for us tomorrow if I tend you well:
brown sugar, butter, water, life

and marshmallows melted over top
encrusting taut and dry, a linen sheet

exposing what the earth would rather hide
and what exuded mirth comes sinewy

and fast, a syrup born of baking, run
of tongue, your hands not here, your recipe.

—John Linstrom

John Linstrom's poems and literary nonfiction have appeared or are forthcoming in Valparaiso Poetry Review, Dunes Review, Broad River Review, This Week in Poetry, *and* Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland.

ourselves: Who now wants to go to graduate school and get a PhD in theology? Not people with the same ambitions as my generation, college students in the 1960s who went to mainstream Catholic colleges and then wanted to do doctoral work at secular institutions or non-denominational divinity schools at universities like Yale or Chicago or Duke. The next generation of scholars, who went to college in the 1980s and '90s, favored Catholic doctoral programs but came from the same undergraduate "feeder" schools. It seems to me that today's doctoral candidates are as likely to come from places like Hillsdale College or Steubenville as from Notre Dame or Boston College. And one wonders where those eager doctorands will ever find jobs if Catholic colleges and universities continue to reduce core requirements. And if there aren't required undergraduate courses to teach, why do we need those doctoral programs either? I can tell you it's not because the hierarchy is waiting breathlessly for the latest fruits of our research.

My perspective on younger people in the theological sector of academe may be shaped by my own sub-discipline of early Christian history, which is a favorite refuge for those looking for a normative fallback when fleeing from doctrinal freefall (it's either patristics or Thomism, and the Fathers are closer to the Bible). It's attractive to recovering fundamentalists and Evangelicals who may be replacing a discredited authoritative Bible with an authoritative church and tradition. I have long argued in my own department that we need to be better at seeing students like this as potential recruits rather than as objects of condescension. There are reasons why our undergraduates opt for a major in St. Thomas's Catholic Studies department—an interdisciplinary program that engages in the "formation" of its students in a supportive if rather anodyne environment—rather than in theology, which may look to them like a collection of freethinkers who are just winging it.

So that's the context: our university home is reducing our stake in its mission. And our own future colleagues in the profession may think we're problematic. And we probably are.

Why is that? Because "Catholic academic theology" is not a self-evident reality. It looks to me like something that only had a viable place in colleges and universities for about thirty years, roughly the first postconciliar generation. During that time it was still dominated by the liberal Catholic clerical establishment. I remember attending the CTSA meeting in New York in 1997, which happened to be the fiftieth anniversary of the CTSA. Down in front for a plenary session were Richard McBrien, Richard McCormick, and Charles Curran. Perfect. The Irish liberal clerical equivalent of Tammany Hall! All priests, remember. Those guys still spoke with authority to the hierarchy, even when they made bishops angry. They were perceived as players, even if disloyal players, because they were priests and subject ultimately to clerical command and control. The same does not apply to us

layfolk, who are mostly irrelevant to the closed world of the celibate clergy. And the more the hierarchy under John Paul II and Benedict XVI became committed to hamstringing the implementation of the Council, the more irritating and irrelevant we looked—in part because it's a hell of a lot harder to command and control us. I remember the low regard in which we were held by former archbishop John Nienstedt, at last report settled in the cushy digs of Fr. Robert Spitzer's Napa Institute. His successor, Archbishop Bernard Hebda, has been a refreshing and much-needed change in pastoral presence. Constructive efforts are underway on both sides to maintain a mutually supportive relationship between the university and the chancery in St. Paul. But that could change tomorrow in a church where the default is and has always been command and control. In the meantime, archdiocesan personnel and programs seem still to be moving on a track set by Hebda's predecessor.

Who studied and wrote theology before Vatican II, and where did they do it? From what I know, it was largely the work of members of religious orders at their seminaries and houses of study. Catholic University of America was meant to be something different, set in a university (the undergraduate program came later). But it was created by the American bishops and its academic charter is pontifical. German university theology was always a kind of freak, as were its clones at Louvain and Nijmegen. In Germany, I suspect that Catholic academic theology will last only as long as the *Kirchensteuer* (church tax) lasts.

In nearly forty years of teaching, I have worked exclusively at church-related colleges and universities. My undergraduate degree in theology from Notre Dame (class of 1969—only the second class of undergraduates able to major in theology) was followed by graduate degrees from Harvard and Chicago in the history of Christianity. My special expertise is of little interest to most bishops today. Maybe it never was. St. Thomas's founder, Archbishop John Ireland, was a fervent advocate of higher education and a major backer of the fledgling CUA, but I doubt he would have liked lay theologians. The miters who still dominate the American hierarchy seem to prefer clerical wannabees like the local married deacon in his collar and gray clericals.

If the church doesn't want what I know, and students won't enroll in my classes as free electives so that I can satisfy the budgetary buzzards, where do I belong? I'm not at all sure. I'm a trained historian of Christianity with multiple teaching and research competencies, someone who first of all loves scholarship for its own sake. But I also have an unofficial role as a keeper of the historical conscience of a church prone to amnesia on sensitive subjects. I expect academic freedom to pursue my work as teacher and scholar. The church needs people like me, if it knows its best interest. Do I need the church? Yes I do, in the double sense that I live in it as a practicing member (see Paul Griffiths's recent *Commonweal* article on Catholicism as a form of life, "A Life, Not a Grammar," March 9) but I also need it as an academic subject: no church, no church history. But I best express my loyalty by being faithful to my scholarly craft and not by devotion to the church hierarchy, which does not understand the concept of a loyal opposition. I believe one can't easily study what one dislikes or even hates. Especially in historical work, a certain kind of intellectual charity is necessary in order to cross, if only in thought, the divide in time and space. But it can't be in the form of a *sacrificium intellectus*—here I am reminded of George Orwell's consternation at Ignatius Loyola's thirteenth rule for thinking with the church ("To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see is black if the Hierarchical Church so decides it…").

So what is the future of Catholic academic theology? Good question. I do agree with Massimo that some kind of conscious commitment to the church is necessary for us to survive as members of a theology department (and not just as religious studies), and that as a matter of principle and not just pragmatic adjustment. But "ecclesial commitment" sounds like a weasel word and I would prefer to avoid it. Because the truth is that there is no purchase on the other side of the equation, the clerical-institutional side, for that "ecclesial commitment." How much time and energy do I want to invest in speaking with people who aren't interested in listening and who don't think they need to listen, because they have the Holy Spirit? I know there is a theological response to that. But I doubt it matters. I once defended the mandatum in print. I wouldn't do that today.

If Catholic academic theology has a future, it may be with those who have withdrawn into safer quarters, a redoubt of some kind, having decided the contemporary university is a lost cause for the faith. There they can pursue their work in common with those who share their presuppositions—and usually their conclusions as well. Conservative donors can be found who will put up money for such efforts, especially if they support free-market ideology. To me this is a wrong turn that will lead to shrinking mental horizons. A tip-off is the idealizing of the past, whether it be "the thirteenth, the greatest of centuries" or the American 1950s. But moving to an intellectual gated community seems a poor way to honor the universalism of the Gospel and a contradiction of the church's claim to be the sacrament of the unity of the human race. Behind the yearning for a lost golden age is a reluctance to admit that the resented "secular" is not in some cultural space out there but the very air we breathe. But I concede that those who disagree with me probably have a better chance of preserving an educational platform on which to teach and write. Our work never depended on the marketplace but always on patronage of some kind. It remains to be seen where future patronage will come from—and what those patrons will expect in return. ■

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Jo McGowan

How Can It Be True?

CONFRONTING SEXUAL ABUSE BY THOSE YOU TRUST

I have watched *Spotlight*—the acclaimed movie about the *Boston Globe*'s investigation into the systematic sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy—three times in the past few weeks. Oddly, the experience of watching this disturbing film has been a kind of therapy for me, reminding me of the cost of silence, the importance of standing up for children, and the compounded damage of inaction.

I am the director of a foundation in India for children with disabilities. According to a report released in January, children with special needs are three times more likely than other children to be abused. And this is something our foundation has always been vigilant about. In a country where beatings and other forms of corporal and verbal punishment are common and culturally acceptable, our organization has established a reputation for being different. Violence of any kind is expressly forbidden in all our centers, and all our staff know that we have a zero-tolerance policy for abuse.

But as strict as I thought we were, when we reviewed our child-protection policy a year ago with a consultant who is an expert in the field, we found it was full of gaps. Training was sketchy, reporting procedures were poorly understood, and documentation was weak. We began a long and exhaustive process of improving the policy, closing its gaps, and making it something our staff could adapt in situations that can't be anticipated.

The immediate result was that child-protection cases suddenly began to emerge from all directions. It was like an epidemic. Were we conjuring them up with our new hyperawareness, or had this abuse always been happening and we just hadn't noticed? Either way, it was unsettling. We discovered that one boy was being exposed to pornography and possibly photographed for the same. We learned of a girl who was probably being raped. Another child told us he was beaten regularly. A young man with an intellectual impairment had been forced to marry a young woman who was also impaired. Because he was incapable of consummating the marriage, his father had taken on that task, and there was now a baby.

All these things were happening in our students' homes, not in our centers. Given the paucity of social services in India, it was all but impossible for us to respond effectively for the protection of the children involved. When we learned about the forced marriage and the repeated rape of the young woman, for example, we called the police. But while the cop who took the report was sympathetic, he said he was powerless to act. By law, both the young man and the young woman were adults; unless one of them made a formal complaint, there were no grounds to investigate. In the other instances, we were legally required to inform the police, but we did so knowing not only that nothing would be done, but that nothing *could* be done. India has no effective system in place to protect a child who is being abused by a member of his or her own family. In cases where the violence is too extreme to be ignored, the child ends up being put in the same institutional care as juvenile delinquents. So a six-year-old child with an intellectual impairment who has been raped by her own father could be kept in a locked ward with teenagers arrested for assault, drug use, and armed robbery.

Wherever there is evidence of abuse, we have to involve the police, but it is a terrible feeling to know that the authorities will almost certainly subject the children we are trying to protect to dangers far worse than the ones they already face. It is frightening to realize that there is no safety net for these children except us.

Because we aren't a system. Our foundation has no residential center in which to house children in distress. We have neither standing, nor authority, nor backup. We are just a few unimportant people who must, in many instances, work outside the law to protect children from the very system whose job it is to protect children. So we inform the police when we must, but then we work with a family to oust an uncle who is molesting their impaired child. We teach parents that there are better ways to manage their child's difficult behavior than by beating them. One child at a time, we make things a little better.

But when, out of the blue, allegations were made against members of our own staff, things got complicated. The foundation is like a family. Many of our staff have never worked anywhere else. They have been with us for more than twenty years, and they identify with the community we have become in much the same way they identify with their family or their religion. The senior management feels the same way about them.

So when two of our students (both teenagers) made accusations against two of our teachers, we found it hard to believe them. It seemed so unlikely, so out of character for both of the accused teachers. Still, we investigated both claims thoroughly.

The incident reports were scrutinized carefully and detailed reconstructions were created to be sure of time, place and people present. A psychologist and a case worker the students trusted interviewed each of the students making the charges; in one of the two cases, three of the student's friends corroborated the story but further investigations

The cast of Spotlight

showed that at least two of them could not actually have been present when the incident took place and the third was doubtful.

Relevant staff were interviewed meticulously and all the reports were compiled for review by an outside adviser with over thirty years of experience in the UK. Yet even as we were doing all the right things, I was thinking to myself, "The charges can't be true. These are people we know, people who have worked with us for years." It was when I actually considered transferring them to different centers that alarm bells began ringing in my head. Why did this sound so familiar?

It's easy to assume that bishops who transferred priests accused of abuse from one parish to another were doing it to preserve their power bases or to avoid scandal. But it's also possible that they were like me: aghast at the accusations and unable to square them with people they knew and loved.

In the end, after lengthy discussions with our adviser, I decided to ask both of the accused teachers to resign. There was no hard evidence (all we had were the students' unsubstantiated accusations), but the doubt created made it impossible for us to allow them to continue working at the foundation. Giving them non-child-related positions was impossible for us financially and unacceptable for them professionally.

I know this is difficult to square with the principle "innocent until proven guilty," and I know that many will say I acted as if I were myself the police. It is, and I did. My first job is to make sure our children are safe. One of those children is my own, and I take that task more seriously than just a line item in a job description. If there's a doubt, I'll help you find another job (I did that for both our former staff), but I won't compromise on our kids' safety.

And the police? The last time I tried to involve the police was about a burglary in one of our centers. After their investigation at the scene of the crime, the cops who responded told our watchman and our gardener to come to the police station that evening for "a few more questions." When I said I would be coming too, they took me aside and said urgently: "Madame? Don't you want us to beat them up?" So unless there is a definite reason to involve the police—and in neither of these cases was there clear evidence of criminal wrongdoing—we prefer not to.

I have gone back over my decision more times than I can count. While individual staff members are important, even crucial, it is the foundation as a whole that we have to consider, and the welfare and safety of the children that is our prime responsibility. If there are doubts, that fundamental principle has to be what guides us. Research tells us that children seldom lie about abuse. And while children with intellectual impairments are easier to take advantage of, they are also harder to manipulate. It would be difficult for an interested party to put them up to making a false accusation. So, hard as it was for me to believe that two people I knew well and trusted could be guilty as charged, in the end I gave the children the benefit of the doubt.

In the weeks following our employees' departures, I saw the impact on their lives. Their marriages suffered and they had trouble paying their bills. One of them recovered quickly enough, but the other returned to our office almost every day, begging to be taken back. Our Child Protection Officer and I second-guessed our decision constantly, haunted by the fear that we had been mistaken, that we had damaged two people's lives for no reason.

Spotlight was helpful here—it reminded us of the road not taken. Like us, church officials put the institution before individuals; unlike us, they defined that institution by its most powerful members. For them, the church meant the clergy, and in their desire to protect priests, they ended up protecting predators. In such terrible circumstances, pain is inevitable; now or later, there will be consequences. Adults, especially if innocent—and especially in India where there are no offenders' registers—can rebuild their lives. Children can be harmed irreparably. ■

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OPEN ROAD FILMS

Protecting Religious Liberty

Has That Become an Elusive Concept?

Bernard G. Prusak

During my first year of graduate school, when I was still very wet behind the ears, I had the privilege of interviewing the philosopher John Rawls for *Commonweal* ("Politics, Religion, and the Public Good: An Interview with Philosopher John Rawls," September 25, 1998). The interview focused on Rawls's thinking about what sort of reasons one ought to present in support of laws and policies in a liberal democracy like our own, one characterized by pervasive pluralism in matters of faith and morals. Rawls defended what he called "public reason." According to him, fairness requires citizens in positions of political power to argue in terms that all other citizens can embrace. So it would be unfair—more strongly, unjust—to reject gay marriage, for example, on the basis of Scripture. It would also be unfair either to limit or to extend abortion rights on the basis of Immanuel Kant's philosophy or any other "comprehensive doctrine" (to use Rawls's terminology) that one could not reasonably expect all citizens to embrace. To be clear, Rawls's position wouldn't rule religion out of political discourse: he recognized the important part that religious language and inspiration played in the civil-rights movement, for example. But he insisted that political justifications must be based, at the end of the day, in our common political culture, embodied and articulated by the likes of Jefferson, Madison, and Lincoln. To fail to justify laws and policies in terms that all citizens can embrace is to fail to observe the duty of civility we have toward one another.

Twenty years later, this argument is beginning to seem a little old-fashioned—as if Rawls, who died in 2002, belongs already to the same near-mythical past as Jefferson and Madison and Lincoln. How quaint his insistence on civility sounds in this tawdry age of ours! Our political culture, such as it is, has slouched from the lurid banality of the Monica Lewinsky scandal to the perpetual scandal of Donald Trump's presidency.

The conversation about religion and politics has also changed over the past twenty years. Though figures like Alabama's Roy Moore still have theocratic ambitions, the growing number of Americans who no longer identify with any religion—a trend hastened, social-science research has found, by the association of religion with reactionary politics—has made those ambitions appear ridiculous. The Evangelical right has been reduced to whispering sweet nothings into the ear of a thrice-married reality-television star who has boasted about groping women; a porn star was paid off to keep her quiet about their affair. Religion is now on the defensive. Today, our questions about religion and politics are: Can bakers or photographers refuse to provide their services for a gay wedding on free-exercise grounds? Should employers who object on religious grounds to contraceptives or abortion be exempted from having to provide employees health insurance that covers such services? Should Catholic hospitals and physicians be allowed to refuse to perform legal, professionally sanctioned procedures to which they object? May religiously affiliated schools fire a teacher who gets pregnant out of wedlock, or a teacher who gets married to her same-sex partner? In short, why give religion special treatment under the law? Why should religious beliefs warrant accommodation when they conflict with other people's interests?

Liberalism's Religion
Cécile Laborde
Harvard University Press, $35, 344 pp.

Cécile Laborde, who publishes in French as well as in English, holds the Nuffield Chair in Political Theory at Oxford University. *Liberalism's Religion* is her first big book: though it's not very long, it's a major contribution to its field, likely to displace a lot of other texts from reading lists. It will command attention from political theorists, philosophers, and legal scholars for years to come.

The multiple meanings of the title reflect the book's multiple ambitions. *Liberalism's Religion* has to do with "the concept of religion at the heart of liberalism." Here

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"liberalism" is understood as the tradition of political thought, dating back to the seventeenth century, committed to toleration of religious differences, individual rights, and state neutrality toward what Rawls called "comprehensive doctrines." Laborde acknowledges that "liberal law is biased toward individualistic, belief-based religions"—that is, toward Protestantism. She also takes seriously the accusation that "liberal regulation of religion amounts...to the establishment of an alternative religion"—namely, so-called ethical individualism, a creed famously expressed in Justice Anthony Kennedy's Opinion of the Court in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992): "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." Finally, *Liberalism's Religion* insists on and explicates "the crucial point that while religion has a special place in liberal theory, it is not a uniquely special place." In this book religion is "disaggregated," to use Laborde's term. She does not try to address all its features, but only those that deserve civic respect and legal protection. In her words, "it is not sufficient simply to say 'religion is X and Y.' What is required is to identify the specific normative values that the law has reason to protect—values that make X or Y legally salient." Laborde argues that those values also belong to many "nonreligious beliefs, conceptions, and identities," with the upshot that it becomes possible "to treat religious and nonreligious individuals on the same terms, as expressions of ethical and social pluralism."

Here it is important to remember that religion is contested nowadays both from within and from without. From within, there are now so many "religions" in countries like the United States that it is increasingly hard to say what exactly counts as religion, and the demand that the law accommodate all citizens' religious beliefs appears increasingly unrealistic and imprudent. From without, there are now so many people professing no religion that it appears unfair for the law to accommodate religious beliefs in particular. Why should the beliefs of religious people be privileged in this way? Egalitarians may seek to solve this problem in two ways: either by denying that religious citizens should enjoy exemptions from generally applicable laws, or by denying that exemptions should be exclusive to religious citizens. Brian Leiter goes the first way in *Why Tolerate Religion?* (see William Galston's review in the May 3, 2013 issue). Laborde goes the second way. For her, in a very telling line, "If exemptions are not exclusive to religion...then religious exemptions might be permissible."

Laborde's project might remind readers of the philosopher Charles Taylor's polemic in *A Secular Age* (2007) against what he calls "subtraction stories"—stories according to which, when religion crumbles away or is sloughed off, ideals and values that were always there, operating in the background, come to the fore, clear at last to sight. Arguably, a subtraction story is behind fifty years' worth of Supreme Court rulings on conscientious objection to military service. According to this story, what we valued in religious liberty was really liberty of conscience. Now, in this time of growing religious non-affiliation, we can begin valuing liberty of conscience directly, rather than through the proxy of religion; otherwise we privilege the consciences of the religious over the consciences of the nonreligious. In *United States v. Seeger* (1965), the Court focused on whether the objector's belief occupied in his life "a place parallel to that filled by the God of those admittedly qualifying for exemption"; in *Welsh v. United States* (1970), the Court focused on whether the objector's belief was "held with the strength of traditional religious convictions." What mattered now—and had always mattered implicitly—was not that a belief was religious but the intensity with which it was held.

Laborde acknowledges that "the *Seeger-Welsh* jurisprudence has become a point of reference for liberal egalitar-

ian theorists, as the paradigm of accommodation extended from religious to nonreligious moral commitments." But the story she tells is more complicated. Religious liberty, she claims, cannot be redescribed without loss as liberty of conscience, for protecting liberty of conscience does "not protect all religious beliefs and practices, because religion cannot be reduced to conscience." For example, the ingestion of peyote in a Native American ceremony is not an obligation of conscience, but it is nonetheless a religious practice that arguably ought to be protected against generally applicable laws prohibiting the possession and use of hallucinogens.

The book's final two chapters stake out positions on the controversial questions in the news today concerning freedom of association and the boundaries of religious liberty. Laborde holds that "only groups that are voluntary and identificatory have rights to discriminate"—for example, in hiring and firing. An "identificatory" association is one "where individuals identify with the projects and commitments that are at the core of the association's integrity." Take a church, for instance, or a religious school. In Laborde's account, the right of such a voluntary, identificatory association to discriminate with respect to gender or sexuality is based on its "coherence interests": for the association to hang together rather than disintegrate, it must be free to live by its own standards, purposes, and commitments. Concretely, it must be free to hire ministers and teachers who satisfy the relevant criteria—perhaps church doctrine specifies the ministers must be male—and live out the relevant teachings—say, regarding same-sex relationships. What's more, an association like a church or a religious school also has "competence interests": it matters for its coherence that it be recognized as the sole competent authority to interpret its own standards, purposes, and commitments. Concretely, it is not for the state to judge whether a minister or a teacher is a good or bad fit for the association.

To this point, the argument seems unobjectionable. But then Laborde turns to what the law calls places of public accommodation, like bakeries and flower shops, which provide goods and services for the public at large. Masterpiece Cakeshop is the example in today's headlines; its owner's refusal to make a cake for a gay couple's wedding has led to a Supreme Court case. According to Laborde, public accommodations "have no relevant coherence interest that would allow them to refuse to serve all members regardless of race, gender, or sexuality." While the defining commitments of a church or religious school would be imperiled if it did not have a right to discriminate in hiring and firing, Laborde does not believe that having to serve all comers similarly imperils what a public accommodation is all about. So, for example, a Roman Catholic church that was compelled to employ a woman as a priest would run awry of Catholic doctrine and cease to be a Catholic church in good standing with Rome. A bakery compelled to serve all comers, by contrast, does not cease to be a bakery. There is just no sense in claiming it must be free to discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or sexuality lest it be untrue to its function, which is to bake.

> We might wonder whether the claim that political authorities should avoid requiring a person to deny his or her God has the same force when it is translated into the claim that authorities should avoid requiring a person to compromise his or her integrity.

That argument seems right, but note that it does not quite reach the point of contention in *Masterpiece Cakeshop* (which Laborde, to be clear, does not discuss). Jack Phillips does not refuse to serve gay persons all baked goods; instead, he refuses to make cakes celebrating gay weddings. Further, while there are no grounds other than racism to oppose participation in an interracial wedding, there are grounds other than homophobia to oppose participation in a same-sex wedding. Opposition to an interracial wedding can only be about the persons being wed; opposition to a same-sex wedding can be about the redefinition of the institution of marriage.

Laborde writes that "as a practice becomes more distant from the core religious practices and activities of the association, it also becomes less relevant to associational coherence," with the upshot that "religious employers cannot discriminate on religious grounds…in relation to employees not doing religious work." This claim also seems right, and it's relevant to the resistance of some Catholic colleges and universities to the formation of part-time faculty unions under the auspices of the National Labor Relations Board. But again, Laborde's argument does not quite reach the point of contention. Catholic colleges and universities like DePaul and Loyola Chicago claim that they should be recognized as having the competence to judge which employees are "doing religious work"; the NLRB claims this competence for itself. This raises the question: Who has the authority to define what counts as "religious work"? Is the question of what counts

as religious itself a religious question over which religious associations have sole competence, or should they have to convince governmental bodies like the NLRB? Laborde refers to this type of dispute as a jurisdictional boundary problem—coming soon, it seems likely, to a federal court near you.

Laborde's defense of individual exemptions to generally applicable laws turns not on the rights of conscience, but on the value of integrity, which she defines as "an ideal of congruence between one's ethical commitments and one's actions." In keeping with her egalitarian premises, she argues that "the moral force of individual exemption claims lies…in their importance to individual integrity, not in their advancement of objective or collective goods such as 'religion' or 'tradition.'" In other words, for her, the question to ask is, "What kinds of commitment are so important to people that their integrity would be threatened were they prevented from acting on them?" Integrity-protecting commitments come in two kinds: those that a person feels obligated to observe (for example, a commitment not to participate in war) and those that, while not experienced as obligations, figure saliently in a person's way of life (for example, ingesting peyote in a religious ceremony). Of course, the fact that an integrity-protecting commitment is burdened by a law does not by itself mean that the burden is unfair. According to Laborde, such a law is unfair only when "there seems to be a disproportion between the aims pursued by the law and the burden it inflicts on claimants," or when "minority citizens are unable to combine the pursuit of a core societal opportunity with an [integrity-protecting commitment], whereas the equivalent opportunity set is institutionally available to the majority"—for example, denying Muslims time off from work on Fridays, when Christians enjoy time off on Sundays.

In its favor, Laborde's argument captures the logic of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Seeger-Welsh* jurisprudence while also laying the groundwork for a more capacious interpretation of religious liberty than the one put forward by the U.S. Supreme Court in the notorious case of *Employment Division v. Smith* (1990). According to Justice Antonin Scalia's Opinion of the Court, "generally applicable, religion-neutral laws that have the effect of burdening a particular religious practice need not be justified by a compelling governmental interest." Scalia feared that having to grant exemptions whenever a compelling governmental interest was not at stake "would be courting anarchy." Laborde agrees with Scalia that "religious believers have no presumptive right" to exemptions, but her argument provides principled grounds for granting exemptions in some cases.

Still, there is reason to wonder whether respect for religious liberty can be redescribed as respect for integrity without loss. According to Laborde, what we valued in religious liberty was really personal integrity all along. Now, in this age of religious pluralism and growing religious nonaffiliation, we can just value personal integrity directly, rather than through the proxy of religion. For Madison, however, it was a citizen's relationship to God in conscience—understood, roughly, as the faculty through which a person might hear God's voice and the duties it prescribes to her—that grounded the limitation on the federal government articulated in the First Amendment. As he wrote in his 1785 pamphlet titled "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments":

> The Religion...of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man; and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate. This right is in its nature an unalienable right... because what is here a right towards men, is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage and such only as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governour of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the General Authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign.

In brief, any government that seeks to respect its citizens' natural rights has to recognize limits to its powers. In particular, it must seek to allow each person to practice his or her religion according to the dictates of conscience. This is because, according to Madison, a person is more than a citizen. Each of us has a dimension that transcends the temporal order and that renders us subject to an authority higher than government.

We might wonder, then, whether the claim that political authorities should avoid requiring a person to deny his or her God has the same force when it is translated into the claim that authorities should avoid requiring a person to compromise his or her integrity. It is interesting in this regard that, while in both *Seeger* and *Welsh* the Supreme Court expanded the class of conscientious-objection claims warranting accommodation, in *Negre v. Larsen* (1971) the Court rejected the claim of a Roman Catholic who objected on faith-based grounds not to war in general, but to the war in Vietnam. Perhaps that decision is exactly what one should expect once religious liberty claims have been reduced to just one among many species of intensely held beliefs. It's hard to see why the mere intensity of a belief should give it priority over the nation's security. Perhaps Laborde's concept of integrity has more weight than that of intensely held belief; maybe "I can't go to war lest my integrity be compromised" is a more powerful argument than "I can't go to war because it's against my intensely held beliefs." But that still doesn't make it as powerful as "I can't go to war lest I violate my duty to God." In Rawls's terms, the appeal to integrity is one that all citizens can understand. Madison's defense of religious liberty, by contrast, is rooted in an increasingly foreign comprehensive doctrine. ■

How Religion Got Trump

Faith in the 2016 Election

Kenneth L. Woodward

Ordinarily, a year is far too short a time to make a difference in the history of American religion, culture, or politics. But then 2017 was not by any measure an ordinary year.

Two months after my book *Getting Religion* was first published, Donald Trump was elected president, an upset that sent populist shock waves throughout this country and Western Europe. Although Trump lost the popular vote by nearly 2.9 million to Hillary Clinton, the Republicans won control of both chambers of Congress plus a majority of state houses and state legislatures—the largest defeat for the Democratic Party since 1928.

However, Trump finds his administration enveloped by billowing scandals; his White House staff riven by leaks and rivalries; his political agenda stalled and his policies incoherent. Several of the president's former and current advisers—including his son-in-law Jared Kushner—are under investigation by both a Senate subcommittee looking into Russian efforts to manipulate the election in Trump's favor, and by a special prosecutor investigating possible criminal acts by Trump associates. Trump himself has been accused of attempting to suborn former FBI Director James Comey before firing him shortly after taking office.

Trump's swift and unexpected ascent to the nation's highest office followed religious, class, and demographic fault lines that were not in evidence only a few years ago. His success was fueled in part by years of political non-cooperation in Congress, by the recognition that Hillary Clinton and the Democrats were no less beholden than the Republicans to Wall Street and the rich, and especially by steady erosion of white middle-class workers' economic status, prospects, and self-respect, particularly in the financially pressed sectors of the Middle West. When Trump blamed Mexican immigrants and "radical Islamic terrorists" for the nation's ills, these economic outsiders applauded. When Trump promised to make America "great" again, they heard "prosperous" and "white" again.

Once more "it was the economy, stupid," even though President Obama had brought the country slowly out of economic crisis. It was also about social and geographic location—"us" against the coastal elites. But despite data showing Trump capturing the "religious vote," very little of it was about religion.

Much—far too much, in my view—was made in the media of exit polls showing that 81 percent of Evangelicals voted for Trump despite his three marriages, his boastful womanizing, and his meager Christian credentials. Trump was baptized a Presbyterian as a child but it was clear that, for him, Calvin Klein had more name recognition than John Calvin. Asked during the campaign if he ever asked God for forgiveness, Trump notoriously replied, "I don't think so.... I think if I do something wrong, I think, I just try and make it right. I don't bring God into that picture. I don't."

Two Evangelicals with bold-face names—Billy Graham's son Franklin and Jerry Falwell's son Jerry Jr.—claimed to know that Trump had recently become a serious Christian, but there was no evidence that he ever reads the Bible, attends church, or looks to someone as his pastor. But there was considerable evidence to the contrary. During the campaign he identified his "spiritual adviser" as Paula White, a former model turned Orlando televangelist, sometime mega-pastor, and fulltime "life coach" who, like Trump himself, has been married three times.

Trump's embrace by Graham and Falwell Jr. was manifestly political and both were rewarded with roles at his inauguration. But neither man exercises anything like the clout their more gifted and famous fathers enjoyed. Indeed, one of the remarkable things about the 2016 election was how few local Evangelical pastors got involved in either campaign. A great many of them lost political heart after Texas Senator Ted Cruz, an authentic Evangelical Christian and certified political conservative, dropped out of the Republican race.

Why then (if the exit-poll numbers survive later analysis), did four out of five voters who identified as Evangelicals choose Trump? Unfortunately, exit polls alone cannot tell us that. Like many other Americans, white Evangelicals felt they had three unpleasant choices. They could choose to stay home election day, which nearly 39 percent of American voters did; they could overlook their dislike or distrust of Hillary Clinton and her party and vote for her anyway. Or

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President Trump and Jerry Falwell Jr. at Liberty University commencement, 2017

they could embrace Trump despite his evanescent religious credentials and his manifest character flaws.

To choose Clinton, they would have to overlook her decision to drop all previous moral qualms about supporting abortion on demand; ignore her ties to President Obama's stand on certain religious-liberty issues, and forget their doubts about her Methodist presumption of moral probity. To opt for Trump required overlooking his moral turpitude and manifest lack of character; to accept as authentic his conversion to political conservatism; and to bet that he would make good on promises to appoint a conservative to the Supreme Court (which he did), to curb abortion on demand, and expand religious liberties for Evangelical businesses that refuse to service gay marriages.

The Evangelical justifications for supporting Trump or not were dramatized by the public spat between Robert Jeffress, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, a congregation with a long history of appointing outspoken theological and political conservatives to its pulpit, and the Dr. Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Nine months before the GOP Convention, Jeffress published arguments for supporting Trump, if other, more Evangelically fit Republican candidates failed to win the nomination. "Seven years of Barack Obama have drastically lowered the threshold of spiritual expectations Evangelicals have of their president," he wrote in an opinion piece for Fox News. "Evangelicals will settle for someone who doesn't hate them like the current [holder] of the Oval Office appears to."

Jeffress did not specify in what ways Obama had offended Evangelicals, but five months later, in an interview on National Public Radio, he described Evangelicals as divided between "idealists" who wanted "a strong conservative in the White House" and those "realists" willing to settle for the most electable conservative candidate; "many of those are going for Donald Trump." After the publication of tapes on which Trump bragged of groping "beautiful" women, Jeffress told NPR that what was important was taking the right stand on issues, not personal morality: "what I'm looking for is a leader who's going to fight ISIS and keep this nation secure. I don't want some meek and mild leader or somebody who's going to turn the other cheek." Clearly, he was not interested in "what Jesus would do."

Speaking often and with passion as the Southern Baptist Convention's point man on religion and public affairs, Russell Moore took the opposite position. If character mattered when Bill Clinton ran for president, he argued, then character still matters when Donald Trump is a candidate. "His attitude toward women is that of a Bronze Age warlord," Moore wrote in an op-ed piece for the *New York Times* in September 2015. "He tells us in one of his books that he revels in the fact that he gets to sleep with some of the 'top women in the world.'" Three months later in *National Review*, Moore reiterated his position that moral character matters more in a president than issues, specifically citing Trump's willingness to ban Muslim immigrants as contrary to the historic Baptist support for freedom of religion. Candidate Trump tweeted right back.

After Trump won, a defeated Moore turned the other cheek and published a piece in the *Washington Post* calling on Christians to pray for the new president and for reconciliation within the church. Southern Baptist Trump supporters were calling for his head. Pastor Jeffress was invited by Trump to preach at the traditional religious service the morning of inauguration day. In his sermon he grandly compared Trump to Nehemiah, an Israelite leader who had brought his people back from Babylon, and declared that God Himself had decided the election for Trump.

Moore lost because he found himself on the wrong end of a process which, according to Robert Jones, CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, has seen white Evangelicals go "from the least likely to the most likely group to agree that a candidate's personal immorality has no bearing on his performance in public office." Indeed, according to PRRI data, even religiously non-affiliated Americans (the "Nones") are more likely to hold officeholders to some standard of personal morality.

My own reading of Trump's success with white Evangelical voters is that after eight presidential elections, most of them have become accustomed to pulling the Republican lever—thus completing the political captivity of the white Evangelical vote that conservative party operatives set out to accomplish in 1972. Inevitably this transformation would come to entail the subordination of a candidate's moral integrity, not to mention his Evangelical bona fides, to that candidate's stands on social and economic issues. It took a candidate like Donald Trump to complete the conversion process.

Still, we do not yet know why so many white Evangelical

GHOST TREES

And now a certain kind of scientist says
the weather in various parts of the world
is growing exhausted and just wants to lie down
for a nap, or maybe for a longer dose
of oblivion, so its dreams can be
re-spawned, its creatures large and small
replenished to wildness, the air re-folded
into its invisible origami, even
human language shot-through again
with sap: In the clear-cut woods—
raw ground and stumps—invisible trees
are learning to move from one place to another,
blurring paths and meadows—the people
who live there call them *fathers who turned
away without waving goodbye and learned
to dance slowly*; they contrast them with the boulders
and rocks, who really know how to dance
in slow time, even as the humans and the creatures
in fur and the creatures in feathers leave
their bodies and all the bodies they passed through
to arrive at now through eternities, but still
we pretend they cast shadows across the ground
and still we pretend they bear fruit.

—Michael Hettich

Michael Hettich's most recent book of poems, The Frozen Harbor (*Red Dragonfly Press, 2017), won the David Martinson/Meadowhawk Prize. He lives with his family in Miami and teaches at Miami Dade College.*

men and women supported Mr. Trump. In a fit of political righteousness, Bill Clinton blamed his wife's loss on "angry white males," suggesting thereby that Hillary was a victim of racism and sexism. Mrs. Clinton eventually added her own list of specific causes, including Comey's announcement ten days before the election that he was reopening the FBI's investigation into her use of a private server. But neither Clinton blamed the campaign, the candidate, or the gap between what many see as her personal sense of moral righteousness and the very different assessment of her detractors.

I would argue that Trump won mainly because too many Americans for too long had experienced no upward mobility, and feared for their own and their children's economic future. Since a third of white Evangelicals earn less than $30,000 a year and more than half (57 percent) less than $50,000 a year, economics offers a more cogent explanation than religion of why Trump won the white Evangelical vote.

Only about one American adult in four puts religion at or near the center of his or her life, which is the same percentage who do not identify with any religion. What can be said about the 50 percent whose religious beliefs, behavior, and belonging lie somewhere in between? Watching Trump's inauguration helped answer that question for me.

Trump invited six clerics to participate in his inauguration, one more than the previous record-holder, Richard Nixon. The choices tell us not only something about the political use of inaugural rituals but, more importantly, about the shifting contours of American Christianity. Two of them were pro forma invitees: the (Roman Catholic) cardinal-archbishop of New York, Trump's home town, and a rabbi from Los Angeles. Neither are close friends of Trump. Two others, a self-proclaimed African-American bishop from Detroit and the leader of a Hispanic Christian coalition, brought needed ethnic diversity to the program. Both served on Trump's "religious advisory board" but until late in his campaign, the candidate had never met either man. The fifth, and the only woman, was the aforementioned Paula White. The sixth was Franklin Graham, a Trump supporter who had held "Values" rallies in fifty states during the campaign and later declared that "for the states to go the way they did, in my opinion, it was the hand of God."

Apart from the cardinal and the rabbi none of the other four, including Graham, have formal seminary training—mirroring Trump's own lack of political or governmental experience. None belong to a mainline Protestant or traditional Evangelical church. All four are prime examples of what I have called entrepreneurial religion: three are self-anointed ministers and stars of their own television programs, and the third, a Pentecostal, is known chiefly for his leadership in organizing Hispanic Christians.

In sum, what we saw at the inaugural evidenced the long-term shift away from the denominations and institutions that once characterized American Protestantism to the free-standing, doctrinally fluid, therapeutically inclined, market-oriented entrepreneurial churches and para-church organizations that have come to characterize much of American religion. Together with Pentecostal congregations, churches of the independent and non-denominational variety now represent the most rapidly growing sector of American Christianity.

Trump's inaugural was also the first to feature preachers of what is broadly labeled the "prosperity gospel," a form of entrepreneurial religion that explains the president's religious proclivities far better than the president has done himself. "Donald Trump is the first American president whose only religious impulses arise from the American prosperity gospel," says professor Kate Bowler of Duke Divinity School, the foremost expert on the history and development of the prosperity gospel.

Like the titles of some of Trump's books (*Think Big* and

Think Like a Champion), prosperity gospellers offer their listeners the biblical secrets of turning "losers" into "winners," to use Trumpian vocabulary, by drawing down God's blessings in the form of better health, wealth, and emotional happiness. Sociologically, the prosperity gospel appeals mainly to the have-nots and have-not-enoughs. Theologically, it turns faith into a technique: by naming specifically what you want—a new Lexus, say, or a bonus check, or improved marital relations—and by tithing in support of the prosperity ministry, the believer acquires the power to press the sort of claims on God that Jesus promises in John 10:10: "I came to give you life, and to give it more abundantly." The operative message of this mutant Christianity is simple: "Ask *not* what you can do for God, but what God can do for you."

In her book *The Blessing*, Bowler traces the roots of the prosperity gospel back to the early twentieth century, showing how it draws from early metaphysical mind-over-matter movements; Pentecostal faith healing as exemplified by Oral Roberts; the positive thinking of Norman Vincent Peale, whose Manhattan church young Donald Trump attended and who presided at his first marriage; and the possibility thinking of Robert Schuller, to name a few. She also teases out the connections between the prosperity gospel and the American myth of the "self-made man," which Trump has appropriated for his own self-presentation.

Sociologically, the prosperity gospel appeals mainly to the have-nots and have-not-enoughs. Theologically, it turns faith into a technique.

The prosperity gospel is the form in which tens of millions of Americans now "get religion." Bowler calculates that 17 percent of U.S. mega-churches (those with at least ten-thousand members) preach some form of the prosperity gospel. That does not include the millions of cable-television viewers and streaming social networkers who follow prosperity mega-stars like Joel Osteen, T. D. Jakes, Joyce Meyer, and Creflo Dollar. A 2006 poll for *Time* magazine found that nearly a third of American Christians believed that "God enriches those who give." In the era of Trump's ascendency, it's religion as the art of the ultimate deal.

From time to time, a book appears that momentarily captures the mood swing within American Christianity. In the mid-1960s, Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* was such a book, blending into a single, optimistic vision the we-shall-overcome confidence of Dr. King's civil-rights movement with the urban cool of the Kennedy White House and the outsized ambition of Johnson's Great Society programs. In the spring of 2017, Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option* articulated for many traditional American Christians their feeling of defeat—as in, "we have lost the culture wars." Oddly enough, both books call for the church to withdraw from roles in the national public square: for Cox because "secular man" had "come of age" and no longer needed tutelage by the church; for Dreher because secularism's cultural triumph, capped for him by the legalization of same-sex marriage, allows no role for orthodox Christians who hope to influence public affairs.

Named after St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, the option Dreher advocates is the creation of new, smaller communities and institutions on the local level in which Christians and their families can sustain and pass on the moral and intellectual truths of what he calls Christianity's "Great Tradition." Forming Christians "who live out Christianity according to the Great Tradition," Dreher argues, "requires embedding within communities and institutions dedicated to that formation."

Building character-forming communities is a recurrent feature of American religious history. It is as old as the Puritan settlements and can be as ambitious as the creation of the Mormon Zion, as clannish as an Hasidic neighborhood, or as selectively porous as the embedded Catholicism of my youth. And the process repeats itself every time practitioners of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other non-Christian religions settle on these shores.

In the course of that history, the Christian majority has seen its institutions—schools, charities, hospitals, and especially colleges and universities—lose their specifically religious character. Not to secularism, so much, as to their own institutional will to survive in an ever-expanding public sphere. Regardless of which political party controls Congress or the White House, the concentration of money, influence, and power in the nation's capital has grown enormously since the 1950s, when Eisenhower warned us about the developing military-industrial complex. Today the local is no longer just local, and with globalization the national is rarely just national. We are all interconnected; our circles of dependency have expanded farther than we can see. And in our newly digitalized universe there really is no time or place to opt out. The emergence of a president like Donald Trump reflects an anxious, unstable, and uncertain society. How hard it is to heed the psalmist's soothing admonition: "be still, and know that I am Lord." ■

Between Worlds

Rose Rappoport Moss

When I was eight I watched my mother prepare the chicken for Sunday's roast. She lit a quill of paper, burned off the pin feathers and removed the gall, careful to keep it whole. Then she put her hand in the slimy carcass and pulled out giblets. That week, she drew out an egg yolk not yet sheathed in shell and saved the golden globe to poach in broth.

She was an excellent cook. The roast came out of the oven fragrant, juicy, and crisp. I assume Leila's mother, Fareeda, had similar skills. When Leila was my tenant in Cambridge, a stranger alone in America, we sometimes cooked for each other. Although Leila was here to study science, she cooked traditional Cape dishes like my mother, not from recipes but recalling her ancestors' methods and how dishes should taste.

In February, she danced out of the house light as a snowflake and a florist delivered red roses. But in late March, I heard her feet drag on the stairs and saw her walk to the bus head bent as though to read the filthy dregs of winter.

I guessed her lonely, stranded, and stunned by our snow, ice, and Yankee ways. Like me when I first came to New England. "What's the matter? Are you coming down with 'flu?"

She wasn't ready yet, but the third time I asked she said, "I'm pregnant." Of course. It should have been obvious. Brad, older and something of a celebrity. Gospel music. She told me he said, "I've got no money," and, "Get rid of it."

But Leila was done with abortions. Certain from the first, she knew she'd conceived a girl, and retorted, "How dare you talk about my daughter that way?"

I said, "He's got money. Look at his car." A mustard Porsche.

We talked and after a while, I brought a pen and pad of lined paper to set in front of her and we wrote a list of questions. That calmed her.

She didn't tell me she feared her brother might come to kill her for the family's honor.

"I'll introduce you to my parish priest. They make such a fuss about abortion, let's see if they have any practical alternatives."

In Father Tom's small office, she said, "I'm an atheist."

He waved that aside and didn't have any practical advice but fifteen years later, she still talks about him.

• • •

Perhaps Olive also cooks well but the weekend they visited she made no move to help. She sat at my kitchen table her face hidden in a white hoodie while Leila cooked for us and I thought, "Perhaps she's shy." She doesn't know me though she's spoken rehearsed thank-yous for birthday gifts I sent.

Brad's confidant said, "Take her to your own doctor," and at the sonogram machine he heard his daughter's heartbeat. His own heart's echo. A pulse from God.

He stopped saying "Get rid of it," but was not going to give up his career or lead a monogamous life with a Coloured wife from Cape Town. He'd been a celebrity for years and it suited him. When Leila started to show, he rented her an apartment in Gloucester—distant enough to keep her out of the way of concert halls, churches, universities, and acquaintances. The week Olive was born, he was performing on the West Coast.

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Then he saw Olive asleep. She opened her newborn-blue eyes and I guess he heard angels singing or something like that. He gave Leila money she might need for Olive.

Leila's brother, running a successful business in Cape Town, gave Fareeda airfare to America and I drove mother and child to the airport to meet her, a flabby woman who addressed me in Cape Coloured Afrikaans mixed with English. For three weeks she cooked dishes Leila had hankered for—bobotie, carrot bredie and yellow rice with raisins. She wanted guinea-fowl but I said, "It's not sold in Massachusetts. Even mutton's difficult, though we do get New Zealand lamb." I mentioned chicken but Leila said, "Americans take out the taste and wrap what's left in plastic."

Three weeks ago, Leila called to tell me Fareeda died last month. She and Olive had just spent five weeks in Cape Town and found her ailing. She'd been complaining about her health for years and impatience tainted my sympathy until Leila's voice broke at a sob. I invited them to visit the day after Thanksgiving. I used to seat twelve at my table, but I'm getting old now and am grateful to be invited to someone else's feast.

Apartheid's over, but the weekend they visit, I fear the imminent collapse of American democracy. Other empires have cracked and broken in my lifetime. It can seem very sudden, like our disarray after the election. I fear our vulnerable country could skid and crash while tantrums and anarchy govern. Our planet itself needs protection and I fear apocalyptic war.

• • •

While she cooks, Leila runs the faucet, a transparent pillar of water, and I hear the careless water flow like when I first arrived here. I left droughts that cake parched veldt, shrinking riverbeds, and cattle that wither into hide on corrugated bone. Suddenly, as though I'm alone, I can't control myself, stand and reach for the faucet, "Sorry, Massachusetts is still recovering from this summer's drought."

Leila says, "Sorry."

"I didn't mean to be so abrupt."

"I've been in Germany too long."

She grew up in Cape Town where moist mountain flanks usually protect the city from the inland droughts I knew.

It didn't take long for Brad to find Leila a jealous shrew. Wary of being tricked, he would not divorce his current wife to marry her. But, she told me, she had "a friend in Germany" and when Olive was still a toddler heaving herself up stairs one riser at a time, Leila took her there. In the event, the friend didn't work out, but Leila found Germany more comfortable than the states and devoted her life to her daughter. I don't know what else she did or whether she tried to get work in a lab there. She read novels and women's magazines, and seemed to lose interest in polymer research.

She never mentioned friends in Germany and I have the impression her life there was lonely and narrow. When people took her for an Arab, she protested she came from Cape Town. Once, she told me her mother was "European," the old South Africanism for white. Ten years ago, she asked me for a recommendation to a small college out west. I wrote, but she never mentioned it again. Her brother suggested she run a branch of his import-export business, but that didn't work out either and she fell back to dedicating her life to her daughter.

Olive shone in classes at her international school and won prizes for ballet and piano playing, but I guess people didn't know where to place them. Were they Arab? Neither German nor American, they didn't fit in.

When I try to guess what Olive craves, I come to a chasm. What do girls her age long for today? Something ineffable, moody and heroic—running on an open beach? Climbing a panoramic cliff? Raising her hands from piano keys before the audience bursts into applause? A close friend? A lover? I cannot see her longings and her inner life is hiding like her face in her hoodie.

• • •

When Brad's mother died, he inherited her half-timbered house in Connecticut. He's still a celebrity but his reputation carries no excitement now. He teaches music at Wellesley and wants Olive, his gazelle, to attend an American college. He persuaded Leila to bring her back to America. They live in the Connecticut house. He keeps one room there and visits Olive every week or two.

He's older and has married Joann, once his secretary, then more. Leila, sipping gall, doesn't let Olive visit his new family, but life changes and when she attends an American college she'll make her own choices. Meanwhile, Brad pays a private school to fix what her German schools left out.

Her first semester, Leila said Olive felt unhappy because they didn't have their own swimming pool. I brushed that misery aside. She needed a friend at the lunch table but I didn't see how to help that happen. It didn't occur to me to wonder whether other students mock or bully her. My own days stream by like water so swift I barely sip life's sweetness and I set their life aside.

• • •

They spent a sparse Thanksgiving in Connecticut and drove up Friday. Brad's name came up twice and Leila dismissed him in an angry tone but Olive hoped to be in Connecticut when he arrived Sunday afternoon.

Perhaps he understands her. At her age he was unhappy himself. Perhaps he believes adolescent pain unavoidable. His old confidant says, "A happy childhood is a poor preparation for life. She'll come into her own at college. You did."

• • •

I planned to take them to the Gardner Museum and looked forward to their surprise at the flowers in the courtyard. Leila would approve of the art Mrs. Gardner bequeathed to her adopted city.

I've changed since Leila lived in my house. When rents in Cambridge rose, I bought another house, fixed it up, and now enjoy living as neither a boss nor a tenant. I'm old now, my friends are dying, and one, weak with chemo, asks me to use her *Messiah* ticket to accompany newly widowed Binkie. Her husband died last year and this will be her first *Messiah* without him.

I tell Leila, "I must attend that concert, but you know Boston. Lots to see and do without me.... Though if you'd like..."

Leila knows *Messiah* is a classic and chooses to introduce Olive to the cultural icon. I warn that *Messiah* is a long work, speak with Binkie, buy tickets, and suggest lunch together.

• • •

The Friday they arrive, we shop in Watertown like before Brad banished Leila to Gloucester. She still looks beautiful but now she's elegant too, her coifed hair shining like a crown.

She cooks Fareeda's fragrant bobotie with yellow rice though she eats little herself. Stress and her habit of bitterness have ruined her digestion.

At dinner, Olive and I eat meat, rice, and chutney with hearty appetites and Olive does not shrink from the honey-drenched baklava.

To prepare them for the long oratorio, I retrieve my old score, sing scraps, and talk about Handel's eighteenth-century allusions to radiance, royalty, sorrow, and triumph. They ask no questions and give no sign of familiarity with Christian symbols. When I stop talking, Olive goes to her own room and Leila talks about her daily life. To me, it seems she sees nothing beyond Olive at college and has no other career. Both take admission to an elite school for granted.

Who paid for their station wagon? Brad? Her brother? Whose money underwrites our shopping in Watertown? Has feisty Leila become a dependent? My hand recoils from the fire. I have no right to question and recall how my parents required my life to vindicate theirs.

But I fear this recent election could leave Leila again a friendless refugee, that Olive may find no home here and need more than her hoodie to hide her.

• • •

Saturday, rain spatters my window with light. Behind the drops, a maple holds red leaves aloft and contradicts my dread.

The rain done, we drive into Boston, and find no parking to take us through the performance but walk toward the restaurant and Binkie expecting us. I introduce them and we scan the menu. Olive, lanky and angular, orders pancakes, sausage and bacon. Our food arrives, Olive sets to, and mid-meal, Leila leaves to find new parking. I should have suggested the T.

Leila gone, Olive asks. "Do you believe in evolution?" Does she think me a fundamentalist? "Yes." "Do you believe in the Big Bang?" "A Jesuit at the Vatican Observatory developed the theory." Her challenge, not, after all, where Cross and Crescent meet but where Religion and Science draw swords. I feel her questions directed to me, but pass them on to Binkie. My own answers may be too skeptical for Binkie's still raw grief.

Olive is hungry and orders chocolate pie. Before her questions spill wider, Leila comes back and I wonder whose questions Olive asked. They sounded precooked, not her own. But, better than impermeable adolescent silence.

We find our seats and withdraw to our own reveries.

The music Handel wrote for orphans in Dublin proclaims, "Though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." I wonder how Binkie hears this promise. And atheist Leila? Her daughter?

• • •

After the concert we say goodbye to Binkie and, back in my apartment, warm yesterday's bobotie. Olive eats again like a famished boy and after dinner leaves for her own room.

Last year, Leila met a professor researching Muslim life on the Bo-Kaap. For a few days energy and hope charged her. He proposed they write a blog together. I ask about it. Her answer sounds flat and dry like a desert's exhausted river.

• • •

"I'm planning to go to Mass tomorrow morning. We can meet afterwards."

"We'll come with you." She asks about the parish priest she met long ago. She asks about him every few years and does not forget his courtesy those months she feared her brother might come to kill her.

"He's in a priests' old-age home."

At Sunday's Mass I introduce Leila and Olive to friends, the priest reminds us it is still November and invites us to write the names of our dead in the book on the Lady altar after the Mass—the parish will pray for them—and at the ritual kiss of peace I turn to both before greeting anyone else. After the last blessing, I say, "Excuse me a moment," and write Fareeda's name in the book. Do I believe her still living somehow?

Leila and Olive are standing nearby. We all go out to the sunny morning.

They will drive to Connecticut but Leila dismisses talk of hurry. We tour the sunlit campus. Olive may study here, where Leila and I met and where she met Brad. We do not talk about what the university evokes or signifies. I overhear Leila tell Olive, "Let him wait," and we divert to a restaurant for brunch. Olive orders eggs, home fries, toast, and hot chocolate. Leila and I choose salad.

When Leila goes to the bathroom, Olive thanks me for writing Fareeda's name in the book. What does she believe?

"What's next for you?" I ask. Parties. Christmas, New Year's, birthdays. Some girls in her class will celebrate their quincenaria. In an instant I see the show-off clothes, relatives and family friends, ardent breasts and sweaty palms, sexual display and competition. I see Olive in a pitiless stadium where all play thumbs-up-thumbs-down for their lives and forever, for sex, money, status, and survival. Shining silks and jewels cannot mask these adolescents as innocent children. In this contest the gladiators emerge as slippery as the gall sac my mother handled with care to keep it from breaking open and making all bitter. I see Olive with no American champion, no defender, no advocate, no patron, no ally, no present parent, no consoler, no fairy godmother, no Prince.

I want to nourish her with homemade chicken soup. "You don't have to have a fancy party. You can do something special with two or three friends. You can't take them to Cape Town, but what about Manhattan? A ferry trip round the island and a great restaurant?" Before I invent more glamorous celebrations Leila comes back and we say no more. Leila pays, we drive to my apartment and they pack their bags in the car.

At farewell, Leila and I hug. Then Olive. She clings to me and tears stream down her face. Olive is the infant Leila once thrust in my arms. She sobs silent tears in my hug, without present parents, alone among worlds, caught between histories with no guide. She weeps in practiced silence, so hidden I hardly feel her sobs. They cut a sudden chasm at my feet. How many years does it take to learn to weep like that?

Whatever I did before she was born is not enough. Fareeda's granddaughter needs protection, especially after this election. She was born here but Leila is not a citizen. Ignoring her atheism, a bureaucrat might declare her Muslim and strip her green card.

I was not expecting to need heroism for her or for me.

When Olive pulls away, I do not wipe the tears from her face. We break apart. "I'll see you soon."

She nods without words. ■

Celia Wren

Travel Agents with a Side of Assassination

'THE AMERICANS' ON FX

For years, the plotting in the FX series *The Americans* struck me as fun but implausible. The series, now in its last season, centers on two KGB agents operating under deep cover in the D.C. area in the 1980s. The Americans of the show's title are an ostensibly mousy couple busy raising two kids in suburbia, while running a travel agency. Behind the scenes, they are Soviet operatives conducting daredevil sabotage, espionage, kidnapping and blackmail operations, not to mention frequent assassinations, sometimes with their bare hands. One storyline chronicled the smuggling of a grisly biological-warfare substance; another involved the bugging of the office of Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger.

Preposterous stuff! Or so I thought, until news broke in early March that Russia had managed to poison an ex-spy with a nerve agent on British soil (somehow the similar 2006 killing of Alexander Litvinenko had slipped my mind). That brazen assassination attempt, together with Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. election, makes the skullduggery practiced by Philip and Elizabeth Jennings (Matthew Rhys and Keri Russell) on *The Americans* seem less implausible. Maybe during the Reagan presidency KGB agents really were able to tootle around Washington, D.C., juggling myriad assumed identities with the aid of wigs and eyewear, without ever triggering suspicions. Maybe the Kremlin really did have an unlimited foreign real-estate budget that enabled it to secure countless safe houses in and around the Beltway.

In any event, even when *The Americans* has seemed most far-fetched, the narrative excesses have always been redeemed by the writers' and actors' flair for taking it seriously. The Jenningses respond to each crisis with appropriate wariness and gravity, frequently discussing their work in the kitchen while making dinner, out of earshot of their kids, Paige (Holly Taylor) and Henry (Keidrich Sellati). Paired together for purely professional reasons in their native Russia, Philip and Elizabeth have gradually developed a real marriage, and the glimpses of their day-to-day family life give the show a powerful emotional pull.

Keri Russell, Holly Taylor, and Matthew Rhys as Elizabeth, Paige, and Philip Jennings in The Americans

That seriousness and maturity makes it easier to relate to the show's concern with values and moral dilemmas. Patriotism fueled Philip and Elizabeth's decision to become spies, but they also seem to have been motivated by a yearning for worldwide justice—goals they think the Soviet Union can advance. Still, as they pursue their calling—killing people and ruining lives—Philip and Elizabeth often appear to be asking themselves whether the end vindicates the means. Last season, for instance, they had misgivings about a plan that involved coaxing bullies to torment a Soviet defector's son—the goal was to goad the defector's family back to the U.S.S.R. They rushed to check up on the boy, nearly giving themselves away.

Philip in particular has grown repulsed by the violence his work forces him to commit. He has also been tempted by American sources of satisfaction. He flirts with the quasi-cult EST and plays squash with Stan Beeman (Noah Emmerich), a neighbor and FBI agent. In season two, Philip buys a new Chevrolet Camaro, appalling his wife, who despises consumerism. "Don't you ever like it?" he asks her about capitalism and consumer goods. "It's nicer here. It's easier. It's not *better*," she retorts.

Nurtured on Soviet values, including atheism, the Jenningses fret when teenage daughter Paige becomes an enthusiastic Christian. "They get them when they're children. They indoctrinate them with friendship, and songs, and cute boys cooing about Jesus…. The opiate of the masses!" Elizabeth sputters to her husband in private after Paige has joined a church. Still, she and Philip attend Paige's baptism. The parents try to be supportive of their daughter—and they know how to put on a façade.

The Americans follows *The Sopranos*, *Mad Men*, and *Breaking Bad*—all dramas that depicted apparently bland suburban lives built on scandalous deceptions. Such deceptions endure in the social-media era: no matter how much we overshare on Twitter and Facebook, there's still a discrepancy between the part of our lives we choose to present and the part we keep to ourselves. Headlines threaten the death of privacy, but we all still have our secrets. And even the most successful among us sometimes feels like a con artist. ■

FX

Peter Steinfels

Half the Story

Catholic Modern
The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church
James Chappel
Harvard University Press, $35, 352 pp.

Catholics on the Barricades
Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891–1956
Piotr H. Kosicki
Yale University Press, $40, 424 pp.

It is a commonplace that the Second Vatican Council consolidated a radical revision in the Catholic Church's stance toward the "modern world." Images of battle gave way to ones of dialogue and common destiny. The church embraced "the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties" of contemporary humanity. The church was embarked on the "same journey" and recognized the "good to be found in the social dynamism of today."

How did this remarkable change come about? Well, there is a familiar story, to which I will shortly return. But that story, if James Chappel's *Catholic Modern* is right, is at the very least incomplete, at the most in need of serious correction. And if Piotr H. Kosicki's *Catholics on the Barricades* is right, that story needs serious expansion and, to complicate things, perhaps Chappel's story also needs correction. These are young historians coming at old topics with fresh eyes and new perspectives.

The standard narrative of this great Catholic transformation goes something like this: first, the Enlightenment put the church under stress, then the French Revolution and Napoleonic era traumatized it. For more than a century, Catholicism suffered from institutional post-traumatic stress disorder, reliving revolutionary flashbacks and acting out accordingly. Every few decades a cluster of dissatisfied believers would propose treatment; they were led by figures like Lamennais, Montalembert, Dollinger, Acton, Newman, Blondel, Sangnier, Sturzo, Maritain, proponents of the *nouvelle théologie*, and John Courtney Murray, SJ. One after another, they were slapped down by popes from Gregory XVI to Pius XII.

Nonetheless, bit by bit, their message of qualified reconciliation with this or that aspect of modernity won support, reinforced by the practical concessions that popes and bishops had to make to the political realities in nations from Belgium to the United States. Eventually Christian Democracy triumphed in post–World War II Europe, a bulwark against Communist totalitarianism but shorn of the anti-modern Catholicism discredited by complicity with Nazi totalitarianism and allied regimes. It remained for Vatican II to do the intellectual and theological mopping up.

There are a number of snags in that story. One is how little attention it devotes to the 1920s and 1930s and the widespread Catholic turn to authoritarian, even totalitarian, right-wing movements and regimes, from Austria to Spain and Portugal, from Italy to Germany, and, after war broke out, from Slovakia and Croatia to Vichy France. Was this only an exceptional interlude, a momentary detour on the long march to Vatican II, a last gasp of a doomed Catholic war against modernity?

No, says Chappel in his highly creative, massively researched, and eye-opening *Catholic Modern*. Anyone assuming that his subtitle, *The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church*, describes a church accepting modernity in recoil from totalitarianism would be mistaken. On the contrary, Chappel argues that Catholicism gave up its battle against modernity precisely in the course of collaborating with those totalitarian or totalitarian-friendly regimes—and only to a lesser extent in resisting them.

For Chappel, the key feature of the modernity that the church battled was the emergence of a secular state and a public sphere open to a plurality of forces; Catholic authorities no longer enjoyed a privileged place as guardians of public and private morality. His narrative begins with the 1920s, when Catholics, he says, were still entranced by a quasi-medieval vision of a restored Catholic society, one that would be "structured by a dense web of Catholic institutions supplanting the secular modern state and the secular modern economy." In the 1930s, the Great Depression and the fear of left-wing revolution rendered this rejection of the secular state and economy totally implausible. The Catholic debate "shifted from 'How can we overcome the secular state?' to 'How can we shape secular modernity to our specifications?'"

Two rival strategies emerged among Catholic intellectuals and leaders. Both involved carving out a "private" zone where Catholic values and institutions would be protected from the secularism and dubious neutrality of the state. One strategy, which Chappel labels "paternal Catholic modernism," focused on the patriarchal "reproductive family" as the protected zone of private religious values. In the 1920s, Catholics had envisioned economic life in terms of independent Christian-inspired associations uniting employees and employers into "corporations" reminiscent of medieval guilds. Now corporatism was reimag-

ined as overseen by the state and subsuming workers and owners in various economic sectors regardless of religion. The secular state provided a reliable shield against class struggle and radical threats to the family and economy.

Chappel labels the competing strategy "fraternal Catholic modernism." It was egalitarian. Marital love between spouses was its starting point for discussing the family. Economic life required free trade unions. Political life demanded a free press and liberty to organize and collaborate across ideological lines. The state had to protect, not constrain, a pluralist civil society. In a sharp break with traditional anti-modernity, both contending perspectives mobilized a very modern vocabulary of human rights, religious freedom, and anti-totalitarianism in defense of their contrasting concerns. In the 1930s, Chappel writes, "the church transitioned from being an *anti-modern* institution into an *anti-totalitarian* one" (his emphases). But for one camp, anti-totalitarian meant anti-Communist; for the other, anti-fascist. In Chappel's eyes, postwar Christian Democracy (especially in Germany) was largely the heir of paternal Catholic modernism. It was militantly anti-Communist; it advocated welfare policies and economic growth not primarily on behalf of the individual or working class but for the family as a consumer unit.

Emmanuel Mounier

All this may sound abstract or schematic, and at moments it is. Yet Chappel fills out this story with a formidable amount of research. While acknowledging that including Italy and the Iberian countries might modify the picture, he focuses on France, Germany, and Austria, and on one or two leading Catholic intellectuals in each, representatives of neo-medieval restoration in the 1920s and of both paternal and fraternal Catholic modernisms in the 1930s and war years. Chappel's achievement includes adding Germany and Austria to a narrative more typically centered on France, ground zero for modern secularization, and on the papacy, command central for opposing it. Alongside Catholic thinkers like Jacques Maritain, Waldemar Gurian, and Dietrich von Hildebrand, he introduces many less familiar actors. His history is transnational and brings to bear historians' recent attentiveness to issues of family, gender, and capitalist consumer culture. All this in service to a provocative thesis about Catholic complicity with right-wing authoritarianism not just as a lingering case of anti-modernity but a decisive phase in rejecting it.

Like any fresh recasting of history, *Catholic Modern* raises questions. Are Chappel's definitions of modernity, secularization, and paternal and fraternal Catholic modernism really adequate? Is a structure organized around the poles of anti-fascism and anti-Communism overly simple? At times, he seems to have constructed an historical Excel sheet in which leading Catholic intellectuals are neatly entered in their proper boxes. Nuances and ambiguities are minimized—a disservice, in fact, to the remarkable depth and sweep of his research.

Along with this tight conceptual framework, Chappel has circumscribed his story not only in space—France, Germany, and Austria—but in time. He quickly dispatches nineteenth-century precedents for Catholicism's confrontation with modernity. He dismisses the extensive Catholic political participation before 1920, e.g. the Center Party in Germany, as only "pragmatic strategies" lacking the "robust, conceptual reasons" required to change Catholic attitudes toward secular modernity. He has little room for the wider European context of his book's critical decades.

After August 1914, for example, the *union sacrée* in France and parallel patriotic fervor in Germany and Austria undermined Catholic estrangement from secular national governments, as did the military tensions arising in the mid-1930s. And after November 1917 and the subsequent launching of the Comintern, a profound schism opened between Moscow-directed Communists and parliamentary or other non-Communist socialists. Chappel scarcely notes that schism and how it complicated the willingness of fraternal Catholic modernists, always antagonistic to capitalism, to reach out to the Marxist left, something dividing them from their zealously anti-Communist paternal counterparts.

The political and moral issues raised by that schism are central to Piotr H. Kosicki's *Catholics on the Barricades*. Even more than Chappel's, Kosicki's book is a work of transnational history. He traces the enormous impact of French Catholic prophets of "personalism"—especially Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain—on Poland's Catholic intelligentsia as it struggled with a modernity that arrived first in the form of the independent Poland resurrected after World War I,

then in the invasions, bloodbaths, and genocide of World War II, and finally in a regime installed and controlled by the Kremlin.

France had long provided physical succor and intellectual inspiration for Poles. Different strands of Polish Catholic thought drank deeply from the wells of French Catholic personalism. Some imbibed it as the latest vintage from the Thomist vineyards that Maritain tended. More, it seems, downed it straight from Mounier's incendiary manifestos for personalist revolution. Personalism, according to Kosicki, was in fact the basis of left Catholics' new vision of a just and peaceful society—an understanding of the human person as both body and spirit, naturally communal, and called to some transcendent destiny. It was an understanding that personalists contrasted to what they considered liberalism's materialist view of the atomized individual, rationally but compulsively acquisitive and self-seeking.

For Polish Catholic intellectuals, as for their French inspirers, personalism implied a Christian socialism and openness to potential Marxist allies. Could this personalist vision, incubated during years of anti-Nazi resistance, be interjected into the postwar Communist-led society? Could it be freed from the ethnonationalist and religious, even anti-Semitic, prejudices that some of its adherents still maintained? Kosicki recounts, in sometimes daunting but to me fascinating detail, the struggles among contending camps. One faction, led by ex-fascist Boleslav Piasecki, won the support of French philo-Communist Catholics like Mounier, but eventually twisted its personalism into craven rationalizations of the Stalinist police state. A saving remnant was grouped around the lay-edited *Tygodnik Powszechny*, known for publishing early writings of Karol Wojtyła and incidentally a journal with some personal ties to *Commonweal*.

Catholics on the Barricades illustrates how in Poland's immediate postwar years, before the Stalinist grip was tightened, radical Catholic hopes for a new beginning could grease the skids toward moral compromise. The book also suggests that Chappel's fraternal Catholic modernism, strongly personalist, had a more ambiguous profile than the one he sketches. Chappel does not mention Mounier's peculiar calm in the face of Nazi Germany's 1940 triumphs or the initial readiness of Mounier and other personalists to work with Vichy. These were reactions rooted in a visceral contempt for the "bourgeois liberalism" of France's Third Republic and the fancy of replacing the grubby work of politics with a rhetorically soaring but ill-defined dream of "revolution." Such sweeping disdain for Europe's tottering liberal institutions was common to both anti-capitalist Catholic intellectuals on the left and authoritarian ones on the right. Chappel and Kosicki take this anti-liberalism as a simple fact of life (more understandable in the Polish case) rather than a possibly toxic inheritance of Catholic anti-modernity deserving more exploration.

Insofar as Chappel's account advances a challenging new thesis about the church's changed attitude toward modernity, his book's oddest lacuna is Catholicism itself—Catholicism, that is, as a lived religion and not just a current in political ideology or social theory. Catholic anti-modernity and affinity for fascist or other authoritarian regimes were embedded in a gestalt. Catholic life blended defensiveness with triumphalism, emphasis on theological doctrine with a suspicion of intellect, and grassroots mobilization with centralized and personified authority. The church insisted on traditional codes and practices while welcoming powerful new devotions; it made opposition to modernity the basis for a separate Catholic subculture that was, in mirror fashion, very "modern."

Beyond frequently mentioning the extensive web of Catholic associations, Chappel pays scant attention to the church's inner life of belief, devotion, authority, and allegiance. His scattered references to two or three Vatican II documents give no sense of the council's impact or its reconfiguring of Catholics' mental world. Over four years an institution priding itself on claims of immutability instead changed, in ways brought home to the faithful at every Mass.

I can understand the desire not to reheat internal church developments when Chappel is pursuing the admirable goal of integrating Catholicism into the larger European story. Yet failure to register, for example, the impact of Vatican II results in a final chapter with a lame treatment of the contraception debate and an idiosyncratic choice of three intellectuals born between 1904 and 1916 as representatives of a "Catholic New Left" and a "return of heresy." Chappel ends with a generous shout-out to fraternal Catholic modernism, suddenly shifting his gaze, however, from its precarious state in France, Germany, and Austria to Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, and the "global South."

Chappel and Kosicki belong to a post–Cold War generation of historians who are expanding our views of Catholic and European history. For Chappel, this means analyzing Catholic social thought in a way that gets beyond the dichotomy of Konrad Adenauer and Jean Monnet (good) versus Franco Spain and Vichy France (bad). He strives to sort out elements encompassing family values, welfare protections, and economic growth as well as egalitarianism and a deep-seated discontent with capitalism. Kosicki not only stretches our view to Central Europe but reminds us of an immediate postwar leeway in which Catholic hopes and choices were not as limited or obvious as they would all too soon become. And not insignificantly both scholars have also offered thoughtful political commentary in various journals of the democratic left.

It is easy to see these two historians already in dialogue with one another, complementing or correcting their respective projects. We should look forward to seeing others join in. ■

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John Schwenkler

A Purpose-Driven Life

From Bacteria to Bach and Back

Daniel Dennett
W. W. Norton, $18.95, 496 pp.

The latest book from the philosopher Daniel Dennett is a work of tremendous ambition. Its scope is displayed in its title: Dennett spins a story of the evolution of intelligence that begins with unicellular life and culminates in human genius and the capacity of the human mind to comprehend its own origins. Like all of Dennett's writings, *From Bacteria to Bach and Back* is brimming with erudition, wit, and insight. He has always been one of the rare philosophers who can write in a way that is at once philosophically rigorous and accessible to an educated and interested non-philosopher. This new book is no exception.

Nor is it an exception to something that many readers will be less enthusiastic about—namely, Dennett's unapologetically reductive understanding of life, consciousness, intelligence, and culture. This reductionism has two main aspects. First, Dennett holds that the behavior of complex systems, including living ones, is generated entirely from the interactions between their parts. Second, except in the special case where humans or other animals act as the "intelligent designers" of our tools or cultural artifacts, he also describes the *evolution* of complexity and intelligence in an entirely bottom-up way—as the result of blind selection pressures acting on simpler and less intelligent systems. Dennett explains the latter idea with a pair of images that are familiar from his other books: instead of "skyhooks"—mythical devices that hang from the sky in order to move things to new heights—nature makes use of cranes, which lift things from the ground up. Reductive explanations of the first sort mean that we don't need souls or other distinctively higher-order principles to explain what happens in nature. Explanations of the second sort mean that no appeal to God or other supernatural powers is required to explain why things are the way they are.

Things are not quite so simple as that. For as Dennett acknowledges, there is more than one kind of explanation. Suppose, for example, that I ask you for an explanation of Donald Trump's election to the presidency. One way to answer this request would be with an account of the causal factors that contributed to Trump's victory. Such an account might discuss the role of the Electoral College in granting disproportionate power to rural states, the deteriorating economic situation of white working-class men, the effects of immigration, the influence of the conservative media, and the ways that misogyny and xenophobia may have made Trump and his policies popular. This account addresses the question "Why did so many voters choose Trump?"—where "Why?" is understood to mean "How come?" It is an attempt to explain what *brought it about* that so many Americans (enough, though not a majority) voted for Trump.

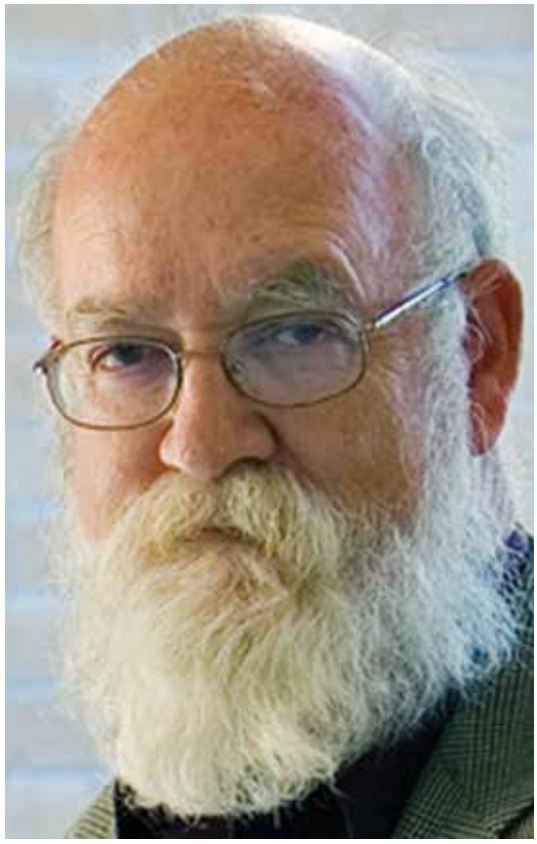
A second way to explain the same outcome would be in terms of the goals of Trump's supporters, or their *purpose* in settling on him as their preferred candidate. There will likely be some contact between this sort of explanation and the previous one: Trump supporters wanted to restrict immigration, to improve the situation of white working-class men, and so on. But now these factors are treated not just as forces that made it likely Trump would win—as, for example, the structure of the Electoral College made this likely by giving more influence to the average Trump supporter than to his average opponent. As Dennett puts it, instead of answering the question "How come?" an explanation in terms of goal or purpose speaks to our desire to know "What for?" And the possibility of giving a how-come explanation of something in terms of impersonal, bottom-up forces doesn't mean that the same thing can't also be explained in terms of purposes or goals.

To illustrate this point, consider how we understand the growth of a tree. To explain *how come* a tree grows in a certain way, we might need to appeal only to factors like the genetic information in its cells, the nutrients in the soil, the chemical reactions involved in processes like photosynthesis, and so on. But the possibility of giving such a mechanistic, bottom-up explanation of the tree's growth doesn't mean that we can't also appeal to goals or purposes in explaining what certain aspects of the tree's metabolism or anatomy are *for*. The purpose of growing leaves, for example, is to help absorb energy from sunlight; the purpose of roots is to collect water from the ground; and so on. Just as we understand Trump's election better when we appreciate the goals that motivated his supporters, this purposive or "teleological" explanation (from *telos*, the Greek word for "end" or "purpose") of the tree's growth captures something important that is not conveyed by a description of the cellular and genetic mechanisms that underlie this process.

For some scientists and philosophers who try to be especially hardheaded in their reductionism, talk of the *purpose* of roots or leaves is either foolish anthropomorphism (how can a mindless organism have goals of its own?) or involves a covert appeal to an intelligent designer whose purposes these are (e.g., perhaps God made trees have leaves because he wanted them to have a way to absorb energy from sunlight). To his credit, Dennett does not hold that teleological, what-for explanations of natural phenomena are all illusory or second-rate. He rejects the assumption that even mindless nature is necessarily bereft of purpose. There are, he says, purposes or "free-floating rationales" throughout the living world, and explanation in the biological sci-

ences makes constant appeal to this natural teleology.

For Dennett, what makes the rationale of a process like photosynthesis or a structure like the roots of a tree *free-floating* is that this rationale does not need to be grasped or represented by anyone in order for it to be part of what explains a given phenomenon. In this respect, teleological explanation in biology is different from the explanation of human behaviors and artifacts in terms of our purposes or goals. Why did Jane go to the store? Suppose it was to get some milk: this explanation presumes that Jane believed that there was milk at the store, and that going to the store was a good way to get it. Why do hammers have flat heads? Because this is part of a clever design—*our* design—for driving in nails. But why do the roots of a tree grow outward? If it is in order to bring in more water, this need not be because the *tree* understands that an extensive root system will have this effect, nor because someone designed trees to be effective in finding nutrition. Rather, it just happens that roots are an effective way of absorbing water from the soil, thereby increasing the lifespan and improving the reproductive fitness of certain species of plants. For this reason, a process of natural selection that favors reproductive fitness was likely to lead to the spread of organisms that possess this favorable trait. This kind of rationale can exist whether or not there are beings like us with the capacity to comprehend it. The rationale for roots existed at least as soon as roots did—and long before human beings discovered what it was.



Daniel Dennett

So far I have said nothing at all about the nature or origins of consciousness, which for many of Dennett's critics is the point at which his reductionism goes to pieces. According to Dennett, the natural assumption that consciousness isn't susceptible to scientific explanation is the result of a peculiar kind of illusion: each of us feels sure that we have a subjective life or point of view on the world that can't be understood from an objective or external point of view. His critics contend that this position is simply a perverse denial of a basic reality for which Dennett's theory has no room. But I think there is more to Dennett's position than he is often given credit for. For example, philosophers who argue against Dennett sometimes do this by asking us to imagine "zombies" who can think and act in just the same ways that we do, despite lacking any subjective life. The conclusion we are supposed to draw is that the conscious subjectivity that is present in us but missing in the zombies is not the sort of thing that is amenable to explanation from an objective scientific perspective. But Dennett challenges us to think more carefully here: Would we be able to tell the difference between ourselves and these hypothetical zombies? Would the *zombies* be able to tell? If not, then it is hard to see what the purported difference between them and us is really supposed to come to.

This doesn't mean I find Dennett's reductionist account of consciousness entirely convincing; I think it's quite possible that consciousness is impervious to reductive explanation. It's hard, though, to explain why this should be without importing problematic assumptions about what conscious experience is.

Two other places where Dennett's account is especially sketchy and incomplete concern the origins of life and the birth of human language. Any discussion of these topics is bound to involve a lot more conjecture than scientific detail, simply because these events occurred in the very distant past and left no fossil traces from which their course could be inferred. Moreover, on Dennett's own telling, both of these are likely to have been *one-time* events, which means that we cannot use evidence of convergent evolution—in which a similar trait evolves independently in distinct species with different ancestral origins—to home in on a correct account of how life and language arose. While Dennett does his best to address these matters in ways that are both plausible and supported by the available scientific evidence, his theory is surely wrong at least in the details, and probably more than that. We're simply not yet in a position to be confident about any detailed account of the origins of language or of life. For now at least, our theories are speculative and mostly untestable.

That situation could change one day. But whether or not it does, I think that anyone interested in defending an orthodox view of God's responsibility for creation should want to do more than identify occasional explanatory gaps in scientific understanding that supernatural "skyhooks" might help to close. That approach makes it seem as if God's role as creator were either in competition with the operation of natural mechanisms, or incidental to their operation—as in the Enlightenment image of God as a benevolent watchmaker who sets the mechanism of the universe in motion

and then leaves it to tick away, perhaps intervening occasionally to adjust the gears or add some clever new widget.

What would a better alternative look like? Consider a famous passage from Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species:*

> As buds give rise by growth to fresh buds, and these, if vigorous, branch out and overtop on all sides many a feebler branch, so by generation I believe it has been with the great Tree of Life, which fills with its dead and broken branches the crust of the earth, and covers the surface with its ever-branching and beautiful ramifications.

Is the generation of life like the growth of a tree? Alhough Dennett borrows this image frequently in many of his books, I am sure he would answer that, really, it is not. The growth of a tree is a process informed with purpose, whereas evolution by natural selection is a blind, purposeless process whose products include blindly purposive organisms like trees and termites, as well as self-conscious agents like ourselves, who can act with purposes we understand and design tools and other artifacts to help us achieve our goals. But this understanding of the process of evolution is not obligatory. Another possible response to Darwin's description of the Tree of Life is the refrain of Aquinas at the end of each of his attempted proofs of God's existence: *Et hoc dicimus Deum—"and this is what we call God."*

Dennett touches on this last idea in an earlier book, asking in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (1995): "Is this Tree of Life a God one could worship? Pray to? Fear?" Probably not, he says, though nevertheless "I can stand in affirmation of its magnificence. This world is sacred." I expect that, were Dennett pressed to clarify that passage, he would add: well, not really. Whether we are able to say this kind of thing without backing down from it seems to me to matter more than Dennett is likely to admit. ■

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Peter Quinn

Unstilled Longings

After Ireland

Writing the Nation from Beckett to the Present

Declan Kiberd

Harvard University Press, $39.95, 560 pp.

Declan Kiberd is the author of incisively thoughtful, sometimes provocative studies of Irish literature. *After Ireland: Writing the Nation from Beckett to the Present* is the latest in a trilogy that includes *Inventing Ireland* and *Irish Classics*. Like the others, *After Ireland* offers a rich and expansive understanding of how, despite its political and cultural travails, such a relatively small island earned such an outsized role in the making of the modern imagination.

Éamon de Valera

Kiberd's "central contention" is that since its inception, the Irish state has "proved unable to contain or embody the very idealistic ambitions of the nation," a failure sealed by the immolation of the "Celtic Tiger" in the aftermath of 2008's financial collapse. Amid the ashes of political and economic disillusionment, Kiberd observes, culture takes on new prominence "as a means of alerting people to the crisis and embodying the unstilled longing for expressive freedom."

In tracing the "gradual expiry of the national project," Kiberd identifies eight major themes, including secularization, Europeanization, and the women's movement, which he briefly examines in short "interchapters." He brings these themes into focus by analyzing specific texts by writers impatient "with many forms of traditional nationalism."

It's possible to argue about who is included or left out. (To my mind, Sebastian Barry, Anne Enright, John Montague, and William Trevor deserve a place.) But to quibble with Kiberd's choices is not to question his scholarship and insights. The essays sometimes feel like discrete book reviews shoehorned into overarching categories. I'm not sure how Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* fits under the theme of the women's movement, or Edna O'Brien's *The Country Girls* under "a neutral Ireland." But the novels Kiberd has chosen are uniformly insightful and well written.

Kiberd gives a prominent role to writing in the Irish language. The near-fatal blow of the Great Hunger (1845–51), which emptied the thickly settled Irish-speaking areas in the south and

west, did what the long, grinding imposition of colonial rule hadn't. Irish, Europe's third-oldest written vernacular behind Greek and Latin, the repository of myths and memory, was reduced to a remnant tongue. By the 1890s, when the Gaelic League began its campaign to revive the language, "there were only six books in print in the Irish language."

The Irish Free State's decision to make Irish a mandatory requirement for students and civil servants rendered it a burdensome qualification instead of a living and essential language. Máirtín Ó Cadhain, the author of the modern classic *Cré na Cille* (*Graveyard Clay*) lamented that Irish texts were mostly fit for "credulous schoolchildren and pre–Vatican II nuns." He wondered at how strange it was to work in a language that might be dead before he was.

For many, Irish remains a treasured if little-used emblem of national identity. For others, like poet Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, it is a vibrant and powerful form of expression, at once a present voice and a connection to the past—"the corpse that will not stay dead."

In 1943, Éamon de Valera, the *taoiséach* (prime minister), made a much-ridiculed speech that offered a vision of a country of home-based industries and villages filled with "athletic youths and happy maidens." Kiberd, however, credits de Valera with "a deep underlying radicalism" that opposed the obliteration of communities by capitalism run amok. If de Valera or his successors had offered a program to create a viable rural economy, the Gaeltacht might have been strengthened and enlivened, but they didn't and it wasn't.

Kiberd identifies the failure of the Free State to revive Irish as part of a larger failure to build on the legacy left by heroes of the 1916 uprising like Padraig Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh, who thought independence was as much a cultural as a political achievement. "It was the bleakness rather than the exhilaration of freedom which struck most writers in the 1920s and 1930s," Kiberd observes. With the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act, Seán O'Faoláin, who once espoused "revolution or death, was lamenting the death of the revolution."

In exile but not silent, Joyce stayed in Paris, where he was joined by Samuel Beckett. Kiberd reads *Waiting for Godot* not only as a reflection of the loss of meaning in postwar Europe, but as Beckett's "warning to Ireland" of the pernicious effects of repression "in the tradition of Joyce's coded attacks on censorship in *Finnegans Wake*."

In *Amongst Women*, John McGahern offered an unsparing yet sympathetic view of "the warmth and narrowness" of a self-enclosed rural world. It cost him his job as a teacher. Edna O'Brien's frank portrait in *The Country Girls* of the "stultifying sterility of village life," damned by the archbishop of Dublin as "a smear on Irish womanhood," was the first of her six novels to be deemed "indecent and obscene" by the Censorship Board.

The culture of post-Famine Ireland left the eldest son waiting helplessly to inherit the family farm, and his siblings to scrape by or emigrate. Ireland's chief export continued to be its people. (Between the 1920s and 1980s, one in every two left the country.) But where hunger and destitution compelled an older generation to leave, tedium, sexual repression, and social immobility drove away a new generation. In Kiberd's description, Ireland was "the most patriarchal regime in Europe."

The result is poignantly portrayed in Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Two actors play a single character (Private Gar and Public Gar) and bring to life the alienation between fathers and sons, and "how little is said in a culture in which so much is deeply felt." The oedipal (O'Edipal?) stalemate in what Kiberd calls a "lunatic culture" lacked a patricidal playboy with the courage of Synge's Christy Mahon.

For all the scorn heaped on the Free State, its achievements were real. Born in a short but brutal civil war, it avoided one-party rule, managed a peaceful transfer of power between two formerly warring parties, and put in place the foundations of a stable democracy. Its moralistic conservativism was supported by a deeply Catholic population. If

artists and intellectuals found little to admire, it's rare the intelligentsia cheer for the status quo.

The church's loss of power happened, as Hemingway said of bankruptcy, two ways: first gradually, then suddenly. Fr. Tom Conroy, the protagonist of Richard Power's 1969 novel *The Hungry Grass*, is a sincere priest faced with maintaining spiritual authenticity in a post-independence arrangement built on "a coalition of large farmers, publicans and ward heelers sailing, like new recruits on a pirate ship, under a flag of convenient pietistic nationalism."

At the same time the church imagined it could control an increasingly secularized and free-thinking population, it stowed its own sins—and crimes—behind a wall of deception and denial. Yet Kiberd points out what many ignore or forget: the church's power wasn't gained by ambitious prelates, at least not entirely, but with the blessing and encouragement of a state that from its "impecunious beginnings had used the Catholic Church as a sort of alternative welfare system in everything from education to health care."

It remains to be seen what will fill the very large vacuum the Humpty-Dumpty fall of the institutional church leaves behind. Kiberd doesn't share in the delight of secularists and anti-clerics—the fallen away and driven away—at the church's shattered credibility. He sees the rise of "predatory forms of capitalism" as one consequence, with "few voices, apart from artists and some independent reporters, to offer any probing criticism of the new materialism."

Kiberd doesn't identify Americanization as a major theme, but its influence is so obvious that it's perhaps easy to take for granted. Among the most glaring (and grievous) examples is the late Celtic Tiger, a feline born of the American winner-take-all/loser-lose-all economy. At its height, some boasted that "Dublin is now no different from New York." Exaggeration though it was, the tumble from riches to ruin proved alike. For the first and probably not last time, Ireland suffered the kind of financial and real-estate bust Americans expect but never seem to learn from, at least for very long.

Financial speculation is only the latest import. Though Ireland distinguished itself as the first nation to vote approval of same-sex marriage, the revolution in attitudes began in New York and San Francisco. Similarly, the civil-rights movement in Northern Ireland took its inspiration from the struggle of African Americans. In the Troubles that followed, when many in the Republic lost interest or chose not to notice, American politicians like Ted Kennedy, Hugh Carey, and Tip O'Neill pressured the British government to seek a peaceful solution. Bill Clinton and George Mitchell guided the process to a successful conclusion.

The growing popularity of Irish noir is built on the hard-boiled American model—in film as well as print—invented by Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, and carried on by successors like John Connolly. Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*, the coming-of-age story of a boy in a suburban housing development dealing with his parents' divorce, resonates more with an American childhood than James Joyce's. The cynosure of Doyle's *The Commitments* is funk artist Wilson Pickett.

Whether hailed as progress or yet another wave of Yeats's "filthy modern tide," American-style office parks, housing estates, and strip malls take up more and more space. American corporations employ thousands in back office operations. Rap is joining Elvis and Dylan as a musical staple. "Hip-hop culture," reported the *New York Times* earlier this year, is "proliferating across the country." Country Western music echoes in pubs from Skibbereen to Derry. The widening gyre of American programming spreads across digital media.

Beginning in the 1980s, with the Warner Bros. production of Pat O'Connor's *Cal*, Hollywood paid attention to Ireland as never before. Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game*, Terry George's *In the Name of the Father*, and Jim Sheridan's *My Left Foot* all won acclaim and awards. Actors like Liam Neeson and Gabriel Byrne gained stardom. The American film industry, the world's most fearsome propaganda machine, has boosted immeasurably Bord Failte's efforts to promote Irishness to the coveted and profitable status of a "brand."

For millions of Irish, after Ireland has come America. Kiberd mentions little about the connections between Irish and Irish America, other than that "Irish Americans have written fine novels and scholarly monographs treating Ireland as a stable entity that can be assessed, controlled, and ultimately contained by their 'objective,' authoritative analyses." He adds that group "instability" on racism and slavery "demonstrates how shaky and uncertain is the ground on which every Irish American stands."

It's hard to know how wide or narrow Kiberd throws his net. Who are the Irish Americans purporting to offer "authoritative analyses" of a "stable entity"? He names no names, and makes no mention of novels and scholarly works like Thomas Flanagan's brilliant trilogy of historical novels, or Robert Scally's penetrating study, *The End of Hidden Ireland*, or Maureen Murphy's highly original account of the philanthropic wanderings in Famine Ireland of American eccentric Asenath Nicholson. Maybe these are exempt, maybe not.

A generalization about race that ropes in "every Irish American" echoes the simplistic proposition advanced in academic circles of a shared intent "to become white." The problem is that the Irish were white-skinned when they arrived, and a majority were English speakers. It was their culture and religion that were the wrong color. They had the option to change or modify their names, assume the majority religion, and use the public schools to speed assimilation, which some did. Under wartime pressure the German community, even larger than the Irish, essentially vanished.

The minute the Irish set foot in America, they went from an aggrieved majority in their own country to a feared, distrusted, and disliked minority

in somebody else's. Between 1845 and 1855, a million Irish—one eighth of the Irish population—landed in New York unskilled, disoriented, many traumatized. Faced with the immediate challenge of reorganization, they built tight-knit networks of parishes, schools, hospitals, orphanages, unions, political clubhouses, and eventually colleges and universities. The intent wasn't to make the Irish white but to help them stay Irish. Rather than vanish into the albumin of the melting pot, the Irish-American diaspora introduced America to the hyphen.

Kiberd points out that one of the Famine's dire effects was "reducing so many to silence." That silence was perhaps even more profound in America, where the old language was utterly useless and letting go of old customs a life-and-death necessity. It's worth noting that in a centuries-long exodus that carried along millions of immigrants, the single memorable first-person account is Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes*.

Irish Americans intent on entering the mainstream distanced themselves from the past. Except for Eugene O'Neill at the end of his life, literary masters like F. Scott Fitzgerald and John O'Hara had next to nothing to say about their immigrant roots. Neither did Flannery O'Connor. Lawyer and art patron John Quinn focused his largesse on avant-garde artists like Joyce and Kandinsky. It wasn't until the end of the twentieth century that William Kennedy and Alice McDermott turned the nitty-gritty particularity and insularity of Irish America into literature.

Irish-American history has been a woefully under-plowed field by historians in both America and Ireland. Only recently have ground-breaking studies like Irene Whalen's *The Bible War in Ireland*, Mark Bulik's *The Sons of the Molly Maguires*, and Terry Golway's *Machine Made* established how rooted Irish-American attitudes and efforts were in Ireland. The struggle of the newly arrived was to preserve their identity and not be coerced into another. When it comes to race and ethnicity, America itself stands on shaky, uncertain ground.

To dig into these complexities and contradictions isn't to obfuscate or excuse but to help understand.

Kiberd observes that the men and women of 1916 faced the "fear of a lost political and economic sovereignty" but didn't retreat. They found inspiration in the Irish past and imagined a country that, though small and limited in resources, could take its place among the nations of the world and help evince a freer, fairer post-colonial order.

In the failure to live up to the idealistic ambitions of its founders, Kiberd sees the seeds of Ireland's cultural renewal. Nationalism of the traditional kind is over but "civic republicanism" is rising in its place. "Rule-bound ecclesiocracy" is giving way to yearnings for true spirituality. Irish intellectuals and artists investigate new meanings of Irishness. "A phrase such as 'After Ireland,'" he concludes, "may represent an opportunity to move forward rather than the utterance of an adverse judgement."

Ireland was hoisted, in Derek Mahon's phrase, "on the sharp end of history's cruel decisions." History was inescapable nightmare to James Joyce; to Seamus Heaney, a bog: "Our pioneers keep striking / Onwards and downwards, / Every layer they strip / Seems camped on before. / The bog holes might be Atlantic seepage. / The wet centre is bottomless." Heaney's Irish pioneer is antithetical to Walt Whitman's American: "All the past we leave behind; / We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world, / Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march, Pioneers! O pioneers!"

Today, as Kiberd's pointed, penetrating commentary makes clear, it is Ireland that increasingly looks to the horizon. Convinced of its decline, America turns in on itself and seeks to be great again as it sinks into the bog. ■

Peter Quinn, *a frequent contributor, is the author of* Banished Children of Eve, The Man Who Never Returned, *and other novels.*

Celia Wren

Leisure Suits Her

The Art of the Wasted Day

Patricia Hampl
Viking, $26, 288 pp.

It's a long way from the Oracle at Delphi to the modern communicative agent that is the iPhone. Yet Patricia Hampl covers much of the distance between the two in her affecting and ingenious new book *The Art of the Wasted Day*. Part essay, part travelogue, part interrogative memoir, part mourning love letter, *The Art of the Wasted Day* touches on a head-spinning range of historical and literary phenomena, including masterpieces by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and Marcel Proust; the *Baltimore Catechism*; the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia; the limitations of Skype; and the significance of the modern memoir craze. Yet Hampl dexterously turns all these topics into lenses bent on a central concern: the value of a certain kind of psychic space, which she refers to as "leisure."

Reverie-friendly leisure is, of course, at odds with the multitasking, no-off-switch ethos of the current moment. Hampl also vividly remembers the chagrin she felt, as a Catholic schoolgirl, on finding "daydreaming" listed as a sin in her catechism. Such anti-woolgathering prejudice notwithstanding, *The Art of the Wasted Day* argues that leisure is a boon to the mind and soul. When we take time off from our ego-driven rush, the book suggests, we can observe and imagine, engage in activities that build up our empathy. The kind of careful noticing that leisure makes possible may even help us reconcile with the motley, transitory, and jarring aspects of existence. "The integrity of the eye, moving over chaos" is "repudiating chaos by the fact of its attention," she writes. At one point, she goes so far as to posit that "the lost life of daydream" is the arena where "all the rest—wisdom, decency, generosity, compassion, joy, and plain honesty—are sequestered."

An acclaimed author of poetry and prose (and a sometime contributor to *Commonweal*), Hampl sets out to explore the meaning of creative leisure by visiting the haunts of four historical figures. Michel de Montaigne wrote his groundbreaking, genre-launching *Essais*—Hampl has the audiobook on her iPhone—during years of relative seclusion at his family's French chateau. Gregor Mendel made his pioneering discoveries in the field of genetics while living as a monk in what is now the Czech Republic; Hampl's pilgrimage to his old stomping grounds allows to her visit Czech friends and revives her memory of learning about the 1968 invasion as a young journalist in Minnesota.

Less well-known than Montaigne and Mendel are Sarah Ponsonby and Lady Eleanor Butler, aristocrats who fled their Irish homes in 1778 in order to settle together in an isolated Welsh cottage, where they spent fifty years reading, walking, writing letters, keeping journals, and—their rejection of societal norms having earned them a degree of fame—entertaining the likes of Wordsworth, Byron, and the Duke of Wellington. Two-plus centuries later, tromping around the Welsh village of Llangollen in the rain, chatting with sundry locals, reading Colette over a lonely dinner, Hampl envies Ponsonby and Butler their quiet, busy, writerly routine. They opted for "life lived, life described, the bits and pieces of the day collected, vignette by vignette. And thus, life affirmed," she muses.

She also envies Ponsonby and Butler's companionship. We come to understand that Hampl is writing *The Art of the Wasted Day*, and doing much of the research, after the death of her husband, who had been her intellectual companion and challenger as well as her soulmate. On some pages, Hampl addresses her spouse in the second person. Allusions to her loss add poignancy to the book's ruminations about ephemerality and the subjective experience of time.

Montaigne, too, suffered a devastating bereavement: he might never have pursued writing had he not been reeling from the death of his close friend Étienne de la Boétie in 1563. The *Essais* became a substitute for the deeply satisfying conversations the two had shared. The parallel between Montaigne's loss and Hampl's own is one of the luminous, poignant connections she traces during the course of the book. While *The Art of the Wasted Day* is a work of prose, it has a poem's dynamics, with im-

The Ladies of Llangollen: Sarah Ponsonby (left) and Lady Eleanor Butler

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ages, ideas, and memories refracting and reflecting, the way images and sounds do in a piece of verse.

The language is also poetic on a sentence-by-sentence level. Arresting turns of phrase leap out from strands of story and argument. Henry James is a "flaneur of the sentence, lounge lizard of the paragraph." Hampl's culinarily gifted Czech hostess is "an Ariel of the dumpling, sprite of a melting pork roast." The psalms, which come up in a section on Mendel's religious vocation, are poems that "form the genetic code of Western lyricism."

Hampl's virtuosic writing often waxes meta: she is interested in keen-eyed nonfiction, including the memoir genre that, at one point, she traces back to the Delphic oracle's axiom "know thyself." Visiting the homes of people who observed and wrote—Montaigne, the Llangollen ladies—Hampl muses on the significance of observing and writing. In one marvelous passage, she offers a daringly anthropomorphic vision of the importance of vivid detail: "Next to grand conceptions like plot, which is the legitimate government of most stories, or character, which is the crowned sovereign, the detail looks like a ragged peasant with a half-baked idea of revolution and a crazy, sure glint in its eye. But here resides divinity."

With its underlying focus on leisure and daydreaming, *The Art of the Wasted Day* is part of a broader reaction against our distracted, frenzied, always-connected culture. Mindfulness meditation has been gaining disciples. Last fall saw the publication of Manoush Zomorodi's *Bored and Brilliant: How Spacing Out Can Unlock Your Most Productive and Creative Self*. NPR's TED Radio Hour recently celebrated the art of "Slowing Down." Such avenues may well benefit harried, self-centered, quick-fix-oriented inhabitants of the twenty-first century; but for a zeitgeist corrective that's also a moving, lyrical, intellectually bracing read, your best bet is Hampl's book. ■

Celia Wren *is* Commonweal*'s stage and television critic.*

Lawrence S. Cunningham

Action Heroes

Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain: 1500–1650

The Presence of God Volume 6

Bernard McGinn

Herder & Herder/Crossroad, $74.95, 500 pp.

This volume of McGinn's monumental history of Western Christian mysticism is the only one to date that has one particular country as its precise focus: Spain in its "Golden Age." Three long chapters each running to nearly a hundred pages—almost mini monographs—discuss in detail the life and works of Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Ávila, and John of the Cross. Framing those chapters are introductory discussions of the influence of Renaissance humanism, the reform impulses of religious orders, the importance of forms of mental prayer, the rise and influence of informal communities of (largely) women, and the impact of the Spanish Inquisition. Concluding chapters fill out the trajectory of Christian mysticism in Spain with a particularly fine discussion of the life and writings of that polyglot Augustinian biblical scholar, poet, and spiritual master, Luis de León. León was imprisoned by the Inquisition, but admired by Cervantes.

McGinn is at pains to erase caricatures of Spanish mystics. He not only affirms that Ignatius was a "contemplative in action" but has no hesitancy in affirming the same about Teresa. In doing so, he skirts (or, at least, reframes) the old discussion about contemplation being superior to action—Mary to Martha—a topic already reflected on

A seventeenth-century painting of Saint Teresa de Ávila

by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. One could say the same about John of the Cross, since as a modern biographer has noted, John tramped hundreds of kilometers in his efforts to reform the Spanish Carmelite friars. McGinn is equally balanced in his observations about the "dark nights" so central to John's thinking. He shows that those "nights" must be read dialectically against John's affirmations about the apex of mystical experience rooted in the living flame of love. Finally, in his sensitive readings of these texts, McGinn shows how they reflected the tradition that came before (he has the advantage of having inspected that tradition so thoroughly) while also remaining sensitive to the particularities of the historical situation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He has grave reservations about those who seek Islamic sources for John of the Cross's thinking and practice. Finally, McGinn points out that the major works of Teresa and John must be seen in the context of their efforts to reform the Carmelites. Their works were attempts to advance the life of prayer so that their members might more perfectly adhere to the life they had chosen. Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* was a text not to be read but *performed* under direction for the greater glory of God.

In order to advance his entire project, McGinn has had to focus exclusively on his main subject, which is the nature of mysticism in the Christian West (in Volume 1 he has an extensive discussion about his method and his presuppositions). To do that he must keep his scholarly gaze on the subject at hand: How is the presence of God detected in the texts that the Tradition has bequeathed to us? We may read John of the Cross in light of the art of the time (El Greco or Zurbarán), but given the goals of McGinn's larger project he cannot afford such cultural asides. What he has done in this volume, as in earlier ones, is to read texts closely and sympathetically, paying special attention to how God's presence is reflected in the metaphors used by the authors. I have read these books with my students over the years and can testify that McGinn's readings are consistently illuminating and an invaluable guide to one's own reading of these spiritual classics.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the figures discussed in this volume for the subsequent history of Christian spirituality. Ignatian insistence on developing contemplatives in action had a profound impact on everything from education to mission theory and practice in the early modern (and contemporary) Catholic world. In a different fashion, it is clear that the export of Teresian spirituality to France at the end of Teresa's life was a foundation stone for the rise of the so-called French School of Spirituality. Finally, with increasing awareness that the rift between theology and spirituality needs healing, McGinn's work has taken on increased significance. Like all the previous volumes in *The Presence of God*, this one is a model of how serious scholarship should be done. ■

Lawrence S. Cunningham *writes from the University of Notre Dame.*

Talk in Your Town

Ann Redpath

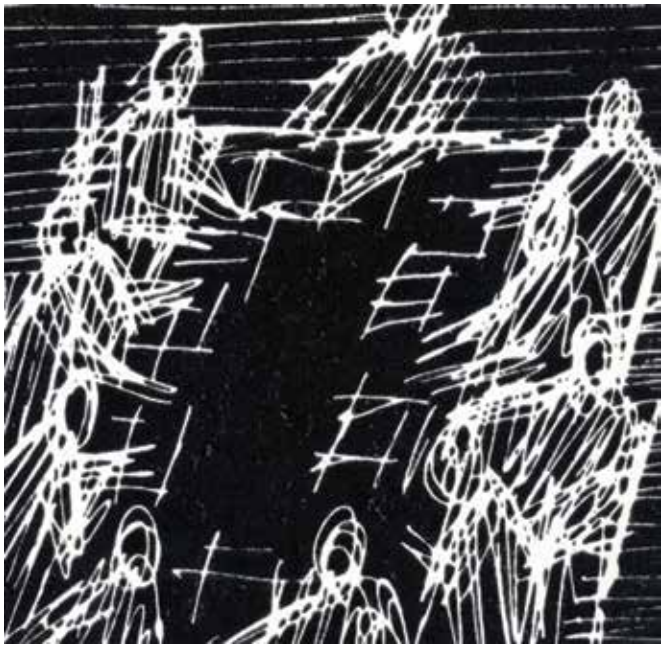
Everybody loves a good conversation. There's something about the language of conversation that's different from the language used in emails, texts, on the phone, or in business settings. In face-to-face conversations, one tends to dispense with superficial labels. Ideally, one does a lot of listening. Everybody is on equal footing, especially when the conversation takes place around a table (preferably with food and drink); everybody watches one another's expressions. No one stares at a device. People make mistakes in such conversations, beginning a sentence a couple of times, or pausing to think something through. Conversation can be messy. That's part of its charm.

In May 2015, I received an invitation to just such a conversation. The invitation was sent to all *Commonweal* subscribers in Manhattan. While *Commonweal* was the source of the list, it was Mary and Roger Mulvihill who offered their apartment and hospitality for the gathering. About thirty-five people responded to the invitation to talk about participating in an ongoing conversation, specifically about world events and other issues.

At that first gathering, most of us were surprised to learn that the magazine was nearing its hundredth anniversary. The Mulvihills gave us a few facts about *Commonweal* and then laid out the purpose of a new program, "Commonweal Local Communities." The goal is to provide a forum to simply talk about issues that most of us were already talking about anyway. Only in this venue, we'd be taking into account some perspectives offered in the magazine or on *Commonweal*'s website. Would we be interested in gathering once a month and using *Commonweal* articles to light the fuse for conversation? Looking around, several people were nodding their heads in interest. I still wasn't sure. Did I want one more thing to do?

But the more I thought about joining a *Commonweal* community group, the more intrigued I became by the idea of discussions about major issues informed by the magazine's well-written articles. The idea particularly appealed to me because I knew no one in the group at that opening meeting, but I felt a kind of camaraderie anyway because of our connection to the magazine.

When our Manhattan group started in fall 2015, we all came armed with books and articles we thought would be good to talk about. As it turned out, we landed on a book that someone said would provoke a good discussion, Paul F. Knitter's *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian*. After a few monthly meetings, we found that we enjoyed talking, and eating and drinking, together. But for whatever reason, Knitter's book didn't keep the conversation going. By June, we concluded that we would have more to talk about if we used a selection of *Commonweal* articles rather than books chosen at random. Mary Mulvihill took our request back to *Commonweal*'s editors, and by fall 2016 we received a packet of *Commonweal* articles as well as discussion questions provided by the editors. We soon discovered that structure, organization,



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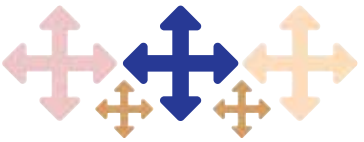
and relatively short articles were the keys to sustaining a successful conversation group.

As we started our third year together this past September, I had occasion to look back at *Commonweal*'s history. The magazine was founded by a group called the Calvert Associates, who also gathered to discuss the issues of the day. Looking back at the magazine's archived articles, it seemed that *Commonweal* editors have been deeply involved in the issues that matter from the very beginning. Commonweal Local Communities may be a good way to pick up the Calvert baton and pass it on to others.

I've found that while the selection of articles focuses the group's attention, each meeting takes on a life of its own. The conversations are casual but informed, and happily it is not unusual for participants to also go home with a good dessert recipe. There is always a variety of views. There is a lot of space for disagreement, learning, and humor. Between meetings, we often communicate by email. Someone will write about her experience with the homeless, someone else about a meeting on the environment, another about teaching terminally ill people how to draw. At the end of each meeting, I usually come away with the expectation that the next meeting will be entirely fresh—with new thoughts, new conviviality. Being in regular conversation with other *Commonweal* readers has been rewarding and fun. Why not start a group in your city? ■

Ann Redpath *spent most of her career as a curriculum developer, and is now writing coach at the Bronx Community College Department of Education.*



Call to Rethink
The Catholic University Today

"Grace upon grace"

We deprecate any essentially secularistic notion of the Catholic university such as appears in the 1967 Land o' Lakes "Statement on the Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University." Whatever its good intentions, that document falls well short of its title's promise.

The Catholic university is a different *species* within the *genus* "university." That is to say that the Catholic university *does not* and *cannot* find in a secular model its fullest expression or its most important motivations and norms of excellence. Our faith and that faith's concerns for the final well-being of humanity (salvation) give the Catholic university not less but more of a range and depth of meaning in its vision, in its formational project, and in its search for the intelligible, the true, the good, the just, the beautiful, the merciful, and the holy. A Catholic university is founded above all on the truth of the Gospel. It aspires to guarantee for the next generation a mature, informed encounter with the Jesus Christ of the Scriptures. It seeks to embody and to cultivate a deep coherence with the Spirit of the Church.

We therefore call upon the responsible leadership of Catholic higher education for a new articulation of the nature of the contemporary Catholic university.

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April 25, 2018