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From the President

Every Torch Meeting Can Sparkle!!



I can honestly say that I've never been to a Torch meeting that I was sorry that I went, or that I considered a waste of time, or even that I didn't enjoy. I'll admit there have been some papers that didn't enthrall me. But there is more to a Torch meeting than the paper.

It's great when the paper and following discussion are informative and stimulating. That adds much to a meeting and we try to have stimulating papers every month. But I no longer search the directory for the programs that I think I will enjoy. I go to all the meetings because I have a way of making a meeting interesting even if the paper is not my favorite subject. That revolves around the camaraderie and the fellowship during the social hour and the dinner conversation.

For me the dinner conversation is often stimulating, even sparkling. Torch members usually volunteer something interesting to the dinner interchange. If the conversation gets dull, I can throw out a provocative comment or question. Torch members are unlikely to let me get away with that without a challenge. Soon we have a stimulating dialogue going that invigorates those at the table and might be as interesting as the paper. That gives

members some control over how interesting the meeting is for them.

This would work for anyone. Go to the meeting with the intention of developing an interesting and satisfying dialogue. You don't have to depend on the paper to be your main source of entertainment.

If there is any place where one should feel free to say what one thinks, it's in a Torch meeting. Opinions are treated with consideration and respect. There is the opportunity to draw one out if someone wants to know more. A provocative remark is likely to get a challenging but respectful response. That is not demeaning. It often leads to sparkling dialogue < to the enjoyment of everyone. It's the kind of conversational experience that leaves dinner companions pleasantly fulfilled.

So, take some responsibility for helping to make every Torch meeting sparkle. Your contribution to conversation can make any meeting a stimulating and satisfying event.

—Ralph Falconer

A Few Words From the Editor's Desk...



I write a column for almost every issue of *The Torch*, and usually, due to lack of space, it doesn't get printed. It is the first item sacrificed to the space gods. I note this, not to seek your sympathy, but in the hope that the knowledge of my inability to get my work printed will be of some slight comfort to others whose work suffers the same fate. The unbreakable rule of

this magazine is that we have thirty-six pages to fill. Of this thirty-six pages, we must use some for calls for Paxton papers, annual meeting notices, convention registration information, calls for nominations for the various awards, etc. In addition to those announcements, the president contributes a column to keep us abreast of his activities in behalf of Torch. Those items reduce the space available for papers but are necessary for the smooth

Continued on next page

P.S.



Richard White, a highly regarded (and honored) historian who was wooed away from the University of Washington by Stanford a few years ago, is intrigued by the comparison of what he calls "memory" and history.

He used his MacArthur "genius" grant to, in effect, check up on his own family's "memory"—the stories his mother told, and retold, about The Troubles in Ireland, and the family's experiences after coming to the United States, specifically Chicago, later.



Not surprisingly, perhaps, the historical record of certain events in both Ireland (he did not personally remember the time of the troubles but passed on the family "memory" of what happened in their village) and Chicago did not always agree with the records he was able to unearth using the skills of the professional historian.



All this produced a small volume I found fascinating—"Remembering

Ahanagan." Ahanagan is his mother's childhood home in Ireland.



I was introduced to White's theories by my son Mac, who was drawn all the way across the continent to Seattle to pursue a doctorate in history under him and had the benefit of hearing the theory expanded upon in seminars and discussions. (Mac, incidentally, switched to law when White switched to Stanford, and is now back in Boston with a Hub law firm.)



The theory was brought to mind recently when a member of the Des Moines Torch Club, who joined Torch shortly after I did, prepared a history which he shared with us for comments at a spring meeting. Our club has precious few official records. A secretary's file that covered a few years was passed to me about 25 years ago but never got passed on, and subsequent secretaries apparently didn't pass on much either.



Much of what is in that particular history is, according to my memory, quite wrong, although fully in agreement with someone else's memory. And I

don't know if anyone is really interested in sorting out what really was from what has been remembered by one person or another.

(Actually my own memory of when I joined Torch doesn't agree with the official IATC records. White doesn't say that history is always right and memory wrong. They're just different. And memory can be more interesting!)



Mac tells me that some members of White's family were unhappy enough with the history he pulled together for "Remembering Ahanagan" to threaten legal action, and family objections are alluded to in some reviews of the book.



The experience prompts me to suggest your club might find the writing of a history an interesting project. The start would be the collecting, in a group process, of all memories. The follow-up (it might be a long one) would be the checking out the conflicts and omissions in this group efforts to produce a record in agreement with the actual life of your club.

Don't be surprised if some conflicting memories can't be resolved.

--Paul Stanfield

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Continued from previous page

functioning of the organization.

Actually, my column for the fall issue almost writes itself. We are just returning home from the convention and our minds are abuzz with memories thereof. If you missed our convention in June, you are among the majority of our membership. Those of us who attended were treated to a grand display of Canadian hospitality, excellent papers, wonderful entertainment and tours. The convention hotel was one of the best

we've had in a long time. The facilities were excellent, meals were outstanding, as was the service. It's a place where one can easily gain a few pounds in a short time. If you missed this one, you missed a good one, so shame on you.

If the above is not sufficient enticement to get you to register for the next convention, I might mention that conventions are also an opportunity to get together with old friends and to make new friends. One of the more interesting things about Torch is the people you meet, and a convention is

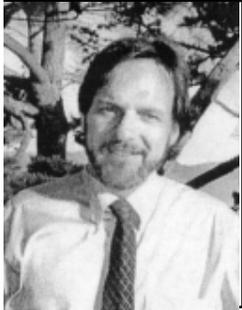
where you'll find a lot of the most interesting of them. Discussions over a meal with members from other clubs are one of the great things about conventions. You'll take away new ideas and thoughts about many things from such conversations. Perhaps not earth shattering, but vastly entertaining and informative. Try it. You'll like it.

—Pat Deans

A Little Adam Smith is a Dangerous Thing

The 2001 Paxton Paper. The father of modern economics. Widely quoted, but often with the wrong attribution.

by Jonathan B. Wight, Ph.D.



About the Author

Jonathan Wight is an Associate Professor of Economics in the Robins School of Business at the University of Richmond, where he has been since 1982. He received his undergraduate degree from Duke University in 1976 and spent the year after graduation in voluntary service with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps of Portland, Oregon. His doctorate in Economics was received at Vanderbilt University as a Danforth Scholar.

Jonathan has authored numerous articles on health economics in developing countries and is the coauthor of a book on the mind-body connection in medical economics. He has recently completed a joyful novel of intrigue on the moral foundations of capitalism, entitled, *Saving Adam Smith: A Journey Toward Wealth, Virtue, and Business Transformation*. It is due out by Prentice-Hall in Fall 2001.

Presented to the Torch Club of Richmond, Virginia November 7, 2000.

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“[T]here is scarcely any economic truth now known of which he [Adam Smith] did not get some glimpse.”

--Alfred Marshall
(great 19th century economist)¹

Introduction

Who is Adam Smith? He is a long-dead economist—the most illustrious free-market advocate of all time. Adam Smith is to capitalism as Karl Marx is to communism. Despite his renown, a prominent economics journal published an article in 1971 with the title, “After Samuelson, who *needs* Adam Smith?”²

The question was rhetorical: Nobel

Prize winner Paul Samuelson represented the new guard of 20th century economists, and Adam Smith, the early founder of economics, represented its classical school of the 18th and 19th centuries. Samuelson and other modern economists desired to transform economics into a “hard” science—a new physics—and at its advanced levels, the new economics utilized deep theorizing with the precise language of higher mathematics. One can imagine all the young Albert Einstein’s scribbling with their chalk on blackboards, deducing with perfect logic the inner workings of an economic system, just as one might the inner workings of an

atom.

In order to model any system, however, one has to simplify. In the case of an economic system, one has to simplify human behavior and its motivation. Whether the assumptions used are realistic or not was never a salient issue for modern economists, because another Nobel laureate, Milton Friedman, assured them that the truthfulness of a model’s assumptions was irrelevant so long as the model did its job of prediction. In any event, one of the key assumptions used in modern economic models was that human nature could be summarized by a set of characteristics

A Short Quiz on Human Nature

Instructions: Below are six quotations on human nature which contrast with that of *homo economicus*. See if you can match each quote to its correct author. (Answers found in the body of the paper.)

- a) Karl Marx c) Jesus of Nazareth e) Pope John Paul
b) Teilhard de Chardin d) Jean Jacques Rousseau f) Sigmund Freud

_____1. “All the members of human society stand in need of each other’s assistance.... Where the necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy.”

_____2. “[S]elf-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, is the source of half the disorders of human life.”

_____3. “But if you have no fellow-feeling for the misfortunes I have met with, or none that bears any proportion to [my] grief.... we become intolerable to one another. You are confounded by my violence and passion, and I am enraged at your cold insensibility and want of feeling.”

_____4. “For to what purpose is all the toil and bustle of this world?... Do they imagine that their stomach is better, or their sleep sounder in a palace than in a cottage? The contrary has been so often observed, and, indeed, is so very obvious...”

_____5. “This disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful...[is] the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our [morals].”

_____6. “‘Superior’ prudence involves wise and judicious conduct directed to greater and nobler purposes than to the needs of the individual...It is the best *head* joined to the best *heart*.”

known as *Homo economicus*. If he walked our streets, *Homo economicus* would be a relentlessly rational, unfeeling, calculating automaton, a greedy materialist maximizer—in short—he would be that egotistical, selfish bore few of us find agreeable company.

The intellectual foundations for *Homo economicus* go back at least to Mandeville, but it is Adam Smith who is usually quoted: “*It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love...³*”.

In another famous passage Smith elaborates that an entrepreneur: “...neither intends to promote the publick interest, nor knows how much he is promoting it . . . he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an **invisible hand** to promote an end which was no part of his intention.” (WN p. 456, emphasis added)

Adam Smith was trying to counter medieval church theology, which held that any self-interested behavior was sinful and detrimental. Smith countered that self-interest could yield valuable outcomes for society as people pursued specialization and market trade. Much later these quotes would be used to justify the greedy and grasping personae of *homo economicus*, illustrating how a little Adam Smith can prove to be a dangerous thing. For example, Max Lerner in 1937 would say that Adam Smith “sanctified predatory impulses” and “gave a new dignity to greed.”⁴ By the 1980s the movie *Wall Street* has the financial tycoon Gordon Gekko reciting the mantra, “[G]reed is good . . . Greed works. Greed clarifies, cuts through and captures the essence of the evolutionary spirit... .It’s all about bucks. The rest is conversation.”

Will the Real Adam Smith Please Stand Up?

Table 1 contains quotations on human nature useful for contrasting with *homo economicus*. While these quotes are a bit obscure, most of you can probably guess who wrote the following: “[S]elf-deceit, this fatal weakness of mankind, is the source of half the disorders of human life.” Was this not Sigmund Freud, waxing on the irrationality of the human psyche? What about this lovely quote on the fallacy of

materialism? “For to what purpose is all the toil and bustle of this world?... Do they imagine that their stomach is better, or their sleep sounder in a palace than in a cottage?” Surely Jesus said this, although it is given here in an obscure translation. And could anyone doubt that the following warning was issued by Pope John Paul? “This disposition to admire, and almost to worship, the rich and the powerful . . . [is] the great and most universal cause of the corruption of our [morals].”

In truth, all these quotes have the same author—Adam Smith.⁵ The simplistic vision of Smith that survives in older textbooks—the reduction to *homo economicus*—is a caricature. Although I cannot do justice to all of these topics, I will argue here that: assumptions do matter; that Smith’s vision of a more complex human nature produces important insights for understanding behavior; and that continuing to use a simplistic view of Smith is, indeed, a dangerous thing.

First, Do Assumptions Matter?

My objection to *homo economicus* is not that it does not accurately identify selfish aspects of human character. My objection is that it dogmatically elevates these motives to a high altar, to the point where many economists cynically scoff at the very notion of altruism or collective responsibility. This dogma blinds economists from seeing other motives that do, in fact, play a part of economic life. For example, the prediction that rational agents always shirk and free board is far from empirical reality, as is readily apparent in observing the tips left by anonymous travelers at highway restaurants. *Homo economicus* would never tip, unless he expected to return to that same restaurant in the near future.

More important, economic models can change the very behavior the model seeks to describe. In a fascinating series of experiments at Cornell, researchers showed that studying *homo economicus* in microeconomics classes actually altered students’ natural tendencies regarding honesty and cooperation in public dealings, leading the authors to question, “Do Economists Make Bad Citizens?”⁶ It appears that human behavior is malleable, and if you repeatedly hold up a model to students that insists that they are greedy and individualistically selfish, they will act to fulfill these expectations. The outcome is

not independent of the assumptions, which would not surprise Adam Smith.

Biographical Details

Smith was born (1723) in a small fishing village north of Edinburgh, Scotland during that tumultuous period known as The Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers struggled to reconcile the conflicting views of the Church with the facts and methods of a dawning Scientific Revolution. Smith did his undergraduate work at the University of Glasgow, by some accounts then the finest university in Europe. There he came under the tutelage of Francis Hutcheson, a great Scottish Enlightenment figure. Smith pursued graduate studies at Oxford for six disappointing years. His orthodox tutors caught him reading Hume’s, *Treatise of Human Nature*, and Smith was reprimanded and the book seized. Meanwhile, England was thrown into civil war during the Jacobite uprising (1745), an attempt to put the Scottish “Pretender” James III, on the throne of England and restore the Papacy. Scots became reviled, and Smith no doubt experienced prejudice at Oxford. During this time he suffered a nervous breakdown, and subsequently rejected the church calling.

With doctorate in hand, Smith returned to his hometown of Kirkcaldy, Scotland, where for two years he lived with his widowed mother and was gainfully unemployed; in modern parlance, this would be called a “postdoc.” Smith spent his time reading books and taking long walks by the sea, presumably pondering what to do with his life. Eventually, he moved to Edinburgh and began giving public lectures for a fee. He developed an enthusiastic following, and when a faculty position came open at the University of Glasgow in 1751, Smith was selected over his close friend David Hume. Smith’s senior in age and prominence, Hume was openly atheistic and was blackballed by the church. Smith, a Deist, had been more guarded in his ideas regarding church matters.

Smith stayed at Glasgow fifteen years teaching Moral Philosophy, a subject encompassing religion, ethics, law, and political economy. During this period he published what he considered his most significant book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), which quickly won him fame in Enlightenment circles. In 1764 Smith resigned his university chair to accept a

post as tutor to the stepson of Lord Townshend, a prominent political figure. For the next two years Smith toured Europe, meeting with the great thinkers of his day: Voltaire, Quesnay (founder of the Physiocrats), Rousseau, and others. In 1766 he returned to Britain with a lifetime pension of £300 per annum, a large sum considering Smith's modest habits and bachelor lifestyle.

The pension allowed Smith to return to his mother's side in Kirkcaldy, and for the next eight years he worked on his second book, *The Wealth of Nations*. Issued in 1776, its timing with the American Revolution was no coincidence: Smith hoped, through this treatise on free trade, to sway Parliament to abandon its mercantile policies in North America and thereby avoid bloodshed. Despite Smith's active lobbying, he failed in this endeavor. Smith spent the remainder of his life as Commissioner of Customs in Edinburgh, and his spare time in expanding and editing *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. He died July 17, 1790.

The Theory of Moral Sentiments

What is significant about Smith's *Moral Sentiments*? In this book Smith outlines the broad psychological foundations for motivation and action, from which he develops a theory of moral conscience. Smith's model starts with the recognition that while we are strongly motivated by the desire to secure our own survival and success, humans are also inherently *social* animals. In contrast to the rugged individualism depicted by *homo economicus*, Smith observed that humans "can subsist only in society," and are "fitted by nature to that situation." No man is an island, but "All the members of a human society stand in need of each other's assistance...."⁷ Justice is the pillar upholding the edifice of this society.

As social animals we seek the positive praise and approval of others. But it is not praise alone that we desire: it is praise for which we are truly worthy. According to Smith, humans are innately attuned, using our vivid imaginations, to feel the joys and pains of others and to have our sentiments reciprocated. This interplay of natural empathy with the desire for approbation, provides the preconditions for the development of morality. This arises through an interior dialogue in which we try to see our own actions as others may see

them. We acquire perspective. We listen to an internal judge—an impartial "spectator"—who adjudicates our conduct. In short, we acquire moral conscience.

Enlightenment thinkers like Smith thus pointed society toward the idea that progress here on earth, rather than in an afterlife, was both possible and desirable. While we are not born with a moral conscience, we are born with the innate tools for creating one and with a reason for doing so. This does not guarantee that everyone will succeed. Developing a moral conscience requires diligent practice, heightening our sensitivity to the rights and needs of others. It is a socialization skill that most elementary school teachers and parents would readily applaud. Put simply: education requires attention to the cultivation of moral virtues.

To Adam Smith, not all virtues are equal. Smith distinguishes between some "narrow" prudence-virtuous actions directed to securing one's own fortune and health—and some "superior" prudence-virtuous actions directed toward "nobler purposes" than oneself. By joining the "the best head" to "the best heart," superior prudence constituted the "perfection" of human nature. (TMS 216)

The World of Commerce

It is within this philosophical and psychological context that we must seek to understand Smith's second and more famous treatise, *The Wealth of Nations*. There is little question both books provide a unified philosophical position. In *Moral Sentiments* Smith analyzed the wide range of motives that lead to action, and promoted a progressive standard of virtue in moral life; in *Wealth of Nations* he examined one motive in detail, that of self-interest, and its role through narrow prudence in fomenting progress in economic life. Smith never endorsed "greed" as a dominant motive or as something vital to making the economic system work. This view that "greed is good" actually comes from Mandeville's famous poem, *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), which Smith roundly denounced as "fallacy" (TMS, pp. 312-313). Smith's "invisible hand" works not only because of the power of competition, but also because our selfish natures are held in check by internal, moral restraints. It is this restraint that allows the economic system to flourish with minimum government intervention.

Pursuing one's "self-interest" meant something quite different to Smith than greed. Self-interest means prudently considering your own security when making decisions; self-interest becomes twisted into selfishness when one maintains an egoistic attachment to one's own needs even when they conflict with the legitimate rights of others. While people can and do hold "passive" feelings of selfishness, action arises after a thought process in which one examines one's choices from the vantage of the "impartial" spectator. Our "active" principles of justice often win out over our "passive" feelings of selfishness.

Recently some economists, philosophers, and biologists have argued that all of our behaviors, even those whom we consider to be altruistic, is really just disguised selfishness. This is to some degree an old argument, and Smith addressed it, buying none of it. For one thing, Smith says our sympathies are often felt so innately that no calculating rational actor could have arrived at them as instantaneously as they are felt. Smith states unequivocally, "Sympathy, however, cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a selfish principle." (TMS p. 317)

Let me clarify another misconception. In *The Wealth of Nations* Smith wrote about the innate urge people have to truck and barter and to better themselves in a material way. Nevertheless, Smith had no illusions that material wealth would provide happiness. Smith calls this belief a "deception," saying, "It is this deception which rouses and keeps in continual motion the industry of mankind." (TMS p. 183) Pride, vanity, and power, rather than utility, are cited by Smith as reasons for acquisition. In contrast to the deception of materialism, Smith says that following one's moral conscience is the road to happiness.

Smith's Relevance Today

Moral Sentiments provides a framework for understanding why we should care about moral and civic virtues, and why these virtues may be highly desirable in business settings (and not something about which economics instructors should be cynical). For one thing, cooperation pays: repeated studies have shown that people who are individualistically and selfishly rational actually earn *less* in game theory experiments than those who behave cooperatively. A so-called practical

businessperson who uses rationality and logic to squeeze every penny out of a transaction regardless of what is fair, is hardly likely to engender the qualities of loyalty, esteem, and consideration that will give him a thriving business in a competitive marketplace. Smith says, "To be anxious, or to be laying a plot either to gain or to save a single shilling, would degrade the most vulgar tradesman in the opinion of all his neighbors." (TMS p. 173)

In the world of small business known to Smith, moral values are recognized to have an impact on productivity. Smith writes that businessmen prefer to keep their business local because, "He can know better the character and situation of the persons whom he trusts...." (WN p. 454) Trust arises from shared moral values, and in a business setting enhances efficiency by lowering transaction costs. Anyone who doubts this has only to examine the "cowboy capitalism" of present-day Russia to see a free market bereft of a moral (or legal) compass and floundering badly. So too, the economic "miracle" in Southeast Asian became unhitched in the late 1990s when "crony" capitalism threatened the integrity of asset market values. The marketplace of Adam Smith, by contrast, existed not in some imaginary land of autonomous, amoral individuals, but within an interdependent social fabric in which virtue was extolled and a moral conscience constrained individual actions.

Conclusion

Let us return to the question which began this paper: "Who needs Adam Smith?" By the evidence of who is reading him today, the answer must be "quite a few of us." The surge of academic writing on Smith over the past twenty-five years is astonishing: Annual citations to Adam Smith *quadrupled* over the period 1971-1997, in fields as diverse as economics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and law. What could possibly explain this surge of interest in a long-dead economist? If the march of scientific advancement were efficient, all new theory would already embody any knowledge from the past worth keeping. Why bother reading Smith's dusty tomes from the 18th century?

There are several scintillating possibilities but I will consider here only two: first, political and economic events create cycles of ideologies being "in" and "out" of favor. The fall of communism and

the shrinking of governments no doubt explains much of Smith's current appeal. Recall, however, that Adam Smith was never a doctrinaire advocate of *laissez-faire*; in this we find, once again, that some authorities for their own purposes use a caricature of Smith that is just plain wrong.

A second explanation for Smith's resurgence is that he posed challenging moral problems that once again are of vital interest. Indeed, Smith's genius lay in exploring the interplay of overlapping worlds—the commercial, the social, the political, and the moral—areas experiencing phenomenal growth in interdisciplinary study over the past three decades. The founder of modern economics appears to lead us today in exploring connections with sister disciplines in social sciences and humanities. One researcher has even boldly predicted that in the not too distant future, *homo economicus* will actually evolve into *homo sapiens*.⁸ All of which means that Adam Smith's holistic views—rather than the caricatures—could play a critical role in reshaping our notions of self responsibility and moral conduct in the 21st century.

Notes

¹. Cited in R.D. Collison Black, "Smith's Contribution in Historical Perspective," in Mark Perlman and Mark Blaug, eds., *Economic Theory and Policy in Context: The Selected Essays of R. D. Collison Black*, Economists of the Twentieth Century Series (Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1995

1976):p.76.

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³. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (abbreviated WN). R.H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, eds., Glasgow Edition (reprinted by Liberty Press, Indianapolis, IN., 1981 [1776]): I.ii.2, pp.26-27.

⁴. Max Lerner, Introduction to *The Wealth of Nations*, Edwin Canaan, ed. (New York: Modern Library Edition, 1937): p. ix.

⁵. Sources for the quotes in Table 1 are: 1. TMS, II.ii.3.1, p. 85; 2. TMS III.4.6, p. 158; 3. TMS, I.i.4.5, p. 21. 4. TMS, I.iii.2.1, p. 50; TMS, I.iii.3.1, p. 61; 6. TMS VI.i.14, p. 216.

⁶. Robert H. Frank, "Do Economists Make Bad Citizens?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 10, Winter 1996, 187-192; and Robert H. Frank, Thomas D. Gilovich, and Dennis T. Regan, "Does Studying Economics Inhibit Cooperation?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Spring 1993, 7, 159-171.

⁷. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (abbreviated TMS). D.D. Raphael and A.L. Macfie, eds. Glasgow Edition (reprinted by Liberty Press, Indianapolis, IN., . 1982 [1759]): II.ii.3.1, p. 85

⁸. Richard H Thaler, "From Homo Economicus to Homo Sapiens." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol 14, No. 1 (Winter 2000): 133-141.

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Mitchell Palmer, the Attorney General of Woodrow Wilson in 1919 to 1921 in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution. With time this philosophy came to be thought of not simply as misguided but evil! F.A. Hayek's book *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944, was a scholarly book, published by University of Chicago Press. But it became a manifesto of the right wing, a credo of a reconstituted 19th century economic and political liberalism, unfortunately without all the premises which accompanied early formulations of Adam Smith, David Ricardo, James and John Stuart Mill, and yes, the culminating champion of the classical economic tradition, Henry George. Ironically, this was an age that believed in human perfectibility!

Fears of creeping socialism were revived during and after World War II, leading to McCarthyism and destroying the lives and reputations of many artists, writers and other public figures, particularly in Hollywood. Certain organizations had a vested interest in maintaining confusion between the free-market social welfare state and state-communism. Hence, whenever programs of a social welfare nature were proposed—even to address those elements of an economy understood as “public goods” and “natural monopolies,” the specter was raised that a coterie of treacherous plotters sought to transform the “American way of life!” Adlai Stevenson's comment summed up much of the final days of this era with his comment that “There's something else I dislike just as much as creeping socialism, and that's galloping reaction.”³ I thought the phrase had disappeared from the American lexicon, but a search on the web site turned up several recent articles and news releases, one from the Conservative News Service in Washington just this past March. According to that article, “The greatest threat facing the planet today is not AIDS, overpopulation or global warming but creeping socialism, according to a group of conservative women gathered in Washington, D.C. this week for an international conference.”⁴ Democratic governor Jim Hunt of North Carolina had his health care proposals met with the editorial comment that

It's time to call a halt to the creeping socialism that threatens to destroy this nation one program at a time. If the goal is to provide health care for children, there are

any number of ways to achieve that desirable end other than implementation of yet another income redistribution scheme.⁵

It appears that with the demise of the “cold war,” American politics is struggling to rediscover its philosophical moorings; conservatives, no longer able to invoke communism as a bugaboo, are reaching back to a pre-industrial era of laissez faire capitalism and the nightwatchman state. One new alarmist of the right is Balint Vaszanyi, a 1959 emigre from Hungary who by popular demand has become almost a regular on C-Span's Washington Journal. Vaszanyi is an accomplished musician, the former mayor of a Midwestern city, and the author of *America's Thirty Years War: Who's Winning?*⁶ Emigres to this country from regimes formerly under the shadow and control of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Cuba most notably, seem often to have attained unassailable credibility as political commentators. By their concentration in certain geographic areas they have managed to hamstring the foreign policy in this country in significant ways. Witness most recently our government's attempts to deal with Fidel Castro. Members of Congress from Miami have held high cards in this byplay. Government to them is not the protector of the public against rapacious private interests, or the provider of services when the market fails to deliver them. Rather government should be opposed at any and all costs. (This presentation was pre-Elian Gonzalez.)

Physician-Assisted Death

The debate about physician-assisted death offers another illustration. “Euthanasia,” taken from its Greek roots, literally means “good death.” And what person wouldn't wish for a good death! Socrates' taking the Hemlock was an exceptional case only insofar as the life he foresaw was not one of physical pain and suffering but rather the loss of his identity as a person. He was, after all, Athenian; to be banished from Athens deprived him of his selfhood, his dignity, and the relationships on which everything in his life depended. To lose his citizenship and be a “guest” in another city was too undignified and compromising. Such a life was worse than death, so at age 70 he chose to end it then. Crito, one of the students, offered to arrange his successful passage to the city

of Thessaly, but Socrates declined. The Pythagoreans, a minority sect, opposed suicide, but a far larger element of the population accepted it. Herodotus, the teacher of Hippocrates, is known to have written that “when life is so burdensome, death has become for man a sought-after refuge.”⁷ Thucydides, Cleanthes, and Seneca also chose to die by their own hand when their lives became difficult.

Many western philosophers have written in support of suicide, especially in the face of pain and suffering. In our own time Aldous Huxley, Henry Pitney Van Dusen, Peter Sammartino, and, yes, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis all chose to end their lives on their own terms. Many suicides result from the failure to find a doctor willing to quietly help ease the passage in the face of failing health and continued suffering, and the job is often then botched. Van Dusen, former president of Union Theological Seminary, ended his life together with his wife, but the drugs didn't work immediately and their final demise was rather difficult. So also with Sammartino, the founder and longtime president of Fairleigh Dickenson University and the driving force for the restoration of Ellis Island, who shot himself and his wife in their New Jersey home. Hearing these stories shocks us!

The thought that anyone would ever choose—in any circumstances—to die rather than to live is deeply threatening to a sizeable element of our population. Despite polls that show that a full 75 percent would in certain circumstances condone physician-assisted death, even in fact choose it for themselves in certain instances, the debate has been muddied significantly wherever it has been put before the public. Physicians have quietly helped patients to die for as long as modern medicine has offered the choice, but many people believe that the practice should not be legitimized, or sanctified, in law. Better it be done quietly, that it remain illegal as a signal to all that such practices are not to be condoned by society as a general rule. Yet driving the practice under the table hides it from public scrutiny and invites abuse.

Nowhere more in recent history has the metaphor of the slippery slope been employed than by opponents of assisted death. It has been the most effective argument in thwarting the passage of laws authorizing such treatment. Ironically, most opponents of assisted death don't

employ the arguments that are most personally compelling for them. For conservative Christians, Orthodox Jews, and Roman Catholics, the matter is more about who decides—premises about the nature of society, about the relationship between man and God, and about the fallibility and vacillation of human will that are the most convincing. But these arguments are not employed in the realm of public debate, mainly because their advocates recognize their often religious grounding and that arguments before the public have to be made in secular terms, without recourse to particular orthodoxies.

The argument has been given new color by the recent appointment of Australian Philosopher Peter Singer to be the DeCamp Professor of Applied Philosophy in the Center for Human Values at Princeton University. Not since the appointment of free-love advocate Bertrand Russell to the faculty of City University of New York has there been so much hubbub in academia. The Right-to-Lifers have been there picketing daily for months, along with a disabled group called “Not Dead Yet!” Steve Forbes, himself a Princeton grad who sits on the University Board, has carefully refrained from getting involved in this one so far. But he’s being pressed hard to take a position and get reversed the decision on Singer’s appointment.⁸

What is threatening about Singer’s ideas, well articulated in over a dozen books, is his view that quality, not simply the presence of a heartbeat, should define the value of a life.⁹ It is personhood—the sufficient condition of humanness, not the biological dimension which is only the necessary condition—that should be the mark of a human being. His book almost from the beginning provided a new philosophical foundation of the death-with-dignity movement. Hemlock Society founder Derek Humphry is quoted on the cover of the hardback edition, “Brilliantly debunks old concepts and introduces honesty to modern medical ethics. [The book] is a blast of fresh thinking that will attract great controversy and debate.” Indeed it did.

In an earlier philosophic venture Singer already almost single-handedly launched the animal liberation movement,¹⁰ and he now was arguing that animals in some instances should be more highly valued than human beings. A graded continuum rather than a sharp line should define what

kinds of lives have more worth. To many people, creationists apart, this has become the ultimate slippery slope! To them, if we’re not going to draw a bright line between human beings and animals, and venerate human lives in an absolute way, then we are indeed headed down a treacherous path. The argument about the validity of the slippery slope argument has never been more sharply posed than in the physician-assisted death and animal liberation movements. Yet it’s not as if he’s said things that other philosophers have not said earlier; it’s that he’s said them more clearly, more directly, and for a more popular audience. This mild mannered philosopher has now had to have armed guards when he goes about in public—a claim to notoriety paralleled only by Salmon Rushdie!

Gun Control

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed,” reads our Constitution’s 2nd Amendment. The Supreme Court decided in the 1939 case, *U.S. v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 174, that possession of a firearm is not protected by the Second Amendment unless it has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia. The Supreme Court has stated that today’s militia is the National Guard. Does this mean that only for purposes of maintaining a militia shall the people have the right to bear arms? Or does it mean people shall be free to bear arms of any kind, for any purpose, at any time, in any place—beyond what any militia may require? We are beginning as a society to face up to the challenge of exploring the meanings, and indeed the wisdom, of the second amendment in a context very different, and with instruments very different, than the framers ever could have foreseen. It may be wise that the Court has sidestepped earlier chances to further interpret the meaning of the 2nd amendment; after all, it has no means of enforcing a decision, and defining a law that can’t be enforced makes a mockery of government authority.

Still, a consensus may be forming whereby a decision by the Court may be acceptable. Public opinion polls show that more than 80 percent of the general public is supportive of gun control laws. Many people wonder what it is about the

American psyche that makes us want to fiddle so much with guns at all! Yet our witness of the passage of the Brady bill in 1997 was an illustration of how a relatively innocuous provision that would require the personal registration of handguns was vehemently opposed less on the ground that it was a questionably effective attempt to control the sale transactions of Saturday-night specials than as a first step in the dismantling of our Constitution, the first step by conspirators to establish a totalitarian dictatorship, and the first step toward the eventual confiscation of all firearms. Adherents are frequently heard on talk shows with the argument that Nazism arose only after guns were confiscated in Germany. We know the political power of the National Rifle Association, and its ability to mobilize its members to shower Congress with messages at strategic moments in deliberation. Interesting to me is the inability of our leaders to articulate arguments that stand up to the arguments of the NRA, arguments which, for the most part, invoke fears of the slippery slope.

Social Explanation and Determinism

The slippery slope metaphor is a form of an “if-then” claim: if X, then Y. Of course in mathematics and in formal logic these statements are ubiquitous. Even in the physical and biological sciences, research has given us a body of knowledge and theory such that deductive explanations are not only possible and enduring but necessary to our ongoing reliance in applied technology. But philosophers question the applicability of this so-called hypothetico-deductive model of explanation to the social world; in fact few if any would hold such views today. Yet, at the time when the study of societies first took on institutional form about a century ago in the form of various social science disciplines, so impressed were its founders with the successes of natural science that attempts were made to emulate what were seen to be its rigorous methods. Social sciences have never fully extricated themselves from these faulty epistemological premises and methodological assumptions.

Today we know that scientific research is not nearly so formal as such models proposed, and we know also that analogizing human behavior to that of protons or trees is a form of reductionism that ignores significant dimensions of

human nature. The word “law” applied to human behavior has very different meanings than when applied in physical science. Traffic laws are not like Newton’s laws. Human behavior is largely rule governed, rules which are made by human beings in their social capacity. Roberto Michel’s famous sociological “Iron Law of Oligarchy” is not testable in any empirical way, and is true only in the general sense that much wisdom of human experience acquires the nature of truth. Laws of behavior explainable by deterministic forces of nature are largely trivial in their importance. When they are employed, such as in game theory for example, they illustrate more often the dimensions of interrelationships by metaphor than by any inviolate deterministic patterns. To be sure, such metaphors applied from animal to human behavior have achieved a certain popular fashion today, particularly in the works of people like E.O. Wilson, Daniel Dennett, and Richard Dawkins.¹¹ But it is notable that philosophers of social science have kept their distance from such works. Applying if-then models to human behavior is accomplished by essentially eliminating whole dimensions of humanness, and is reductionistic in its explanatory power. Human laws, rather, are human creations, and are mutable, tractable, and sometimes indeterminate.

Such an approach typically commits what Alfred North Whitehead called the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” and what others have often called the fallacy of reification. It is the mistake of attributing concrete existence to that which has only essence, that which has reality only in our minds. When human behavior is analogized and then concretized in mechanistic terms, it eliminates the element of choice and motive in our behavior. Although human behavior is largely rule-governed, the consequence of our being socialized and acting as members of a community and society, these rules are neither cast in stone nor inviolable. They can be both changed and disobeyed. There is nothing inevitable or inexorable about one choice leading to another. It may in some instances have that effect—life goes on, after all, and “one can’t step into the same river twice.” But irreversible human choices are not the same thing as deterministic slides.

Yet we have to ask, doesn’t one thing lead to another? Of course. But this is not to imply there is a logical entailment between one event and another. The

slippery slope metaphor asserts that social and legal policies, once put in place, lead inevitably and inexorably to other social decisions. Decisions in law or in politics are not made this way, when they are made at all. Rather they are made individually and incrementally, with great deliberation by any number of leaders reflecting general public sentiments. Anyone who has worked for political and social change in our society knows full well that it is inordinately slow. Decisions are checked and balanced, reviewed and revised so often that commentators far more often speak of “deadlock” and “gridlock” than they do of automaticity. There is seldom if ever any logical entailment at all between social events. No person who has ever worked in the arena of public policy would ever regard decisions and trends as inevitable. Only in one special instance might it be argued that there is ever the possibility of slippery slopes as applied to social decision-making: that’s in the judicial policy of *stare decisis*, or the recognition of legal precedent.¹²

Historical Perspective and Subjectivity

A second assumption of the slippery slope argument is that history is a down hill slide, that people in the past were perhaps stronger and more noble than we are today. Contemporary society, far from being the march of progress in this view, is just the reverse, and that social changes that mark turning points of history really usher in greater depravity. History is not progress but rather the fall from a golden age. One might note the fallacy of such thinking by using as an example the expansion of the voting franchise in America. At the founding of our nation, only white propertied males over age 21 were entitled to vote, but we have seen the expansion of this privilege to gradually include those without property, then to freed slaves, to women, and most recently to those age 18 and over. Or consider the evolution of medical treatment, or the expansion of educational opportunity. All slippery slopes?

Technological Dependence

An argument can be made, however, that in one realm of experience there is a linkage between one event or decision and another. This is in the realm of technology. We can recall when it was touch and go whether 45 rpm records or 33 rpm records

were going to become the standard, or when the VHS videotape format was completing with Betamax. We know what happens when one standard achieves a certain dominance: it soon becomes ubiquitous. Economists describe the outcome of situations like this with terms like “system scale economies,” “entry barriers,” and “quasi-irreversibility of investment.” The monopoly dominance of Microsoft’s products may be another such instance. It has also been described as the QWERTY phenomena.

As the story goes, a Milwaukee printer named Christopher Latham Sholes filed a patent for a mechanical writing machine in 1867, a project he labored over for six years without much success from keeping the keys from jamming. His machine had its type bars on the bottom, striking upward to leave an impression on the paper. This arrangement had two serious drawbacks. First, because the printing point was underneath the paper carriage, it was invisible to the typist. Second, if a type bar became jammed, it too, remained invisible to the operator. Sholes worked for the next six years to try to eliminate this problem, trying mechanical changes and different keyboard arrangements. In 1873, the Remington company licensed the design from Scholes, first using the name “typewriter,” and using the same keyboard layout that Sholes had originally designed. Remington changed the keyboard layout, but it was too late: the earliest typists had already learned to use the Sholes design. And we’ve been stuck with QWERTY ever since.¹³

Consider another pattern, which I also owe to a web site.¹⁴ The US Standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That’s an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that’s the way they built them in England, and the US railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English people build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that’s the gauge they used.

Why did “they” use that gauge then? Because the people who built the trams used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons use that odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing the wagons would break on some of the old, long distance roads, because that’s the spacing of the old

wheel ruts.

So who built these old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe were built by Imperial Rome for the benefit of their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagons, were first made by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for or by Imperial Rome they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Thus, we have the answer to the original questions. The United State standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for Imperial Roman army war chariots which were made to be just wide enough to accommodate the back-ends of two war horses.

Some explanations reflect downright corruption. The earliest cars manufactured in this country and in Europe were electric; streetcars also were largely electric powered until a conspiracy of the automobile and petroleum industry exerted its force to ensure that fossil fuel powered motor vehicles would dominate our transportation and land use patterns.¹⁵ Our motor-vehicle-dependent and urban sprawl configurations can be explained by powerful interests continually pressing for policies to make us so. One might even conclude that the decision to drive on the right side of the road was equally as much a defining moment.

And I hope that you will forgive me for mentioning another great conspiracy in American history, the subject of my Torch presentation about four years ago. That story recounted how the American railroad industry, in collusion with the banks, induced the founders of the American economics profession to change definitions and formulas so that they would be relieved of taxation on their land holdings and speculation would be rewarded.¹⁶ This dividing line between classical and neoclassical economics is responsible I believe for many of our economic problems today—economic cycles, an inequitable tax structure, poverty and unemployment, urban sprawl and the gutting of urban centers. Only now is this economic ideology, almost sacrosanct for a century, falling apart and seen for what it is.

Determinism or Perception?

But are these examples illustrations of a slippery slope? I don't think so, because

they are not decisions of social policy but rather of technical standardization or refinement. Perhaps even the evolution of firearms is an instance of the QWERTY phenomenon. One could argue that these latter were right or wrong, but that's a separate question. Our views of social reality and its explanations are colored very much by our philosophies, and this is never more true than with respect to our evaluation of policy alternatives. If we are opposed to a set of policy alternatives, we are frequently likely to argue that their implementation is not simply a mistake of the moment, but one with irreversible and far-reaching consequences. We marshal all the evidence and arguments we can in opposition to these courses of action, and, since they are policy options for the future, we envision all the possible future problems inherent in their adoption. This is true both of the right and the left.

There is a difference, too, between explaining things historically and attributing unilinear causality to social events. As it happens, if our views of human nature and of social institutions are colored by pessimism and if we believe that we human beings are by nature self serving and rapacious, we are likely to have one view of matters. If, on the other hand, our view of human beings, both collectively and individually, is more optimistic and altruistic, our conclusions will reflect this too.

This has been borne out in several studies of personality and politics over the years. People with a dim view of human nature are more likely to see conspiracies and negative consequences to what is often perceived as social engineering. And people more trusting of others and of institutional authority are less likely to be concerned about the negative consequences of policy proposals. In recent years, those wearing the popular appellation of "conservative"—at least in the American sense of the term—are more distrustful of others, of government, and of institutions generally. There is a further corollary to this as well: that people who believe that human nature is inherently selfish will tend to believe that their own selfish behavior is only natural, and they will attribute the same low motives to others that they use to justify their own behavior. This further reinforces their own view that they are completely justified in acting in the way that they do. Realizing that this is the mentality that drives such people, those

who take a more benign view of human nature and of political institutions are then compelled to find the motives of their opposites suspect and threatening.¹⁷ So such escalating distrust becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

I would like to illustrate the dynamics of this thinking through one widely used psychological scale, used in countless studies over the course of some 40 years. It is known as the "Faith in People Scale," originally developed in 1956 by Rosenberg.¹⁸ One point is awarded for each scaled response. A score of five identifies you as having a very low level of trust in others. I will read the five paired statements to you, since they are very short:

1. Some people say that most people can be trusted. Others say you can't be too careful in your dealings with people. How do you feel about it?
 - Most people can be trusted.
 - You can't be too careful.
2. Would you say that most people are more inclined to help others, or more inclined to look out for themselves?
 - To help others.
 - To look out for themselves.
3. If you don't watch yourself, people will take advantage of you.
Agree Disagree
4. No one is going to care much what happens to you, when you get right down to it.
Agree Disagree
5. Human nature is fundamentally cooperative.
Agree Disagree

So that's what it may come down to, not to a matter of validity of the slippery slope argument as measured in logical terms, but rather by the extent to which social decisions are made by people who can be trusted and relied upon to act in altruistic ways. If people expect the worst, the worst may happen. If people look on the positive side, that trust may engender further such feelings and be self-reinforcing. "What goes around comes around," as they say, applied to both conservatives with a dim view of human nature and society as well as to progressives with their more hopeful view.

There is a further dimension to all this which offers a fascinating area for study. The faith-in-people scale along with many other research instruments has been used in many societies and at various times. But

time has been too short in this country for us to be able to say very much about what has happened over the past 250 years with respect to public sentiments. The general view is that people have become more cynical and pessimistic; what this portends for America's future, and particularly the future of our political health, is well worth pondering. We used to be a nation of optimists, at least as other nations saw us. That may have been our greatest asset. If we lose this optimism, we may be the worse for it as a nation. And to this extent, our declining view of ourselves and our motives may be the ultimate slippery slope.

Postscript

I thought, because I just read it, I should add a postscript to this piece that shows how much the slippery slope metaphor has crept into our way of looking at things and affected our public policy formation. Here I quote from Saturday's *New York Times*, relating the work of a Professor of Popular Culture Joe Austin at Bowling Green State University, whose book *Taking the Train* will shortly be published by Columbia University Press:¹⁹

[New York] City officials believed that if graffiti went unchecked it would signal a general lawlessness and more serious crimes would follow. This is sometimes called the broken-window thesis, popularized by James Q. Wilson, now a retired professor at the University of California in Los Angeles, and George Kelling of Rutgers University in a 1982 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*.²⁰

"If you allowed one window to break in a neighborhood and it wasn't repaired, people would think you can do other acts of vandalism," Austin explained. "Eventually this would become, 'It's all right to mug and rape people,' and a general sort of social chaos would ensue."

The article goes on to estimate that the city spent about half a billion dollars between 1970 and 1990 trying to eradicate graffiti. By the mid-80's most of the graffiti on the subway cars was cleaned up. Austin argues that crime on the subways during those 20 years did not significantly decrease. "The correlation between graffiti and crime had no basis," he said. He pointed out that most experts don't subscribe to the "broken windows" hypothesis, holding the economy to be the

dominant determinant. But we did spend lots of money on a theory which had nothing more than plausibility behind it.

Notes:

¹ From Laurence Urdang (ed.), *Picturesque Expressions: A Thematic Dictionary*, Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1980, p 52: "Domino Theory: The belief that if one of a cluster of small neighboring countries is taken over by communism or some other political system the others will soon follow suit; the phenomenon of political chain reaction. This theory takes its name from the chain reaction effect created when one in a line of standing dominos topples, bringing the rest down, one after another. The concept arose during the 1950's and was popular during the sixties as the expression most representative of the basis for American involvement in Southeast Asia at the time."

² Anthony Flew, *Thinking Straight*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1977, pp. 103 ff. See also www.nizkor.org/features/fallacies/slippery-slope.html; and www.loyno.edu/~wagues/fallacies.html.

³ Adlai Stevenson Quotes, at <http://www.cp-tel.net/miller/BilLee/quotes/Adlai.html>.

⁴ "Women Meet to Discuss Global Conservatism," Washington: Conservative News Service, March 31, 1999.

⁵ "Health Care Plan Reeks of Socialism," Jacksonville (NC) Daily News, March 3, 1998

⁶ New York: Regnery Press, 1998.

⁷ From the frontispiece, Derek Humphry, *The Right to Die: Understanding Euthanasia*, Hemlock Society, 1990.

⁸ David Oderberg, "Good Riddance to a Warped Philosopher," *The Age*, (Melbourne), April 28, 1999; Gay Alcorn, "Life and Death Matters," Sydney (AUS) *Morning Herald*, May 8, 1999; James Bandler, "Furor Follows Princeton Philosopher," *Boston Globe*, July 27, 1999; Paula Span, "Philosophy of Death: Bioethicist Peter Singer's Views on Euthanasia Foment Debate," *Washington Post*, December 9, 1999.

⁹ Peter, Singer, *Rethinking Life and Death*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1994.

¹⁰ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation: A New Ethic for the Treatment of Animals*, New York: Avon Books, 1975.

¹¹ Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*, Harvard University Press, 1988; *Consilience*, New York: A.A. Knopf, 1998; Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford U. Press,

1990; Daniel Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life*, New York: Touchstone Books, 1996.

¹² Wibren van der Burg, "The Slippery-Slope Argument," *Ethics*, Vol. 102 (1991): 42-65; reprinted in *The Journal of Clinical Ethics*, Vol. 3 No. 4 (Winter, 1992): 256-268.

¹³ <http://www.superkids.com/aweb/pages/features/qwerty/qwerty.shtml>

¹⁴ <http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/2493/rails.htm>

¹⁵ This is an untold story. A trial was held in a Chicago federal court in 1949, resulting in an indictment of GM, Firestone, Standard Oil, Phillips Petroleum, and Mack Trucks among others. Their crime was in forming a holding company called National City Lines which proceeded in the preceding decade to buy up the public transportation services in dozens of US cities, and then scrapping them so that people would then become more automobile dependent. The corporations were fined \$5,000 each, and the CEOs of each one \$1. See United States Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, 93rd Congress, 2nd Session, "American Ground Transport: A Proposal for Restructuring the Automobile, Truck, Bus, and Rail Industries," by Bradford C. Snell, February 26, 1974 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1974); and Jonathan Kwitney, "The Great Transportation Conspiracy," *Harper's Magazine*, February, 1981.

¹⁶ H. William Batt, "How the Railroads Got us on the Wrong Economic Track," *Torch Magazine*, Spring, 1998, and www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/5148/batt_railroad_1.html

¹⁷ A particularly insightful treatment of this is to be found in George Lakoff, *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

¹⁸ "Misanthropy and Political Ideology," *American Sociological Review*, 1956, Vol. 21, pp. 690-695; reprinted in John P. Robinson and Phillip R. Shaver (ed.), *Measures of Sociological Attitudes*, University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 1969, pp.526-528.

¹⁹ Dinitia Smith, "Rethinking the Graffiti Wars," *New York Times*, Saturday, January 1, 2000, D1.

²⁰ See also George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*, New York: The Free Press, 1996.

The Making of a Classic: Are There Any Future Classics Among Modern Day Works of Literature?

The author explores the possibility of "classics" being found in currently produced literature and that of the recent past.

by Mark Tiernan Moore



About the Author

Mark Moore is a graduate of Washington and Lee University and holds a masters degree in taxation from Old Dominion University. He is a certified public accountant and is associated with Hottel & Willis, P.C. in Winchester, Virginia. He is a new member of the Winchester Torch Club.

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I recently bought a Jefferson Airplane compact disk. At the counter, the eighteen-year old clerk saw it and congratulated me on my selection. She said, "I only listen to oldies, because everything today is crap." "They don't make them like that anymore." One sometimes uses this expression to describe the sturdy construction of older homes; however, seldom does anyone lament developments in science and technology. This paper is inspired by my sense that there is a perception that, in matters of art, older is better.

This perception is demonstrated each time someone proclaims, "I don't like modern art" or "I only read the classics." These statements are not motivated by veneration of classic works as much as by contempt for modern works.

I use the word classic in my title. Homer and Virgil wrote the true classics, but I use the term in a broader sense to describe a work of enduring significance. The classics to which I refer in this paper are timeless great works of literature. We all recognize the more loosely defined classics when we hear them. They are Leo Tolstoy's *War and*

Peace, Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and Dante's *Inferno* to name a few. This paper will explore what it means to be a classic and try to determine whether any modern works of literature might become classics.



Mark Twain defines a classic as a book that everyone praises and nobody reads. Floyd Zulli seems to acknowledge this in his book *The Joy of Reading: A Personal Introduction to Great Books*. He is concerned that the classics carry a connotation of works that are unapproachable. He counters this notion by saying that classics are simply the best works of all time. He says that they have a timelessness that makes them worthy to be read by anyone at any time.

Kenneth Rexroth in his introduction to *Classics Revisited*, describes classics similarly, only he focuses on the personal relationships described in these works. He says that classics are set apart from other works by their portrayal of human relationships that are significant and relevant to all generations. He goes on to say that the greatness of classics is unaffected by subsequent works of literature.

With an eye toward testing whether any modern works may become classics in the future, I have developed a list of four additional characteristics shared by classics. First, they influence works that follow.

Secondly, they have some memorable quality whether it is quotable lines or unforgettable characters. The third general characteristic of the classics is that they have received critical acclaim associated with years of study and analysis by students and scholars. Lastly, their content must be interesting and informative enough to attract readers across generations.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. The classics influence other works and, in many cases, other classics. Virgil's *The Aeneid* influenced Dante's *Inferno*, which influenced Milton's *Paradise Lost*. *Paradise Lost*, in turn, inspired the recent movie, *The Devil's Advocate*.

In fact, numerous movies have been adapted from classic works of literature. *Clueless* was adapted from Jane Austin's *Emma*. *West Side Story* was adapted from William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The movie, *Apocalypse Now* is based on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Influence on works that follow is clearly an important characteristic of classics.

In order to withstand the test of time, a work must provide something especially memorable. That thing might be a particular character or a line. Lines such as "There is something rotten in Denmark" or "I sing of arms and a man" are cited and recited and thus serve to reinforce their source's classic status. Memorable lines keep the work on the mind of the reading public and help the work to stand the test of time.

Other works are memorable because of a character in them. Jane Austin's Mr. Darcy, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, and Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn are such characters. The character, Don Quixote is such a significant character that an English word is derived from his name. Quixotic means ridiculously chivalrous like the character Don Quixote. Memorable

characters like memorable lines help to keep the work alive.

The third characteristic of classics is that as a result of years of scholars analyzing them, they are attributed a wide array of stylistic characteristics. Scholars pore over the great works and describe them with high-minded literary terms. These terms range from alliteration to simile.

Scholars may start by assigning a writer's work to a period. For instance, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* fits into the period of romanticism. Other "isms" that describe periods include classicism, realism, and naturalism. These periods describe trends of writing and are themselves assigned general characteristics.

The styles of great works are further described using various literary terms. Edgar Allan Poe is renowned for his use of onomatopoeia. That is words that sound like the sound of the object described. Keats uses personification when he assigns human qualities to the Grecian urn in *Ode to a Grecian Urn* by suggesting that it can tell a story. Scholars use the term satire in describing Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Cervantes' tale of the comic hero Don Quixote roaming from place to place finding adventures along the way is said to be an example of the Picaresque style. Studies of *Don Quixote* attribute symbolism to the characters, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Some suggest that their contrasting characters represent the agony and triumph of Spain.

Scholars have analyzed the classics so closely and attributed them with so much that one wonders whether the qualities are so remote as to not have been intended by the author. In fact, at times, it seems that flaws in classics receive praise from scholars. For instance, when William Shakespeare refers to wristwatches and pockets in *Julius Caesar*, he is credited with deliberately using an anachronism. Similarly, the epic poet Virgil's use of the poop deck to refer to the ship in *The Aeneid* is an example of synecdoche. That is the practice of using a part to describe a whole. Virgil himself might be amused at this, because he might describe this instance as a desperate attempt to achieve the proper meter.

What they say about the work is not as important as the fact that scholars deemed them worthy of their commentary.

The most important characteristic of a classic involves its content. Classics have

some informative quality. This quality may be direct such as in *The Prince*, in which Machiavelli provides advice on how to unite and protect Italy. The informative content may be historical as in Homer's *The Iliad* or Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. Other works provide subtle messages. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austin gently pokes fun at pomp and elitism. It is the content of the work that makes it interesting and popular to many generations.

Having determined as much as possible what a classic is, let us turn our attention to whether any modern works of literature will ever be regarded as classics.

A search for likely candidates as future classics might lead to the New York Public Library's *Books of the Century*. This book edited by Elizabeth Diefendorf was published in 1996 and is a collection of reviews of the most significant books of the century that preceded its publishing. While reading through the book, one is likely to find striking the number of works written this century that have already achieved some measure of classic status. Works cited include *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley.

The collection is organized into categories, the first of which is titled "Landmarks of Modern Literature." In this category, James Joyce is recognized for his use of stream of consciousness as used in *Ulysses*. T. S. Elliot receives praise for his use of ordinary speech in his poem, *The Waste Land*. Each of these has influenced later works, which is one of the characteristics of a classic.

Also included among the characteristics of classics is the informative subject matter, which would interest readers of all generations. I suggested that *The Iliad* and *A Tale of Two Cities* were interesting for their historical value. It may be, because of the area we live in, but there seems to be tremendous interest in the Civil War. *Books of the Century* cites Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* as one of the most significant works of the century.

The civil rights movement, the great depression, the drug culture era, and the beginning of the AIDS epidemic are all significant events of the twentieth century. It stands to reason that works offering insights into those events will live on and

perhaps become classics. Indeed, the collection cites *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *The Politics of Ecstasy* by Timothy Leary, and *And the Band Played On* by Randy Shilts as being among the great works of the century.

Earlier in the paper, I said that classics often are remembered for particular lines and characters. One of the books of the century is *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, whose title has become synonymous with a no win situation and is used in everyday conversation.

I thought it was interesting that, according to the New York Public Library, its *Books of the Century* received the most criticism for its omission of any single work of William Faulkner from its collection. Faulkner is one of my favorite authors. Another one of my favorite authors that was omitted is John Updike. It seems to me that both of these authors have written books significant enough to one day be classics.

Many of the books of the century mentioned so far were written in the first half of the century, so let me name some of the more recent titles. Some of the newer titles include *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey. In addition, I would like to specially mention *Bonfire of the Vanities*, whose author, Tom Wolfe, shares my *alma mater*, Washington and Lee University. This work provides insights into the "Wall Street go-go eighties."

These works are too new to have a body of scholarly analysis supporting them and only time will tell whether any of them will become classics.

I mentioned in my opening that I believe there is an element that believes that the best works of literature were written in the past and that modern literature is inferior. I find it difficult to accept this notion. Is it possible that the generation that has achieved so much in science and technology writes inferior literature?

If this is so, one wonders why it should be. One theory may be that of creative drain. Perhaps there are more creative outlets than there once were. For example the poets of generations past may be lyricists today and artists who would have written prose in the past may be screenwriters today. Advertising, graphic design, and even

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Pearl Harbor's Cashiered Commanders: Were They Scapegoats?

Were the military commanders at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked the only ones to fail in their duty or were they the victims of political expediency?

by **Henry B. Rose**



About the Author

Hank Rose graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he was a Naval ROTC midshipman, in 1951. He served in the Marine Corps until 1955. On a midshipman cruise in the summer in the summer of 1948 he visited Pearl Harbor, which at the time, still showed some evidence of the Japanese attack. He resides in Worcester, MA with his wife Donna.

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Prologue

I became interested in this subject after reading Al Southwick's column about it in the Sunday Telegram almost two years ago. At that time the US Senate had voted (but only by 52-47) to exonerate Adm. Kimmel and Gen. Short, but the House took no action and the Department of Defense then declined to exonerate them. I started reading about the issue, and found a lot of sensationalist books, mostly arguing for the commanders. I'm generally skeptical of revisionist historians and conspiracy theorists, and many of these books provided plenty of grounds for skepticism. Nevertheless, after studying the matter, I find myself an uncomfortable ally of some of the revisionists. I think that although the commanders, especially Short, were guilty of several errors, they were badly abused by the government. Here are my reasons:

Introduction

In December 2000, we passed the 59th anniversary of that well known "infamous date." Within two weeks after the attack the two commanders were relieved, and soon



after charged with dereliction and cashiered.

Some Americans thought the officers were not treated fairly. Adm. Richardson, who preceded Kimmel at Pearl Harbor said, "I think they were given the rawest of raw deals." Adm. Standley, retired CNO (Chief of Naval Operations) who served on the Commission which charged them with dereliction, signed the report reluctantly, and a few months later reversed himself, saying the commanders had been "martyred." Adms. Spruance, Halsey, Holloway, and King agreed, and have since been joined by:

- Alumni Associations of the Naval and Military Academies,
- Pearl Harbor Survivors Association,
- Nimitz Foundation,
- Veterans of Foreign Wars,
- Retired Officers Association,
- Pearl Harbor Commemorative Committee,
- Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb, and
- 37 other retired admirals (seven of them former CNOs).

Yet the officers remain today officially guilty, although many Americans now believe they were scapegoats.

What is a scapegoat?

The term comes from an ancient Hebrew tribal custom. Webster says: Scapegoat—Any animal or person to whom sins, evils, ill luck, etc. are ceremonially attached, the victim then being sacrificed or

driven out as symbolic of dispelling the evil.

Revisionist Historians

The scapegoat charge has sired dozens of books, the latest published only this year. Most favor the commanders and are often contrived and sensational, calculated more to hurt Roosevelt than to help Kimmel and Short. This is unfortunate because it tends to discredit legitimate claims on their behalf. The premier historian of Pearl Harbor is Gordon Prange, who spent 37 years researching the subject, including two extended stays in Japan. He interviewed almost all the surviving actors and studied all available documents. In *Pearl Harbor—the Verdict of History*, Prange debunked more than a dozen of the most vociferous revisionists. His own opinion was that there were "no villains and no scapegoats."

Public Fury

The attack was a remarkable feat of arms. A small, poor country, held in contempt by most Americans at the time, destroyed half the American Pacific Fleet in its home base, then the strongest bastion in the world. They sank or severely damaged 18 vessels, including six battleships, and half the military aircraft in Hawaii at almost no cost to themselves. It was as if Daniel had entered the lion's den, slaughtered six lions, tipped his hat to the surviving lions, and departed without a scratch. Of the American reaction Prange wrote: "The American people reeled with a mind staggering mixture of surprise, awe, mystification, grief, humiliation, and above all, cataclysmic fury." Most of the fury was directed at Japan, but some also at the American commanders. At its height the Kimmel family was receiving 3000 letters and phone calls per week. One woman telephoned Mrs. Kimmel and told her "I can't wait for the day they take your husband out and shoot him." Aside from

Benedict Arnold there has never been an American commander who has had to endure such public hatred.

The Ten Investigations

It was painfully apparent that our army and navy were completely surprised and that the defense capacity which was available had not been used effectively. People demanded to know who had been asleep at the switch.

To answer that question, on 9 Dec Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox left Washington for Hawaii. His report to FDR was not published, but within days of his return the two commanders were relieved. Four days after Knox returned, a second more formal investigation was commissioned, headed by Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts. Roosevelt chose Roberts because as investigator of the Teapot Dome Scandal 18 years earlier, he was widely known and credible. Kimmel and Short expected to be blamed for errors, some of which they freely admitted, but they were stunned also to be found guilty of dereliction of duty, while their superiors in Washington were judged to be nearly guiltless.

They protested. They had been found guilty, but (except for their own testimony) had been barred from the proceedings. They demanded to be court martialed, but patriotically agreed to wait until after the war. In July 1944, forced by an Act of Congress, the Army and Navy made investigations. The reports were reversals of Roberts' findings; the commanders were found nearly guiltless, and top officials in Washington, including General Marshall, were held to be largely responsible. These explosive findings, delivered within weeks of the 1944 elections, were suppressed, and both service secretaries appointed new investigators to refute the results. But these investigations also found fault in both Hawaii and Washington, and again were suppressed. Three weeks after the war ended Pres. Truman ordered release of all the reports, but Congress was still not satisfied and in Nov. 1945 convened a Joint Congressional Investigation. The report, running to 15,000 pages, also found fault in both places.

The Key Players

Adm. Husband E. Kimmel was promoted over the heads of several more senior admirals. He was a workaholic and a spit-and-polish commander. He recruited a first

class staff who remained loyal to him for life.

During the attack Kimmel and his staff were watching from the window of his office when a spent .50 caliber round bounced off his chest and fell at his feet. He picked it up, slipped it in his pocket, and said "It would have been merciful had it killed me." Nevertheless he soon became convinced that he was being scapegoated. In the hallway outside the Roberts Commission hearing room he grabbed an army lawyer by the shoulders and asked "What are they trying to do? Crucify me?"

Gen. Walter C. Short was an earnest, if unimaginative officer who had served honorably in WWI, although he had spent more time on training than he did in combat. He had no experience with air war, and assumed that any Japanese attack on Hawaii would be an amphibious assault. Short chose inferior men for his staff, and routinely did not attend staff meetings. He did make an effort to heal the past animosities between army and navy in Hawaii and to that end socialized with Kimmel, but he never realized that personal sociability of the top officers is not the same as organizational cooperation.

When Short was assigned to Hawaii in early 1941, he twice refused briefings on his new job. Before he left for his new command, Marshall's staff offered briefings, but Short showed little interest. Gen. Herron, whom he was to relieve in Hawaii with only a day or two of overlap, prepared a briefing book and rushed it to San Francisco so Short could study it on the five-day voyage to the islands. When Short arrived Herron asked if he had gotten the book. Short said he had, but had not spent much time on it.

He told Herron that he had spent the shipboard time reading a novel.

The CNO at the time was Adm. Harold Stark. He was a kindly gentleman (his Academy nickname, "Betty," describes him well) but he was not a dynamic or demanding leader. He was easily cowed by his number two man, Adm. Richmond K. "Terrible" Turner. Turner was a domineering and aggressive man, whom no one in the Navy wanted to cross. He made a turf grab by demanding that no intelligence appreciations be sent to the fleet except by him. Adm. Wilkinson, Director of Naval Intelligence, protested to Stark, who in spite

of navy regulations to the contrary, deferred to Turner.

The originator and motive force behind the attack was Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto. Having studied at Harvard and later served in the Japanese Embassy in Washington, he knew America well, and was firmly opposed to war with that country, but when he saw that war was inevitable he devised the surprise attack as Japan's only hope. He told Prime Minister Konoye that after a surprise attack "I can run wild in the Pacific for six months or a year, but for the second and third years I have utterly no confidence." In fact, during those six months Japan conquered Malaya, Singapore, French Indo-China, Burma, Thailand, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines. But in the seventh month the tide turned against her with the defeat at Midway, and continued inexorably to her surrender three years later. Yamamoto didn't live to see the accuracy of his prophecy. His plane was ambushed by American fighters in 1943.

Yamamoto (born Takano) was a peasant's son who, at age 34, after both parents had died, agreed to be adopted by the prominent Yamamoto family, who wanted an heir.

His given name, Isoroku, means "fifty-six," which was his father's age when he was conceived. In Japan at the time, a man of 56 was considered too old to sire a son, and his father chose the name for that reason.

The key tactical planner under Yamamoto was Commander Minoru Genda, a leading naval aviator. Genda spent nearly a year planning every detail of the attack, including the North Pacific route of the fleet, rush development of shallow water torpedoes, organization and tactics of the air fleet, and withdrawal of the surviving ships.

Commander Mitsuo Fuchida commanded the 360 attacking aircraft, and led the first wave. He and Genda presided over the training and briefing of the aircrews, and it was he who gave the famous radio signal Tora! Tora! Tora!

After the war Fuchida converted to Christianity and became a world-renowned evangelist.

The Japanese had excellent intelligence on our military facilities and ship movements before the attack. They knew that our fleet was always in port for weekends, and thus planned the attack for Sunday morning. The famous "bomb plot" messages divided

the harbor into five areas and plotted the location of anchorages and wharves. They knew the berthing plan in the harbor, and planned the air strike accordingly. This information came from Takeo Yoshikawa, a naval intelligence officer who was posted under an assumed name as a staff member of the Japanese Consulate in Honolulu. His final message on 6 Dec. said there appeared to be no torpedo nets, and that there was "still time to achieve surprise." All these messages were intercepted, but were given low priority in Washington. The 6 Dec message was not decrypted and translated until the day after the attack.

Yoshikawa's fellow employees despised him because he was often seen in bars in the evening, came to work late many days, and some days didn't come to the consulate at all. They had no idea what his real name and assignment were. Among the few friends who did know what he was doing, he gave himself an English nickname: "Bobby Make Believe."

Codes and Ciphers

Two years before the war American code breakers in Washington began breaking Japanese military and diplomatic codes. A machine (called "Magic") was devised to speed the decryption process, and eight copies of the machine were built. One of these was intended for Hawaii, but instead was shipped to the British, who already had two. A machine was shipped to MacArthur in Manila, but Kimmel and Short were not even told that such intelligence existed. Kimmel had been assured by Stark that he was getting all available intelligence regarding Hawaii, but in fact a stream of information, including the "bomb plots" was kept from him.

Naturally it was vital that the Japanese not get the slightest hint that we had broken their codes, and protection of that secret was a major consideration in Washington. The high command insisted that although the commanders had not been let in on the secret, they were nevertheless adequately warned, and were therefore accountable for the disaster.

Code breaking was a huge benefit for us during the war. It was directly responsible for the death of Yamamoto, whose flight plan was intercepted so we could send fighters to down his plane. Code breaking was also directly responsible for our key victory at Midway.

Errors of the Commanders

In my opinion Kimmel's worst errors were:

1. He received on 27 Nov. a war warning message, but did not change his alert status, nor did he advise his subordinates, one of whom, Adm. Newton, sortied a few days later, unaware of the warning.
2. Kimmel was advised on 3 Dec. that the Japanese embassies around the world were destroying their code books. He didn't draw the obvious conclusion from that news, and failed to alert Short.
3. He had 49 PBY patrol bombers and dozens of sea craft with which he could have established 360° reconnaissances to detect the incoming carriers before they launched their aircraft. He did not. He later justified this action on two grounds, first that he needed 180 patrol planes to cover all approaches, which had been promised but never delivered, and second that he had been ordered in the event of war to attack the Japanese Marshall Islands, and was therefore saving his aircraft for that mission. I think if that order was really preventing him from assuring the security of his base, he should have so advised Washington.
4. 90 minutes before the air attack, a Japanese 2-man submarine was sunk outside Pearl Harbor by the destroyer Ward. Previous studies had stated that a submarine sighting might be the first sign of a general attack. No one wondered how such a small craft could have gotten to Hawaii, and no one advised the Army of the sinking.

Gen. Short's errors seem to me to be even worse, especially considering that his only mission in Hawaii was to protect the naval base:

1. Radar equipment and system specialists trained in England had been sent to him, but he did not set up a working system, or man the equipment full time.
2. His AA guns were not emplaced for defense of the fleet; ammunition was locked away in Aliamanu Crater.
3. He set an alert against sabotage, but not against air attack. He had 100 fighter planes but they were not ready to fly.
4. He too had a warning message on 27 Nov which included the words "undertake recon." He didn't do it, and didn't ask the Navy if they were doing it.
5. The afternoon before the attack an intelligence officer rushed to Short's quarters to show him a telephone intercept

in which a Japanese woman in Honolulu had reported to a caller in Tokyo that 'things are normal here,' 'there is no blackout,' and 'no increase in air patrols.' There followed some peculiar references to "poinsettias" and "hibiscus." Short and his guest, who happened to be his G-2 (chief of intelligence) told the officer he was "too intelligence conscious," and continued on a dinner date with their wives.

Errors in Washington

1. In Jan '41 the American ambassador in Tokyo, Joseph Grew, was informed by the Peruvian ambassador, Ricardo Rivera-Schreiber, that Japan was planning a massive attack on Pearl Harbor. This information was relayed by Washington to Kimmel, but with a cover memo saying "we place no credence in these rumors."
2. The most serious charge against Kimmel and Short was that they failed to exercise "joint command," but the separation of army and navy was not their decision. It was mandated by Washington.
3. "Terrible" Turner demanded the right to filter intelligence going to Kimmel and Stark weakly permitted the turf grab. Turner then suppressed warning messages which junior officers wanted to send.
4. An identical scene occurred at Army headquarters, where a junior intelligence officer prepared a warning message, but was muzzled by Gen. Gerow, Chief of War Planning. The silenced army and navy officers then sought to bypass their bosses by sending messages to intelligence officers of their own branches in Hawaii and asking them to consult with each other.
5. Obsessed about the 160,000 Japanese who lived in Hawaii, Washington repeatedly urged Short to guard against sabotage. The concern was groundless, and it caused Short to group his aircraft together where they were perfect targets for attack by air.
6. Short replied to Marshall's 27 Nov war warning with a 9-word message saying only that he was alert against sabotage. It was obvious that he had not grasped the whole significance of the warning. His response was seen and ignored by both Marshall and Gerow. Both later admitted that they had erred.
7. Stark and Turner withheld intelligence (including the "bomb plot" messages) from Kimmel on the mistaken assumption that Kimmel had a "Magic" machine. Stark asked if he did, but he asked the wrong person - Turner.

8. A message on 6 Dec from Tokyo to its ambassadors in Washington required them to break off negotiations at exactly 1:00 P.M. (7:30 A.M. in Hawaii) Sunday. Stark knew this at 9:00 A.M., but did not advise Kimmel. When Marshall saw the message at about 11:30, he immediately dispatched a message to MacArthur, Short, and Panama, but through communication blunders the Hawaii message didn't arrive until after the bombs fell.

American Illusions

In 1941 Americans were strongly isolationist. In that year Congress came within one vote of ending the draft, although our army then ranked only 17th in the world. Most citizens were ignorant of Japan, and looked with racist contempt at its people. They believed Americans were vastly superior, and invincible. These illusions were the steam behind the fury when disaster struck.

Equity

Kimmel and Short did make serious mistakes, but so did others. MacArthur, for example, was also caught by surprise and also lost most of his air force on the ground. He had been more directly warned, and his attack came 7 hours *after* Pearl Harbor, yet he was not blamed. Instead he was given a Medal of Honor! Marshall, Gerow, Stark, and Turner, who also erred, were allowed to serve in the war, and emerged as honored leaders. But Kimmel and Short were singled out to bear all the disgrace. To me that fulfills perfectly Webster's definition of 'scapegoat.'

This abuse was caused partly by our need to protect our code-breaking secrets, and partly to preserve public faith in the high command in wartime. But those concerns are now 59 years past. Isn't it time to treat the two commanders more equitably and remove a blot of injustice from our history?

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War warnings sent to Hawaii 27 Nov 41

Navy Department to Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and Philippines:

This dispatch is to be considered a war warning. Negotiations with Japan looking toward stabilization of conditions in the Pacific have ceased and an aggressive move by Japan is expected within the next few days. The number and equipment of Japanese troops and the organization of naval task forces indicates an amphibious expedition against either the Philippines, Thai, or Kra Peninsula or possibly Borneo. Execute an appropriate defensive deployment preparatory to carrying out the tasks assigned in WPL 46. Inform District and army authorities. A similar warning is being sent by War Department. Spenavo inform British. Continental districts Guam

Samoa directed take appropriate measures against sabotage.

War Department to Hawaii, Panama, and Philippines:

Negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes with only the barest possibilities that the Japanese Government might come back and offer to continue. Japanese future action unpredictable but hostile action possible at any moment. If hostilities cannot be avoided the United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense. Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary but the measures should be carried out so as not to alarm civil population or disclose intent. Report measures taken. Should hostilities occur you will carry out the tasks assigned in Rainbow Five so far as they pertain to Japan. Limit dissemination of this highly secret information to minimum essential officers. MARSHALL

2001 Paxton Lectureship Award

The Paxton Award, created in honor and remembrance of W. Norris Paxton, past president of the IATC and editor emeritus of The Torch magazine, is given to the author of an outstanding paper presented by a Torch member at a Torch club meeting during the calendar year 2001. The winning author will receive an appropriate trophy, \$250, and paid registration fees at the 2002 annual IATC convention in Ontario, Canada. The winner will be introduced at the 2002 convention banquet where he or she (or a designated representative) delivers the paper on June 22, 2002.

Eligibility: The author must be a member of a Torch club and the paper must have been delivered at a Torch club or regional meeting between January 1 and December 31, 2001. (Note: Current officers and directors of IATC are ineligible during their terms in office.)

Procedure: Entries are to be typed (double or triple spaced). Include a cover sheet with the author's name, address, daytime telephone number and date and place of the paper's presentation. All identification, including identifying references within the paper, will be masked wherever possible prior to submission to the judges' panel. Entries may be submitted at any time but the deadline for receipt is March 1, 2002. Send to Paxton Award, International Association of Torch Clubs, Inc., 749 Boush St., Norfolk, VA 23510-1517.

Judging: The reading and judging panel consists of five people: a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee, a member of the IATC board of directors, one of the last five winners of the Paxton Lecture Award, and two Torch club members selected by the IATC board of directors. Judging is based on the principles set forth in the IATC brochure "The Torch Paper." The winner of the Paxton Award and the authors of all other entries will be notified approximately May 1, 2002.

Additional Information:

- There is no limit to the numbers of papers submitted by any one Torch club.
- A paper may be submitted by the author, Torch club colleague or by a Torch officer. It is preferred that the paper receive the endorsement of the club as a Paxton Lecture Award through its officers, secretary, or the executive or program committee.
- The winning paper is to be presented at the 2002 annual convention by the author or designated representative from the author's local Torch club.
- The Paxton Lecture Award paper will be published in the Fall 2002 issue of The Torch magazine. Other entries will be forwarded to the Editorial Advisory Committee for review for possible publication in the magazine.

The Breadbox Letters: Howard E. Merrill with the YMCA in Russia, 1917-1919

A happy coincidence brings to light almost forgotten details of our relations with Russia in the early years of the twentieth century.

by **Kenneth E. Peters**



About the Author

Kenneth Peters holds an undergraduate degree from Albion College, a masters degree in U.S. History and a Ph.D. in American Culture from the University of Michigan. Among his research activities are his work on the Good-roads movement of the early 1900s, the Charleston, S.C. Earthquake of 1886, and the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787. He joined the faculty of South Carolina's College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management in 1973 where he teaches U.S. history and contemporary issues and acts as faculty advisor to three student organizations. He is a member of the Columbia Torch Club.

This paper was presented to the Columbia, South Carolina Torch Club September 26, 2000.



If it had not been for a breadbox, I would not have written this paper. The breadbox belonged to Susan Merrill Brashares, wife of a retired United Methodist bishop. The Brashareses were our neighbors in Ann Arbor in the late 1960s, when I was a doctoral candidate at the University of Michigan.

I learned about the breadbox from Dr. Robert M. Warner, then director of the University's Historical Collections and later Archivist of the United States. Brashares had casually mentioned to Warner that Susan possessed letters that her brother, Howard E. Merrill, had written to their parents in Chicago in the late 1910s and early 1920s. The bishop told Warner that these letters chronicled Merrill's service with the American Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Russia from 1917 to 1919.

Curious about the letters, Warner got

permission to examine them. Having Warner as a teacher and member of my doctoral committee, I acquired a special assignment. I was to study the letters and write Warner a paper about their contents.

As I pored over the letters, I discovered that they documented the life and character of a fervent, idealistic, religious, athletic, adventurous, American male and painted a vivid picture of events and personalities of the Kerensky and Bolshevik revolutions of 1917 and early years of Bolshevik (Communist) rule in Russia. I want to share with you a parcel of what I uncovered in the Merrill letters.

Prior to the 1900s the United States was little involved with Russia. With the new century, however, U.S.-Russian relations assumed greater import and frequency. It was WWI and the two Russian revolutions of 1917 that substantially shaped this relationship that often was fraught with great dangers to world stability and peace. Many of the problems stemmed from that second Russian Revolution, led by Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (aka Nikolai Lenin) and his Bolsheviks who sought to modernize Russia, create a new social order, and win allies throughout the world.

By April 1917 the United States was a loosely associated ally of Russia. By summer 1917 Howard E. Merrill would be a member of a special American YMCA task force assigned to Russia upon the request of the so-called Provisional Government that had staged the first Russian revolution. This government, headed by Alexander Kerensky, had the awesome twofold responsibility of establishing a stable government in a war-torn country and reversing the course of a war against Germany and other Central Powers which was going badly for the Russians. Kerenskyites hoped that the arrival of task forces of the American YMCA,



American Red Cross, and other U.S. and foreign philanthropic organizations would help their cause.

When Merrill, who had spent much of his boyhood on a farm in New Hampshire, heard that the YMCA was sending an agricultural and humanitarian mission to Russia, he eagerly enlisted in its secretary-training program. His first assignment was in Boston, where he built an athletic program for the new military recruits. Merrill, who was muscular and had demonstrated considerable prowess in athletics, especially as a member of Dartmouth's football squad, scheduled boxing bouts aboard ships of the U.S. Navy's "mothball fleet," berthed at Boston's Commonwealth Pier. But the work did not captivate Merrill. By early August 1917, upset by rumors that the "Y" was not sending men to Russia, he considered joining the balloon division of the Signal Officers Reserve Corps. He even took the physical examination for the aviation service, only to be told that his nearsightedness would disqualify him.

Merrill did not stay disappointed for long. By mid-September his enthusiasm for "Y" work was rekindled. He discovered that Thomas L. "Tom" Cotton (a former teammate

on Dartmouth's football squad and co-worker at the Yard), and several other "Y" personnel had been selected to go to Russia. On October 9, imbued with a cogent desire both to serve the Russian people and to travel, he was speeding across the continental United States on a Southern Pacific train for San Francisco. Shortly he would board the *S.S. China* for Honolulu and Yokohama.

Aboard the *China* Merrill prepared for his assignment. He read several books on Russia and honed his skills in the Russian language with tutoring from a Russian national who was returning to Siberia. Following a short layover in Honolulu, he took the *China* to Yokohama. From there he traveled overland to Kyoto, where another ship took him to Vladivostok. He arrived there on November 8, amid widespread reports that Bolsheviks had overthrown Kerensky's government. The city was astir. Russian troops were everywhere, yet citizens went quietly about their daily business.

A week later Merrill began the long ride on the Siberian Express to Moscow. He was awestruck by the natural beauty, "limitless resources," and potential of Siberia. "Some day Russia will show the whole world great things," he wrote his parents back in Chicago.

Once in Moscow, he and the task force found lodging in an elegant and spacious millionaire's home. The owner had consigned it to the American consul and YMCA to avoid its confiscation by the Bolsheviks. The house became the headquarters for a Berlitz language school that would teach "Y" personnel and the American consular staff the Russian language and for various American projects throughout Russia. Here Merrill received invaluable instruction from prominent "Y" officials, including Jerome Davis, the head of the American YMCA in Russia.

Merrill's dedication to American ideals and the Russian people colored most of his correspondence home. In one letter he told his parents that his work in Russia was fulfilling in a small yet significant way the Wilsonian ideal of "making the world safe for democracy." Merrill told them that in Russia he could make a more positive contribution than on the Western Front, where he might be more in the line of fire. He also confessed to them his intention to stay in Russia after the war. The possibilities for important work in Russia seemed limitless: "One cannot see anything of this country

without feeling that here above any other place is the place that Christian men are needed." He quickly added, "One sees so great need for the very sort of work that the Association [the YMCA] does that he cannot help but be stirred to throw himself in and do whatever he can."

The "Y" began its work in Russia in June 1917 with its primary mission being to feed, clothe, and entertain the hordes of Russian soldiers returning from the war fronts. The Kerensky government, desperate for military and civilian assistance from Russia's newest ally, the United States, had expedited the "Y"'s projects by granting it certain privileges. Included were the exemption of all "Y" supplies coming from abroad from custom's duties and other taxes and their free and prompt transportation throughout Russia, unrestricted travel for "Y" agents, conditional appropriation of buildings, and free use of Russia's postal system for any letters written on "Y" property.

When Merrill arrived in Moscow in late November 1917, the AY's activities were confined to Moscow and its environs. But, with the arrival of new personnel, the "Y" extended its program of English classes, reading rooms, athletics, religious instruction, and motion picture showings to civilians as well as Russian military personnel elsewhere in Russia. When Russian soldiers streamed home following the March 3, 1918, secret treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Bolshevik Russia, the "Y" fed them at food stations, which came to be called "huts." These huts were positioned along the long frontal lines and in the large interior military centers such as Khar, Kov, and Kazan.

Shortly the "Y" became the largest, most significant American institution in Russia. It had more personnel than the U.S. diplomatic and consular services, American press corps, American Red Cross, and U.S. military missions combined, and it enjoyed good rapport with the Bolsheviks. They even allowed it to pilot an old river steamer, the *Kerzenetz*, from which it disseminated agricultural and educational information to Russians along the Volga. Such efforts won the "Y" many friends and encouraged Russians to adopt better agricultural practices and practice better sanitation.

Merrill played an important role in this expanded "Y" activity. Late December found him near Minsk gathering information on conditions there. When he returned to Moscow, his superiors assigned him to the

Northern Front to manage a "Y hut" at Dvinsk, a small city near the German lines. His "hut" was the city's principal theater. It would be one of the main "huts" in a chain extending from the Northern Front to the Russian heartland. Frankly, Merrill was disappointed. But when he learned that Jerome Davis would help him with his "hut," and that Tom Cotton, his Dartmouth buddy, would man a "hut" in Pskov, only 12 hours away by railroad, the assignment seemed more tolerable.

Soon after opening the "hut," Merrill attempted to return to Moscow to inquire about starting agricultural education programs for the people in Dvinsk. However, because German armies threatened an all-out advance on the Western Front, Merrill was able to get only as far as Petrograd, where the air was rife with talk that it would be but days before the Germans controlled Dvinsk, Pskov, and even Petrograd.

So Merrill returned to Dvinsk only to find that the commissariat of the Fifth Red Army was threatening to close all "Y" operations in that part of Russia. On January 29 the commissariat determined that the "Y's" work was not congruent with "the standards and political views of the Soviets," and that it needed to end by February 1. Although Merrill pleaded with the local soviet (the Bolshevik civilian council) in Dvinsk, the effort proved unfruitful, and he hurriedly left by train for Pskov to visit Tom Cotton.

After only a few days in Pskov, Merrill heard from the commissar in Dvinsk that he could return. But while he was returning, approaching German armies blocked him, and he and Tom Cotton were forced to flee from Pskov for Moscow.

Two weeks later in Moscow, Merrill found that despite Russia's official pullout from the War under the Brest-Litovsk agreement of March 3, John R. Mott, the "Y's" highest official, its General Secretary, was requesting that all "Y" personnel in Russia remain indefinitely. He also learned that he finally might be allowed to engage in rural "Y" projects in Russia, which had long been his ardent desire. Merrill and 40 other "Y" staff were to board the *Kerzenetz* and ply the Volga and its tributaries.

Because the *Kerzenetz* assignment would not start immediately, Merrill divided his time between Moscow and Samara (today's Kuybyshev). The mass exodus of foreigners had largely subsided, and Merrill found it increasingly difficult to send letters out of Russia with American and other

foreigners who were returning home. Rumors were omnipresent. Merrill was especially upset by an unofficial report that the Germans, who at this point, seemed to be winning the war, were about to offer peace to France and Great Britain should they give Germany a free hand in Russia. This rumor greatly distressed Merrill's Wilsonian conscience and he wrote to his parents, disclaiming being a pacifist.

May 1918 found Merrill aboard the *Kerzenetz*. At Nijni-Novogorod (today's Gorki) and other stops along the Volga, he was popular with the Russian youngsters, who ensnared him into playing games, particularly baseball. But Merrill's typical day was not all games. He might teach as many as three classes in English, confer with local Russian Orthodox priests and civic leaders, scrutinize living conditions, explain the merits of scientific agriculture and sanitation to curious locals, and repair machinery. Additionally, he determined how Red Cross monies entrusted to the "Y" for hospital upgrading and public relief would be spent.

In May 1918, Merrill sensed a change in the political wind. The U.S. War Department wanted to remove all Americans from Russia. However, the U.S. Secretary of State wanted "Y" personnel to remain. With the Central Bolshevik Government ostensibly reaffirming the support that the Kerensky Government had accorded the "Y," it continued to pursue its ambitious agenda of humanitarian relief. Distrustful of "Y" ideology, the Bolsheviks were, nonetheless, willing to let it do whatever it could to alleviate starvation, poverty, disease, and illiteracy. However, by August 1918 the cooperative spirit evaporated.

Almost daily throughout August, Merrill heard reports of Bolsheviks molesting and arresting Britons and Frenchmen. They did not bother Americans at first, but later that month, Americans too came under attack. Despite threats of harassment, "Y" officials contemplated taking the *Kerzenetz* on a final run up the Oka River. But these plans were thwarted when they received an urgent telephone message from Nijni-Novogorod stating that Bolsheviks had imposed martial law there and had arrested 30 Americans at its railroad depot as they attempted to leave the city. So the *Kerzenetz* returned to its moorings at Nijni-Novogorod. Several days later, "Y" personnel, fearing for their lives, hurriedly hopped the earliest train for Petrograd, where they could catch another

train to Sweden.

But when the "Y" task force arrived in Petrograd on August 29, it found that Finnish authorities needed to approve their crossing Finland. Seeking such permission, Merrill and Cotton spent nervous hours waiting in Petrograd's Finland Station. Petrograd was tense, and reports were circulating that two American soldiers were dead from clashes between Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik troops around Archangel. It seemed to Merrill that his Russian adventure was coming to a hasty end.

Permission to enter Finland came early the next day, August 30. But a chain of bizarre events in Russia delayed Merrill's departure. First came news that the commissar of foreign affairs had been murdered in Petrograd and that all foreigners were being arrested. This news sparked "Y" directors in Petrograd to ask Merrill and two others to round up all "Y" personnel in the area. Completing this assignment, Merrill hastened to board the train. Then came unconfirmed news that Lenin had been shot and that there had been attempts on the lives of other leading Bolsheviks.

Reports circulated that Leon Trotsky, who headed the Red Army, had fled Russia and that chaos reigned supreme in other Russian cities. Because of this confused situation, Merrill and many other anxious passengers found that they were virtual prisoners on a train that had strict orders not to leave the Finland Station. However these orders were rescinded the next day, and the train departed, despite the startling disclosure that Red Guards had assassinated the naval attache to the British Mission in Moscow after he had supposedly shot and killed two Red Guards who had insisted upon searching the British Embassy.

The flight to Sweden terminated one phase of Merrill's Russian adventure. But he would soon begin another. After a few days in Stockholm and Uppsala, Merrill, on September 24, was on his way back to Russia. Writing his father from Stockholm, Merrill disclosed that the "Y" had asked him and others to assist the British, French, Russian, and American troops around Archangel. The British and the Americans were spearheading these clandestine operations to support anti-Bolshevik Russian soldiers attempting to oust the Bolsheviks. Merrill could not say "no" to this new assignment.

Taking a train to Narvik, Norway, Merrill then traveled by boat along the long, bleak and craggy Norwegian coast, finally making

port at Archangel. It was the second week of October.

Having the ability to converse in Russian and possessing considerable aplomb, Merrill immediately impressed the "Y" officials at Archangel. They hustled him off to a military front nearly 200 miles distant to serve the allied, anti-Bolshevik, troops already fighting elements of the Red Army. Lacking provisions that the British had promised and overstocked with others, Merrill and other "Y" secretaries began the arduous boat trip up the Dvina to the front. Winter was quickly coming, and it would be spring before boats would again be able to navigate the river. What stores they had would have to suffice.

On October 16, Merrill arrived at a small village on the Dvina seeking a suitable building for his "Y hut." He chose the local schoolhouse. With cooperation from the friendly local Russian Orthodox priest and the schoolmistress, he quickly had his "hut" operating. In the surrounding territory were most of the three battalions of U.S. infantry and the three companies of engineers that President Wilson had ordered to duty in Russia on July 17, 1918. They were bracing themselves for combat and the severe Russian winter.

Merrill had manifold responsibilities at the front. He was expected to befriend the local population and provide the soldiers with coffee, tea, biscuits, and shelter. Additionally, he was to minister to the soldiers' religious needs, because there was only one regular army chaplain for the nearly 6,000 U. S. troops stationed in the Archangel Military District.

Merrill found life at the front dreary and tedious. His work absorbed most of his waking hours. After establishing his first "hut" in the village school, he subsequently founded at least four others several miles distant. When he was not busy at one "hut," he was checking on or manning another. Though busy, Merrill often found time to converse with the soldiers. His "hut" was not just for American soldiers. A sizable number of British soldiers also frequented the facility. Their manner and speech intrigued and sometimes amused Merrill. Merrill also found time to visit Tom Cotton, who maintained a "hut" nearby.

In mid-November 1918 Merrill had a close brush with the enemy. For a few hours one of his "huts" became the favorite target for Bolshevik marksmen. In letters to his parents he noted that he had "had the

pleasure of dodging sniper's bullets." For his bravery in this incident and several others Merrill received commendation from the American General in charge of the area and from Crawford Wheeler, senior secretary of the YMCA in Arctic Russia.

During this long Russian winter Merrill yearned to be back in the United States with his fiancée and his parents. Periodic excursions to Archangel bolstered his enthusiasm somewhat, and he even accepted the extra project of tutoring foreign-born American soldiers who frequented his "huts" with their English.

In January 1919 Merrill asked the "Y" to send him home by midsummer. But he stayed on largely out of duty to the soldiers who were fighting and even dying to stop the advances of Bolshevism. In one letter he told his mother, "If it were not for the needs of the men here I would have thrown all to the winds and left long before now."

By May 1919 the situation had become particularly tense along the Dvina. The Reds (Bolsheviks) had stepped up their offensive, and on many fronts Allied troops were in retreat. From across the ocean came word that President Wilson had authorized the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops in North Russia. Merrill continued his work, but things were getting worse. In a Bolshevik-inspired coup against the Archangel Provisional Government by local citizenry, Merrill and his friend Tom Cotton were taken prisoner. But, managing to outwit their captors, they escaped the village in a small rowboat. Sleeping in open fields and receiving food from friendly villagers, they eventually rowed their way to Archangel, a distance of 175 miles.

But Merrill's Russian adventure was not quite over. The "Y" assigned him to yet another front in the Archangel Military District after promising to send him home by June 20. Merrill felt betrayed, but his new assignment was less austere. He had another "Y" secretary as a co-worker, assistants, and constant contact with Archangel. His new facility consisted of seven railroad cars for storage, dining, a library, a canteen, a dormitory for his assistants, and private quarters for Merrill and Don Lowrie (the other "Y" secretary) and a roomy "hut," where he could show movies and put on shows. While most spending most of their time on location, Merrill and Lowrie took short trips to the front every other day to provision the soldiers there. On at least one occasion Merrill carried with him a gramophone on

which he would play musical recordings for the soldiers.

While Merrill looked forward to returning home, his superiors had other plans for him. After all, he was doing excellent work for the "Y." By June 25 Merrill was the only American "Y" secretary at the front. Crawford Wheeler, senior secretary of the YMCA in Arctic Russia, visited him that very day to tell him that he would finally be heading home. Wheeler reserved passage for Merrill on a ship sailing from Bergen, Norway, to New York on July 26. Meanwhile, Merrill was to await the arrival of his replacements at the outpost, which by then was under daily sporadic fire from Bolshevik artillery. Surrendering his responsibilities to his replacements, Merrill finally left Russia. On July 27 he was aboard the *S.S. Bergensfjord* en route to New York City.

Merrill's two years in Russia provided him with opportunities for realizing a career of humanitarian service. Risking harassment, imprisonment, torture, and even death, Merrill performed well his assignment. He was fighting Woodrow Wilson's Great Crusade but on a less ambitious level. He was a harbinger of a new era, one that would extol the virtues of friendship, kindness, education, science, and social justice.

During his years in Russia Merrill acquired a deep love for the Russian people that transcended politics. He learned to work with persons of many political persuasions, even Bolsheviks. Merrill wanted desperately to return to Russia to resume his service to the Russian people under the aegis of the "Y." But, although the "Y" did send a number of "Y" secretaries there in the 1920's, Merrill's request was denied.

The history of the years 1917-1919 in Russia is still puzzling. Authors, such as E. M. Halliday, in his book *Ignorant Armies*, have shed light on the topic, but the definitive history of the period remains to be written. This paper is an attempt to overcome the dearth of literature on the topic. Perusing Howard E. Merrill's letters was an enlightening and worthwhile experience. Thank goodness for that breadbox!

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Betty Miller Unterberger includes a very helpful bibliographical essay in her book *American Intervention in the Russian Civil War* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath & Co., 1969). Since then other authors have published books that provide important insights. A partial list includes the following books:

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ERROR CORRECTION

In our spring issue of *The Torch*, we included a paper entitled "New Ink Spilled on an Old Subject" by William Garretson. We misspelled his name on the cover and in the title as "Gatterson." We finally got it right in his bio, but that was in small type.

Our sincere apologies to Mr. Garretson.

Where in the Mind are Sanity and the Soul?

A brief look at the evolution of our beliefs about, and treatment of, mental illness.

by Marion E. Sherman, M.D.



About the Author

Marion Sherman holds a bachelor's degree from Williams College, master of business administration degree from New York University and a medical degree

from Case Western Reserve School of Medicine. Upon completion of her training, she opened a private practice and joined the clinical faculty at the University of Utah Medical School. She served as clinical director and medical director concerned with child and adolescent service in several public and private organizations. In 1997, She joined the clinical faculty of Ohio State University. Presently, she is Chief Clinical Officer of the Twin Valley Psychiatric System, Columbus Campus.

This paper was presented to the Torch Club of Columbus, Ohio November 2, 2000.



Introduction

“As a man thinketh in his heart so is he . . . Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control . . . Only the wise man, only he whose thoughts are controlled and purified, makes the winds and the storms of the soul obey him,” written 100 years ago by the Englishman James Allen.¹ From the historical roots of mind-brain duality, to the current concepts of mind-brain unity, we will examine the path we have taken, and the road we travel. Our travels will begin with written clinical observations from the first millennium, through moral treatment theory of the nineteenth century, and intellectual shifts in the early twentieth century, into modern microscopic and macroscopic concepts of the twenty-first century.

As we look at mind-brain-sanity-soul theory as applied to mental illness over time, we will maintain a sensitivity to science-religion tension. For a historical perspective, we will begin with the written description of mental illness by a well-known physician

who practiced 2000 years ago, known to us as Luke. He wrote a basic premise of humane health care, in his example of the good Samaritan, who took pity on a roadside victim of violence, applied the medications of the day, bandaged the wounds, transported (by donkey) to inpatient care for treatment (an inn), and provided funds for the recovery of the injured patient. Many of the words of this physician have been misunderstood and misapplied, as erroneous concepts were used against those who struggled with mental illness. Luke described symptoms consistent with a variety of modern psychiatric diagnoses. We will look at three examples:

(1) “For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs...many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains, and had been driven by the demons into solitary places...and the people went out to see what had happened... They found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid...” (Luke 8:27-37).²

This healing of a man with apparent schizophrenia demonstrates severe and persistent mental illness behaviors, and socio-economic sequella, such as poverty and homelessness. We see the community’s inhumane treatment of this man in their initial response. We see the man’s reaction, to flee to a solitary existence in the tombs, as under the bridges of today. We see optimism about reversibility and successful treatment for mental illness, but even in mental health recovery from the ravages of a psychosis, this man struggles with his neighbors’ fear and community stigma.

(2) “A man in the crowd called out, ‘Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him . . .’ even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion...but Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the

greatness of God.” (Luke 9:37-43).³

This healing of a boy with tourettes and seizure disorder demonstrates a parent advocating for the treatment of his son, who suffers with symptoms of: convulsions, screaming, foaming at the mouth, and continual symptoms which “destroy him.” The healing approach respects the patient, rather than to discriminate, abuse, or neglect. While in this situation, the crowd is not afraid, but is amazed, and we see their recognition of the difficulty of recovery from mental illness.

(3) “Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed . . . Jesus said, ‘When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.’” (Luke 11:14-26).⁴

This is healing of a man with apparent selective mutism and anxiety. When the man had been healed, he spoke, and the crowd was amazed. Jesus discusses recidivism with the perilous risk of a relapse. Relapse-prevention management must be included in every treatment plan. Peer and family support are important components in relapse prevention.

Let us look more closely at the last two hundred years. In the 19th century, there was widespread belief among physicians that treatment interventions led to structural brain changes. At that time, they did not have the technology to prove or disprove this theory. These early beliefs remarkably resembled what technology would later begin to prove. Abandonment of scientific pursuit occurred in the early 20th century, but evolved into the scientific underpinnings of our current mind-brain concept.

Moral Treatment

Until the early 1800’s, most commonly, mental illness was viewed as demonic

possession, shame, embarrassment, or debasement. Treatments consisted of cathartics, ice baths, bleeding, punishment, neglect, or imprisonment. In 1815, in the United States, moral treatment came into use for treatment of mental illness. In the 1820s and 1830s, moral treatment asylums were built, following the model of European facilities. Moral treatment was humanistic, optimistic about the treatability of severe mental illness, and emphatic about the importance of the treatment environment. Mental illness was viewed as a physical illness.

In the early 1800's, physicians believed that the brain was composed of three regions: 1) intellect, 2) sentiment, and 3) animal/selfish feelings. These three regions were made of physical components termed faculties, such as moral-volition, will, passion, reason, intellect, animal instincts, and religious receptivity. Religious receptivity was the faculty in the highest sphere of the sentiment region. The faculties formed the mental phenomena and the moral character of the person, and influenced other faculties.

Specific stimuli from the immediate environment created sensations. Moral treatment providers stressed the importance of experiencing "proper" sensations, because the sensations formed and fed complex matrices of associations, which formed the faculties, which formed the physical brain regions. They believed that to produce sanity, there must be a balance of sensations maintained in the brain, between overzealousness and torpidity.

Disease could occur in any of the brain regions, and impact the faculties located there. During acute mental illness, some faculties were dormant but intact, and thus it was critical to find the right treatment, aimed at the healthy faculties, to awaken the dormant faculties. They believed that harmonious sensations led to harmonious associations, which awakened the dormant faculties, and thus the healthy faculties healed the diseased faculties. Due to the belief in moderation and the causative impact of sensations, physicians concluded that overzealous study of a subject, such as business, literature, or religion, could throw off the balance of the sensations, and create the diseased faculties of insanity.

Since there were no medications yet effective, the focus was on physical stimuli (such as occupational therapy, amusement therapy, agricultural therapy, and religious

exposure), in an orderly and regimented environment, to create the proper sensations. The amusements were provided to promote the "motive" of the patient through music, scientific lectures, literature, or religious studies, while distracting the patient from unhealthy and irrational preoccupations.

Moral Treatment and the Religious Faculty

Religious aspects of life were important in moral treatment, as the physical location of the religious receptivity was theorized to be the highest sphere in the sentiment region of the brain. While this faculty could become diseased, it had special features and a unique hardness, which helped to heal the other faculties. Religious worship and treatment centered primarily around the prevalent Protestant structure.⁵ The prevailing views of the soul influenced the view of the mind, brain, and sanity. The construct of the duality of the mind and brain, with the inviolability of the mind, came directly from views of the inviolability of the soul. While the brain could become diseased with mental illness, the mind could not. The mind was seen with an intangible core self construct, independent of the diseases of the brain which manifested as mental illness.

In the healing process, the patient's self-control was reawakened, with the assistance of the "core self." With treatment, the patient's governing power over the diseased parts and behavior were restored in the healed brain faculty. Mind-brain duality interlinked with concepts of soul characteristics, and was well accepted, with the disease residing in the brain, and not in the ethereal mind. As John Gray stated in 1871, "Disease is what we have to deal with. Not disease of the mind, for the mind, the spiritual principle, the immortal being, cannot be the subject of disease."⁶

Experts debated over what constituted the mind. Was knowing right from wrong a physical part of the brain, potentially diseased, or a part of the inviolable mind? They turned to the Bible and asked profound questions:

Could the soul become ill? Regarding depression: "Why are you downcast O my soul?" (Psalm 42:11). Regarding anxiety: "When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul" (Psalm 94:19). Regarding post traumatic stress disorder: "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I remember them, and my soul is downcast

within me" (Lamentations 3:19-20).

If the soul can become ill, can the soul become cured? "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your soul" (Jeremiah 6:16). Regarding psychotherapy effectiveness: "Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).

What are the boundaries between soul and mind and brain? "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).⁷

Into the Twentieth Century

By the end of the 19th century, psychiatry was abandoning the premise that the brain was the physical organ of mental illness, with abandonment of intellectual thought and scientific curiosity. The prevailing belief had transformed, and now physicians believed that one could not localize mental functions to specific brain regions. Their belief that functions were diffusely spread around in the cortex greatly diminished optimism in treatment effectiveness and biologic research.

Through the first half of the 20th century, there was progressive domination of psychoanalytic beliefs that unconscious conflicts caused neurotic or character illness. By midcentury, beliefs prevailed that unconscious conflicts also caused other brain and non-brain illness, such as hypertension, asthma, gastric ulcers, and ulcerative colitis. Parents were blamed for their children's schizophrenia using derogatory names such as "the schizophrenogenic mother." Dr. Eric R. Kandel describes his 1960s Harvard psychiatric residency, "We were assigned no text books; rarely was there reference to scientific papers in conferences or in case supervision . . . Much of this attitude came from our teachers, from the heads of the residency program. They made a point of encouraging us NOT to read. Reading, they argued, interfered with a resident's ability to listen to patients, and therefore biased his or her perception of the patient's life histories. One famous, much quoted remark was that, 'There are those who care about people and there are those who care about research . . .'" (E. Kandel 1998).⁸ The optimistic, structured, environmentally rich

and programmatic approach of the 1800s had given way to this unstructured, loose approach in the 1900s.

The latter half of the twentieth century brought many changes. In the 1960s, psychopharmacology was introduced to mainstream psychiatry. At that time, mental illness was still classified by the presence or absence of gross anatomical changes on autopsy. Where the limited technology could detect change, these mental illnesses were termed organic, such as chronic substance abuse or dementia. Where no changes were seen, these were considered nonbiologic mental illnesses, which included both neuroses and severe mental disorders. Only limitations in technology prevented them from seeing that all mental illness was organic.

In the 1970's, new advances made psychiatric treatment of mental illness as effective as treatment in other medical subspecialties. At that time, NIH increased research support for the biology and genetics of mental illness. In the 1980s, technology leapt forward. Clinical studies allowed for the creation of sophisticated brain mapping. A new optimism and energy regarding treatability of mental illness emerged with this return to the earlier construct of moral treatment, in which the behaviors and thoughts of individuals were assigned brain locations. In the 1990s, the "Decade of the Brain," we became more aware of the complexity of the brain as an organ. In 1999, NIMH funded 1,342 mental illness research grants.

Our current use of positron emission tomography (PET) scans and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) provide the technology needed to examine anatomical structure and function. This allows us to unravel the biology of the mind, then the biology of mental illness, and then greater specificity in treatments. In current thinking, the mind-brain duality has been rejected, and provides evidence of mind-brain-structure-gene continuity. We can see imaged and biopsied examples, where specific brain lesions lead to specific behavioral changes. We can also see examples where behavioral changes lead to brain anatomy changes.

The Twenty-First Century

Not only do we have current evidence of the structural impact of social and biologic forces on brain functioning and anatomy, but increasing genetic influences

on knowledge. As we consider current theory regarding where sanity and the soul reside in the mind/brain, we will first examine microscopic genetic evidence, and then finish with macroscopic behavioral evidence and recovery to mental health.

Under the Microscope- Genetic Influences on the Mind: Template Function of DNA

Genes have two main functions: template function and transcription function, each impacting mental illness and structural brain change. A total DNA copy exists in every cell in our bodies. This DNA, made of genes, serves as a pattern or template to replicate reliably, to produce the potential traits of the individual. The structure of the DNA is not altered by social experience, but only by mutation (biological evolution). All potential traits, and some behaviors are passed on through this exact replication, i.e., DNA template function. For example, vocational desires, religious preferences, and tastes are shared traits in identical monozygotic (MZ) twins reared separately.

More than two million Americans suffer from schizophrenia. Schizophrenia shows a probable alteration in this heritable genetic template function. If schizophrenia was strictly genetic, there would be a 100% concordance for schizophrenia in MZ twins, as MZ twins are genetically identical. Instead, we find 45% concordance. A strong genetic component is present, however, as we find a 15% concordance in DZ twins, and only a 1% rate in general population. There is 50% risk of schizophrenia for a child of two parents with schizophrenia. Some illnesses or behaviors can be demonstrated through a single genetic defect. Most likely schizophrenia requires defects in the nucleotide sequencing of multiple genes, i.e., polygenic disease. This strong polygenic component may predispose the individual to schizophrenia. Different forms of schizophrenia may occur depending on a complex interplay of biologic factors (stress, illness), environmental factors, developmental factors, birth or fetal trauma, or other genetic factors, and thus is "intergenic" in nature.

Examples of non-brain medical illness with similar genetic casualty include hypertension, diabetes, and cardiac illness. In the Cardiovascular Health Study, 5,888 participants demonstrated that depression appears to be an independent risk factor for coronary heart disease among 65-year-old

Americans.⁹ We also know that non-brain illness impacts brain function. Dr. Christopher Ryan, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, recently described findings of an apparent central neuropathy due to chronic hyperglycemia in adult diabetics, with a cognitive dysfunction characterized by psychomotor slowing.¹⁰

While the Human Genome Project mapped the 70,000 genes that make up DNA, we do not yet have strong replicated gene locations for any mental illness. We know varying amounts about the genetics of any specific mental illness, most likely caused by a complex interplay of genes. To date, a significant genetic role has been found in bipolar, schizophrenia, autism, and depression. To pursue answers, more than eighty million dollars were spent on genetic research in mental illness in 1996, and the overall FY 2000 NIMH budget was 974 million dollars.¹¹

Genes-What it Means: Transcription Function

The second major function of the gene is the transcription function. Unlike the DNA template function which copies all DNA, the DNA transcription function puts only a small percentage of genetic material into action. In each cell, only about 15% of the total DNA genes are transcribed into action, and the other genes are repressed, depending on many factors, including social/environmental experiences, stress, learning, hormones, or brain developmental phase. These transcription changes are not propagated to the next generation because there is no change in the genes of the egg and sperm cells.

Social experiences, environment, and stress can lead to transcription genetic changes, which then impact other genes in intergenic influence, and change behaviors through impact on the biology of brain and nonbrain organs. Change occurring through genetic transcription function changes are termed cultural evolution. Biologic evolution through template change is more slow and stable. In the 50,000 year history of modern humans, there has not been significant biologic evolution in brain size, while there has been significant cultural evolution.

Gene changes lead to brain changes in structure and function. Growth or pruning of synaptic connections leads to alterations in gene expression and production of proteins. In lab animals, when long-term memory was created by controlled learning, presynaptic terminals doubled to twice

those found in animals without the controlled learning. This process becomes very complex in humans, as simple behaviors involve hundreds of thousands of neurons, although evidence from research has supported these genetic theories. In one study, adult monkeys were trained to get food by using only fingers two, three, and four. Brodmann's area, within the brain's somatosensory cortex, contained mapped areas for each of the five fingers. After the trials, the researchers found that the trained monkeys had greatly enlarged brain areas for fingers two, three, and four, while areas of the cortex assigned to fingers one and five had decreased. This was a very direct and elegant method to demonstrate the measurable structural brain changes in the adult, which occurred solely through behavior changes and learning.¹²

Can psychotherapy and psychopharmacology lead to altered gene transcription, and lead to functional and structural brain changes? Striking evidence demonstrates this in obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). OCD is caused by a combination of biologic, genetic, and environmental factors. Effective treatment for OCD includes medication, behavior therapy, and family education, and has led to symptom remission in up to 70% of those afflicted with OCD. A specific form of psychotherapy, exposure with response prevention, has proven effective, along with selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) such as fluoxetine. Functional hyperactivity of the head of the right caudate nucleus in the brain can be imaged in active OCD. In PET scans, the glucose metabolic rate of the caudate nucleus was greatly decreased after successful treatment of the OCD by *either* SSRI alone *or* exposure and response prevention behavioral modification. In this manner, the words and experiences of psychotherapy can actually produce observable change in brain function.

Does the brain grow throughout life? If so, there is greater opportunity for transcription function changes to impact significantly on the structure of brain tissue. Peter Eriksson of Sahlgrenska University in Sweden looked at hippocampal slices of the brains of five expired throat cancer patients who had been injected with bromodeoxyuridine (BrdU), which stains rapidly-dividing cells only. He found extensive neurogenesis in the hippocampus, early confirmation of the theory that the

brain grows throughout the life span. Supporting this concept, preliminary results from a Wayne State University School of Medicine study show fMRI demonstration of a significant increase in gray matter content after four weeks of lithium treatment, in patients with bipolar I disorder.¹³

On the Macro Scale: Modern Concepts

So experiences change genes, genes change brain function and structure, brains change through life, and brain function and structure determine behaviors. On a "macroscopic," or clinically observable level, with effective treatment interventions, we can see these changed behaviors, evidenced as recovery from mental illness. In the macroscopic realm of sanity, current research shows the benefit of self-control, environment, and mastery over environment. Twelve hundred persons were followed for twelve years to determine mechanisms for stress resistance in the Harvard Stress-Resistance Project led by Dr. Raymond Flannery. They found six traits evident in the stress-resistant individuals: reasonable mastery skills, commitment to some meaningful project, wise lifestyle choices, social support, sense of humor, and concern for the welfare of others. These sanity-strengthening foci leading to stress-resistance were present in both moral treatment and in the mental health recovery movement of today.

Recovery has been described as a path, a process, and an attitude. The goal of the healing recovery process is to strengthen and enrich the individual, lessen the risk of a relapse, and increase resiliency from relapse. The individual moves from dependence to independence and then to interdependence. Patient/Consumer Dr. Patricia Deegan described recovery as, "the urge, the wrestle, and the resurrection... The recovery process is more accurately described as a series of small beginnings and very small steps...professionals cannot manufacture the spirit of recovery and give it to consumers...however, environments can be created in which the recovery process can be nurtured like a tender and precious seedling."

Conclusion

We have seen the complex myriad of interactions of bio-psycho-socio-environmental factors producing functional and anatomic brain change, leading to changes in behavior, and sanity or insanity. Our technology allows us to continue to shift

our focus from the anatomy of neuroreceptors to functional biochemical pathways such as second-messengers, completing the "Decade of the Brain." As we enter the next millennium, it is a remarkable time. With new biologic resources for treatment and prevention, we can look with appreciation at some of the beliefs held over a century ago, and see where we were on track.

As we utilize microscale, high power resolution brain imaging techniques for sophisticated biologic psychiatric tools, we also continue to develop our macroscale understandings and treatments. We know that these sensations, experiences, learnings, roles, and relationships lead to greater responsibility and empowerment of the individual. The experiences impact down to the genetic level to change brain function and structure, and to guide lives into recovery. As with many of life's valuable lessons, whether in the research lab, the living room, or the church, we have much more to learn and understand than we already know.

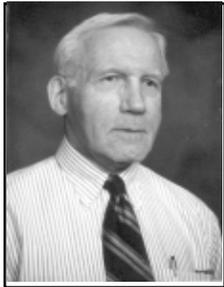
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Why the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Will Be Unsuccessful

The author reviews conditions necessary to intelligent life on a planet and concludes that none known to us are capable of supporting such life

by Richard G. Teske, Ph.D.



About the Author

Richard Teske received his Ph.D. in astronomy at Harvard and moved to the University of Michigan, from which he retired 33 years later with the rank of Emeritus Professor. During his last five years at Michigan, he was director of the Michigan, Dartmouth, M.I.T. Observatory in Arizona. He was one of the first astronomers to launch an orbiting experiment in the early years of the space program, a small detector for measuring X-rays emitted from the Sun. His work mostly concerned solar physics and supernova remnants, and many of his research papers were based on data obtained by spacecraft. A member of the American Astronomical Society and the Astronomical Union, he has been a consultant to NASA and Aerospace Corporation.

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The theme of other worlds inhabited by other peoples has been with us for more than two millennia. The Roman Lucretius and the Greek Plutarch both concluded the Moon and other worlds were inhabited. Copernicus's declaration that the earth circled the sun just like the other planets led in the 16th century to increasing speculation about habitation of the planets. Giordano Bruno's publicly professed belief in the existence of an infinity of populated worlds helped lead to his execution. Yet, less than a century after Bruno's death, and only fifty years after Galileo's trial for supporting Copernicus's cosmology, Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle wittily entertained his sophisticated French readers and instructed

them in the new astronomical science by speculating upon a Universe abounding in inhabited planets¹. He boldly wrote that it was purely up to chance where planets would be found, and whether they would be inhabited. It is a very modern-sounding stance.

For forty years now radio telescopes have been scanning the sky for signs of artificial radio transmissions from the alien civilizations that many people have come to believe are out there somewhere. The search is a scientific experiment in the Baconian sense. Our accumulated human knowledge suggests there may be some sort of life out there among the other stars. Thus, it becomes science's obligation to attempt to find that life. In actuality, of course, the search is not for just any old life but for technologically advanced cultures capable of communicating by means of radio transmission. That's all we can hope to do right now.

The experiment searches for signs of life among the stars because there is no evidence of life in the Solar System. Radio telescopes, optical and infrared telescopes, spacecraft and a host of scientific devices have failed to uncover it indirectly. And direct observations on the Moon and Mars have also failed to turn up any evidence. So we rake and scabble among the stars to prove life exists elsewhere because we've found none hereabouts.

So far the search has been sterile. The hunt for alien civilizations that can communicate with us seems in danger of failing. Why? First, there is a possibility the experimental design is flawed. But if something is wrong, the difficulty lies beyond my present understanding of the problem. I can't and won't address that issue. A second possibility is that the hypothesis is wrong. But our growing knowledge in astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology continues to support and even strengthen the notion that other life,

perhaps intelligent, ought to be present somewhere in the Galaxy.

To try to identify why the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) is failing, I focus on a central idea underlying the experiment's conduct. The search's proponents initially calculated that intelligent life is abundant in our Galaxy and that communicating civilizations will be fairly easy to detect. This expectation seemed reasonable at the outset of the experiment. Yet some recent advances in our knowledge suggest that technologically accomplished communicating civilizations could be rare. If so, we are unlikely to discover one. I think this is the central difficulty with the experimental search. The prediction of rarity of civilizations is based on new information concerning the stability of planetary habitats and the availability of planetary raw materials.

At the outset of the experiment in 1960, nothing was known about other planets. So the proponents of the search relied on the Copernican Principle, which declares that we are not privileged observers. The Principle is named for that same Nicolaus Copernicus who in 1543 took the Earth out of the center of the Universe and placed it among the rest of the planets. According to the Principle, we and our surroundings are a typical sample of the Universe in the large. Thus, because our Sun is an ordinary star, we expect other planets have also been assembled orbiting around other ordinary stars. Because one, or maybe two, planets in the Solar System have surface climates suitable for life, the Principle says there will exist other suitable and hospitable planets on which life might be found. In these ideas we have progressed no farther than did the French writer Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle. But SETI scientists have gone beyond him by calling forth Charles Darwin. They say the living organisms on those planets will evolve to become complex, robust, intelligent, and even develop technological

arts and an industrial civilization. They discern an unbroken, undeviating course directly leading from the first cell to the cellular telephone. In support of this complicated notion they point to the example of Earth's highly developed civilization and conjure with the Copernican Principle.

Yet there are two reasonable arguments I know of where the Copernican Principle is used to show that alien industrial civilizations are rare or even absent from the Galaxy². If the Principle can cut both ways then it is not especially useful. And, indeed, with passing time SETI enthusiasts have become less strenuous in invoking it.

SETI proponents optimistically calculate there may be one million communicating civilizations presently in the Galaxy. If so, the nearest one to us could be roughly 250 light years away. The SETI experiment is designed for that optimistic estimate. It sniffs for its quarry only within about 500 light years.

To make their case the SETI scientists say that life always begins and prospers on habitable planets. Most of us, even me, accept that. Next, they presume to know of a law that always drives evolution of living organisms toward development of complexity and eventual intelligence. Yet terrestrial biological science knows of no such law. Regarding evolution itself, SETI scientists can't really say whether operation of Darwinian principles will be typical of their alien targets because they can't know whether the terrestrial pattern of evolution requires cellular nucleic acid chemistry or whether alien biota will be based on that chemistry.

So the question of whether alien life somehow gets started and eventually evolves into an intelligent technological culture is just too murky at present to be a satisfactory element guiding the conduct of SETI. Further, it's not a quantifiable issue. What is really needed now in the SETI picture is consideration of new conditions that we can quantify, ones *not* concerning life.

There are three such non-life conditions that I want to examine. Two have to do with planetary stability and the third has to do with availability of planetary resources for an intelligent, technological civilization, if one ever arises. The three issues have been discovered and developed only in the last few years, long after the SETI experiment was optimistically launched. Taken together,

these three potentially quantifiable conditions suggest to me that technologically advanced civilizations are rare in the Galaxy. The SETI scientists are not yet discussing them, and seem to be avoiding them.

Regarding planetary stability: Speculation about alien life envisions that it inhabits a planetary surface that offers a long-lived, stable habitat in which living organisms can originate and develop toward a civilization. Our habitat is our best example. Earth's climate has been roughly the same almost since its beginning. During the three and a half billion years of life's tenancy here on Earth, the surface temperature stayed near to its present range of values, according to the geophysical record. Water was abundant and usually in liquid form. The astronomical evidence is that the Earth's orbit around the Sun and the Earth's equatorial tilt that confers our seasons stayed near their present values. Such dependable stability over billion year intervals is essential for the chance development and slow change of life forms.

The organization of the present planetary orbits in the Solar System appears to grant the system a placid, long-term stability. Many theoretical investigations have all seemed to confirm that. So we have come to expect (enter Copernicus again) that, out there in the far cosmos, the rule is quiet, stable planetary systems in which life can evolve over billions of years. This now turns out to have been illusory.

My first point is this: recent discoveries of distant planetary systems suggest that the Solar System's placid organization may be rare.

Twenty-seven planetary systems of other stars have been discovered so far³. The delicate equipment for making the discovery observations is only capable of detecting planets larger than 500 times Earth's mass, planets more like Jupiter than like the Earth. Our knowledge of the large planets now being detected says they are *not habitable* planets. We are not yet able to detect habitable Earthlike planets, although that capability is coming soon.

But the important news for SETI is that all twenty-seven of the newly found planetary systems are quite unlike the Solar System. The Jupiter sized planets are close to their primary stars, not far from their Sun as the giant planets are here. Many of those jumbo planets of other stars are in orbits of great eccentricity, not almost circular like in

the Solar System. Why are these planetary systems so different from ours? The apparent conflict is perhaps reconciled when the history of our own Solar System is looked at afresh.

Recent investigation concerning the origin and evolution of the Solar System's planets has taken into account a newly discovered belt of trillions of small asteroid-like bodies circling the Sun just beyond Neptune's orbit⁴. These small objects are still forming the planet Pluto and may eventually assemble into one or two others billions of years from now. That is, the Solar System is still under construction. All the planets of the Solar System were put together out of myriads of such small asteroid-like bodies like the ones now forming Pluto.

All planets everywhere share a similar process of formation; they are built up from many small asteroid-like objects that aggregate together. It turns out the dynamical effects of the many small bodies in the Solar System has in the past importantly modified the orbits of the outer giant planets during and after the giant planets' formation. Jupiter has migrated inward toward the Sun. Saturn, Uranus and Neptune have migrated outward⁴. Everybody now agrees about this, although the magnitudes of the migrational adjustments are under debate.

The planets of other stars now being discovered were built up through the same formation process that took place here. Just as has happened in the Solar System, the huge number of small asteroid-like bodies out of which those giant exo-planets were formed exerted a dynamical gravitational influence that has resulted in the observed organization of their orbits. Computer simulations of the distant, stirred up planetary systems reveal that any Earth-mass planets that were initially present have probably been cast into the primary star or ejected from the planetary system by repeated gravitational encounters with the jumbo planets⁵. Earth-mass planets also may have collided with the giant planets and been assimilated by them. The lesson is that any Earth-mass planets initially assembled in these planetary systems probably don't survive very long.

So the Solar System has undergone the same formative processes that have led to the stirred-up characteristics of those distant planetary systems. They, and we, have shared similar but not identical

histories. However, the Solar System's history is one that led to a quiet pattern of orbits allowing Earth-like planets to exist. Out of twenty seven other planetary systems now known, few if any will contain habitable planets with about Earth's mass. This statistic needs to be taken into account when we ask how many alien civilizations currently exist in the Galaxy. Planets needed for them may be in short supply. As Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle wrote for his literate and discerning French audience, it's a matter of chance.

So the Copernican Principle has guided us to a correct expectation that other planets exist, but we have misled ourselves in thinking the Principle requires those other planetary systems be as peaceful as ours.

My second point has to do with the climate stability of any Earth-mass planet that does happen to exist. I'm sure there will indeed be many, but not as many as the SETI enthusiasts think. For the ones that do exist, an unstable climate may be in store. Although the Copernican Principle may suggest otherwise, our Earth's dependable climate is probably not the general rule. Here is why.

Each planet's orbit around its central star lies in a flat plane. Because of the gravitational attraction of the other planets this orbital plane wobbles around just a little bit, precessing in space, its slow pattern of re-orientation measured in million-year-long intervals. Further, each planet spins on an axis and possesses an equatorial plane. The planet's rotation creates an equatorial bulge. Gravitational torques on the equatorial bulge are induced by the primary star, by a moon or moons, and by the other planets. These forces cause the equatorial plane to wobble, to precess, in a pattern also measured usually in millions of years. Orbit plane and equatorial plane precess independently.

The angle between the plane of the orbit and the plane of the equator is known as the planet's *obliquity*, and the obliquity, we all know, is the cause of seasons during a year's time. The Earth's obliquity of 23 degrees of arc gives rise to our mild yearly exchange of summer and winter climate at mid-latitudes. Imagine what our seasons and climate would be like if the Earth's obliquity were near 90 degrees. Under that condition, the Northern Hemisphere would point almost toward the Sun sometimes and we would have scorching full sunlight 24

hours a day for part of the year. During the other half of the year the Northern Hemisphere would point away from the Sun and we would have perpetual, frigid night for a while. The Earth's climate would then be very different from what we now experience.

It is now known that coupling of spin and orbital angular momenta can cause three of the four inner planets of the Solar System to experience abrupt and unpredictable changes in their obliquities from time to time ⁶. As a result they can experience climate changes that could be extreme. It has happened at cosmically short intervals of tens of millions of years to Mercury, Venus and Mars, and will happen to them again. As each planet's equatorial plane precesses it occasionally falls into step with the precessing orbit plane. The resulting coupling of angular momenta can cause an abrupt and possibly large change in the planet's obliquity. Because the amount of change is not exactly predictable, the process is called *chaotic*. This seems to have happened to the planet Mars just ten million years ago.

Accompanying any change in planetary obliquity is a change in planetary climate and, of course, a *possibly* catastrophic change in planetary habitability. But this has never happened to Earth in all of its history, because our Moon is large. Relative to Earth, the Moon's mass is great enough that it makes the Earth's equatorial plane precess at the cosmically rapid rate of once around in 26,000 years, the fastest of all the planets. The rate is too fast for the equatorial precession to couple with the much slower precession of the orbit plane and so we're safe from random, drastic climate changes ⁷. As a result, Earth's climate has remained much the same over time. (The ice ages weren't caused by the chaotic changes I'm discussing, nor was the temporary freezing of the oceans that has recently been hypothesized ⁸.)

How come we're so lucky to have a big Moon to protect us from random climatic disorder? It's now believed that the Moon originated in a planetary collision shortly after the planets had first been assembled. In the early Solar System a Mars-sized body collided off-center with the proto-Earth. Afterward some debris from the colliding body orbited the mauled Earth. Soon the planetary shards gravitationally gathered together to form the present Moon. (When you look up at the Moon at night, you are

looking at the reassembled debris of a shattered planet.) If the collision had not happened, and if it hadn't also happened in just the right way to generate a large Moon, Earth would today be subject to possible chaotic climatic changes every tens of millions of years, with all that implies for habitability (or non-habitability) by evolving life.

Let's turn next to the prospects for a civilization that might in fact eventually arise on an Earth-like planet, somehow. To become the technologically capable, communicating aliens the SETI project seeks, they are going to have to develop a planetary industrial infrastructure much like ours, with all that implies as to availability of large quantities of metallic ores and other mineral resources. And that in turn requires that the planetary processes of chemical transport and deposition of ores operate on their planet much as those processes do here on Earth.

My third point is that abundant planetary resources for development of a technological civilization may be rare ⁹. As I pointed out, planets are assembled by collisional aggregation of asteroid-sized chunks. The collisions are violent and disperse the chemical materials of the incoming missiles. After it is finally assembled, the crust of the newly formed planet has a uniform composition. It has no ore concentrations, no mineable deposits of resources.

On Earth, the harmonious operation and delicate balance of several complicated natural mechanisms have led to concentration and deposition of industrial quantities of ores and minerals over billion year intervals. The planetary engine of ore deposition is driven by plate tectonism, the movement of crustal plates rafted about on the surface by convection within the Earth's mantle. On none of the other Solar System planets is there evidence for ongoing plate tectonism.

Circulation of waters deep in Earth's crust is also essential for ore deposition. The planetary hydrological cycle dissolves materials in some locations, transporting, concentrating and depositing them elsewhere, sometimes hundreds of miles away, by chemical precipitation. On none of the other planets is there evidence for an ongoing hydrological cycle that can do this. The Earth's atmosphere participates with and determines the nature of chemical processes in the crust that dissolve and

transport ore materials. Our vast deposits of iron were created *before* the Earth's atmosphere had free oxygen, for iron is oxidized in the presence of free oxygen and will not dissolve, and the oxidized iron cannot then be transported and concentrated by crustal waters. On the other hand our deposits of copper, zinc, uranium and their like are more mobile in the presence of free oxygen and less mobile without it. It is our astounding good fortune that Earth's atmosphere was without free oxygen for the first half of the planet's history, allowing deposition of iron. For the second half of our planet's history the atmosphere contained abundant free oxygen, allowing deposition of many other ores. On none of the other planets is there free oxygen and they apparently never had any.

Two geophysicists, R. G. Burns and D. S. Fisher from M. I. T., have found evidence in spacecraft images for deposits of iron on Mars's northern hemisphere, but no evidence for other kinds of ores. The iron deposits were probably emplaced by weathering of iron-rich volcanic basalt in a way similar to the processes that once took place on Earth. Whether the Martian iron deposits are large enough and concentrated enough to support a planetary industrial infrastructure over centuries is unknown. Certainly Mars's surface is extensively coated with such basalt.

The evidence in the Solar System is that the coordinated planetary processes necessary to generate and emplace an abundant variety of industrial ores operate only on one planet: ours. Together with the

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"Classics," from page 14

computer programming provide lucrative careers that might be satisfying to the creative mind. However, one can still make a good living writing books particularly if one can sell movie rights.

Another theory may be the fall of the lifework or masterwork. Many of the great writers, like Virgil spent many year writing and refining single works. Today, Tom Clancy, John Grisham, Michael Crichton, and Stephen King churn out novels one after the other. On the other hand, William Shakespeare and Honore Balzac must have been just as prolific. Librarian and club member, Hartley Schearer, has recommended to me a modern work, titled *Cold Mountain*, by Charles Frazier, which reportedly took seven years to complete.

It seems counter-intuitive to presume

Copernican Principle – I do not blush at using it here - this suggests to me that there is only a low probability that a distant civilization will enjoy a planetary bounty like ours. It is unlikely to be able to establish the technological culture for which the SETI project listens.

To summarize: The first twenty-seven planetary systems detected suggest a low probability for the existence of habitable Earth-like planets. Among the Earth-like planets that do exist, and I think there will be some, there is a high probability for abrupt, chaotic climate changes and thus a low probability for a planetary climate stable over intervals longer than a few million years. Great climate instability probably works against development of advanced forms of life. But even if advanced, intelligent life forms do emerge on some planet or other they may face the whammy of lack of industrial resources. As de Fontenelle wrote in the 17th century, it's all up to chance.

With future investigation, each of the three conditions I've discussed will be quantified. While it is not yet possible to assign clear probabilities to them, they are mutually exclusive and so we must multiply them together to predict the net probability of SETI's success.

I believe there's only a low probability for each of the three conditions that are necessary for emergence of an industrial civilization, and am guessing that their joint probability is therefore tiny. Consequently I predict there are only a few communicating civilizations in the Galaxy right now, and the

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that modern literature is inferior. Just as today's scientists have the benefit of the knowledge of the past, so should the writers of today. I believe that it only seems as if past works are better and I believe there are several reasons for this.

One reason is that we have more exposure to the poorer works of our time. Doubtless, writers of ages past wrote marginal literature; however, those works have faded over time and we do not see them. Whereas, every modern work, whether it is worthy of being published or not, is displayed at the local bookstore. No doubt, the handpicked classics compare favorably to the general mass of modern works.

There is another reason that the gap between classics and recent works may seem greater than it is. Classics are supported by a wealth of study and analysis in which the

nearest one is likely too far away to be caught in SETI's well-cast net. I wish the project well, but I think it will be unsuccessful.

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classics receives great acclaim for various traits. Earlier, I indicated that I believe that much of this analysis is fluff and that great works may get more credit than they deserve. In many cases, I believe that intense study of great modern work will come. At that time, scholars may find new reasons to praise these works and their relative stature will be enhanced.

I have come to the conclusion that time will shake out the best works of today. Certain modern works will be read, reread, and remembered. The late twentieth century unit in high school English classes will include these works and over time scholars will study them and attribute stylistic elements to them that will make them worthy of being classics. In the end, the scholars will look hard enough at these works to find or invent their genius.

The General and the President

The Union general who was a great organizer and trainer, but an overcautious fighter.

by Frederic Nicholson

About the Author

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In August of 1861, George Brinton McClellan was appointed commanding general of the Army of the Potomac. Three months later, he was appointed general-in-chief of the entire Union Army, and he retained the first position when he received the second one. If you think of leadership in World War II, it was as if the responsibilities of George Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower had devolved on one man – who, incidentally, was only thirty-four years old. The dual roles prompted the President to ask the General if he might be overburdened; and that question prompted the General to reply: "President Lincoln, I can do it all."

In searching for the one word that epitomized George McClellan, you would not choose either "modesty" or "humility." But to that time, there was little in his life to promote those qualities. First among his peers as a child and an adolescent, he was admitted to West Point at fifteen, graduating second in the class of 1846, and taken into the Army Engineers, the elite branch of that time. There followed a distinguished

military career for eleven years and then, looking for greater challenges, he resigned to become a railroad executive. By 1861 he was president of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad. But with the Civil War he rejoined the army as a major general, and in the second month of the war units under his command invaded western Virginia in a campaign that assured its continued allegiance to the Union.

It was a minor military victory, but in a nation yearning for good news, the fighting in western Virginia – and McClellan's role in it – was praised extravagantly, and he became the first battlefield hero of the war.

This, combined with a Union disaster in northern Virginia, would catapult him to the top of the military establishment. For within a week after his success in western Virginia a Union army was beaten at Manassas Junction, retreating in chaos back to Washington. There was a need for a new beginning, and that accounts for the War Department telegram to McClellan one day later: "Circumstances make your presence here necessary. Surrender your command in western Virginia and come to Washington immediately."

A special train was arranged to take him there, and at each stop along the way – from Wheeling to Philadelphia – there were crowds waiting to express their admiration for the young Napoleon, so called by a very favorable press. He arrived in Washington as the conquering hero of western Virginia and was immediately enveloped in a round of meetings and receptions, and everyone seemed to defer to his judgment. He wrote to his wife, Ellen: "I seem to have become the power of the land – they look to me to restore the nation's honor."

He took charge of the defense of the capital and of the rehabilitation of the army. It was work that showed him at his best, for he was a brilliant administrator and his youthful vigor and compact muscular physique projected an image of confidence and strength. His crowning achievement was the transformation of the army. He picked up the dispirited mob that retreated to Washington after Manassas, renamed it

the Army of the Potomac, reorganized it, and trained it into a disciplined military force.

Who could deny McClellan's consummate skill in preparing his army for the war it was to fight? But with the passage of time, there emerged the suggestion of a problem: in the transition from preparation to execution; for days and weeks and then months passed, summer into autumn, autumn into winter, and the war was at a standstill – and the daily report of "all is quiet on the Potomac," originally a source of comfort, became one of concern as the pressure for action was mounting from Congress and from the people.

These were the circumstances that brought the President and the General together, and during the eight months that McClellan was in Washington there were fifty-seven meetings between them.

They had known each other only casually before the war, for Lincoln represented McClellan's railroad when it needed Illinois counsel. McClellan had been unimpressed – there was a lack of refinement in the man's demeanor; a tediousness in his anecdotes – and in Washington, the unfavorable impression was furthered by McClellan's resentment of the President's intrusions into matters best left to generals – his habit of dropping in without notice, asking a multitude of questions about the state of the war. The General could be stunningly abrupt, as on the evening in November when Lincoln, with his secretary, John Hay, called unannounced at McClellan's residence to be told that the General was out attending a wedding. The two of them waited in the parlor. On his return, McClellan, glancing at, but not acknowledging the President, went up the stairs to his quarters. The orderly, who was sent to remind McClellan of his guests, returned to report that the General had retired for the evening. An "unparallel insolence," so characterized by John Hay, prompted from Lincoln only the observation that "this was not the time to be making points of etiquette."

Less acceptable, however, was the

covertness – the General’s refusal throughout 1861 to disclose how he proposed to move against the Confederacy, and it was only after an order, issued by the President as commander-in-chief of the armed services, that McClellan in February 1862 unveiled his plan of action through a letter to the War Department.

It evidenced a time in the war when it was possible to believe – with McClellan – that a single battle might end it. McClellan proposed that his army be taken down the Potomac into the Chesapeake Bay and then into Hampton Roads, landing at Fort Monroe on the Peninsula between the York and James Rivers. It would then advance up the Peninsula – toward Richmond – with the support of the Union Navy controlling the York River. Central to the plan was the expectation of reaching the confederate capital before the enemy’s main army, then in northern Virginia, could establish itself in front of the city. McClellan envisioned a decisive battle – he called it an American Waterloo – to be fought at the time and place of his choosing.

McClellan had an unenthusiastic audience of one. Lincoln was in favor of engaging the Confederate Army where it was through an attack into northern Virginia. Nevertheless, he agreed to McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign, for the alternatives were even less acceptable: either to order that McClellan adopt a plan of action he opposed or remove him and start over with someone else.

The Army of the Potomac did reach the outskirts of Richmond – they could hear the chimes of its clocks – but between it and the city was a Confederate army that had secured its position weeks before the Union army’s arrival. The problem had been Yorktown or, more precisely, the four weeks at the defense line across the narrowest point of the Peninsula, extending from Yorktown to the James River. On reaching it, two days out of Fort Monroe, McClellan had elected not to attack but instead to place Yorktown under siege. It would require the bringing of the heavy artillery by barges up the York River, taking days, perhaps weeks.

A concerned President, by telegram, urged McClellan to attack, and in doing so expressed all of the misgivings he had from the beginning:

I have always insisted that going down the bay in search

of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting, and not surmounting, a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy and the same or equal entrenchments at either place. I have never written you, or spoken to you, in greater kindness or feelings than now...but you must act.

There is no record of a reply, but McClellan’s reaction is disclosed in a letter to his wife:

“I was much tempted to reply that he had better come and do it himself.”

He remained resolute; there would be no attack at Yorktown. But he never tested the siege guns, for the night of May 3, only hours before the guns were in place, the Confederate defenders covertly withdrew from Yorktown, to join their main force in front of Richmond. It was a decision by Joseph Johnston, their commanding general, who feared that his army would be outflanked and destroyed if it remained on the Peninsula.

By the middle of May, the two armies faced each other at Richmond; and at the end of the month there was a battle at Seven Pines, five miles southeast of the city. There were 11,000 killed and wounded, but Seven Pines is memorable in history for one particular casualty. In the late afternoon on the last day of May, a rifle shot hit General Johnston in the shoulder and as he fell a shell fragment struck his chest. He was taken by ambulance to a Richmond hospital where his life was saved, but the period of recovery would take him out of the war longer than the war could wait.

Jefferson Davis looked to a military adviser who until then had served outside of the Civil War limelight. On June 1, 1862, Davis appointed Robert Edward Lee commanding general of the Confederate army in the east – renamed, at Lee’s request, the “Army of Northern Virginia.” On receiving the news, McClellan welcomed the change for he thought Lee “likely to be timid and irresolute in action.” It was, to say the least, a prediction that would not stand the test of time.

With Lee a major player, there was an acceleration of events in the east, with dramatic changes in the landscape over the next four months. To appreciate its beginning, one needs to know that

McClellan’s army straddled the Chickahominy River, a slow-moving stream that makes its way in front of Richmond in a southeasterly direction: 70,000 men on the Richmond side and 30,000 on the far side away from Richmond. It was a vulnerable position made necessary because the Union line of supply to its army came up the York River to a landing called White House, ten miles on the far side of the Chickahominy. To protect this vital lifeline, McClellan needed to place a sizeable part of his army on the side of the River.

Lee recognized and acted on the opportunity this offered. He sent his army several miles upstream from the enemy’s position, crossed the Chickahominy, and then turned back to attack the Union army on the opposite side of the river. It inaugurated a battle that was fought continuously from June 25 to July 1, 1862, and so came to be known as The Seven Days.

The Confederate offense in the Seven Days was not a textbook operation. Lee’s orders were often misunderstood; some were even ignored; and movements intended to coordinate rarely did. But these were faults in the particulars; they should not obscure a larger consideration: the offense had this undeniable virtue: it worked – it did the job, or at least a good part of it; for at the end of the Seven Days, Richmond was no longer threatened by the Union Army and the initiative in the war, for a time, had been seized by Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia.

The pivotal moment occurred on the third of the Seven Days when Lee’s army, at Gaines Mill, broke the Union line of defense above the Chickahominy, and McClellan, rejecting advice to send reinforcements from below the river, instead abandoned the supply base at White House, and withdrew thirty miles to the south, to Harrison’s Landing on the James River.

He characterized it as only a change in his base of supply. But this euphemism could not disguise the reality, and what he actually thought was expressed in a telegram to the War Department, sent on the evening of his decision to withdraw to Harrison’s Landing.

I have lost this battle because my force was too small. I again repeat that I am not responsible for this. And it concluded:

If I save this army now, I tell you plainly that I owe no thanks to you or to any other persons in Washington. You have done your best to sacrifice this army.

That last sentence, literally a charge of treason, never reached the Secretary of War or the President. Before delivering the message, the head of the telegraph office simply deleted the final sentence.

Harrison's Landing covered two plantation estates – Berkeley and Westover – an area three miles across and extending over a mile out from the banks of the James River. Into this area poured an army of 100,000 soldiers, with horses and mules and cattle and weapons, all of this in the middle of a sweltering hot summer.

It was a condition designed for the long term: a decision had to be made; either, as McClellan urged, Harrison's Landing would become a base for a renewed offense against Richmond, thirty-five miles to the west, or it would be only a temporary refuge soon to be abandoned, the last act of an ill-fated military venture. This was on Lincoln's mind when for three days in early July, he visited Harrison's Landing to review the army and consult with its leaders. He remained noncommittal, however, even to the time when he boarded the steamer that took him down the James River on the start of his return trip to Washington.

However, considerations militated against McClellan's desire. One was his own imagination, consistently leading him to inflate the strength of the enemy he faced. In Washington, he had estimated there to be 100,000 Confederate troops in northern Virginia, which more than doubled reality, and at Harrison's Landing he estimated there to be 200,000 men in Lee's army, when the real number was less than 78,000. If McClellan's estimates were to be believed, it would require – and he so requested – 50,000 more men before renewing the offense against Richmond. But they were not available.

Coupled with this was the growing sense among Republicans in Washington – both in the Administration and in Congress – of the need to fight a harder, a more punitive war – a war led by generals who espoused that belief. Such a general, they thought, was John Pope, victorious in small battles along the Mississippi River. His credentials as a Republican were unassailable, and he talked the right talk: of

an unrelenting war against all who supported the confederacy, in or out of uniform. And so it was that when a new army was formed in Washington – named the Army of Virginia – John Pope was called from the west to become its commanding general.

The plan was to bring the two armies together, and in the process Pope would become first among equals. To this end, on the second of August, McClellan was ordered to leave Harrison's Landing and take his army to northern Virginia, where it would offer support to Pope and the Army of Virginia.

It appeared to offer, with a minimum of friction, a solution to what we now being seen as the "McClellan Problem." With no formal announcement, Pope could take increased authority in military matters, with McClellan, without a formal demotion, in fact being relegated to a supporting role – a condition that might lead him to resign, making it unnecessary for the President to act on what would be a controversial decision.

But the plan foundered on a simple fact: John Pope was shown, in both words and action, to be an unfortunate choice for the role he was to fulfill. Described by a fellow officer as an "inveterate gasbag," his pronouncements deeply offended the men who were to serve under him, even before his taking command in the east, as when he fatuously observed "I come from the west where we do not show our backs to the enemy" or when he offered patronizing advice: "discard your excessive concern over lines of supply and routes of retreat."

And in action, he was shown to be ill-equipped to lead an army against the likes of Robert E. Lee. This was established when Lee, on learning that Harrison's Landing was to be abandoned, moved his army north in the hope of suppressing the Army of Virginia before it was reinforced by McClellan.

He succeeded in engaging Pope's army in continuous fighting over several days that ended on August 31 on the plains at Manassas, precisely where the first major battle of the war was fought – and so in history, it is known as the Campaign of Second Manassas. It ended in a disaster for the Union – brought on largely by Pope's miscalculations – with the Union army, as in the earlier battle, retreating to the protection of Washington.

As to McClellan's performance, he had

control over a most important variable in the Second Manassas Campaign: that is, how long it would take for his Army of the Potomac to join Pope's Army of Virginia; or to put it another way how long Lee could conduct the Campaign with numerical superiority. In his evacuation of Harrison's Landing, more than two weeks elapsed between the order from the War Department to go to northern Virginia and the time by which his army boarded the boats that would take them north, and later after arriving at Alexandria, when conditions required a bold response, McClellan seemed to take every pretext to delay sending troops to Pope's aid. Whether motivated by personal considerations or the caution he always exhibited in military actions is questionable, but letters to his wife evidenced his satisfaction over Pope's distress: "I am inclined to believe that Pope will be badly thrashed within two days, and then they will be very glad to turn over the redemption of their affairs to me." And President Lincoln appeared to support the worse interpretation when he commented to his secretary, John Hay, that McClellan seemed to have wanted Pope's defeat.

However problematic the motives, the net effect was clear: on a personal level John Pope's misfortune redounded to George McClellan's advantage. The men who fought in the Second Manassas Campaign believed, with justification, that they had been victimized by poor leadership. They threatened to lay down their guns if told to continue serving under John Pope. So Pope was relieved of his command. He was sent to the western frontier, spending much of his remaining military career coping with Indian uprisings. He became a footnote to the civil War, a man best remembered for the new meaning he gave to the phrase "pompous ass."

As to the Army of Virginia, in less than three months from its creation it ceased to exist – merged into the Army of the Potomac. And Lincoln, over the objections of his Cabinet and of Republicans in Congress, restored McClellan to its command. He knew the men to be loyal to McClellan, and he said that he had no alternative: "We must work with the tools that we have." Moreover, the immediate need was for the defense leadership – it was thought that Lee would follow his victory with an attack on Washington – and the defense was more compatible with

McClellan's cautious temperament.

So McClellan was again in Washington as he had been a year before; and again, as before, they looked to him to redeem a humiliating defeat at Manassas.

But the attack against Washington never happened; Lee found the fortifications around the city too formidable to challenge. He was, nevertheless, resolved to retain the initiative, and at the beginning of September, he took the war to the enemy by crossing the Potomac thirty miles above Washington, into Western Maryland. From the crossing, his army went due north to Frederick Maryland and then turned northwest toward Hagerstown, with the expectation, if all went well, of going into Pennsylvania and destroying the railroad bridges at Harrisburg.

Kept in command, originally to defend the capital, McClellan was now directed to pursue the invading Confederates into western Maryland. He and his army left Washington on the Seventh of September, a Sunday, marching down the streets of the city in a parade-like atmosphere.

When they reached Frederick, four days later, McClellan was the beneficiary of an unexpected gift that stacked the military deck in his favor. A copy of General Order 191 – from the headquarters of Robert E. Lee – was lost by an extremely negligent southerner – his identity never determined – and it was found by a union corporal in the tall grass of a field outside of Frederick, in a stuffed envelope wrapped around three cigars. When it reached McClellan, it told him that the Confederate army directly to the west had been reduced by one-half, resulting from Lee's decision to send part of it across the Potomac to Harper's Ferry to open a line of supply. Lee intended to reunite all the units within five days, relying on McClellan's caution not to force a battle before then.

On the strength of Order 191, McClellan moved forward, faster than usual but even so slower than he might have had him not overestimated what remained of the Confederate army. McClellan's advance required that Lee abandon his plan of going further west to Hagerstown and then into Pennsylvania. But he learned of McClellan's good fortune in sufficient time to prepare for the arrival of the Army of the Potomac.

Late in the day on the 16th of September, the Confederates formed a four-mile line of defense in front of Sharpsburg, Maryland,

parallel to the Potomac that was behind them and facing Antietam Creek, to which the Union army had advanced and was encamped. That evening the soldiers in each army could sense the size and proximity of the enemy force in front of them and suspect that something terrible would happen the next day – as it did.

In the thirteen hours of fighting on September 17, 1862 – it was called Antietam in the North and Sharpsburg in the South – from six in the morning until seven in the evening, more than 23,000 men – North and South – were killed or wounded. It exceeded the American losses on any day in any war before or since. It was, for example, four times greater than D-day losses on the beaches at Normandy.

Measured by damage done, at least in absolute numbers, Antietam might be considered a tie – but it is seen as a Union victory because the south had a smaller force to deplete and because two days after the battle, Lee's army retreated across the Potomac, having accomplished none of the objectives that had prompted the invasion.

McClellan was exultant, satisfied that he had saved the army from defeat, and the north from an invasion. The President's reaction, while positive, was less than enthusiastic, qualified by his believe that a unique opportunity had been missed – the chance to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia had it been pursued as it retreated across the Potomac – a pursuit that had been urged on McClellan by his staff but that he had rejected, focusing on the condition of his army rather than on that of his enemy.

The Army of the Potomac remained encamped in fields adjacent to the Antietam battleground, and two weeks after the battle, the President paid a visit to review the army and to meet with McClellan to impress on him the importance of moving aggressively into Virginia, for questions were being raised in Washington as to the integrity of his intentions in prosecuting the war. A meeting between them held in McClellan's tent is the subject of a famous photograph which they somehow seem to be looking directly at each other without establishing eye contact.

Early one morning while at Antietam, on a walk with a friend from Illinois, Ozias Hatch, Lincoln climbed a high ground overlooking the military encampment with its sea of tents reaching out to the horizon.

Abruptly, unrelated to anything said before, Lincoln asked: "Hatch, do you know what that is?" "Why Mr. President, it's the Army of the Potomac" replied his somewhat puzzled friend. "So it is called," Lincoln said, "but that's a mistake; it's only McClellan's bodyguard."

The comment showed an awareness of the esteem the men still had for their leader, yet also suggested they might oppose by force any effort at his removal. It, however, it was intended to imply McClellan's encouragement that would be disproved by later events.

After his return to Washington and the passage, a number of days with no movement by the army, Lincoln wrote a letter to the General, carrying the earmarks of a final effort. He again urged that McClellan initiate an offense in Virginia toward Richmond – employing geometric imagery to support his reasoning. Lee and his army were encamped in the Shenandoah Valley. If McClellan marched south in a direct line east of the Blue Ridge, he would be advancing along the chord of the circle, with Lee's route being on its arc of the same circle. Move quickly, Lincoln asserted, and you will be established in front of Richmond before he arrives, so that the ensuing fight will be at the time and place of your choosing.

At the end of October, McClellan did advance into Virginia, some twenty miles and then stopped to encamp at Rectortown, outside of Warrenton; and it was here, a week later on November 7, that he received a notice from the War Department of his removal from command of the Army of the Potomac.

Two intervening events pressed the matter to closure. By November 4, part of the Confederate army led by James Longstreet had reached Culpeper directly between the Army of the Potomac and Richmond. The southerners were no longer on the arc nor the northerners on the chord. And also the fourth of November, the first Tuesday of the month, the midterm elections for Congress were held so that the removal of McClellan would no longer affect the voting in that election.

McClellan remained for a few days to help with the details of the command change – General Ambrose Burnside, a personal friend, was to succeed him – and to allow for a ceremonial leave-taking in which the army turned out in full review in his

honor.

Four days after his dismissal, McClellan boarded a special train bound for Washington.

At his leaving, members of an attending honor guard made a brief display of protest, but, standing on the rear platform, he quieted them, told them to give Burnside the same loyalty they had given him and all would go well, and then as the train moved out, it was simply "goodbye, lads."

After the November departure from "his army" – as he had always referred to it – McClellan never returned to active military service. He would, however, continue as someone for the President to contend with for two more years, but in a different forum.

McClellan's desire to influence events beyond the normal role of a general was made clear to the President at Harrison's Landing when they met in July. At the end of their meeting, McClellan handed Lincoln a letter, identified in history as "The Harrison's Landing Letter." A general review of the state of the rebellion, it told of the need to conduct the war on the highest Christian principles; to avoid seeing it as a fight against the general population of the south but only against their armed services; to avoid the taking or confiscation of property and this included property in human form; and, of most importance, of the need to limit the war's objective to the restoration of the Union. The peculiar institution must be left intact, for if the abolition of slavery became a stated objective; there could never be a negotiated peace that brought the Union together again.

Lincoln read the letter in McClellan's presence, thanked him, but said nothing else. There was a time, earlier in the war, when he would have agreed: however deplorable slavery, only the restoration of the Union mattered. But by the summer of 1862, events had taken him to another place. Unknown to McClellan, Lincoln had by the time of Harrison's Landing prepared the Emancipation Proclamation, delaying its issuance until the Union won a military victory. It was in fact issued on the 22nd of September, on the strength of the fighting at Antietam – and there is a special irony in its being a battle fought under the command of a general so opposed to abolition.

After leaving the army, McClellan moved to New York City, where he was well received, for it was a stronghold of that

segment of the Democratic party whose views on the war and its objective were identical to his – those who favored the prosecution of the war but only to restore the Union; they were called the "War Democrats" as distinguished from the "Peace Democrats" who favored the ending of hostilities even if it meant that the Union was not restored.

McClellan was enormously popular among the right people in New York and by the end of 1863 had become the candidate for president, and at the Democratic Convention on August 31, 1864 in Chicago he received the party's nomination, to run against Lincoln who had been denominated by the Republicans at its convention in July.

In assessing the election of 1864, it is well to remember that as late as August 23, Lincoln believed, as he stated in a memorandum prepared on that date, that he probably would not be reelected and that the union would not be saved by his opponent, as yet not nominated.

That this proved to be unprophetic was attributable to events on the battlefields. On the first of September, only one day after McClellan's nomination, William Sherman took Atlanta, the largest unoccupied city in the south and in October, Philip Sheridan overran the Shenandoah Valley and through a scorched earth policy ended its role as a bread basket for the south.

In the election, Lincoln received 55% of the 4,000,000 popular votes and all but twenty-one of the 233 electoral votes, losing only New Jersey, Kentucky and Delaware. What must have been particularly disappointing to McClellan was the soldier vote; that is, the voting of the men in service and away from the states of their residence – of 150,000 Lincoln won 78%.

There was a political slogan of the day heard in McClellan's campaign because it so concisely embraced his view: "the Union as it was; the Constitution as it is." It was a plea for the restoration for the *status quo ante*; a return to the government as it was before the secession winter of 1860 and 1861. And the "Constitution as it is" meant that the peculiar institution would live on, for the then Constitution supported the right of the states to maintain or reject slavery.

But with the election of Lincoln and the defeat of McClellan, the slogan would prove to be misplaced on both counts. The

Constitution would not remain "as it is" but would reflect the changed relationship in our federal system, so that every amendment for sixty years after the War would enhance the federal powers to the diminution of the states, whereas almost every amendment before the war had just the opposite effect; and there would be no return to the Union as it was but instead the emergence of a nation recreating itself in ways not imagined before the war.

Lincoln came to embrace this perception; and a year before the 1864 election he would immortalize it through words of simple yet timeless eloquence, when he stood at a graveyard site in a small village in Pennsylvania, and in that mythic moment spoke of the nation then engaged in a great Civil War – said of that nation that it would not perish from the earth, but more than that, that it would have a new birth – a new birth of freedom.

**Ready or not,
it's time to start
planning
for the
2002 IATC
Convention in
Athens, Georgia
from
June 27 - 30!!!**

**Be sure to
check out the
2001 Convention
photo collage
in the Winter
2001-2002 issue
of *The Torch*.**

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IATC ANNUAL CONVENTION ATHENS, GEORGIA JUNE 27-30, 2002

General Information

The Georgia Center for Continuing Education is a full-service, residential adult-learning facility on the campus of The University of Georgia. A modern 200-bedroom hotel, dining services, conference rooms, auditoriums, library, and computer labs are combined in one smoke-free facility. Hotel rooms offer hair dryers, coffeepots, irons and ironing boards. Some suites and smoking rooms may be available. A full-service Business Center—complete with computers and printers, Internet and e-mail access, photo-copying and fax services, instructional and office supplies—is available for nominal fees.

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Lodging: A block of rooms is being held for the conference until 5 p.m. ET, June 5, 2002. Indicate lodging preference on the registration form. If your choice is unavailable, the best alternative will be confirmed. If lodging at the Georgia Center is unavailable, we will arrange for your accommodations at a local hotel; room rates vary. A credit card is required to guarantee your reservation at the Georgia Center and local hotels. Your card will be charged one night's lodging if you do not cancel by 4:00 p.m. 24 hours prior to your arrival date. Check-in time is 4:00 p.m., and check-out time is 11:00 a.m.

Transportation: All flights into Athens connect through Charlotte, NC. Regular ground transportation is available from Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport to the Georgia Center. A map, parking information, and further details will be mailed to you with your conference confirmation. Directions may also be found at www.gactr.uga.edu/conferences/about/directions.phtml. A parking deck is located adjacent to the Center. Vans and other vehicles over seven feet tall cannot fit in the deck, but arrangements can be made for alternative parking.

Program Cancellation Policies: (1) We will gladly issue full refunds for cancellations made by 5 p.m. ET, June 20, 2002. No refunds will be issued thereafter. Substitutions are encouraged. (2) If a program is cancelled for any reason, the Georgia Center will not be responsible for any cancellation changes/charges assessed by airlines or travel agencies.

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Reflections:

*"To found a great empire
for the sole purpose of raising
up a people of customers
may at first sight appear a
project fit only for a nation
of shopkeepers. It is,
however, a project altogether
unfit for a nation whose
Government is influenced
by shopkeepers."*

—Adam Smith: Wealth of
Nations II.iv.7. (1776)

*The phrase "a nation of shopkeepers"
was picked up and applied
contemptuously to the English by
Napoleon. The English accepted it
with pride.*
