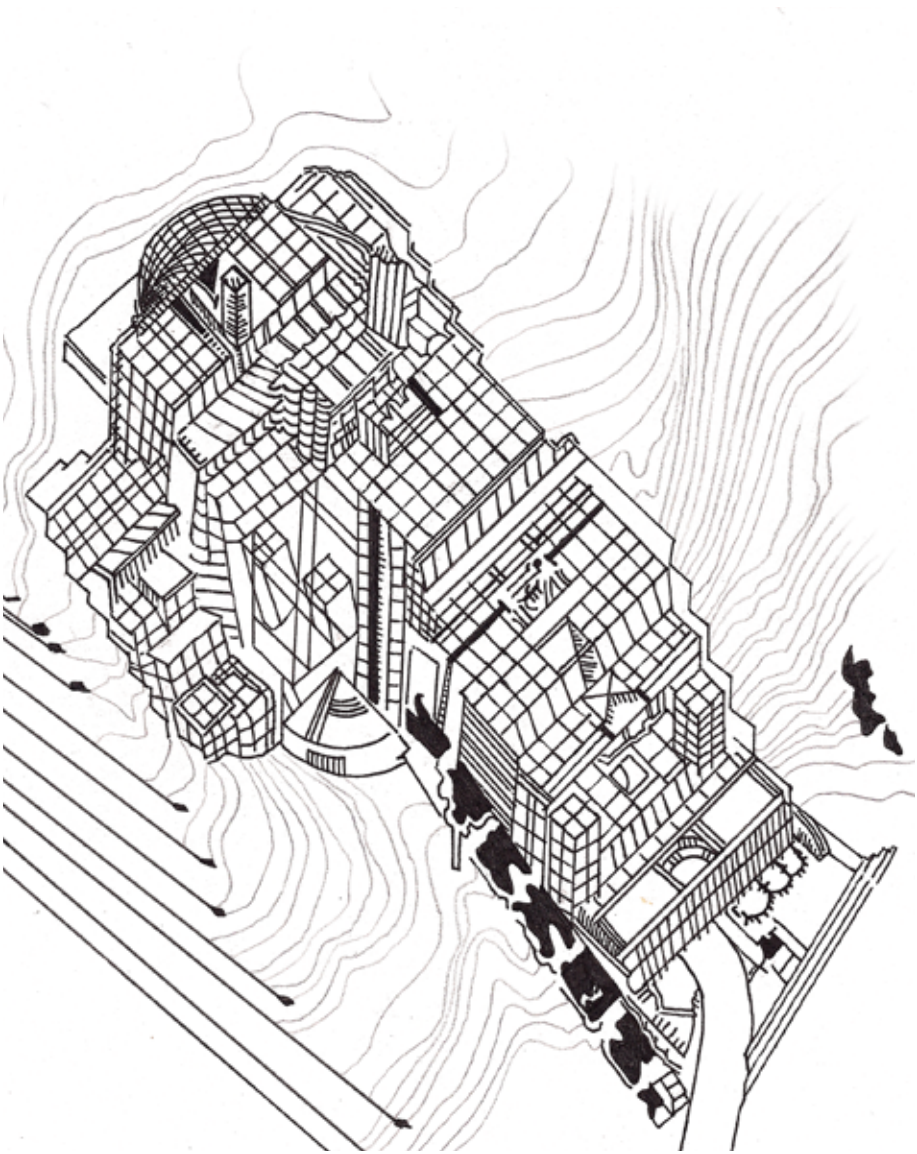
Philomel

past conceptions of the future



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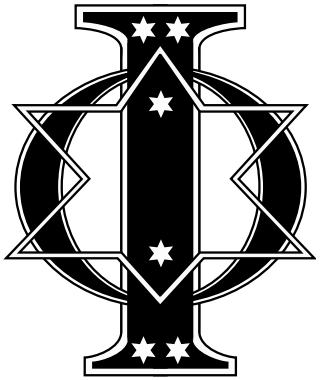

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Front Cover by Caroline Acheatel

Philomel

Dear readers,

In 1899, a French cartoonist sketched his predictions for daily life in the year 2000. Within a century, he predicted, activities like construction and cooking would be fully mechanized, and we would listen to the news in the comfort of our own homes with the aid of a large switchboard and a contraption suspiciously like a Victrola phonograph. While the basic ideas were mostly correct, the steam-powered blender belongs much more in 1899 than in our own century. Throughout history humans have tried to predict and envision the future. Generally, their predictions have been wrong…mostly. Perhaps we're so bad at imagining what comes next because we're too caught up in the process of getting there.

Philomel too continues to evolve and grow. This is our second consecutive issue to be published after a decade-long hiatus, just one of the many interruptions since the publication of the first Philomathean magazine in 1817. Although some things have changed in the past 193 years—the advent of word processing and women at the university spring to mind—some things never change. This magazine would not be possible without the tremendous energy and dedication of our submissions and design editors and, furthermore, without our excellent contributors. Heartfelt thanks to you all.

Now I'm just holding out for those personal hovercrafts we were all supposed to be driving by the year 2000…I'll keep you posted.

All the best,

Emily Kern
Editor-in-chief

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Essay

Michael Tague

H.G. Wells and the Failure of Memory

After hurtling forward through hundreds of thousands of years in a daring science experiment, the protagonist of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine* finds himself in a London we would find unrecognizable. Round the decay of the colossal wrecks of monuments mankind had erected to itself, he discovers two species that he later realizes have descended from human beings. The peaceful, child-like Eloi make florid leis, laugh, and doze in the sunlight, while their genetic cousins the subterranean Morlocks keep them like lambs and feast on them by night. In this novel, Wells's conception of the future is one in which all efforts at memorialization meet with failure. And although his narrator clings to affection as the best hope for the survival of traces of humanity, his are the words of a man who is trying to fool himself. Nothing in the book provides compelling evidence for his claim. Truly, by the time that *The Time Machine* was published in 1895, the growing strength of forces like Darwinism and industrialization had made everything from physical monuments to affection seem impotent vaults for any human legacy. Founded with the obliterating nature of these scientific and technological transformations in mind, Wells's past vision of the future is the damnation of humanity to transience.

At first glance, monuments appear to have some claim to keep man's legacy alive in *The Time Machine*. The only two sites in the future that the Time Traveller lends proper names to are that of the lawn of the White Sphinx and the Palace of Green Porcelain, and both are memorials. The Palace, the largest building left standing in future London, turns out to have been built as a museum. It must initially appear significant that these two most specifically situated, continually referenced sites in his story are made to keep memories. However, a sustained study of the monuments tells a far different story. In fact, the same passages that seem to uphold them as sites of memory really expose these locations as disappointments. Not only have the White Sphinx and the Palace of Green Porcelain failed to keep mankind's legacy alive by the time the Time Traveller finds them, but in addition they evoke more confusion about memory than any other places in the novel.

The enigmatic White Sphinx is far more a symbol of dissolution and confusion than it is of remembrance. Critic Peter Firchow suggests that the Sphinx alludes to classical and biblical tropes, but concludes that any examination must end in mere speculation: "a riddle which the Time Traveller – along with the rest of humanity – has not and will never be able to answer."[1] The fact is that it does not matter what it might have stood for. Any meaning it may have had was lost millennia before the Time Traveller arrived in 802,701 A.D., and all the statue evokes for him is "an unpleasant suggestion of disease."[2] In fact, the lawn of the White Sphinx is the very place that provides the greatest moment of memory's confusion in him during his entire period in the future, when he realizes somebody or something has stolen his time machine:

> I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. "No," said I stoutly to myself, "that was not the lawn." But it *was* the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me?[3]

Thus the White Sphinx, once set apart to retain remembrances, is converted to the exact opposite of its *raison d'être*.

The mission of the Palace of Green Porcelain to save memories is similarly ruined. A massive, towering site built solely for purposes of recollection, the Palace does not allow the Time Traveller to remember a single day, let alone the epochs of time it was made to remember: "I cannot tell you all the story of that long afternoon."[4] Besides this unadulterated failure of memory, it is also striking that the Time Traveller seems not to learn a single thing about past, present, or future in the museum. He mulls over the idea of finding information in its library, but in the space of a few words performs an about face and derides the whole place as an "enormous waste of labour," almost instantaneously returning to his more immediate concerns.[5] Like the Time Traveller's early references to 802,701 A.D. as the "Golden Age," the appellation of shrine hardly fits either the Palace of Green Porcelain or the White Sphinx. Rather than memorials, they are sites of confused and lost recollections, monuments only to the failure of memory.

If an accurate reading of the text shows that it actually dismisses monuments' abilities to keep memory alive, where can humanity turn in the hope of leaving some kind of legacy? As far as Wells's narrator can be believed, the answer lies in "gratitude and a mutual tenderness." For the purposes of our criticism, we can group both ideas under "affection," a term that neither idealizes nor degrades the connection between the Time Traveller and the Eloi friend he makes and names Weena. We can say without doubt that, for the narrator, such affection was the final testament of and to man. This is the main idea and hope with which he closes his account:

> And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers – shrivelled now, and brown and flat and brittle – to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man.[6]

Regrettably, the desperate truth is that the narrator seems almost to have fabricated the power of affection out of whole cloth so that his epilogue would not bring despair, as if (and as he basically admits) the idea was only for his comfort. In regards to legacy and memory, we cannot take his conclusion seriously. There are some minor instances to shore up the claim, like bouts of Eloi tears and wreath-making, but let us remember the odd statement the Time Traveller makes about forgetting Weena after her death: "It is more like a sorrow of a dream than an actual loss."[7] This unsound sort of remembrance, along with the incredible lack of retention that the Eloi display throughout the novel, suggests that affection fades as soon as the affectionate are out of each other's sight. This is nothing like the love human beings are used to placing faith in, nothing like the love of parents or children or siblings or lovers. Arguably, a feeling that fades does not deserve to be called genuine affection at all, especially in the way we would like it to be remembered. And a feeling that fades certainly can not be said to make things permanent.

Perhaps the greatest flaw in the idea of affection's legacy is the lack of credibility we must place in the narrator who propounds it. He seems to have ignored the Time Traveller's entire tale, which states that the fortunate among us will survive only as irrational, dim, and weakened creatures whose soft muscle tissue will make a tender dish for the monstrous humanoids lurking underground, although we will remember how to giggle. The rest of us will be consigned to a subterranean, cannibalistic existence that not figuratively shrinks from the light of day – without even the supposed benefits of mindless cuddling. Between the two groups will exist what the Time Traveller calls the "Great Fear."[8] Then the giant crabs will inherit the earth (literally), and affection, like all things, will die forever as the planet bakes beneath a star that is dying itself. It is obvious that even if the evidence of the story had more impressively buttressed the narrator's closing ode to gratitude and tenderness, the prospects would still be more than miserable. Can he sincerely defend this devastatingly superficial kind of affection as the legacy of man in the wake of the story he has just related? In the light of the Time Traveller's actual words, the narrator's conclusion seems almost like a sick joke. In any case, to say humanity's affection has lived on for the denizens of the world of *The Time Machine* is to willfully ignore the facts.

We may wonder why Wells's past conception of the future is as dark as it is. Writers living just a few decades earlier created works that seem far more comfortable with affection as a means for memory, from Charles Dickens's love-centric *David Copperfield* to George Eliot's tender *Silas Marner*. One explanation for this change is that the concepts of industrialization and Darwinism had yet to take their firm places in British society at the time of their writing. The latter, for example, was hardly on the standard elementary curriculum:

> Such major theories tax, affront, and exhilarate those who first encounter them, although in fifty years or so they will be taken for granted (...) When it is first advanced, theory is at its most fictive (...) Throughout the 1850s and well into the 1860s, for example, evolutionary theory was commonly referred to as 'the Development Hypothesis'.[9]

Yet as the decades passed, affection must have begun to look less and less viable in the face of the endurance of industrialism and Darwinism, which were beginning to be taken for granted at the time in which Wells wrote *The Time Machine*. Unlike, say, Eliot's ambivalent, doubtful pattern of approaching the changes of her time in *Silas Marner*, Wells's *fin de siècle* attitude assumes both industrialization and Darwinism to be inevitable

and foretells his eventual embrace of the two forces.

In *The Time Machine*, industrialization is a fact of life. The third sentence of the book describes rather dispassionately "the soft radiance of the incandescent lights," a fact instantly signaling that this is no setting in which Industrial Revolution technology would be regarded as mysterious.[10] The tale's protagonist is in fact more comfortable around machinery than he is with nature. Taking us through the Palace of Green Porcelain, he remarks upon his preference for the technologies that were bringing cities and countrysides closer together in distance and in culture: "Here I was more in my element (...) You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism."[11] Remarkably, all of this was written at a time critic Roslynn D. Haynes says marked the low point of Wells's support for industrial machinery.[12] Yet even if one were to argue that the 1895 novel does not unreservedly embrace technology, he would have to admit that it does assume technology's permanent presence in society. We see the hints of Wells's eventual full support for technology in *The Time Machine* as the Time Traveller, a lover of machinery, uses inventions of his own making to escape the bonds of time and search futilely for something that might make memory survive.

Wells's Time Traveller is more than just a technophile; he is also a scientist, and a Darwinian one at that. The entire conceit of *The Time Machine* revolves around the premise that Darwinism is true and that it will shape the world to come. Examples for this position in the novel are abundant, but an examination of just one shows how times had changed since Eliot and Dickens were at their peaks of literary production. Discussing evolution's influence on man and his descendants the Eloi and the Morlocks, the Time Traveller states, "it is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble."[13] Law is a strong word. The protagonist of Wells's novel takes for granted the chance-driven process of natural selection that novelists just a few decades earlier found so unpleasant. A true Darwinist, Wells envisioned a world in which man was no more loved than any other creature that walked the face of the earth.[14]

At the same time that industrialization was reducing distance and variety between places, Darwinism was removing man from the center of nature's attention. The shrinkage of the planet and the diminishment of its denizens meant man occupied a smaller place in the universe. In this context, it is fitting that Wells's London came to represent the future of the entire Earth. With the centrifugal forces influencing nineteenth-century life in mind, the narrator of *The Time Machine* leaves aside man's monumental efforts to preserve memory and attempts to endorse affection as the great prospect for man's legacy in the widening gyre. Earlier books made such an endorsement whole-heartedly, but the decades did pass, and Wells provides no evidence for the permanence of affection that his narrator upholds. His novel's mechanistic, non-human-centered vision, flung to the farthest reaches of time and space, demonstrates a breakdown in memory akin to the way in which science tells us natural laws fail at the edges of the spatial and temporal universe. Narrator's comforts aside, what the text actually reveals is that Wells's vision of the future has condemned us all to evanescence.

Endnotes

[1] Peter Firchow, 'H. G. Wells's *Time Machine*: In Search of Time Future-and Time Past', *Midwest Quarterly: A Journal of Contemporary Thought*, 45, 2 (2004), p. 130. The White Sphinx is a continual source of fascination for critics. See Patrick Parrinder, *Shadows of the Future* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995) and John Huntingdon, *The Logic of Fantasy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) for other pertinent discussions of this monument.

[2] Wells, p. 19.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 31.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 61.

[5] Wells, pp. 60-1.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 91.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[8] Wells, p. 55.

[9] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983) p 3.

[10] Wells, p. 3.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 59.

[12] Roslynn D. Haynes, *H.G. Wells: Discoverer of the Future: The Influence of Science on His Thought* (London: MacMillan Press, 1980) p 71.

[13] Wells, p. 69.

[14] For a number of views on Wells's level of optimism for the human race, see *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H.G. Wells*, ed. by John S. Partington (London: Equilibrius, 2003).

Poetry
Peter Manda

Finance in the Inner City

He sleeps by 30th Street
There, by the SEPTA entrance;
A wool banket like
in high
school enshrouds him.

Last week.
He was sitting there at noon,
appetizing a discarded wrap;
chicken? with a smile.

Other times.
He lies there surrounded by what seem belongings
as if the concrete floor
were his bedroom
and.
We RESPECT his privacy.

Tonight.
he reached up
and quickly pled.
His eyes, blue, silver, grey
bulging out of a
deteriorated, falling body
desperately, silently
claiming a wish
and I passed him like my classmates
studying community development and public
Finance in the Inner City.

Essay
Sam Bieler Φ

The Face of War

War takes a perverse delight in smashing the assumptions of the men tasked with carrying it out. The American Civil war was expected to be a neat affair of six months; it lasted almost five years and gave birth to the destructive doctrine of total war. World War I was intended to be a fluid affair of advance and retreat yet from this war came the trench and the stalemate. World War II was no different. In the lead up to World War II, naval strategists envisioned a war in which battleships reigned supreme on the seas, when in truth this era signaled the death knell for the battleship fleets of old and the rise of the aircraft carrier as monarch of the seas.

Going into World War II, the battleship was seen as the most important element of the fleet: tactical doctrine and acquisition would center on its use and deployment. The British Admiralty "viewed artillery action by a line of battleships as the main decisive factor in the main battle between fleets."[1] It would be the mammoth sixteen inch guns of the battleship that inflicted the telling blows in battle, even the British Air Force's chief of staff did not think his planes had a chance of sinking a battleship.[2] Throughout the lead up to World War II officers in the navy minimized the importance of air power and continued to see the battleship as the primary force of the fleet though the battleship had played a peripheral role in World War I.[3] Nor was the British Admiralty alone in this thinking: Japan continued to develop super battleships, the Yamato class, while America remained focused on battleship primacy until 1943.[4] It was the best use of battleships, not air power, which was at the forefront of strategist's minds.

When these fleets engaged, the emphasis would be on mass firepower. Both the British and American navies believed that massing all the guns of their fleet against a single target was the key to a successful outcome.[5] Indeed, fleet exercises and war games from this period suggested that a major battleship could be demolished in as little as six minutes if sufficient firepower was brought to bear. In that same simulation, the first

battleship's fate was quickly shared by two other ships once all the guns of a fleet were brought to bear: concentrated fire was speculated to bring about clear victories not just in simulation but in actual engagement.[6] Nor would these be close range battles where a captain could shout to his foe that "he had not yet begun to fight." American naval forces sought to engage the enemy at ranges of up to 34,000 yards, where their guns would have a significant advantage due to the design of American battleships of the era.[7] Thus the strategic vision of this era coalesced around the concept of big gun battleships jockeying for good firing lines at range.

In this scheme, the aircraft had a role, but as a scout, not an offensive weapon. Before the rise of flight, battleships had a limited effective range of 22,000-26,000 yards. This was the maximum that a gun spotter perched in the masts of these vessels could see. Aircraft with radio changed this, guns could now be aimed at far greater ranges because accuracy could be checked and corrected by aerial scouts.[8] Beyond artillery spotting, naval officers appreciated the range of the aircraft in scouting operations. The planes of the carrier could spot the enemy forces, and perhaps even harass and "fix" them in place with torpedoes until the battleships closed to begin the battle proper.[9] As offensive weapons, however, they were considered to be, at best, auxiliary to the battleship, good only for disruption formations.[10] As defensive weapons for intercepting bombers and attacking aircraft, they were considered utterly ineffective. In 1934, neither the British nor the Japanese believed that fighter planes stood any chance of intercepting hostile enemy aircraft. The defense of the fleet was expected to fall primarily to the anti-aircraft fire of flak cannon aboard the ships themselves.[11] These assumptions would fall far short when battle was joined.

While the battleship would see use in World War II, it became clear that the aircraft carrier and its planes were going to be the decisive factors. Carriers had served in World War I, and the Japanese, American, and British fleets all possessed them, but the carriers and their planes were still considered supplementary craft. By 1945, however, while the battleship retained its prestige it had clearly been surpassed by the carrier as the center piece of the fleet.[12] The Battle of Coral Sea in 1942 would be the first naval battle in history to be conducted where the opposing fleets do not see each other at all, much less fire at one another with battleship broadsides. All attacks were conducted by air. Later, at the Battle of Midway, it would be a team of American dive bomber aircraft that won the battle by sinking Japanese carriers. The final great naval battle of the Pacific and one of the largest naval battles of all time, Leyte Gulf, the American naval aviators demolished the Japanese fleet in large part because the Japanese had lost almost all of their air power.[13] The naval carrier had arrived.

What accounts for this strategic oversight is a combination of misconceptions of the role of aircraft and technological innovations in the field of aviation. Planners assumed that the bomber was simply not an effective implement of naval warfare, at best a poor substitute for a battleship that could not be replaced.[14] Indeed, air power languished forgotten in the American lead-up to World War II, embraced in short, enthusiastic bursts, and then forgotten.[15] Part of this sprung out of the perfectly reasonable assertion that planes, unlike ships and infantry, could not hold their ground and fight, could not obtain territory.[16] Furthermore, the bombing of Madrid in the Spanish Revolution did not break the resolve of the population, further lowering aircraft efficacy in the esteem of military planners.[17] These weaknesses were a function of the technology of that era, which would change dramatically by WWII.

In 1921, the German WWI battleship, *Ostfriesland* sat serenely at rest in the Chesapeake Bay, a test target for a round of Navy bombing trials. Brigadier General William Mitchell was tasked with destroying the supposedly unsinkable *Ostfriesland* by attacking it from 5000 feet with planes dropping thousand-pound bombs.[18] He failed to even scratch the paint.[19] Airframes of the era were far too light to carry an effective payload,[20] and were considered far too vulnerable to alerted ships[21], bristling as they were with flak cannon.[22] The aircraft would grow out of these difficulties and would develop new tactics by the time of WWII so that more powerful planes were operating at greater speeds with far superior payloads. Their development would be accelerated by the destruction of the American battleship fleet at Pearl Harbor. The carriers, which were spared this destruction due to being out on exercise, gained new importance.[23] B-29 bombers with more accurate bombsights were able to wreak havoc on land targets from carriers, and aircraft devastate the Japanese fleet at Leyte Gulf.[24] The aircraft and the carriers they deployed now dominated the seas.

The battleship did not disappear entirely, and indeed acquitted

itself in the Mediterranean conflicts but the conflict would be their swan song. Mothballed, they would be brought back out during the Regan years, but would be returned to oblivion soon after and not a single battleship remains in active service today. Carriers meanwhile, would grow to become the core of the US fleet and their development continues to be a focus of US policy even today. It remains to be seen if the carrier will eventually go the way of the battleship.

Endnotes

[1] Till, Geoffry. "Adopting the Aircraft Carrier: British, American and Japanese Case Studies." *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 214.
[2] Till, 219.
[3] McBride, William M. "The Unstable Dynamics of a Strategic Technology: Disarmament, Unemployment, and the Interwar Battleship." *Technology and Culture* 38.2 (1997): 386-423. 389.
[4] McBride, 412.
[5] Hone, Trent. "The Evolution of Fleet Tactical Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1922-1941." *The Journal of Military History* 67.4 (2003): 1107-148. 1115.
[6] Hone, 1138.
[7] Hone, 1121.
[8] Hone, 1115.
[9] Till, 215.
[10] Till, 217.
[11] Till, 219.
[12] Till, 223.
[13] Hersh, Matthew. "WWII Pacific." STSC 212. PA, Philadelphia. 3 Nov. 2009.
[14] Sherry, Michael S. *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Amageddon*. Harvard: Yale UP, 1987. Print.
[15] Sherry, 103.
[16] Sherry, 67.
[17] Sherry, 70.
[18] Hersh, Matthew. "WWII Pacific." STSC 212. PA, Philadelphia. 11 Oct. 2009.
[19] In a sign of things to come however, Mitchell disobeyed orders on his second attack run, attacking with a dive bombing style run using an experimental 2000 pound bomb that shook the vessel apart from impact alone. Given the attitudes of the time, this insubordination was received rather harshly in spite of his success. He promptly faced court martial and was sent to an isolated service base where the Navy was confident he would never trouble them again: Texas.
[20] Hone, 1112.
[21] Hone, 1140.
[22] Hersh, 11/3/09.
[23] One of these carriers is assigned to a series of hopeless, desperate missions as it is the only surviving carrier for a number of months. The nature of this ship's missions inspires one of its crewmates, one Gene Roddenberry, who turns the adventures of this ship, the USS Enterprise, into a TV show of some note.
[24] Hersh, 11/3/09.

Essay

Paul Mitchell Φ

Dreams of a Totalitarian Tomorrow

"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever."

Twenty-five years have elapsed since *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s horrified readers could judge the work as literary history and, assuredly with no small measure of relief, not as prophecy. The novel reeks of a world still limping and raw from a war unprecedented and even today unsurpassed in its pathological barbarity. Pessimism about the future rarely had such easy access to the popular psyche as it did when it was released in 1949. Although Nazism died in a Berlin bunker, Stalin's brand of totalitarianism survived the war and presented itself as the new enemy of the West. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s author, George Orwell, the *nom de plume* of the quiet, eccentric Englishman Eric Arthur Blair, capitalized upon the aftermath of the war to write a grim warning of the future lest its impending fall into Stalinism be left unchecked.

This St. George slayed a number of dragons with his pen: fascism and imperialism were also the subjects of unrestrained vituperation. Both were national concerns for Orwell, but the latter was a personal one. Having served as a colonial policeman for the Crown in Burma, Orwell was explicit with his disdain for the white man's burden and the inevitable oppression accompanying it. In "Shooting an Elephant," he confesses, "I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better."

While he applied the force of his writing against imperialism, Orwell used something more tangible to combat fascism. The advantages of his police training and eagerness were enough to advance him to corporal in his British ILP contingent deployed against Franco's uprising in the Spanish Civil War. (May it be duly noted that Mr. Orwell was a socialist and fought as a socialist in his only military service. His issues with Stalin's socialism were mainly humanitarian.) His conspicuous height did not lend itself well to trench warfare and he was shot through the throat by a sniper's bullet in May 1937. It was enough to declare him medically unfit for service but not sufficient to break his fabled chain-smoking.

He returned to England and began to focus his attentions on the growing troubles of the U.S.S.R. in the next years. As the world baptized itself again in blood, he wrote *Animal Farm* in 1944 to voice his fear of Stalin's despotism, and, for similar purposes, fashioned his masterpiece *Nineteen Eighty-Four* five years later. Whatever distaste for Stalinistic totalitarianism and all its corruption and cruelty that *Animal Farm*'s allegory was to inspire in readers, the gritty pages of his last novel inflict upon them. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell dreams of a totalitarian tomorrow. Describing his intentions in writing:

> My recent novel [*Nineteen Eighty-Four*] is NOT intended as an attack on Socialism or on the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter), but as a show-up of the perversions . . . which have already been partly realized in Communism and Fascism. . . . The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasize that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else, and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.

Orwell's literary tocsin is rung to alert a war-torn West that the noble fight against fascism is not the end, but rather the beginning of a wider war. The cruel caprice of history that pitted Hitler against Stalin ensured that one species of tyranny would survive the agon, and the victor's creeping blight threatened again to make a madhouse of the globe. What remained from the war was Stalin's Sovietism, a brand of evil, in Orwell's caricature, that imposed censorship, nationalism, and a disdain for the individual with horrible effect.

Joseph Stalin, appellation of peasant-born Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili, U.S.S.R. dictator *par excellence*, did not shy away from christening himself with honorifics such as "Brilliant Genius of Humanity," having the many statues of himself distorted to show a taller man, rewriting history to cast himself a greater role in the Bolshevik Revolution, doctoring photos to remove the visages of his political enemies, and developing a cult of personality unseen since Julius Caesar. His infamous party purges and deportations of over three million Soviets evidence inhuman

cruelty and heartless political calculation. His mandate of collectivization caused death by starvation to untold millions in the Ukraine in the early 1930s. Stalin even joined the like of Leibniz and Newton in formulating a new branch of mathematics when he declared that two plus two equals five, as to best communicate that his "Five Year" plans were running one year ahead of schedule. He established a secret police and cordoned off the masses from the party elites. Science was subjugated to ideological sanctioning, as was art and literature. Religious culture was eviscerated.

There is no seam from these images to a terrible tapestry of the environment in London, capital of "Airstrip One" in the superstate Oceania, in which the protagonist, Winston Smith, is introduced on a "bright cold day in April," 1984. Nuclear wars over thirty years prior disintegrated the former government and installed the Party, "Ingsoc," or English Socialism. Plastering every street and alley is the face of the Party Leader, Big Brother, constant in his penetrating glare above the unambiguous slogan "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU." Class is stratified into a privileged few Inner Party members perched above a benighted and servile group of Outer Party administrators, all situated over a sea of brutish "Proles." The Party has complete control over all media and historical documents, and it destroys all records of problematic "unpersons" at will. Originality plays scant part in Orwell's construction of a fictional, British totalitarian state.

Orwell coined the term 'cold war' in a prophetic 1945 article, "You and the Atom Bomb." He employs the idea masterfully in the Party's manipulation, for political gain, of a war raging *in perpetua* between Oceania and its neighbor states. Daily "two minute hates" are mandated to refresh the image of the despised Party nemesis, Goldstein, in the mind of the populace. Newspeak, the Party's official language, is used to hinder literature and free thought. Children are encouraged to charge their parents with "thoughtcrime" against the state. Scientists strive to eliminate the orgasm for its latent subversive power, as sex is only useful insofar as it serves the Party through procreation. Books are banned and two plus two equals five, when the Party says it is so. Finally, there is the chilling description of unending Party surveillance into all homes and public places by ubiquitous "telescreens." The parallels with Stalin's communist regime as it sought to make mincemeat of liberty, individuality, and democracy in similar fashion are not too hard to miss.

> There will be no loyalty, except loyalty towards the Party. There will be no love, except the love of Big Brother. There will be no laughter, except the laugh of triumph over a defeated enemy. There will be no art, no literature, no science. When we are omnipotent there will be no need of science. There will be no distinction between beauty and ugliness. There will be no curiosity, no enjoyment of the process of life. All competing pleasures will be destroyed. But always — do not forget this Winston — always there will be the intoxication of power, constantly increasing and constantly growing subtler. Always, at every moment, there will be the thrill of victory, the sensation of trampling on an enemy who is helpless. *If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.*

Could this possibly have been what Orwell imagined for a future a mere thirty-five years distant? Even if it were, is it not a ridiculous notion? In the narrowest sense, Orwell's "study in pessimism unrelieved" is a false warning for a future thankfully misconceived. Stalin's tyranny subsided with his death in 1953 as a new generation in the Politburo swiftly cleansed the country of his mustachioed mug and barbarous doctrines. Despite the reverberating clang of the Iron Curtain's fall and the arms race to oblivion embroiling the Soviet Union and United States, Reagan's words healed Berlin and the West's tenacity toppled an "evil empire" shortly after the portentous year. The Soviet Union of 1984 was not the boundlessly inhumane, oppressive force that it was in Orwell's nightmarish tome. Gorbachev's policies of "*perestroika*" and "*glasnost*" ensured that dirigisme gave way to a free market, liberty dissolved dictatorship, and Orwell was posthumously chided for the barrenness of his predictions.

Of course, the potential for *Two Thousand Eighty-Four* is enormous. North Korea's dungeon of a state, China's decades-long humanitarian abortion in Tibet, the civil-rights-deletion cum economic bungling of Zimbabwe, or an Iranian theocracy with transcendent cruelty are all wonderful material with which the political Cassandras of tomorrow may assemble a literary nightmare. Only hope gives recourse to the thought that the arresting reality of dystopia is solely the domain of fiction in the future and that Orwell's clamor is that of a distant, dark age.

Fernanda Dobal

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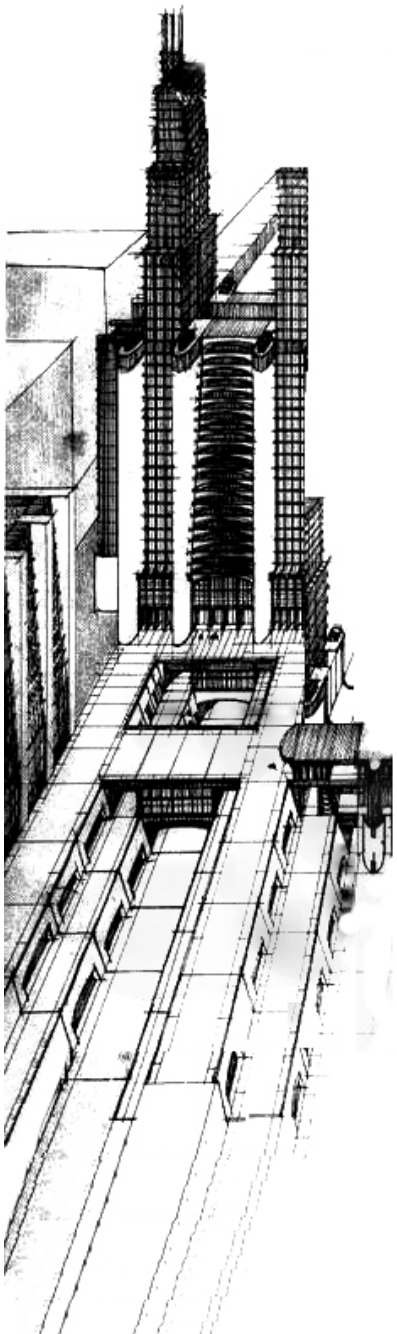

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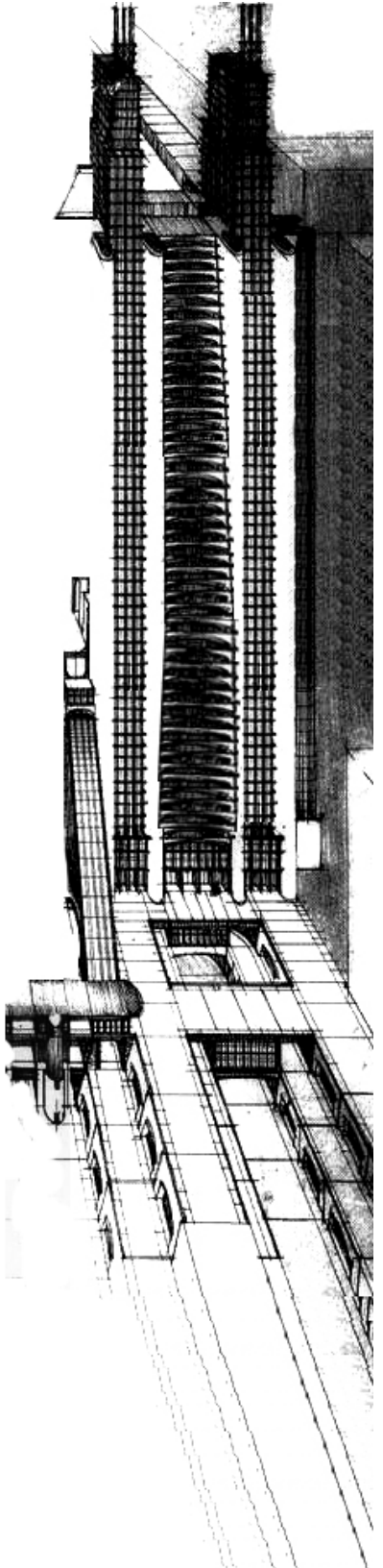

WINSTON SMITH

(# 32.156.234-1)

camera # 66297625

Born in London, raised in 234 Surrey Street, until the age
the Ministry of Truth he took a two month leave to pursue
return, he swore alleigence to Big Brother and was rewarde
of the Ministry of Truth.

Today he works as a Historical Clerk at the Ministry of Truth
the truths of the IngSoc government remain up to date and
around his work without much deviation from the party, this
and historical manipulation regarding the Party's war effort.
it is reccomended that his actions be monitored closely by

photo # 29.02.1984

Records Department, Ministry of Truth
Historical Clerk # 23 (level 3 clearence)

Address: 56 Dawn Lane, Oceania

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Brown

Current Location: 51° 36' 21'' N
00° 05' 08'' W

of 17. Joined party at age 16. After working for three years in
the truths of the Ministry around the English country. After his
ed by an increased level clearence within the informational files

h. He is one of 45 clerks who work at different levels to ensure
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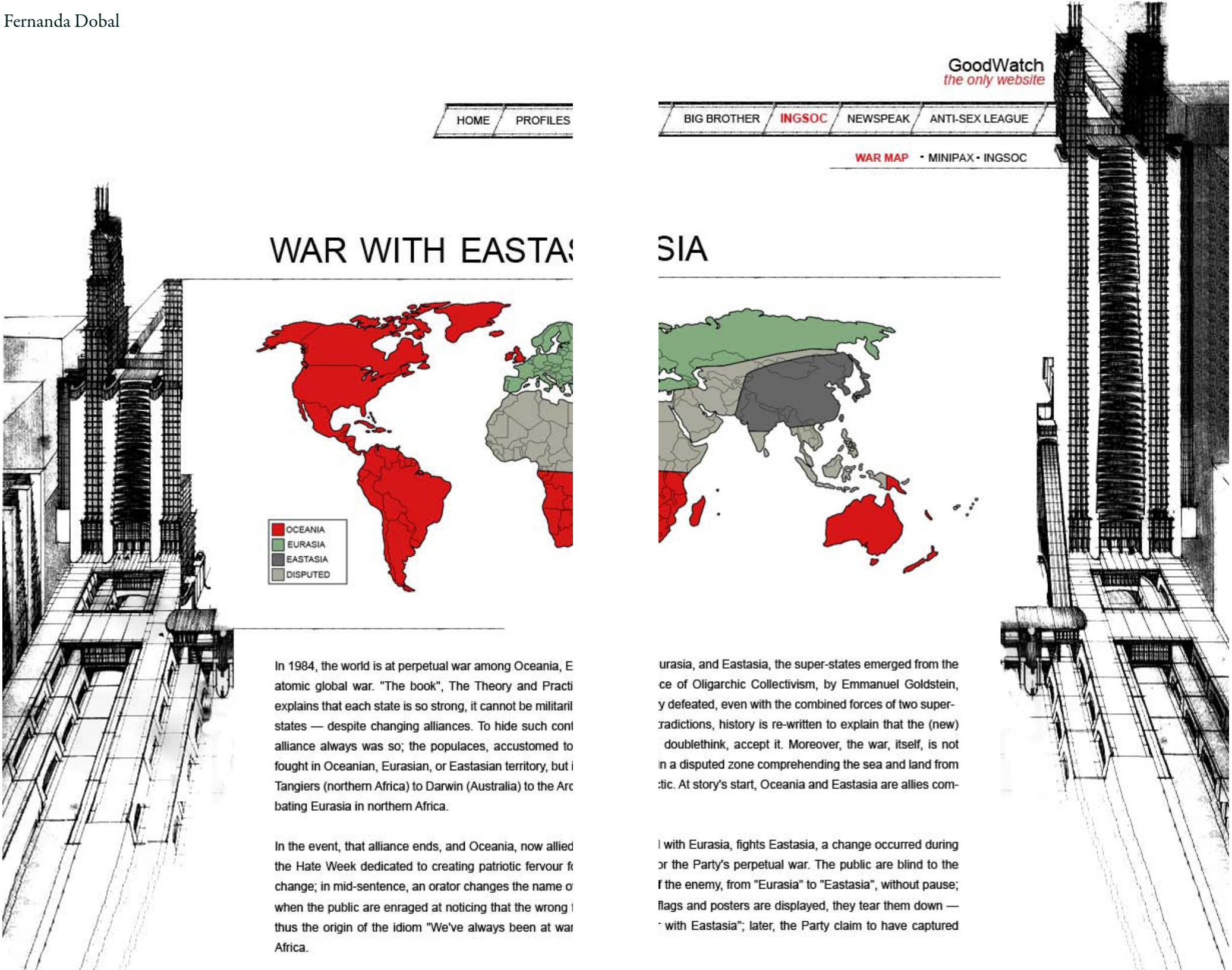

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WAR MAP · MINIPAX · INGSOC

WAR WITH EASTA SIA

In 1984, the world is at perpetual war among Oceania, E
atomic global war. "The book", The Theory and Practi
explains that each state is so strong, it cannot be militaril
states — despite changing alliances. To hide such cont
alliance always was so; the populaces, accustomed to
fought in Oceanian, Eurasian, or Eastasian territory, but i
Tangiers (northern Africa) to Darwin (Australia) to the Arc
bating Eurasia in northern Africa.

In the event, that alliance ends, and Oceania, now allied
the Hate Week dedicated to creating patriotic fervour fo
change; in mid-sentence, an orator changes the name o
when the public are enraged at noticing that the wrong
thus the origin of the idiom "We've always been at war
Africa.

urasia, and Eastasia, the super-states emerged from the
ce of Oligarchic Collectivism, by Emmanuel Goldstein,
y defeated, even with the combined forces of two super-
radictions, history is re-written to explain that the (new)
doublethink, accept it. Moreover, the war, itself, is not
n a disputed zone comprehending the sea and land from
tic. At story's start, Oceania and Eastasia are allies com-

l with Eurasia, fights Eastasia, a change occurred during
or the Party's perpetual war. The public are blind to the
f the enemy, from "Eurasia" to "Eastasia", without pause;
flags and posters are displayed, they tear them down —
with Eastasia"; later, the Party claim to have captured

Essay

Joshua Matz Φ

Re-Conceiving Transcendentalism: Emerson, Parker, Brownson and Visions of Social Reform

Transcendentalism, one of America's most fascinating intellectual movements, often receives rough treatment at the hands of historians. Just as many contemporary observers worried that Emerson's writings might lead to political paralysis, an academic consensus still rules that many Transcendentalist ideas exclude social reform. Emerson's lack of political activism is seen as the inexorable result of his exaltation of the individual, distrust of the phenomenal world, and disengaged role for poet-intellectuals. As argued in different ways by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Yvors Winters, Stanley Elkins, Aileen Kraditor, and Cornel West, "Emerson's 'American religion' renders his moral objections and cultural criticisms of America virtually impotent and politically ineffective."[1] Others critique the apparent capitulation to determinism and impotency witnessed in such essays as "Experience" and "Fate."[2] Barbara Packer reiterates this argument in *The Transcendentalists* (2007), concluding that "Transcendentalism was of little immediate use to reformers who wanted to feed the hungry or free the slave; indeed, the quietism the movement fostered and self-absorption it encouraged favored existing institutions."[3]

Even if Packer's claims are true of Emerson – a position hotly contested in recent scholarship – they are laughably off-the-mark when applied to other Transcendentalists.[4] Theodore Parker, George Ripley, and Orestes Brownson worked tirelessly to reform society, applying explicitly Transcendentalist terms to their attempts at imagining a better future. Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau, sympathetic to Emerson's individualism, nevertheless contributed in profound ways to education reform, feminism, and theories of political disobedience. Even Emerson, the arch-villain of this narrative, developed views that – taken on their own terms – are worthy of a more charitable verdict.

By exploring the visions of social reform championed by Parker, Brownson, and Emerson, we discover a vibrant conversation about the proper future of American society – and the means by which this ideal might be most effectively realized. Although each articulated a unique set of notions, it would constitute an injustice to deny that each influentially shaped the outlines of still-influential ideologies. Notwithstanding variable preferences for reformist, theological, or perfectionist conceptions of reform, we should hesitate and reflect before asserting that any one of these intellectuals misconceived the future.

Who Were the Transcendentalists?

Orestes Brownson concluded of the Transcendentalists that "no single term can describe them, nothing can be more unjust to them, or more likely to mislead the public than to lump them all together, and predicate the same things of them all."[5] This has not stopped scholars from trying. From 1870 to 1970, Transcendentalists were variously portrayed as religious heretics, subjectivist philosophers, genteel authors, romantic rebels, bourgeois individualists, moderate liberal reformers, abettors of slavery, and modernist aesthetes.[6] One is not sure whether Parker was right to joke that "We be all dead men, for the Transcendentalists have come!" or if Charles Dickens was better informed when told that "whatever was unintelligible would be certainly transcendental."[7]

Fortunately, recent scholarship on social and theological dimensions of Transcendentalism, as well its diverse participants and transformation across time, offers a clarified image. Leading figures are now held to include, at minimum, Emerson, Parker, Henry Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Orestes Brownson, Bronson Alcott, and George Ripley. These individuals all shared, at least in the 1830s, a number of key commitments, attitudes, and aspirations. Theologically, they extended the radical edge of Unitarianism toward rejection of biblical authority and miraculous testimony, preferring instead perfectionist piety, internal religious sentiment, and a form of post-Christian religious pluralism. These beliefs entailed rejection of the Scottish Common Sense epistemology dominant amongst Unitarians, a process encouraged by their reception of idealist philosophy, biblical criticism, and romantic literature. Primarily Germanic in origin, many of these heady notions arrived from Europe via Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Coleridge, and Victor Cousin. Transcendentalists were also opposed to the materialism,

conformism, and greed they perceived in antebellum culture, fiercely committed to free expression, generally anti-Establishment, and hopeful that major changes in American spiritual life were imminent.[8]

If none of these beliefs was unique to Transcendentalism, their particular combination in 1830s Boston nevertheless exploded with distinct force. Many Transcendentalists were originally Unitarian ministers, educated at Harvard and familiar with doctrines espoused by William Ellery Channing. Their reaction to this theology constituted, in many ways, an extension rather than break from its terms, and the backlash they endured forced some Transcendentalists into a defensive, embattled posture. This helped motivate their creation of new journals, congregations, and social structures; it also facilitated their connections with other marginal groups, notably radical reformers.[9] National trends also influenced Transcendentalism: the lyceum movement created popular venues to spread ideas; an explosion in print culture permitted the spread of European thought to America and promoted creation of journals; and the market revolution, along with industrialization and increased consumerism, created social conditions against which the Transcendentalists reacted.[10]

The Transcendentalists swam in a sea of radical, transformative ideas. Emerson complained to Carlyle that "not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket," and Henry Steel Commager notes that "for the Reformers, at least, Boston was the Hub of the Universe ... they could agitate the most inflammatory issues, announce the most outlandish ideas, champion the most extravagant causes, and you would have to listen to them."[11] Transcendentalism thus took shape in dynamic interaction with reform ideas ranging from utopian socialism to phrenology and veganism.

Henry Adams attempted a summary of the movement in 1876, concluding that "Transcendentalists ... renounced allegiance to the Constitution, continuing the practice of law; went through a process when they bought a piece of land which they called "releasing it from human ownership"; sought conspicuous solitudes; looked out of windows and said, "I am raining"; clad themselves in strange garments; courted oppression; and were, in short, unutterably funny."[12] The only problem with this otherwise accurate précis is that it overlooks internal differences, many of which related to questions of social reform.

Theodore Parker: On Fire With The Velocity of his Spirit's Speed

Theodore Parker rose from humble origins to serve as minister of a Boston congregation committed to social reform. Born to a family of modest means, he mastered twenty languages, attended Harvard, and stunned Unitarian society with his breadth of knowledge. Uncomfortable with dogma, he merged German criticism with perfectionist piety to reinvigorate and transform religious faith. Ostracized within the ministry, he formed a new congregation and waged war on social injustice. His sermons, heard by thousands each week, led Elizabeth Peabody to call him "a son of Thunder," and Caroline Healey to declare that "every word falling from Mr. Parker's lip is a battle ax."[13] He ministered to and befriended William Lloyd Garrison, Horace Mann, Charles Sumner, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Wendell Phillips, and Julia Ward Howe, championed the Boston Vigilance Committee, and is reputed to have associated with every black person in Boston.[14] Dean Grodzins records that "He was a saint, a prophet, and a tribune – or an infidel, a fanatic and a demagogue. Many believed, and some feared, that he was the most influential minister in mid-nineteenth-century America."[15]

Parker's career reveals the potency of a fusion between Transcendentalist theology and social reform. Influenced by Convers Francis, who invited him to attend the 'Transcendental Club' on 19 September, 1836, and familiar with the assault on biblical authority underway in German scholarship, Parker clearly sympathized with the 'new spirituality' when he graduated Harvard. Over the next few years, as Emerson, Ripley, and Brownson abandoned their ministries, Parker emerged as Transcendentalism's leading theologian. Readings of W.M.L. de Wette and David Strauss pushed him to question reliance on miracles, historical Jesus, and biblical authority as the basis of religion.[16] Instead, like other Transcendentalists, he came to focus on an internal faculty as the foundation of his perfectionist piety. Unlike Emerson, however, who linked innate spirituality to nature and individual power, Parker emphasized Friedrich Schleiermacher's "sense of dependence" without the fulfillment brought by God.[17] Linked to a notion of 'Absolute Religion,' and thus partially post-Christian, Parker's theology insisted upon "inward and outward obedience to the law [God] has written on

our nature."[18] He thus devolved religious authority upon individuals, exalting the manifest divinity of every person.

Horrified by attempts to silence Transcendentalist ideas, he resolved in 1839 to "let out all the force of Transcendentalism that is in me."[19] Peabody noticed the change in Parker's preaching, writing to John Sullivan Dwight that "he has got on fire with velocity of his spirit's speed – and the elements melt ... in the fervent [sic] heat of his word."[20] Shattering Unitarian beliefs, and committed to perfection of the human soul, he began to see church and society as obstacles to his mission. Elizabeth Cady Stanton observed in 1842 that "while hurling such thunderbolts of denunciation and defiance at the old theologies," Parker "carried his audience along with him, quite unmindful of the havoc he was making of time-honored creeds and opinions."[21] From 1840 onward, ostracized by most ministers, defended by others who martyred their pulpit in his service, Parker delivered a series of increasingly devastating critiques of antebellum society.[22] His journal witnesses this transformation: "A Reformation will scarcely suit me. It must be a Revolution that sets the world right."[23]

Objections to the social order were hardly new for Parker. By 1839, he had already challenged the abuse of labor, intemperance, maltreatment of the Cherokees, and slavery in major sermons. He preached that "the blood of the red man cries out to heaven," and that "slavery is a curse, a sin."[24] The major change in Parker's thought involved his diagnosis of social ills. In 1840, he still believed that "the church was the oldest and greatest oppressor of the human spirit, and once this boulder was removed, all other forms of oppression would have to give way."[25] To that end, his energies revolved around pushing Unitarianism toward a more reformist, theologically liberal, and tolerant stance. By 1845, having witnessed the power of pew-owners and social turbulence in Europe, he came to believe that socio-political reform must accompany any effort to realize his perfectionist theology.[26] In "Education," for example, he ranked politics, business, journalism, and the church, in that order, as the most important influences on society.[27] He accordingly assigned an activist role to his new church, the 28th Congregational, declaring that "A Christian Church should be the means of reforming the world."[28]

Parker's radicalization on social matters gathered steam through the late 1840s. Henry Steele Commager observes that "among the reformers, he was the only one who found it possible to remain in the Church and to use the pulpit as the vantage ground from which to direct the attack."[29] This assault revolved around his articulation of the 'American Idea': "1. that the state is for the Man, not he for it. 2. That all right – like all power comes from the individual man. 3. That Right is born in us, is primitive – derived to us from no earthly source – but only from God. 4. That all are equal – not in Mights but in Rights."[30] Equipped with two crucial notions – Absolute Religion and the American Idea – Parker set about minimizing the difference between these ideals and their earthly manifestations (church and state). His would be "A church of Faith & works that warred with Sin, & healed the woes of men, & loosed the chain!"[31] Parker led this army of the just against inequality, crime, poverty, slavery, ignorance, and intemperance. To be a "church triumphant," the preacher counseled, his must be a "church militant."[32] Parker's group of friends accordingly expanded to include more politicians and social reformers, leading him to a prominent position amongst reform-minded Bostonians by the late 1840s. This shift occurred just in time for the Mexican-American War and Great Compromise of 1850.

Critics of Transcendentalism urge that its emphasis on the individual precluded effective social action. Theodore Parker shows that the desire to perfect individuals and live a spiritual life could lead directly to socio-political activism and reform. An apparent tension was thus resolved into a powerful synergy. To other Transcendentalist ministers, whose 'individualism' primarily involved a commitment to the adequacy of individual spirituality, social reconstruction flowed along different paths.

Orestes Brownson: A Marxist (and Anti-Marxist) Before Marx

Orestes Brownson arrived in Boston as minister-at-large to the poor in 1836, summoned by Ripley and Channing to win converts among the laboring classes. Constitutionally incapable of holding any set of beliefs for more than five years, his recent history had involved flirtations with freethought, universalism, and socialism.[33] By this point a Unitarian, Brownson retained strong Jacksonian-Democratic political views and a forceful commitment to improving life for the working classes. His Transcendentalism, unlike that of Parker or Emerson, was

rooted in a distinctly French social-philosophical tradition articulated by Victor Cousin, Benjamin Constant, Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, and Pierre Leroux.[34] He also absorbed Félicité Robert de Lemennais' writings on the inherently democratic nature of Christianity.[35] Initially sympathetic to Channing's call for self-culture and education as the basis of social reform, a stance he espoused in *New Views of Christianity, Society and Church*, Brownson soon shifted course.[36] By 1838 he decided that such an individual and utopian approach to reform "would be fatal to all progress, and be most heartily pleasing to all tyrants."[37] The decisive motivation for this turn was the Panic of 1837; as Schlesinger notes, "his pious theories were crumbling when confronted by the desperate facts of misery and starvation."[38]

Brownson's turn to radical social activism launched with a show-stopping sermon entitled "Babylon is Falling."[39] He insisted that "society for long ages has been in perpetual strife" between "the privileged and underprivileged," a struggle that "can be ended only by giving to all, not equal wealth, but equal chances to wealth." His outlook was grim: "one part or the other must be exterminated before the war will end." This call to class warfare was followed by even more extensive advocacy of women's rights, education, labor rights, and anti-slavery activism through the late 1830s, reflecting Brownson's insistence that social reconstruction precede individual development. His Transcendentalist beliefs helped motivate discontent with the existing social order, condemnation of the priesthood, faith in the democratic character of Christianity, and the millennialist character of his apocalyptic visions.

Brownson's 'socialist-Transcendentalist' period peaked with "The Laboring Classes" in July 1840, an essay that Schlesinger calls "perhaps the best study of the workings of society written by an American before the Civil War."[40] A review of Carlyle's *Chartism*, this essay offers a devastating indictment of capitalism as tantamount to slavery: "wages is a cunning device of the devil, for the benefit of tender consciences, who would retain all the advantages of the slave system, without the expense, trouble, and odium of being slave-holders." Calling for destruction of the priesthood, the end of inherited property, and other radical socio-economic reforms, Brownson's essay won him a barrage of horrified criticism from fellow Democrats.[41] Just a few years later, to general dismay, Brownson recanted his Transcendentalist views, converted to Catholicism, and began arguing passionately for political conservatism. This makes him "the most convincing American opponent of Marxism" (Russell Kirk) and "An American Marxist before Marx" (Schlesinger).[42]

Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Soliloquizer on the Eternal Mountain-Tops

The social reforms championed by Parker and Brownson, which grew directly from their Transcendentalist commitments, stand in apparently embarrassing contrast to the life and works of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Canonization in literary anthologies has done little to secure his reputation amongst historians, many of whom strike hostile poses. Schlesinger writes in *The Age of Jackson* that "politics represents his greatest failure," charging a "'headlong escape into perfection [that] left responsibility far behind for a magic domain where mystic sentiment and gnomic utterance exorcised the rude intrusions of the world."[43] In *Slavery*, Stanley Elkins furthers this indictment: Emerson (amongst others) failed to "analyze slavery itself as an institution," and to "consider and exploit institutional means for subverting it."[44] These critiques effectively mimic Mrs. Samuel Brackett's charge to Emerson in 1841 that Transcendentalists "are paralyzed and never do anything for humanity," and Carlyle's discernment in Emerson's work of "a Soliloquizer on the eternal mountain-tops only, in vast solitudes where men and their affairs lie all hushed in very dim remoteness."[45]

Prima fasciae, this perspective rests on solid evidence. Through the 1840s, Emerson seems disquietingly removed from the struggles raging around him. He did not join any reform societies, failed to advance any obvious political agenda, and devoted much time to literary pursuits. He certainly wasn't ignorant of events, writing to his aunt that "War, Slavery, Alcohol, Animal Food, Domestic Hired Service, Colleges, Creeds, and now at last Money also, have their spirited and unweariable assailants, and must pass out of use or must learn a law."[46] Worse, he actually condemned reformers: "They are partial; they are not equal to the work they pretend"; "They, who are urging with most ardor what are called the greatest benefits of mankind, are narrow, self-pleasing, conceited men ... This denouncing philanthropist is himself a slaveholder ... He is the state of Georgia, or Alabama, with their sanguinary slave-laws walking here on

our north-eastern shores."[47] Rebukes for such statements are often linked to attacks on Transcendentalism, presented as the legitimating ideology or causal basis of Emerson's inaction.

The past twenty years have witnessed a sustained counter-assault on this indictment.[48] In retrospect it seems clear that Schlesinger and Elkins suffered from the adoption of a 1950s, consensus-era normative framework against which they judged historical actors. Their work valorized an emphatically liberal, reformist, and intra-institutional model of effective reform, leading to the expulsion of moral, structural, and perfectionist arguments from the realm of acceptable reform activities. Emerson, who preferred such approaches, was summarily condemned for passivity without a chance to defend himself.

Very different views have been available since the 1960s, when Staughton Lynd linked Transcendentalism to a tradition of countercultural radicalism and George Fredrickson connected it to a perfectionist ethos dominant amongst antebellum Northern intellectuals.[49] These approaches, sympathetic to alternative modes of theorizing social reform and resistance, are reflected in a wave of recent studies focused on Emerson's own reform ideas. Some scholars, notably Leo Gougeon, de-transcendentalize Emerson by attending almost exclusively to his reform activities – which, as it turns out, are more substantial than previously imagined.[50] Others emphasize connections between Emerson's Transcendentalist individualism and vision of social reform, concluding that "Emerson's reluctance to sacrifice the individual to the agenda, which looks cold and selfish on a superficial examination, is in fact offered as a means of preserving to the triumph of reform its best resource."[51] Such works yields "the image of a more socially engagé Emerson ... [operating] according to a more wary and sophisticated apprehension of the relative claims of dissent and consent than has been ascribed to him since at least as far back at Matthiessen."[52]

Emerson's views on reform, at least through the 1840s, were rooted in Transcendentalism. Influenced especially by Goethe's romantic literature, a Platonic emphasis on the priority of fundamental ideas to phenomenal appearances, Coleridge's explication of Reason, and a global mélange of philosophical texts, he championed the essential power and priority of the self.[53] A biographer notes that, "against the gigantic facts and forces of history, historical religion, and social pressure, against 'creeds and classifications that are thrust on the soul from Botany to Calvinism,' and against the weight of the past, of the tragic, and of the demonic, Emerson asserts the essential adequacy of the individual, the possibility of action."[54] His famous works of the 1830s and 1840s describe expression, development, spirituality, and creativity as essential to human nature. In "Self-Reliance" he warns that "society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members ... the virtue in most request is conformity," retorting that "nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."[55] Similar ideas underlie Emerson's search for "Man Thinking" and "an original relation to the universe."[56]

This individualism, however, does not promote an "empire of self," as charged by Quentin Anderson.[57] Emerson insisted that his was "not a faith in a man's own whim or conceit as if he were quite severed from all other beings and acted on his own private account, but a perception that the mind common to the universe is disclosed to the individual through his own nature."[58] Faith in the individual was thus joined to belief in "that great nature in which we rest ... that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other."[59] Emerson hoped to bring individuals back into contact with this part of their nature, thus freeing them in a profound and radical sense from the omnipresent array of quotidian forces that could domineer, destroy, or submerge their truly profound capacities. When Emerson writes that, "as far as you can conform your life to the pure idea in your mind, that will unfold its great portions. A correspondent revolution in things will attend the influx of spirit," his emphasis is decidedly on individual consciousness.[60] Nevertheless, although the ultimate social consequences of such a transformation are necessarily indirect and uncertain, they were potentially far more profound than those sought by temperance societies. At the very least, his motivational impact on other reformers should be sufficient to command our respect.

Acknowledging this aspect of Emerson's Transcendentalism is only part of an effort to consider his relation with reform. Aside from theorizing, what did the man actually do? Robert Richardson reports that Emerson was "a good neighbor, an activist citizen, a fond father, a loyal brother, and a man whose many friendships framed his life."[61] From 1836 to 1848, he served on local committees, wrote angrily to President Van Buren to protest treatment of the Cherokees, signed controversial

petitions, defended freedom of expression, and spoke publicly to condemn slavery and maltreatment of Native Americans.[62] His wife, influenced by the Grimké sisters, was an active abolitionist and regularly pursued this subject at home.[63] Emerson encouraged Ripley's Brook Farm effort, Alcott's Temple School, Parker's theological reform, and Fuller's feminist literary efforts.[64] Though hardly a major reformer, and temperamentally disinclined from activism, he hardly ignored Boston's raging controversies.

Emerson's distaste for many social reform projects was nurtured by his Transcendentalist philosophy and personal experiences. He publicly argued that "Society gains nothing while a man, not himself renovated, attempts to renovate things around him," noting in his journal:

> The young people, like Brownson, Channing, Greene, Peabody, and possibly Bancroft think that the vice of the age is to exaggerate individualism, and they adopt the world *l'humanité* from Le Roux, and go for 'the race.' Hence the phalanx, Owenism, Simonianism, the communities ... [they may] rewrite institutions and destroy drudgery, [but] not in the way these men think, in none of their ways ... A man cannot free himself by any self-denying ordinances, neither by water nor potatoes, nor by violent possibilities, by refusing to swear, refusing to pay taxes, by going to jail, or by taking another man's crops or squatting on his land. By none of these ways can he free himself; no, nor by paying his debts with money; only by obedience to his own genius.[65]

This philosophical distrust of single-issue association-based movements was furthered by his experience of self-professed reformers. Many such men visited Emerson, driving the entire household to distraction (especially diet reformers). His jokes about a "prophet of bran-bread and pumpkins" paled before Lidian Emerson's biting parody of these "men with long beards, men with bare feet":

> *Never confess a fault. You should not have committed it and who cares whether you are sorry ...*
> *Loathe and shun the sick. They are in bad taste and may untune us for writing the poem floating through our mind ...*
> *Scorn the infirm of character and omit no opportunity of insulting and exposing them.* [66]

Even still, Emerson was not entirely immune to the reformist impulse sweeping Boston. Sounding uncharacteristically giddy, perhaps influenced by time spent with Ripley and Alcott, he proposed a Transcendentalist University to Fuller, Hedge, and Parker in 1840: "What society shall we not have! ... We shall sleep no more and we shall concert better houses, economies, and social modes than any we have seen."[67] This project never materialized, but suggests Emerson's interest in new social ideas.

An Abolitionist Reconciliation: Parker and Emerson in the 1850s

The 1840s, however, were hard on the Transcendentalist intellectuals. Brownson converted to Catholicism, Ripley left Boston, Alcott was disillusioned by the failure of his experimental community at Fruitlands, Francis retreated to Unitarianism, and Fuller died in a tragic shipwreck.[68] Relations to European intellectuals weakened in the aftermath of revolution and Emerson's break with Carlyle.[69] *The Dial* and *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review* both failed, and Transcendentalists split geographically between Boston and Concord. The movement's radical edge, critical of the status quo, was blunted by the obligations of maintaining new churches, lecture circuits, and literary output. Transcendentalism was exhausted by 1848 – even as Thoreau, Parker, and Emerson gained greater prominence. Soon their energies would divert into the ever-widening channels of abolitionism. By 1854, Emerson was a known abolitionist and Parker a renowned champion of the cause.

Emerson's involvement, begun in 1844 with a public anti-slavery address, remained calm and deliberate until April 3, 1851.[70] Upset by the Fugitive Slave Act and contemptuous of Daniel Webster's sectional treason, the seizure of Thomas Sims "snapped Emerson's equanimity."[71] Over the next few years he spoke regularly and aggressively against the Slave Act, supported political candidates who opposed slavery, joined the underground railroad, and hosted fundraisers for John Brown.[72] On May 3, 1851, noting that "the last year has forced us all into politics," Emerson lambasted Northerners for their complicity and urged Thoreauean civil disobedience: "Make this law inoperative. It must be abrogated and wiped

out of the statute books."[73] Such "repeated, overt, public incitements to break the law" continued apace through the 1850s; Emerson "gave the most emotional speeches of his career in the crusade against slavery."[74] He also worried terribly about his capacities in this regard: "I believe I make the worst Antislavery discourses that are made in this country. They are only less bad than slavery."[75] This is unsurprising. Ever the individualist, Emerson never saw himself as a public agitator, and found political polemics intellectually and temperamentally disagreeable.[76] Thus the continued influence of his Transcendentalism, partly qualified in deference to abolition's pressing moral demands.

Parker entertained few such reservations. His soaring rhetoric and dazzling capacity to rouse an audience were well-honed before he commenced a verbal siege of the 'peculiar institution.' Unlike Emerson, who still preferred Concord's solitude, Parker threw himself forcibly into the nitty-gritty of this holy cause. He arranged dozens of rescues as Chairman of the Boston Vigilance Committee, regularly sheltered runaway slaves, served as one of John Brown's "Secret Six" supporters, and was considered "one of the nation's most prominent abolitionists."[77] His sermons – "The Chief Sins of the People," "The New Crime Against Humanity" – savagely condemned Northern complicity with the 'money interests' of slavery, exhorted disobedience of the Fugitive Slave Act, and damned slavery as "the greatest, foulest wrong which man ever did to man ... a wrong and sin wholly without excuse."[78] The menacing and motivational power of his sermons was such that, in response to new crises, thousands of Bostonians filled his church to capacity: "What a sermon Theodore Parker will preach about this next Sunday!"[79]

Emerson and Parker were acquainted through the 1840s and 1850s. Their changing relationship reflects the nuances of Transcendentalist social reform and its relation to abolitionism. Parker's reform career was launched by admiration of Emerson's 1838 "Divinity School Address," which prompted his own earliest reform sermons.[80] "Neither man," however, "was temperamentally suited to work arm in arm with the other."[81] They feuded over *The Dial* – Parker condemned its literary focus; Emerson disliked Parker's theological pieces enough to publish some unread – and then the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review*. Parker's closest friends included Ripley, Peabody, and other reformers; he disliked Alcott and Fuller, and come to believe that "Mr. RWE is a great Egotist. His *sage* is himself ... his God is subjectively projected out of himself."[82] Emerson preferred Alcott and Fuller, refused to join Brook Farm, and was annoyed by Parker's penchant for aggressively stirring theological controversy. Carlos Baker describes them as "friendly duelists" in the 1840s, a distinction within Transcendentalism that also charts different attitudes toward social reform, theology, and the role of intellectuals.[83]

These duelists finally bonded over their shared hatred of the Fugitive Slave Act, setting aside previous tension in service to a new cause. Emerson placed Parker on a list of his four anti-slavery heroes and informed him that "we all love and honor you, and have come to think every drop of your blood and every moment of your life a national value."[84] Parker, in turn, dedicated his *Ten Sermons* to Emerson, sent him printed copies of anti-slavery speeches, and, in 1850, defended him against detractors: "Reproached as an idler, he is active as the sun, and pours out his radiant truth ... all over the land."[85] Their methods had not basically changed, but removed from the matrix of Transcendentalist commitments and controversies, each perceived his colleague more sympathetically.

Parker and Emerson thus embody markedly different manifestations of Transcendentalist reformism. Emerson, "Zeus-like, loosed epigrammatic bolts of lightning: his literary eclecticism enabled him to select out a series of tropes to light up the sky," whereas "Parker gained ground yard by yard with the grinding power of his logic."[86] If one approach more forcefully strikes the fancy of historians, that is no reason to neglect alternative strategies. In crucial and diverse ways, Transcendentalism was part-and-parcel of the reformist furor sweeping antebellum America in the 1840s. Emerson knew this, overcoming hesitation to speak at the memorial of his fallen comrade: "a man of study" who became "a man of the world," Theodore Parker would survive as "a living and enlarging power wherever learning, wit, honest valor, and independence are honored."[87]

Futures Misconceived?

It is easy for modern scholars, resting atop Whig histories, to condemn the Transcendentalists for misconceiving the proper path

of social reform. It is easy, but wrong. The Transcendentalists were a diverse and contentious group of intellectuals, hardly amenable to cheap generalizations. These men and women gave inspirational voice to some of the most enduring – and conflicting – impulses in American thought: individualism, spiritual perfectionism, social gospel reform, and class critique. Each dared to imagine a better future, and some actually lead the charge toward that dream. We should not hesitate to critique, but must take pause before we condemn. After all, as hard as it may be to conceive the future, we have fewer excuses when it comes to the past.

Endnotes

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Poetry
Rivka Fogel

the mark

i folded your socks today. the argyle ones. with three creases, the way you would have liked. i put on your fedora and danced naked in front of the bathroom mirror. i would have pressed your white pinstripe pants, the ones you bought at the circus headlined by Sir Jake the Snake, but we buried you in them.

as it was, i put on your leather wing-tipped armani dress shoes and went outside, because it was raining and your fedora was rainproof. i grinned and twirled and screamed like jesus with my arms extended i slipped in the shoes sloppy until somebody threw a melon out the third-floor window and told me to shut the fuck up, lady! then i went to the cemetery and got arrested for indecent exposure.

at the police station i met a boy with red stripes in his hair. we sat next to each other on the police bench. our fedoras touched. we sat there for a long time. we would have posted bail for each other, but apparently that wasn't allowed.

a year later, we were married. he wore a white bandanna. i wore argyle socks, and a ring. officer stanton officiated.

Short Story
Ross Lipton

Of Gods and Glaciers

Prelude: I, a lowly archivist have the great pleasure of sifting through the thoughts and visions of the great men who haunt the vaulted halls through which I will never walk. As I am doomed by destiny to never be anything more than an archivist, I have become proud of my middling profession, for the highest intelligence most of us are capable of lies in acknowledging what eludes our grasp. Where greatness has forsaken me, it has heaped its bounty onto the person of Dr Von Lugenstele. Thus I have the honor of presenting to the public a signpost of our age: the last lecture given at the Fitzgerald School of Management annual lecture series on the eve of the Great Catastrophe, of which the learned man would come to be known as its greatest harbinger. This notorious lecture ended with the great professor Dwiticus Von Lugenstele pulling out a small handheld revolver from his vest pocket and proceeding to splatter his magnificent brains upon the floor. We, of the committee, will always see him as the first man who died to actuality in pursuit of the Idea--- yours with tenderness

Gianbatista Blumenkopft

Transcript of a lecture given by Dwiticus Von Lugenstele to the Fitzgerald School of Management Club before his public suicide.

<u>Of Gods and Glaciers</u>:

What is written upon the icebergs and swimming amidst the rivers"

"Voices of tomorrow heard today. My heart and brain have become lit, containers of stars. Ladies and Gentlemen, the light of the Idea concealed by a Cloud of Unknowing will be revealed in the coming succession of moments that march on like galley slaves to the chopping block of time's guillotine. For it is said that only when a second loses its head, does it finally becomes the past, and for each second of actuality we endure, their deaths are something to be anticipated and savored like red flower wine. We will be the men that future generations will measure up to. We now stand in silence upon the threshold of a new world, barely visible yet glowing in this near darkness. A world to be revealed not today but tomorrow, not now, but soon. Today-tomorrow, o infernal contradiction! Bride of the Sabbath feast who approaches wearing festive garments and holy jewels, it is Friday eve, and I, no, We are going out into the fields of Tzfat to dance for you an open armed welcome, more than a greeting, but a renewal of vows!

So let us sing in the tintinnabulations of angels, Halleluiah! Not He, but It, It has risen. And to be contemporary with such a moment as this! There is a sweet song of time- but can you listen? Where once noble men strove to live their life for an idea, we brave architects of a new age, will use the idea to live in the garb of the Idea. No more do we sacrifice life for the idea but ideas will be sacrificed for the benefit of life! As men of professional standards, we believe (for a man is a liar when he says in his heart that men of business do not believe in anything), that the quality of a society rests upon the quality of its material transactions, the reciprocal sharing of resources, the conviction for freedom through all of its pursuits. Yes, we have the right to pursue happiness with baited breath and loaded gun. As men, we are eternally interested in the world, as of what we can do in it and for it. We are eternally interested which is not to say we are interested in eternity, no for there is no such thing, for we know the world is a river that one cannot step into twice. The world may have once been ossified in the form of an iceberg, but that is not up for discussion for now we are swimming onwards and it is a liar who says in his heart that one can swim in an iceberg.

But fair gentlemen of the academy, I do not wish to bore you with my speculations regarding the current world-situation that is yet to come. No, for as shame will make a liar, despair will make one a poet who plays hopscotch with the imagination of good working men such as yourselves. So let us focus our power in this room. The economy is changing, and thus the world and thus what it means to be an individual in it (and in that very order of causation). Things are changing like a river altered by

both the construction of sluices and the destruction of old dams. Our future will not be written by the kinetic heat of our hands, but by the static precision of our minds yielding forth the data of infinity. As labor and marketing changes, we do too. No longer, as a race, are we to be machines of labor but processors of information all thanks to the benevolence bestowed by----The Idea! The battle cry of a generation. Of course as an observant supplicant of the academy, you may hear other cries such as "innovation", "versatile marketing" "interconnectivity". But I assure you, these are all sublated under the godhead of the Idea. They are but modes of the one essence. The Idea is strength in beauty like the capital stone atop a Corinthian column, containing a living swirl of fruits, lines and animal-life underneath its weight.

"It is a liar who says in heart that the Idea was built by us and for us. No it is the manifestation of history, temporality's gift to eternity. And yet it is still temporality's gift to spend. History is wrought by sacrifice, and we cannot chide them for it. We are made strong by the sickness and terror of those who came before us. We are made joyful only by the despair of children sacrificed to the gods of old. The past has given us much to reflect on, but we will go further. The current age is the summation that past ages have suffered a fiery conflagration for so that we may behold the gift of the Idea as if it were land reclaimed from nature by the right hand of man."

"What I say may seem puzzling to some of you, for it far extends the simple applicable definition of such concepts as the "information age" or "The service economy". It goes deeper than all of this, and by going deeper we will be catapulted even further into eternity's horizon. I know this prospect of the Idea may fill some of you with dread. It sounds monolithic, sacred and immutable which are three values that terrify us today. And we should be terrified, for each transition is made in uncertainty, and every necessary progression could lead at any time to an infinite regression.

Now ladies and gentlemen I want to share a part of my life with you. It was the first time I realized that the world was changing, irrevocably so. I now stand before the court of good-will as I bare my soul. As a youth,

I harbored a silent yearning for a young lady. O' her face was like the sea upon which my mind swam in. As it is impossible to imagine the sea in your mind's eye, out of all the various fluctuating images I had of her, I could not hold tight to one still-frame of beauteous immensities. She, with her hair pulled tight by the wind; she arising from a cave at dusk when all things become sound, she amidst the canyons, resting under the phosphorescent pillow of moon. Her beauty was constantly changing, rippling anew with each free undulation of her being. She was a world onto herself. She looked like everything, which is to say she looked like nothing, for just as all sounds at once amounts to silence all sights at once amount to blindness. But what a darkness to entomb oneself in, like falling asleep against the heart of the world.

I did manage to touch her once, to feel her warm human blood coursing through her warm human veins. Under a bridge that smelled of rusted calla lilies and silent flesh, I touched her. Her left shoulder blade, dusky from a summer's duration, blinked at me. So I touched her with the trembling fingers of a woman in prayer. She turned around slowly, carefully, fearfully and wonderfully. Her eyes were orbs of ochre, beckoning and negating in one glance.

"What, may I ask, are you doing, sir?" she asked.

A steady stream of hazel trickled down the hewn rock of her legs, giving me a sense of excitement of which no reciprocal contact could match. From this memory, the gentle splash upon the cheek of my history, I was given fair vantage of what gross corporeality actuality can be. This is why when I saw that the tides were changing that a new age was dawning, the "Age of the Idea". My blood turned to wine and I became drunk with the higher lunacy.

I cannot remember where or exactly when it occurred for the whole experience has become a mystery to me. Or should I say: due to the mental hemorrhaging it caused me, I had to rarify it down into a mystery for the sake of my well-being.

Ladies and gentlemen, time is a many-armed goddess that dances vio-

lently upon my head. With each of its choreographed footfalls, I affirm my weak finitude and beckon the true reality in which all difference will be mediated

Do not trust what great and ponderous men have said (even as great and ponderous as they were) for it is a great virtue to become intoxicated from the gaseous vapors of what one day tomorrow will be. The voyage from actuality to ideality spans over a chasm of which it is the ultimatum of us living in the present to construct a concrete bridge over so that future generations will one day be able to cross with ease and satisfaction.

Ah, I am drunk as a sailor under a blood red moon. Change is necessary, the one thing needful. O' to have it and to have it without carefulness. We will walk over, you and I, when the stars are projected onto the sky Ah, to usurp the elevation of Gods and glaciers. To wrest upon the world freely as if one were a sliver of moonlight.

But alas, there is a danger that I am being misunderstood by you, fine educated gentlemen who sit with wistful smiles before my lectern, knowing yourself to be the culmination of the past generation's triumphs. One can go no further than you my audience- for I am convinced that if one were to darken the room, the brightness of your eyes would form miraculous constellations ensconced in a vaulted dome under which I shall never have the honor of resting. What some past generations may have called your attitude one of complacent self-satisfied smugness; I declare it as truth in self-acknowledgement. But nonetheless, you are not the last men who will populate the world, for we are still living in a world in which the Idea has not been granted its due. We are not the ones to inhabit this new age, but we are the ones who will become drunk with the scents of its distant galaxies. We know the change is coming, it is already in the air; an effluvia that will make some of us sick and some of us strong, hovering over the objects that will one day become buoyant with the transparent nakedness of a Hesperia Esmeralda.

The language of change is not universal; it can only be read by us educated in its rites and garb. Some of us are illiterate to the variegated modulations of its speech like a beautiful princess stuck in a tower, bereft of mirror or shiny surface, who believes herself to be a wretch. But rest assured, if a visitor from another age were to touch down upon this age and filter through the crowds of man and gaze upon the citadels of progress, he would sense the excitement and cloying desire that such anticipation for the next-new-now generates. This alien may even presume that the change had already occurred, and that the busyness of the crowds was really just the masses swarming to claim their prize for a job well done.

Towers fall, Tides recede, and still we march on, forever forcing the horses to bite down on their bits. In reason and authority, we stand tall upon gods and glaciers. I am not proposing that we return to the ancients that saw the Idea as Ideals hovering in heaven high above material phenomena, something to live up to. No! Such classicism demands an obsequious acknowledgement of one's own limitations that we are no longer at liberty to submit to. No! We shall no longer wait to be reclaimed by the hands of God, for we have taken the matter into our own hands. For us, the Idea will be the marriage between the temporal and the eternal. Through our alchemy, the sacred becomes banal and the banal sacred. Gone are the categories that endured through countless generations. Such eroding of boundaries occurs only though A blessed annihilation-baptisms by fire, mass sterilizations, an ethnic-cleansing of the mind. To you brave winds, I open up my arms. I am your penitent slave.

Until we transcend to the realm of Ideas, we are nothing but prisoners to our bodies, constantly reminded of its decay.

We must die in actuality and be reborn in the Idea- that is the task of the present age; for to praise fire, one must first become fire!

Stand strong with me as the sanctifying waters close over my head. Fellow penultimate men, I will see you in the next stage of existence where all will be convened. There, yonder when all actuality kowtows to the blessed Godhead of the Idea, where all senses melt in unity, mediated, perfected, disembodied, pure psychic well-being free from the grossness of meat- real and ideal all at once.

There we shall be....at high noon when shadows detach from their objects and conjugate in the ante-rooms of language. And in this new dawn of silence, I will be the first to speak....