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Editor’s Notebook

Andrew C. Holman

Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson (1824–63) was a West Point graduate, a decorated and respected Confederate Army general, a hypochondriacal advocate of hydropathic therapy, and an inveterate book marginalist. The first three of these characteristics made him, without doubt, an uncommon Victorian, but not so the fourth. The dozens of books in Jackson’s library, preserved and on display in the Stonewall Jackson House Museum (the only dwelling he ever owned, in Lexington, Virginia) demonstrate well his penchant for scribbling marks of emphasis, reminders, comparisons, and exclamations of disgust or approval in the margins of printed books. As the extant libraries of many of our famous and not-so-famous ancestors show, readers have long plunged into this sort of silent dialogue with their books, to engage ideas on the printed page, to have the “last word” in their myriad discussions with authoritative texts and published authors.

Isaac Newton was a committed marginalist; so, too, were Thomas Jefferson, Jane Austen, John Adams, Edgar Allen Poe, Herman Melville, Sylvia Plath, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and David Foster Wallace. We know about these famous book defacers because their celebrity recommended the saving of their libraries and other possessions. But they were hardly alone. No less dedicated to the practice were thousands of ordinary readers, including me. I admit it. I write in the margins of all of my books, though I make no great claim to writing in them anything enlightening, or even clever. My dirty little secret stared me in the face again recently when I considered thinning out my office book collection, only to conclude that hundreds of hours of erasing coded pencil marks and comments would be required to restore them to a state where the books might be re-sellable, or even reusable.

My secret is dirty because I was taught (by my school librarians and teachers, and my parents, if I recall correctly) to respect the sanctity of the printed page. The “thou shall not scribble in books” commandment must have had more to do with the protection of school property than anything else. But my take-away was also that marginalizing was seen as objectionable because it was an act of irreverence (a mortal sin for Canadians like me), one that could only lead to more offensive sorts of public commentary, such as graffiti on restroom stall walls, or worse, Twitter. Since then, though, I think I have come to terms with my proclivity to jot in white spaces. In fact, I embrace it warmly, and recommend it to my students with enthusiasm.

In academic life, marginalia has value in at least a couple of different ways. First, it has instrumental, pedagogical use. Marginal scribbling is, I am convinced, infinitely more effective in helping scholars and students remember what they have read and to challenge it, though it has not been the preferred mode of textual engagement for some decades—since 1963, to be specific, when the despicable “Hi-Liter” was invented by the Carter’s Ink Company. Since then, those fat little cylinders have been the scourge of the textual universe, leaving in their wake mindless rainbows on painted pages, the meaning behind those selected sections forever lost. For me, to consume a text (I mean really devour it) is to mark it up. To notate it is to love it. But marginalia are valuable in a second scholarly way, beyond pedagogy. We have come to delight in reading other people’s glosses on and addenda to the printed text, and to invest them with meaning. Scholars who look at, say, Stonewall Jackson’s scribbling, do so because they expect to gain insight.
We have come to delight in reading other people’s glosses on and addenda to the printed text, and to invest them with meaning.

into what made the great man tick, and hope to find a comment or witticism entered in a key book in a key place, one that at long last figures him out, or challenges what we already know about him. And marginalia in famous authors’ copies of their own work are doubly enticing. “Marginalia reveal much about … the development of their ideas,” Drew University librarian Andrew Scrimgeour wrote in a recent New York Times piece. “Researchers and biographers mine those annotations.”

Of course, we need not merely wax nostalgic about this literary act. Though perhaps in decline in these past decades, marginalizing is by no means dead. Indeed, its prospects look pretty bright, as Heather Jackson, University of Toronto professor and author of the 2001 book Marginalia, told a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio audience in November 2013. The rise of new internet-based forums that encourage annotation (especially weblogs and news media outlets that encourage readers to respond to articles and editorials) and new technology (such as e-readers and tablets) that makes marginalizing easy to do, cannot help but bring back the art. The dirty little secret is becoming respectable (I’ll have to find another one).

So, go ahead. Go wild. Mark up the margins of this issue of Bridgewater Review. Cover it in scrawl. I know that there is plenty in the printed pages that follow that will delight, inform, provoke and otherwise exercise all of our readers. Engage your magazine and then express your response to it. But don’t keep your scratchings secret. When you are done scribbling, write them up in a letter, send it to me, and share your ideas with all of us.

Andrew Holman is Professor of History and Editor of Bridgewater Review.
Organizational Justice: A Primer

**Todd C. Harris**

I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.

— Theodore Parker, Unitarian Minister and Boston Abolitionist, “Sermon on Justice and the Conscience” (1853).

We often think about moral questions as abstract philosophical inquiries that fathom the depths of what it means to be human. Certainly, moral questions motivated antebellum antislavery advocates, for example, for whom morality offered the best argument against the evil of slavery. What is true, however, is that every engaged member of society, then and now, must struggle daily with deep moral questions. This is no less true for the university professor or the corporate manager than it was for abolitionists such as Theodore Parker.

Imagine that a college student receives a failing grade in a course. The student would likely be dissatisfied with the grade, but could he or she reasonably claim that the grade was unfair? To answer this question, we would need to take a number of issues into consideration. For example, did the grade accurately reflect how the student performed in the course? Were the scores on tests and other assignments computed in an objective, unbiased manner and summed correctly? Did the professor treat the student with dignity and respect throughout the semester? Lastly, was the grading procedure clearly and thoroughly communicated and explained to the student? The answers to these questions are likely to have a considerable impact on how the student feels about the grade, the professor, and even the school as a whole. These perceptions, in turn, may have a profound effect on what the student actually does in response to the grade, ranging from quietly accepting the grade, complaining to a fellow student, challenging the professor, or even withdrawing from school altogether.

Although the above example is drawn from the field of education, the same kinds of issues arise in the workplace. For example, do you feel that your salary and other benefits equitably reflect your contributions to your organization? How is your annual performance review conducted? Do your immediate manager and other leaders treat you with dignity and respect? Have you been given information about how important organizational decisions were made? Matters such as these are relevant to organizational justice: the study of people’s perceptions of, and their reactions to, fairness in organizations.

**Organizational Justice: Fairness Matters**

Why should organizations and the people that lead them care about justice? The most powerful arguments can be distilled into three broad categories. The Moral Argument holds that organizations should strive to do the right thing as a worthwhile end unto itself, exclusive of any tangible organizational benefits. The Business Argument holds that treating employees unfairly adversely impacts their work attitudes and behaviors, which in turn negatively impact criteria that organizations value, such as sales, customer satisfaction, safety, absenteeism, job satisfaction, employee turnover, and other factors directly relevant to business success. This argument may take on added importance as we continue to shift toward a service, creative and innovation-focused economy, one that places a premium on employees who are fully committed to their organizations and engaged with their work. The Public Argument, which may actually be a constituent of the business argument, holds that the public is growing increasingly aware and intolerant of unethical corporate behavior. Consumers and investors will support socially responsible companies and punish irresponsible ones.
Research has shown that people are more willing to accept negative outcomes when the outcomes were determined using fair procedures.

Three Forms of Organizational Justice

If we return for a moment to the example of the college student who received a failing grade, we see that organizational justice is a multi-faceted concept that takes on a number of forms. The key forms are distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Distributive justice is the form of organizational justice that focuses on employees’ beliefs that they get their fair share of valuable organizational outcomes (e.g. pay, promotions, recognition). For example, as I write this, the final roster for the 2014 Men’s United States Olympic hockey team has just been announced. The twenty-five roster spots would be considered to have been distributed fairly if the best twenty-five players received them. It is important to note that individuals make assessments of distributive justice not in isolation but in comparison to others. For example, consider two employees, Employee A and Employee B. Both have identical educational backgrounds, job titles and responsibilities, are hard workers, and are equally competent performers. However, Employee A’s annual compensation is ten percent higher than Employee B’s. Upon making this discovery, Employee B is likely to be dissatisfied, and may seek to remedy this inequity by working less (i.e. reducing inputs) or asking for a raise (i.e. increasing outcomes) among other strategies. It is important to note that there are many different definitions of what is “fair” with respect to the allocation of rewards. One definition is based on the merit norm, which indicates a situation in which the people who work the hardest or add the most value to the organization get the greatest rewards. Another definition is based on the notion of an equality norm, in which every member of the organization gets the same share of rewards, regardless of effort or levels of contribution. Finally, the need norm distributes rewards in proportion to individual needs. In the United States, the merit norm is the most common foundation for defining fairness, whereas in other parts of the world where a collectivist culture prevails (e.g. Asia and Scandinavia), the equality norm is stronger.

The second form of organizational justice is procedural justice. Whereas distributive justice concerns itself with the fairness of the “ends” (i.e. did I get my fair share of the pie?), procedural justice considers the fairness of the “means” to those ends (i.e. was the process by which valued outcomes were allocated done fairly?). Procedural justice occurs in situations in which individuals feel that they have a “voice” in the making of decisions, where rules are applied consistently, safeguards against bias are in place, and the information used in the decision is accurate. Although it is important to use fair procedures always, it is especially important to do so when
the outcomes involved are unfavora-
ble. Let us return for a moment to the
classroom. A student who receives an
“A” as a final course grade would be
inclined to simply accept the grade
without asking too many questions.
If, on the other hand, the grade was an
“F,” then the student would likely have
much more interest in the procedures
by which this final grade was calcu-
lated. This is known as the “fair process
effect.” Research has shown that people
are more willing to accept negative
outcomes when the outcomes were
determined using fair procedures.

In my pre-academic career as a man-
agement consultant, I often observed
that companies, especially those based
in the United States, paid less than full
attention to the issue of procedural
justice. My research finds that some
managers and other organizational
leaders believe that they are “better” at
procedural justice than they truly are,
resulting in a disconnect between their
perceptions and those of their employ-
ees. For example, I suspect that most
of us would rate ourselves highly on a
survey item that measures how well we
treat others with dignity and respect.
However, if our employees were asked
the same question, would they rate
us as highly on this dimension as we
rate ourselves? The research says no.
Managers may have the intent to treat
others respectfully, but are not well
attuned to how those intentions
are being viewed by others. Within

Employees who believe that they
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Alternatively, some managers wrongly
believe that tangible benefits (i.e.
distributive justice) are more important
to employees than being treated with
decency and respect. This phenomenon
often happens when a company con-
ducts a downsizing or other large-scale
layoff, during which company execu-
tives concern themselves more with the
size of severance packages and the con-
tinuation of health insurance benefits
(distributive justice) than with being
transparent about how the lay-off deci-
sions (e.g. who stays? who goes? why?)
were made (i.e. procedural justice).

the realm of organizational justice,
perceptions matter more than any
objective reality.
The final form of organization justice is interactional justice. Individuals make determinations about fairness not only on the basis of outcomes received and the procedures used to determine those outcomes, but also in terms of how these outcomes and procedures are explained. This is interactional justice, which manifests itself in two forms. The first is informational justice, which can be defined as the amount and quality of information provided to explain outcomes and procedures. Sharing lots of accurate information helps employees to perceive that decisions were made in a careful, thoughtful, and unbiased manner. The second is interpersonal justice, which can be defined as the level of respect and professionalism accorded to all employees. Imagine a long-time and loyal employee who found out she had been fired only when she went to her doctor and was told that she no longer had health insurance, or a team of senior executives from the U.S. relieved of their duties via email while on a business trip in China, stranded with no way to get home. Imagine a college football coach pulled off of the team bus and fired in front of the whole team. These would be all examples of an egregious lack of interpersonal justice, which we understand to be the degree of dignity and respect shown someone while explaining outcomes and procedures. Employees who believe that they have been treated with a high level of interactional justice tend to be good organizational citizens, going “above and beyond” to assist others even when they do not have to.

As with procedural justice, I have often observed companies struggle with the concept of interactional justice. Unwittingly, sometimes corporate policies and guidelines hinder interactional justice. A company’s legal department or human resources department may discourage managers from fully explaining their decisions on the grounds that the disclosure of information may make the company more vulnerable to lawsuits. They reason that the less said the better. While legal considerations regarding what to communicate, when, and how certainly need to be taken into account, in my experience organizations often err on the side of withholding information when being more open and transparent would actually be more beneficial.

Another reason why managers often struggle with interactional justice is the all-too-human desire to avoid or minimize uncomfortable situations. When a manager has to communicate bad news, such as laying off an employee, he or she has to wrestle with a litany of negative emotions such as anxiety, guilt, and fear. In lieu of addressing these emotions, some managers find it preferable to avoid the issue and the people impacted by it altogether. Although emotionally taxing, it is vitally important for organizational leaders to be more visible, not less, during times of organizational challenge.

**Suggestions to Improve Organizational Justice**

How can a company build a culture that honors organizational justice? Compensating employees fairly and in accordance with prevailing market conditions improves the distributive justice of a workplace. In this vein, compensation could include non-wage-based benefits such as health insurance or flexible work schedules. Compensating employees in proportion to their contributions to the organization also enhances distributive justice. Giving employees a genuine voice in organizational decisions and being transparent about how organizational decisions are made both facilitate procedural justice. Finally, explaining decisions thoroughly with accurate and timely information and ensuring that managers treat everyone with dignity, respect and professionalism extend interactional justice. It is important for senior executives and other organizational leaders to make all forms of organizational justice a top priority and to personally model it in all of their communications and interactions. When the people at the top of the organizational pyramid involve employees in critical decisions, make themselves available for authentic two-way dialogue, explain why decisions are made and what alternatives were considered, and treat employee concerns with dignity and respect, the organization will be morally healthier.

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U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense, NORAD and the Canada Conundrum

Joel Sokolsky

When newly sworn in U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced in early 2013 that in response to the growing threat from North Korea, 14 new Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) interceptors would be added to the 30 already in place in California and Alaska, the Wall Street Journal called it “one of the biggest switcheroos of the Obama Presidency.” Whether the administration is prepared to go much further still is not clear. A September 2012 report by the U.S. National Research Council (Making Sense of Ballistic Missile Defense) called for a gradual buildup of the system, specifically mentioning Fort Drum, NY and northern Maine as possible BMD locations.

While the deployment of more BMD interceptors will be a purely American decision, such an expansion will have implications for U.S. defense relations with Canada. This is because of the existence of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a unique “bi-national” command staffed with both American and Canadian military personnel which, since 1957, has had responsibility for the aerospace defense of both countries. Originally postured to defend the continent against the threat of Soviet long-range bombers by providing a single command for the operational control of assigned American and Canadian air defense forces, NORAD in subsequent years has taken on additional responsibility for warning of ballistic missile attack and space surveillance.

But NORAD never had a real operational BMD function. During the Cold War, the United States did not deploy it and there was no capability to intercept Soviet nuclear-armed ground and sea-launched Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs and SLBMs) before they reached their military and urban targets in the U.S. or Canada. The “defense” of North America lay instead in the deterrent power of the American strategic-nuclear offensive capability.

The absence of an American BMD system meant that Canada, although involved through NORAD in missile warning, could eschew a role in BMD, a situation that reflected Canadian policy preferences.

With the advent of new post-Cold War missile threats and the deployment by the United States of a limited BMD system directed against North Korea and other “rogue” states, the U.S. has now moved to deploy a limited BMD system of radars and interceptors. These capabilities were not placed under NORAD’s operational control, although as the command responsible for the continent’s aerospace defense this might have been seen as a logical step. Here again, the government in Ottawa has resisted direct participation in BMD, and adjustments were made at NORAD to accommodate Canadian reluctance. With Washington now set to expand its BMD system, including along the border with Canada, Ottawa’s position may no longer be tenable and as such the future of NORAD as a bi-national command is in question.

Speaking in Kingston, Ontario in 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt declared that the United States would not stand idly by if Canada were ever threatened.
Missile Defense and the Obligations of a “Good and Friendly Neighbour”

Speaking in Kingston, Ontario in 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt declared that the United States would not stand idly by if Canada were ever threatened. In response, then Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King said that Canada’s obligation as a “good and friendly neighbour” was to see to it that enemy forces did not attack the U.S. by land, sea or air by way of Canada. The essence of the bilateral security relationship—its close, friendly and cooperative nature notwithstanding—is that Canada cannot become a security liability for the U.S.

This obligation took on new meaning after World War Two as the Soviet Union developed atomic weapons and a long-range bomber force capable of flying over the North Pole en route to the U.S. Suddenly, Canada became, in the words of American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, a “very important piece of real estate.” Canada understood and readily embraced its new position. As the Cold War deepened in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Ottawa joined with Washington to create a strong western deterrent in Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in North America in the development of radar lines in the Canadian north backed by interceptor aircraft to provide for continental air defence. In 1957, these combined efforts were brought together under a single operational command, NORAD, with an American general in charge who reported directly to each government, a Canadian deputy, and a combined bi-national headquarters at Colorado Springs.

No sooner had NORAD been established to defend against the bomber, then the “missile became the message” and Canada’s strategic importance, along with the Canadian and American air defence systems declined. Our best bet was deterrence and deterrence depended on good warning. Ballistic missiles (whether ICBMs launched from the USSR or SLBMs fired from Soviet submarines) aimed at the U.S. would travel into then beyond the atmosphere and then sharply down toward their American targets, arcing above the altitude of Canadian air space. Unlike the extensive air defence installations that were once located in Canada, no system to detect or track ballistic missiles has ever been located there or operated by the Canadian military. The US placed its missile warning radars on its own soil in Alaska, in the United Kingdom, in Greenland, and in space. Despite this, Canadians remained involved in the NORAD missile warning role. It is a bit of a puzzle why this is the case; the quality of Canadian personnel at Colorado Springs and our historical defence partnership offer only a partial explanation. It just may be, as a senior Canadian defense official mused before a Canadian parliamentary committee in 2000, that Americans simply have developed a comfortable “habit” of working with Canadians in continental defense.

Another factor that made this situation viable in NORAD was that during the Cold War the United States did not actively deploy a BMD system (except briefly in the 1970s, with a single BMD site). The prevailing view was that a BMD system could never be effective and that its very existence, especially if matched by a Soviet counterpart, would destabilize the nuclear balance of power which was based upon an Assured Destruction capability—that is, that neither superpower could gain from a first strike. As arms control advocates argued, the mere presence of a BMD capability might tempt one side to believe a first strike was possible. In the early 1970s, the U.S. and USSR signed the Antiballistic Missile Defense Treaty limiting BMD systems. While the Soviets deployed two BMD sites, the U.S. eventually dismantled its only BMD site. Canada welcomed this U.S. position on BMD and indeed in the 1968 renewal of the NORAD agreement insisted that a clause be added which stated that participation in the bi-national command not obligate it to be involved in missile defence.
In 1983, President Ronald Reagan launched his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and Canada was again faced with having to make an uncomfortable decision about NORAD and missile defense. SDI envisioned, amongst other things, space-based BMD interceptors (hence the pejorative appellation “Star Wars”). When Canada was asked by the Reagan administration if it wanted to officially participate in SDI research, it declined, but there was no damage to NORAD or overall U.S.–Canada defense relations. Indeed, in 1985, the U.S. and Canada agreed to modernize NORAD’s air defense capabilities, in part to deal with a new air threat: cruise missiles. In the end, Reagan’s program ran into strong public and Congressional opposition and the BMD issue faded away again as the Cold War ended.

In the late 1990s, due to fears about North Korean and Iranian missile programs, the Clinton administration, this time pressed by Congress, moved to develop limited BMD capabilities to match the new limited threat. But the White House was not enthusiastic about forging ahead with an extensive and expensive “National Missile Defense” (NMD) system. Concern about the future of NORAD in these years centered on the declining strategic relevance of traditional air defence, as the numbers of radar stations (only just recently modernized) and interceptor aircraft were cut back to bare minimums.

This was the situation on September 11, 2001 when, with the Canadian Deputy Commander in charge, the order went out: “Generate! generate! generate!” But NORAD was not postured to deal with threats coming from inside the continent. In the days that followed, fighter aircraft on alert were deployed to 26 sites in the contiguous U.S., with a goal of providing 20-minute coverage of potential targets, including major cities. Though this extensive deployment was subsequently scaled back, NORAD has occasionally provided coverage for special events in both the U.S. and Canada, such as the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games and the G8/G20 summits. In addition, with American homeland security and defense assuming greater importance, the United States established a new unified command to cover North America, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), whose commander also serves as commander of NORAD. Canada was approached by the Pentagon about converting NORAD into something bigger, a comprehensive North American defense arrangement but declined, electing instead to establish its own homeland defense arrangements.

In the post–9/11 war on terrorism, the George W. Bush administration renewed efforts for an NMD system. It abrogated the U.S.–U.S.S.R. Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense Treaty in late 2001 and deployed a limited missile defense of the United States. Again, Canada was approached to participate and in 2004 the government of Prime Minister Paul Martin agreed that NORAD could support the new missile defense system. But a year later when the Bush administration asked if Canada would directly participate in BMD operations, the Martin government declined, yielding to public sentiment which remained suspicious of BMD and highly critical of the policies.
The newly elected Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper was able to renew the NORAD agreement in 2006 including an expansion of the Command’s mission to include maritime warning.

In NORAD, then, Canada and the US appear to have established a firm, perennial institution with flexibility enough to accommodate asymmetries in command at Colorado Springs. While Canada does not participate in the operation of missile defences, Canadians in NORAD support the system by providing warning and assessment of any potential missile attack. This arrangement can lead to some oddities at Colorado Springs. For example, a Canadian general officer in command of NORAD would be able to confirm that North America is under missile attack and provide the warning, but must leave it to an American to release the BMD interceptors.

However, notwithstanding the 2006 renewal and accommodation, the Canadian decision to stay out of BMD still leaves NORAD’s future as a bi-national command in jeopardy. This is because, as James Ferguson of the University of Manitoba points out in his 2010 book Canada and Ballistic Missile Defence, 1954-2009, “NORAD’s early warning mission appear[s] at risk of becoming a redundancy.” Known as Integrated Tactical Warning and Assessment or “ITT/WA,” wherein air and missile warning and attack assessment functions are brought together, early warning is at the very heart of NORAD’s mission. And very recently, the stakes have been raised. The Obama administration’s policy reversal on BMD and Secretary Hagel’s announcement of an expansion of the system indicates a new seriousness about missile defense that highlights the differences between Washington and Ottawa on BMD. If the U.S. proceeds with a more extensive BMD system, the existing accommodations within NORAD to the continued Canadian aversion to BMD may not be possible nor in the United States’ best interest. Americans may in other words get over their habit of cooperating with Canadians and decide to effectively gut NORAD by unilaterally taking ITT/WA away from the bi-national command.

Giving Up the Anti-BMD Habit

Today, the Harper government has given no indication that it is considering pulling its own about face on BMD. But as the Obama administration and its successor move forward in expanding America’s ability to intercept missiles, Ottawa may have no choice if it wishes to maintain NORAD as a permanent and relevant substantive and symbolic fixture of American-Canadian security cooperation. The price of sustaining the United States habit of cooperating with Canada in matters of continental defense is that Canadians give up their habit of rejecting ballistic missile defense. Given the stakes involved, it seems a small price to pay.

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$$\text{Alice Munro: An Appreciation}$$

$$\text{Michael Boyd}$$

When a student in one of my English classes exclaimed how neat it was that we just happened to be reading some stories by Alice Munro on the day it was announced that she had won the 2013 Nobel Prize for Literature, I didn’t mention that I had predicted that this would happen every year for at least a decade. Why spoil the student’s enjoyment of coincidence? Or, even better, the illusion that I might have insider knowledge? Her winning was not inevitable, after all. The fact that she was a woman from a small town in Ontario who wrote only short stories, not novels, did not necessarily make her an obvious front-runner. Only her work would do that—the 14 books published over the past 45 years. Alice Munro should be seen as both continuing the realist/Chekhovian tradition and introducing innovations in technique that have been admired by readers and writers all over the world. Her central setting, the small towns and farms of southwestern Ontario, has become as richly populated with vivid fictional characters as Hardy’s Wessex, Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha, or García Márquez’s Macondo.

When teaching the stories of Alice Munro, I like to begin with the opening of one entitled “Differently” from her collection *Friend of My Youth* (1990):

> Georgia once took a creative-writing course, and what the instructor told her was: Too many things. Too many things going on at the same time; also too many people. Think, he told her. What is the important thing? What do you want us to pay attention to? Think.

Eventually she wrote a story that was about her grandfather killing chickens, and the instructor seemed pleased with it. Georgia herself thought it was a fake. She made a long list of things that had been left out and handed it in as an appendix to the story. The instructor said that she expected too much, of herself and of the process, and that she was wearing him out (*Selected Stories*, 498).

It is difficult to see a significant connection between this beginning and the story that follows, but we may treat it as a piece of self-analysis. Munro seems to be announcing something important about her own practice as a storyteller. She characteristically puts in “too many things going on at the same time,” things that we will be forced to accommodate by making our own connections. These complications are probably the primary reason her readers frequently claim that her short stories seem more like novels.

This claim is obviously presented as praise—and perhaps explains why she finally received the Prize, long overdue, making her one of the oldest recipients at the age of 82 and the only one who writes only short stories, not novels. (Yes, I know that *The Lives of Girls and Women* [1971], is always called a novel, but *The Beggar Maid*, published seven years later, is always referred to as a short-story cycle, in spite of the fact that it follows the same pattern of interrelated stories as the earlier work. In any case, her work has done much to elevate the status of short fiction in the minds of critics and common readers.)

She writes primarily but not exclusively of the lives of girls and women in this expanded or dilated manner, giving us the illusion of seeing a whole life, not just the singular epiphany of the moment of self-discovery that has been the defining characteristic of the short story, at least since James Joyce. How is this accomplished? Not by adding more words—although many of her best stories are longer than average, some rightfully considered novellas. More significantly, she employs a variety of devices to create the sense of a life extended through time.

Surely the most frequently employed of these devices is her rejection of linear chronology in favor of time-shifts, often jumping backwards to fill in the past or leaping forward, shocking us...
with the changes wrought by time. These shifts are clearly marked by Munro’s segmentation of her text, triple-spacing between sections running from one to six or seven pages in length. Reading one of her stories for the first time, I am constantly aware of how impossible it is to predict where in the central character’s life she is taking us next. Only when we reach the end of the story does the ordering of the different parts seem essential to the effects created by the narrative as a whole.

Another way in which Munro disrupts and expands conventional storytelling practice is by splitting the story into different points of view, something more frequently found in novels than in short fiction. “Labor Day Dinner” presents the events of a single afternoon through the eyes of three characters, none of whom have any idea of what will almost happen to them at the end of the story. “White Dump” combines shifts in time with shifts in point of view to tell the story of the breakup of a marriage through the eyes of three generations — daughter, mother, and grandmother. Sometimes the breaks seem more radical, as in “The Albanian Virgin” and “The Love of a Good Woman,” when one story collides with another without them having any apparent connection. Readers may be left to make their own thematic linkages. A character might reflect on her personal loss of past relationships. Her risky decision to burn her bridges and seek a new life is suddenly thrown into doubt: “Sometimes our connection is frayed, it is in danger, it seems almost lost. Views and streets deny knowledge of us, the air grows thin. Wouldn’t we rather have a destiny to submit to, then, something that claims us, anything, instead of such flimsy choices, arbitrary days?” (“Albanian Virgin,” Selected Stories 602). An interpretive leap is in order here. The existential crisis of the character can also be read as a dilemma in the reader-writer relationship. Might not this doubt, this fear also refer to the reader’s uncertainty about how things connect in this narrative?

For me, Munro’s most exciting experiments in form or structure occur in the middle period of her writing, from 1980 to a little after the turn of the century, a period that includes seven collections—half of her production to date. In an interview with the CBC radio host Peter Gzowski in 1994, she offered a hint of what she was trying to do in some of her most ambitious works: “I want to move away from what happened, to the possibility of this happening, or that happening, and a kind of idea that life is not just made up of facts, things that happened … but 

Michael Boyd’s Favorite Alice Munro Stories

Where to begin? Start with Open Secrets (1995) or maybe her excellent choice of 28 stories from the first seven collections, Selected Stories (1997). My favorites (1998–2012) spread over six volumes are:

The Love of a Good Woman (1998)

- Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage (2001)
- Hateship, etc.
- Family Furnishings
- Comfort
- Nettles
- The Bear Came Over the Mountain
- Runaway
- Passion
- Chance
- Soon
- Silence

The View from Castle Rock (2006)

- The View from Castle Rock
- The Hired Girl
- Too Much Happiness (2009)
- Dimensions
- Fiction
- Some Women
- Child’s Play
- Wood
- Dear Life (2012)
- Leaving Maverley
- Gravel
- Corrie

Munro finally received the Nobel Prize for Literature … making her one of the oldest recipients at the age of 82 and the only one who writes only short stories, not novels.
all the things that happen in fantasy, the things that might have happened, the kind of alternate life that can almost seem to be accompanying what we call our real lives. I wanted to get all of that, sort of, working together.”

Can we imagine what Georgia’s writing instructor would say about that? Suddenly nothing can be safely omitted! Alternate lives lived alongside of our “real life”? We might recall Jorge Luis Borges’ plenary fiction “The Garden of the Forking Paths,” that never-ending story in which one path of life taken points toward and activates those not taken, and gets all those alternate lives “working together.”

In “Miles City, Montana,” a child drowns, and 20 years later the narrator’s daughter almost does, but the mother is “compelled to picture the opposite,” in all its copious and tragic detail: “There’s something trashy about this kind of imagining, isn’t there? Something shameful. Laying your finger on the wire to get the safe shock, feeling a bit of what it’s like, then pulling back” (392). But there is nothing especially unusual about such use of the imagination to consider various possible lives, what might have happened. We do it in our lives, as a part of our real lives, and we do it when, in the act of reading, we vicariously enter the lives of fictional characters.

There is perhaps another way in which Munro thickens our reception of a particular story—after we have read a few—and that is by what her biographer Robert Thacker calls her practice of “revisiting” earlier stories (Alice Munro, 2011). When I have taught courses on Munro or spent three or four weeks on her Selected Stories in a survey course, I have asked the class to begin our discussion of a new story by calling attention to echoes or rhymes from earlier ones. This can go on for maybe half the class and further complicate an already complex structure scheduled for discussion on that day. But sometimes it can lead to a perception of her body of work as a single, multifarious entity enriched by that repetition with the same sort of variation so essential to musical structure and the cohesiveness of novels. Resemblances between characters, relationships, plot situations, and themes abound. For example, Munro likes to return to the theme of marital infidelity—real and imagined—and its aftermath. Probably no writer, certainly no woman writer, has rung so many changes on this triangular relationship, considered so thoroughly its causes and effects in so many different permutations. The cumulative effect of this matches the male masterworks of the novel of adultery, Flaubert’s Madame Bovary and Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina, and yet how different they are in almost every way.

Okay, here is your assignment: go, read all of her stories, some at least twice because you won’t really know where she is going until you both get there. Some will work for you better than others, but almost all will provoke some shock or tremor of recognition, some sense that they resemble nothing so much as novels in concentrated form. Or maybe just one impossibly long novel, some approximation of what D. H. Lawrence referred to as the great, bright book of life.
“Too embarrassed to ask”: The pros and cons of foreign-affairs explainers in The Washington Post

Jessica Birthisel

It is not a pleasant word, but one we must face, for it has become a major part of online media production and consumption: listicle. A portmanteau that combines “list” and “article,” the listicle is one of the latest fads in journalism that uses a list as a method of presenting content information that would otherwise be worthy of a full narrative.

If you are not familiar with the technical definition of the listicle, you have no doubt experienced it in your day-to-day media consumption. From Cosmopolitan’s endless iterations of “101 ways to please your man” to Buzzfeed’s pervasive pop culture compilations like “18 Cartoons From The ‘90s You Probably Forgot Existed,” listicles shape current creations of media content, particularly online content. They assume that readers want information in quick hits, lists, slideshows, memes and sound bites instead of long articles. Their sensational headlines drive traffic to a site, generating more money from advertising, and they build on the belief that today’s readers prefer mindless fluff and trivia over hard news and heavy stories. Additionally, the listicle performs a common journalistic role, the explainer, which is sometimes presented as the story behind the story, or a brief that provides the context that readers need to understand a developing story or trend.

In an interesting twist on the listicle fad, The Washington Post recently launched a new series that applies the popular format to breaking foreign-affairs news, a type of coverage not known for its trendiness. Starting in November 2012, the Post began a recurring feature in its “World” section of WashingtonPost.com offering answers to questions “you were too embarrassed to ask” about foreign-affairs topics. Its first piece was titled “9 questions about Israel-Gaza you were too embarrassed to ask.” Questions in the piece ranged from “What is the Gaza strip?” to “Who is Hamas?” to “Why don’t Israel and Palestine just become independent countries?” to “What’s going to happen?”

Referenced in hundreds of Tweets and thousands of Facebook posts, this listicle approach proved popular, and the Post has replicated it eight more times, focusing on escalating foreign affairs situations in Mali, the Central African Republic, Chechnya and Dagestan, Egypt, Syria, Iran, South Sudan, and, as this article is being written, Ukraine.

Each installment follows a similar style: a formulaic headline promising nine questions about a country or conflict, followed by a simple map of the region and a brief introduction. This introduction (usually prefaced with sympathetic language such as “we understand that it can take a lot of time and energy to keep up with international news”) includes a promise that the basic questions are answered in such a way “that anyone can understand them.” The questions are answered in short and numbered paragraphs. The language is simple, conversational and directly addresses the reader. For example, the explainer on Mali directs readers to the map at the top of the story with elementary language: “You see that little blue line? That’s the Niger River, and it’s really important.” The questions build on one another, as if an audience member is having a real-time conversation with the series’ author, foreign-affairs blogger Max Fisher. For example, the third question in the listicle on Syria is both a reaction to the previous answer and a follow-up question: “3.) That’s horrible. But there are protests lots of places. How did it all go so wrong in Syria? And please, just give me the short version.”

Experienced journalists have mixed reactions to the listicle. Undoubtedly, there are some advantages to the approach, but at what cost? One possible advantage is that it provides foreign-affairs information and context in a quick, accessible and easy-to-share format. Though journalists dream of a world where all citizens are interested in reading lengthy foreign-affairs articles, this does not reflect how most of us really consume news. Traditional foreign affairs reporting is often dense and dry, and written for the people who already know its context and are already convinced of its importance and

They build on the belief that today’s readers prefer mindless fluff and trivia over hard news and heavy stories.
not in need of basic definitions. Even for the moderately informed reader, pulling up a story on an international conflict can feel more like jumping into a book on page 1,001 rather than beginning on page one. The explainer format starts from scratch, which is an important journalistic function. Is the information oversimplified? Undoubtedly. Is an oversimplified understanding of a major world event preferable to complete ignorance about it? Most likely.

A second advantage is that the listicle highlights the countries at the top of the news agenda right now. So many of these international struggles evolve, transition, flare up and cool down, and ultimately seem to be part of a never-ending story about the country, region, parties, or religions involved. Many of these situations experience a low level of coverage all year round, which can make it difficult for audiences to understand just how pressing a given conflict is at any one time. In some ways, these explainers shout to the readers: “Hey! You may have noticed that Ukraine has jumped to the top of our news agenda. Here’s why!” This can help readers differentiate between truly breaking international news and stories that are simmering on a journalistic back burner.

A final advantage is this: by easing readers’ insecurity about their lack of knowledge, this format can expose them to news stories that they have previously found intimidating or inaccessible. Listen, author Max Fisher seems to explain in a comforting tone, we get it. It’s confusing. People are busy. No one expects you to be an expert on this. Heck, no one expects you to be able to find Egypt on a map. Relax. We’re here to help. You’re not alone (as evidenced by the 13,000+ other people who shared this article on Facebook!) When the Post frames its entire presentation of a complex situation in an it’s-not-your-fault-and-you’re-not-alone format, it eliminates some of the shame people experience when they think they should know more than they do about a given topic.

Despite these surface advantages, the listicle is not without its flaws. First, the format segregates audiences and reinforces the fact that more traditional foreign-affairs news coverage caters to those who are already well versed on a topic. One of the challenges journalists face is how much background to include in their stories. What can you presume the reader already knows, and what needs to be explained? This is especially tricky on the foreign-affairs beat, where stories may have been developing for hundreds if not thousands of years. And yet, many traditional news stories rarely bother to situ-ate breaking news into a larger cultural or political context. This is a failure of journalism’s most basic purpose: to clearly and fairly provide the public with information they need to think independently and govern themselves effectively. In this way, the presence of these explainers exposes the limitations of more traditional news coverage of world affairs. What results are two formats on the same story; two incomplete perspectives on an issue rather than one complete perspective, which is a disservice to the reader.
A second disadvantage of the listicle approach is that by providing explainers for some regions and conflicts but not others, there is a risk of an “othering” effect within this format. There is no transparency as to how the Post decides about which regions, conflicts, and countries its readers are embarrassingly clueless. The matter was brought to light in writer Teju Cole’s Twitter-based parody of the series, called “9 questions about Britain you were too embarrassed to ask.” Cole’s spoof asked if the U.S. was considering a surgical strike against the United Kingdom because of its alleged sale of chemical components to Syria in September 2013. The parody highlights the sense of “otherness” that pervades the explainer series. The presumption is that American audiences don’t need explainers on the U.K. or other places that are like us in lifestyle, culture, race, religion, or other identifiers of modernity. Given the exoticness of the regions that the Post’s editors have focused on so far, these explainers seem to prefer and privilege mysterious “others,” possibly creating the illusion of faraway, lawless, and backwards lands and populations of extremism, endless conflict, and strange languages, religions, and skin tones. A more systematic approach to providing context for world affairs would avoid cherry picking global issues in a discriminatory way.

A final disadvantage involves the tone of the Post’s series. The explainers come off as judgmental, suggesting that a lack of knowledge is something to be embarrassed about, rather than the exact reason to pick up a newspaper. This is the core critique of the Post’s “too-embarrassed-to-ask” listicle approach to foreign affairs. At its heart, it demonizes ignorance. On one extreme, we might expect all Americans to be able to find Egypt on a map; on the other extreme, it is not reasonable to expect all of the Post’s readership to have a clear and confident understanding of the complex historical context of tensions between the Dinka and the Nuer in South Sudan. The slightly snarky tone of these Post listicles suggests that the lack of this very specific knowledge is something to be ashamed of. The role of a newspaper is to inform its readers, not to shame them for arriving at an article without a fully developed, historically contextualized sense of what has already happened, what is currently happening, and what will happen next in any given region experiencing conflict. Journalism is meant to inform, and can serve an especially important pedagogical role at a time when citizens do not feel confident about their knowledge of history, geography, or world affairs.

The instinct behind the Post’s series is fair and constructive. Many readers need historical and geographical context in order to fully digest foreign-affairs stories. However, its practice of segregating this context in a stand-alone listicle format, presented in a way that magnifies readers’ insecurities should be rejected. This practice creates a divisive and unproductive environment that says “this article is for the smart people” and “this article is for the rest of you.” With major newspapers expanding their multimedia and interactive capacities at an astonishing rate, editors need to think about how they can package these foreign-affairs stories in a way that is informative and comprehensive without being insulting.

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Glacial Waters
PHOTO ESSAY

Ivana George

Since 2008, I have become increasingly interested in the environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change and have wanted to produce a body of work that explores this subject. To prepare for that, I researched what other artists and scientists had already produced around this topic. What I found was that several artists and scientists had created a good many documentary-style images of glaciers, icebergs, and changing landscapes. Instead, my aim is to produce artwork that uses visual metaphor to provoke viewers to explore these issues, and to make my work visually unique. When I received an invitation to travel to the Peruvian Andes with Dr. Bryan Mark and his research team from the Byrd Polar Research Center of the Ohio State University as they researched how climate change is affecting the high-mountain glaciers and water resources, I jumped at the chance. I experimented with different approaches to convey the environmental, social, and economic impacts of climate change upon water resource availability. Ultimately, I settled upon using water as a lens to encapsulate, reflect, and distort the images.

The use of the water globe in these images is meant to convey a visual association to the round form of mother earth. By using this glass form throughout the project, I hope to conjure the notion of the fragility of the planetary ecosystem in which all living beings play a role. While the subject of each image is different, they are connected in this project, both by form and theme.

From an aesthetic perspective, I wanted to show the majesty of the glacier-capped mountains, but also the streams of melt water emanating from these glaciers. I wanted to demonstrate the subsistence agricultural activities in the arid valleys below the glaciers, to implant in viewers’ minds the question: what will happen to the people who live there when the glaciers are fully melted? I also wanted to show the research activities of the scientists in gathering data, to show that more understanding is needed if countries such as Peru (also China and India) that rely on glacial melt water during their dry seasons are to adapt to climate change.

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Sunset at Camp 7
The Specific Intellectuals: Foucault, Thoreau, and Berkeley

Paul J. Medeiros

Among the more troubling characterizations of modern life are Michel Foucault’s portrayals of European society and Europe’s historical responses to homelessness and immigration. In essays and in interviews (The Foucault Reader [Random House, 1984]), the philosopher portrays for us a world distinguished by secrecy, isolation, surveillance, control measures, and incentives geared to promote specific conceptions of health and beauty. For all the historical detail he gives and for all the approbation he implies, the philosopher seems awkwardly resistant to expressing his own proposals and visions. Most readers of Foucault are ferried to the conclusion that all we do is caught within the advance of established power. But a careful reading of Foucault turns up at least one hopeful proposal for the academic community: that experts pursuing specialized, local areas of knowledge may create new relations of power rather than advancing the all-pervasive, established power.

Gone, claims Foucault, is the possibility of a universal theory like nineteenth-century psychology. Departed, says Foucault, is the promise of comprehensive knowledge like nineteenth-century idealism. Vanishing, claims Foucault, is the epistemological privilege of the solitary, intellectual author. But what, for Foucault, remains promising in the quest to transform established power relations are the experiences and ideas of experts exploring specialized areas of knowledge, acquired in-residence in locations such as hospitals, prisons, and schools. The philosopher thinks the work of “specific intellectuals,” close as they are to genuine disparities of power, can transform power.

Foucault (1926–1984) remains complex. Whether the philosopher, prior to his death, pursued and embodied his own vision of “the specific intellectual” is a matter of biography. Whether he modeled the classic commitment to solitary, intellectual authorship or, like many activists, subordinated publication in favor of community discussion and collaboration is worth debating. But what Foucault leaves for us is a proposal we should wholeheartedly explore. Among our conversations about the mission of the university and the service of its various members as scholars and researchers ought to be conversations about our participation as envisioned by thinkers like Foucault. As time-honored publication becomes complicated by digital technology and online forums, as needed standards of quality and worth appear malleable, and as we grow anxious about where and why to research and publish, the service of scholars and researchers may find genuine purpose and audiences in non-profit organizations, in town committees and associations, and in areas otherwise isolated and ignored by the public. This insight gains support from the thought of the French philosopher Foucault, but also from the compositions and legendary quests of philosophers drawn from New England history.

The insight that genuine knowledge is especially particular and discovered locally, among needy people and by perceptive persons, is an insight won, at times, through setbacks and encounters with established power. In New England history, few persons better express this insight than the nineteenth-century author Henry David Thoreau (1817–62), who voyaged through the town of Bridgewater a half-dozen times on the train from Boston to New Bedford, Massachusetts. We recall Thoreau for successfully finishing the dismal “1000-credit” course of study given, at the time, by Harvard College. We admire Thoreau for abruptly resigning his first
employment, an elementary school-teaching appointment, because of a disagreement between himself and the Concord School Committee about corporeal punishment in the rural classroom. Such setbacks and encounters profoundly oriented the author of *Walden; Or, Life in the Woods* (1854) to alternative, gentler approaches to knowledge and learning. First among these alternatives, for Thoreau, were the new town lyceums, promising forums for public learning. But Thoreau resolved to go beyond these as well: by himself and with worthy companions, the author voyaged to Native-American communities, viewed timber country outposts, walked on foot to isolated, coastal villages, and wandered under the rural, moonlit night. In all this, the author understood himself to be a needed community inspector and a citizen of a future state, carrying with him a writing pad and the notion that we ought to inhabit our taken-for-granted sources of timber, civil peace, and safe navigation. Thoreau expressed for us his conviction that the New England future is fundamentally derailed so long as we ignore historic injustices, such as the disappearance of the Wampanoag, and so long as we heedlessly pursue the advance of commerce, as with commercial whaling. Thus, the author Thoreau is, for us in New England, recognizable as an exemplar of the specific intellectual, conducting genealogical studies of power disparities of the sort envisioned by Michel Foucault.

Then and now, we deem good the university scholar and researcher who voyage to the historic locations where ideas and knowledge came forth. If, for example, one proposes to be expert in the thought of the twentieth-century European scholar, Martin Heidegger, author of *Being and Time* (1927), one goes to reside, for an academic term, near the university archives in Freiburg, Germany. A more gentle and authentic learning about Heidegger’s poetic thinking is possible by serving as scholar-in-residence with the nearest historical society or town symphony. For these were organizations important to Heidegger, who wrote his most graceful compositions for town commemorations and gatherings. If, for example, one proposes to be expert in the thought of the twentieth-century European scholar, Martin Heidegger, author of *Being and Time* (1927), one goes to reside, for an academic term, near the university archives in Freiburg, Germany. A more gentle and authentic learning about Heidegger’s poetic thinking is possible by serving as scholar-in-residence with the nearest historical society or town symphony. For these were organizations important to Heidegger, who wrote his most graceful compositions for town commemorations and gatherings.

Not far from us at Bridgewater State University is Whitehall Museum House, an eighteenth-century building serving public visitors, school groups, and in-residence scholars during the summer months. Located in Middletown, Rhode Island, the museum displays colonial architecture and furnishings. But, more than this, the museum stands as a celebration of the quest of the Irish clergyman and philosopher, George Berkeley (1685–1753), author of *Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713) and *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710). Berkeley came to colonial America with the most magnificent vision: to found a college in service to the young colonies and Native-American communities. From 1729 to 1731, the philosopher and family waited in the red farmhouse, called Whitehall, only to learn the promised funds from England would never arrive. Established power ordered the Irish clergyman to return to Britain straightaway.

Philosophy textbooks inform us about the setback and the legend that the philosopher, defeated, gave one portion of his collection of books to the college in New Haven, Connecticut and the other portion to the college in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We know that those institutions went onto worldwide acclaim. But the resident scholar of today’s Whitehall Museum House may discover what else transpired: by hosting community meetings and bible groups in Whitehall’s parlor, the affable George Berkeley precipitated...
If our academic projects are... directed toward and conducted in service to non-profit organizations, town bodies, and taken-for-granted institutions and if our compositions are collaboratively authored, then our scholarly contributions become eminently more useful.

Damas of America, the clergyman’s charity came back to life and lives today in rural Rhode Island: a unique site for the history of philosophy.

Those of us who conduct scholarship and research and who wish to offer contributions to the pursuit of knowledge may evaluate academic projects according to a moral test: Does my proposed contribution bring people together; or, Is my proposed contribution assuming an orientation outside of human life? If Foucault is right, often we assume the tempting view that knowledge exists and is to be exercised outside the problems and questions of life. Foucault’s vision of experts inhabiting hospitals, prisons, and schools in order to gain knowledge and transform power is a good and daring one. Analogously, in nineteenth-century New England, Thoreau wrote in “Resistance to Civil Government” (1849) that the proper place of the just person in an unjust Massachusetts town is the jail. Famously, the author tells us one night of jail allowed him to discover decency, friendliness, and fresh perspectives on the town he otherwise doubted.

Sadly, neither Foucault nor Thoreau fully relinquished commitments to the established mode of philosophical scholarship: solitary study and authorship. Foucault, for all his interviews, pursued the ambitious, multi-volume History of Sexuality (1976); Thoreau, for his part, devotedly composed in his personal journal, now regarded as a useful, primary source by contemporary Thoreau scholars. If our academic projects are, instead, directed toward and conducted in service to non-profit organizations, town bodies, and taken-for-granted institutions and if our compositions are collaboratively authored, then our scholarly contributions become eminently more useful. That is what “specific intellectuals” can do. We embrace multiculturalism, personal dignity, and diversity. So, too, in our academic projects, in the Humanities as well as in the Sciences, we ought to explore multiple-authorship and audience-specific publication, to build needed community and knowledge.

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Bishop George Berkeley (Oil on canvas, 1727?) by John Smybert. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC.
Seamus Heaney: A Tribute

Ellen Scheible

On August 30, 2013, Seamus Heaney died in Dublin, Ireland at the age of 74. A Nobel laureate in literature and the most prominent Irish poet from the second half of the twentieth century, Heaney changed the way teachers and scholars of Irish literature and poetry think about the inherent hybridity of partitioned Irish culture. Heaney was born and educated as a Catholic in Northern Ireland during some of the most tumultuous times in modern Irish history. He later relocated to the Republic of Ireland and taught at various institutions in both Ireland and the United States. His reluctance to position himself or his writing on either side of the Irish Troubles allowed Heaney to speak about the nature of violence and struggle rather than criticize the overt manifestations of those experiences in modern Ireland. While his poetry often addresses openly many sources of tension in Ireland, such as violent disagreements between Protestants and Catholics and the long history of British colonialism mapped onto the island, Heaney used his prolific talent to illustrate essential human experiences, such as love, loss, anger, and regret. He was able to underscore the humanity of the Irish experience in the face of a long history of dehumanization and colonial destruction. Bridgewater State University has a direct connection with Seamus Heaney, as he visited the university on different occasions and developed relationships with faculty and administrators. Orson Kingsley, our library archivist, has been working diligently to build a Seamus Heaney collection based on a large amount of memorabilia that has recently been donated to the University. In consideration of the many ways Seamus Heaney has changed classroom discourse about poetry and Irish studies and his long friendship with our university, I asked two local Heaney scholars, Kelly Matthews (Assistant Professor of English at Framingham State University) and Shaun O’Connell (Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts Boston) to describe their thoughts on Heaney’s poetry and politics.

ES: In The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing (1990), Declan Kiberd refers to Seamus Heaney’s poetry as “excavatory in every sense, reaching down into the ground and back into the past.” How do you think the act of excavation manifests in Heaney’s work?

Kelly Mathews: Kiberd’s comment brings to mind Heaney’s poems about the “bog people” discovered in Denmark and elsewhere in Europe in the mid-twentieth century, and how Heaney used them to approach the violence of the Northern Ireland conflict from an oblique angle, rather than taking an overtly political stance. In “Punishment,” for example, he describes the body of a young woman executed in pre-modern Europe for her role in an adulterous affair. When teaching this poem, I often share with students my husband’s experience of seeing a young woman, tarred and feathered, tied to a lamppost outside the local Catholic church as he and his parents drove by on a Sunday morning. Heaney used this experience, common to many people in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, to connect the body of the bog woman to ordinary people who were horrified by the brutality they saw unfolding around them. “My poor scapegoat,” Heaney writes, “I almost love you, / but would have cast, I know / the stones of silence.” In a concise and economical use of words, the poet condemns bystanders’ passivity even while he both empathizes with the victims – the bog woman with the noose around her neck, young Catholic women tarred and feathered for consorting with British soldiers – and empathizes with the bystanders themselves, positioning himself among them. The poem is excavatory in multiple ways: it unearths the bodies of the bog people in order to explore the multiple layers of violence among and between tribal groups, and the traumatized consciousness of everyday people in Northern Ireland who were forced to become witnesses to the Troubles.

Shaun O’Connell: “Excavatory” makes sense when we recall that in 1964 Seamus Heaney published “Digging,” his first and ultimately his signature poem. “Between my finger and my thumb/ The squat pen rests./ I’ll dig with it.” Later, in “Feeling Into Word,”
Heaney said of this poem “I dug it up” from what was “laid down in me years before,” in Mossbawn, County Derry. But we should note that in “Digging” it is his father who actually digs, while Seamus looks down, pen in hand, from his window—or, more likely, pen in hand, he remembered and poeticized that epiphany. Yet there is no denying his digging. After reading P.V. Glob’s *The Bog People* in 1970, Heaney’s pen dug into Jutland’s preserved corpses, vowing that “Some day I will go to Aarhus,” but it is important to note that he imagined these “old man-killing parishes” into poetry long before he saw them. So, then, we should not limit Heaney to the role of excavator. *Cavare* means to make hollow, according to *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, but Heaney filled empty spaces and places. That is, he ascends as much as he descends, as his Hercules is “raised up” after his fall in “Hercules and Antaeus.” Seamus Heaney, though a poet of his dear perpetual place, is also a transcender, a border crosser from here to there, a figure in flight or on a quest—from Jutland, to Station Island, from the bog to the spirit level or the Republic of Conscience; that is, to wherever he can find fitting emblems for poetic expression. By 1995, at his Stockholm Nobel Prize address, Heaney even allowed himself “the luxury of walking on air,” crediting poetry “for making this space-walk possible,” instructing himself, perhaps instructing readers of his poetry to “walk on air against your better judgment.”

**ES:** Should we read Seamus Heaney as a political poet?

**Matthews:** I think both Heaney’s and Michael Longley’s achievement during the Troubles was to document and delve the human response to violence, especially to the tit-for-tat murders that characterized such a long stretch of the Northern Ireland conflict. In poems like “Casualty” or “The Strand at Lough Beg” or “Keeping Going,” Heaney explored the effects of violence on those left behind, both the victims’ loved ones as well as those who witnessed the sudden loss of human life. Rather than comment on the political actions of elected officials, Heaney used his poetry to represent the human impact of political violence. So many murders during the Troubles depended on an intimate connection between perpetrators and victims, whether they took place in a country pub, along a deserted road, or in the early-morning silence of a town square. In “Keeping Going,” Heaney makes a personal connection to his brother Hugh, who “stay[s] on where it happens,” holding himself up between two cows in the milking barn as he struggles to come to terms with the assassination of a part-time soldier in the village diamond. In these circumstances, the personal becomes political, and the act of “keeping going,” as well as the act of writing about it, becomes a statement of resilience and resistance.

**O’Connell:** Heaney as a political poet? How could he—to paraphrase Yeats—his attention fix on Republican or Unionist politics, with that girl, standing there, with flowers in her hair? The “girl,” of course, is poetry, that sly beauty who “makes nothing happen,” as Auden said after Yeats died, but also makes everything matter. Yeats, dead at 74 in 1939—the year Heaney, now dead at 74, was born—was “hurt into poetry,” says Auden, by Ireland’s inescapable political troubles.

The poet condemns bystanders’ passivity even while he both empathizes with the victims … and empathizes with the bystanders themselves, positioning himself among them.

As was Heaney, for he was accused when he moved from Belfast to Wicklow in 1972 of being a “well-known papist propagandist” by the Paisleyite *Protestant Telegraph*, which claimed Heaney would find “his spiritual home in the popish republic.” Though Paisley caricatured Heaney, we all recall that Seamus, in refusing to be included in a Penguin collection titled *Contemporary British Verse*, did declare that...
“no glass of ours was ever raised” in the Heaney household “To toast The Queen.” But Seamus—ever fair-minded, balanced and generous—immediately added that he wished “No harm to her nor you who deign/ To God Bless her as sovereign.” His pen may have fit “snug as a gun,” but Heaney used neither gun nor pen to further political ends. This is clear in Heaney’s 1979 encounter with IRA leader Danny Morrison on a Belfast-Dublin train. There Morrison pressured Heaney to write something in support of the IRA’s struggle against British rule, but Heaney refused “to be a party spokesman,” as he recalls in Stepping Stones. “If do write something,/ Whatever it is, I’ll be writing for myself,” Heaney recalls saying in “The Flight Path.” That era of the IRA prisoners’ dirty protest and Hunger Strike stretched Heaney between his sympathies for the suffering prisoners, his anger at the implacable Thatcher government and his disagreement with the IRA’s terrorist policies. However, though Heaney’s poetry, like that of Yeats before him, was intensified and dramatized by these political and personal conflicts, it was never politicized. “The end of art is peace,” he wrote in “The Harvest Bow.”

Matthews: I was a student in Seamus’s lecture class on modern British and Irish poetry during my senior year at Harvard, and I was fortunate enough to have Seamus appointed as a reader for my honors thesis on Yeats . . . For such an accomplished and erudite man, he was always tolerant of others’ lack of knowledge, and as a teacher, he was unfailingly generous and good-natured. He gave so much of himself to everyone he met, so it really is true, as Michael Longley remarked, that there must be tens of thousands of people who feel personally bereaved by his passing.

O’Connell: In his Harvard creative writing class, 1983, Seamus occasionally went silent—brief broodings, caesurae—inviting students to fill the empty air with words. He was at once playful and instructive, letting poems “loose like a squirrel among you,” then telling one student a line was “a little otiose,” but laughing at himself for his own pretentious word choice. Once at a Yeats Society meeting in Cambridge he read Yeats’s “The Collar-bone of a Hare” three times, pausing between each reading until we all could see, as had Yeats, “the old bitter world…through the white thin bone of a hare.” Another time, while he was teaching at Carysfort College in Dublin, Heaney suggested—need I add we had had a few drinks?—that I teach his class on The Catcher in the Rye the next morning. I did so, still a bit bleary-eyed, before an array of bright-eyed, faintly-amused, young students. Afterward, I apologized for my somewhat hung-over performance, but he reassured me all was well. “Ah, they loved hearing your accent,” he said, laughing. Heaney often laughed with exuberant joy during in his readings, which were in a way also his classes, for he surrounded his readings with prefatory and follow-up comments which took his audience in on the poem’s making, its shaping and its implications. He set his poems in informing contexts, poetic and personal. Reading at Deerfield Academy in 1996, Heaney reflected upon his move with his family to the small house in Wicklow in 1972, “when I became committed to poetry and my wife became committed to my commitment.” He and Marie, he said, visited nearby Glendalough, the site of his poem “St. Kevin and the Blackbird,” from The Spirit Level. This led him to read “At the Wellhead,” a tribute to his wife, who sings with her eyes closed. Heaney compared her with a Moosbawn blind neighbor, Rosie Keenan, who played the piano all day. “When I read/ A poem with Keenan’s well in it, she said, /’I can see the sky at the bottom of it now.’” As could Heaney’s students, his listeners and his readers. I can see him now—a voice and a vision in my head, in my heart.

Rather than comment on the political actions of elected officials, Heaney used his poetry to represent the human impact of political violence.

ES: What is your strongest memory of teaching or interacting with Seamus Heaney?

Matthews: I was a student in Seamus’s lecture class on modern British and Irish poetry during my senior year at Harvard, and I was fortunate enough to have Seamus appointed as a reader for my honors thesis on Yeats . . .
Toward Twenty-first-century Teaching: Interdisciplinarity at Bridgewater and Beyond

John J. Kucich and Pamela J. Russell

College graduates today enter a world full of complex, multifaceted problems. An ailing global economy, transnational terrorism, climate change, staggering economic inequality and intractable political stalemate are a few; the United Nations lists at least a dozen more. As university educators, we aim to provide students with intellectual tools to make meaningful contributions to the world. Yet these global issues are huge, complicated, growing and ever-changing. Often, they do not fit within tidy disciplinary boundaries that define undergraduate majors. Yet, like most universities, Bridgewater State provides few opportunities for students to learn how to approach issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. We need to teach them to think broadly as well as deeply. How can we better prepare them to draw upon, weave together and apply content from different academic fields so they begin to understand and grapple with issues that are not confined to single disciplines?

This question is not new. People at Bridgewater have approached it before with limited success and a number of universities have developed a wide range of interdisciplinary programs. There are many from which we can learn. Our goal in this article is to summarize some of the recent interdisciplinary teaching and learning theories, to note promising models that foster interdisciplinarity, and to share some of the efforts underway at Bridgewater. As we begin to re-envision our institutional mission and values, we should consider interdisciplinarity and the associated prospects of truly transformative learning for both students and faculty.

First, a word about terms. The different words used to describe the effort to think beyond disciplinary boundaries carry with them different theoretical perspectives. Disciplines, as Louis Menand reminds us in *The Marketplace of Ideas* (2010), have specific histories. As the nineteenth century ended, academics organized themselves into professional bodies to protect their freedom, standardize their methods of
Multidisciplinary suggests that different disciplinary approaches remain distinct when looking at an issue or problem, with separate lenses bringing different insights.

inquiry, foster deeper study and guard their professional status. This disciplinary structure has proved effective at producing specialized knowledge and organizing universities, but fixing exact disciplinary boundaries has always caused tension. Over time, disciplines redefine themselves, fracture into different fields or merge in response to new issues or evolving paradigms. In Creating Interdisciplinarity (2001), Lisa Lattuca traces how a variety of government and industry initiatives brought scholars from different specialties together to tackle complex practical challenges, often within collaborative arenas such as the National Institutes of Health.

The terms that have been used to describe that collaboration reveal a lot about its nature. Multidisciplinary suggests that different disciplinary approaches remain distinct when looking at an issue or problem, with separate lenses bringing different insights. A multidisciplinary approach to describing America in the 1950s, for example, might bring together an art historian, a sociologist and a political scientist to build a composite view of the era made up of complementary, but distinctive, ideas. The result is a patchwork quilt, with visibly distinct fields of disciplinary knowledge stitched together. Interdisciplinary suggests an interwoven fabric where distinct disciplinary perspectives make closely connected contributions, and the intersections among them build a coherent whole. An interdisciplinary perspective could be used to explore the long-term impact of the Chernobyl nuclear accident – a topic that might require the perspectives of engineers, environmentalists and public health workers to fully grasp. In interdisciplinary thinking, the emphasis is on synthesis and understanding of the problem as a whole rather than the separate disciplinary insights needed to approach it. A third term, transdisciplinary, pushes this synthesis further, focusing on complex problems in contemporary society that require methods and knowledge unique to the problem and not tied to any one discipline. Advocates of transdisciplinarity often downplay academia and beyond our institutional borders. We prefer interdisciplinary because its balance strikes us as particularly useful for a university setting such as Bridgewater’s. Interdisciplinarity does not seek to deprivilege academic departments and the specialized knowledge they cultivate – such expertise is crucial in approaching complex issues. It does, though, seek to bring distinct strands of knowledge together in a systematic way that transforms how we understand the world.

There are multiple interdisciplinary teaching models to draw upon in bringing this perspective to the classroom. Team teaching involves two or more faculty members planning and teaching a course together. There are a number of variants, some of which shade toward extensive guest lecturing or parallel teaching, where faculty have separate areas of responsibility; other models use a co-teaching approach, where faculty members work closely in running the class. Many team-teaching models require ample time for planning before academic learning in favor of “real-world” problems and solutions. A task force charged with finding options to deal with the aging Pilgrim nuclear power plant in Plymouth, Massachusetts could use a transdisciplinary approach. The terms multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary form a spectrum rather than a hierarchy. Each has its place in and during a course to craft clear and powerful interdisciplinary connections. Linked courses include two separate courses that share a theme and some or all of their students. While the teachers do some common planning, the courses are usually independent, leaving the interdisciplinary connections largely to the students. A course cluster is a series of linked courses that share some
cross-curricular learning experiences that should foster interdisciplinary thinking. A **learning community** shifts the focus to students, who enroll in two or more courses as a coherent group and, often, engage in related activities outside of class, sometimes living together in campus housing and completing projects mentored by faculty. Learning communities are often limited to one or two semesters. Finally, a **learning cohort** is a group of students who engage in a field of study over time, making connections among courses and topics studied for several years.

Over the past few years Bridgewater faculty members have shared their involvement with some of these models. Team teaching provides the most striking range of experiences. While many have found the experience powerful and effective, the failures are, perhaps, more instructive. Faculty clashes over teaching styles, priorities, or egos inevitably create rocky experiences. (Students often learn a good deal from the show.) Yet when faculty members who team taught took time to listen and recognize the validity of a different disciplinary approach, they found their team-teaching experience transformative. There have been several successful examples in recent years. A course on the Holocaust taught by three faculty members from different departments has proved remarkably durable, despite the extensive commitment of uncompensated time for planning. Other faculty members have team taught Second Year Seminars, such as “Tools for Understanding Sport Science” and, recently, “The Physics of Music.”

Some individual faculty members offer courses within a department that reach broadly into other disciplines, and others offer courses as part of interdisciplinary minors (such as film studies, women’s and gender studies, Middle Eastern studies and others). One challenge of these minors is to help students integrate the content and applications from distinct disciplines. This work often happens in individual research projects. The Adrian Tinsley Program and the Honors Program have supported a number of interdisciplinary theses, with advisors from different departments, but these projects run counter to institutional structures, and they remain relatively rare.

There is a growing awareness at Bridgewater that we need to do more to foster interdisciplinary. In 2011, an Interdisciplinary Studies Council composed of college deans, other administrators and faculty, began exploring the topic. It has made some programmatic recommendations, beginning with a policy on joint appointments and its work continues. In summer 2012, a pedagogy track in the Teacher-Scholar Summer Institute was devoted to interdisciplinary teaching. Thirty-five faculty members explored the scholarship on interdisciplinarity, examined different interdisciplinary teaching models and integrated some form of multi- or interdisciplinarity into their own course proposals.

One of these courses, “The Physics of Music” demonstrates the potential for team teaching. Jamie Kern (Physics) and Don Running (Music) share a long-standing interest in each other’s fields and were surprised by the level of insight they gained during their collaboration. For Running, the partnership gave him the opportunity to better understand his craft: “I had never really cared to ask ‘why does my 4th partial D have to be raised 5 cents’ – I simply did it because the technique demanded it.” Kern, for her part, had a revelation about the common foundation of the two fields. After giving students a letter introducing physics as “the human attempt to understand the universe at its deepest, most fundamental level,” Running turned to her and replied that he defined music in exactly the same way. “Why,” Kern asked herself, “had I relegated music to a place of non-discovery?”

One particularly useful aspect of the summer institute was the chance to review and discuss interdisciplinary models at work in other universities. At Edgewood College, a small liberal-arts Catholic institution in Madison, Wisconsin, interdisciplinary education is required in the curriculum. Students complete three sequential experiences where they question personal identity and potential, discover the needs of and opportunities within the world, and determine their role in building a more just and compassionate world. The first experience is a seminar (e.g., Biotech, Bioethics and You) which fosters...
engagement with the community and includes mentoring by a faculty member and a peer leader. The second experience gives students options that include 20–25 hours of community-based learning, 50–100 hours of internship/field experience, short or long-term study abroad, civic leadership or undergraduate research. The culminating experience includes a capstone seminar (e.g., Men and Masculinity) or a project. Other universities require an interdisciplinary course as part of the general-education requirements. At the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, an interdisciplinary, team-taught First-Year Experience course meets twice per week, once in a large lecture format and once in separate groups of 25. Each team of faculty chooses a theme such as “Food for Thought … and Action,” and develops curriculum that draws on the different faculty members’ expertise. Large lecture sessions and presentations are balanced by discussion and writing in smaller sessions as students work through central texts (such as Michael Pollen’s *In Defense of Food* [2008]) and current food-related issues and case studies. Students create written work including a capstone project that involves a service component. Another approach is to offer an interdisciplinary coursework utilizes active learning, independent inquiry and research to build skill sets that prepare students to respond to contemporary problems and meet the diverse needs of society.

The most powerful learning for students comes from models that marry two or more disciplinary perspectives.

interdisciplinary program for interested students. At George Mason University’s New Century College, housed within its College of Humanities and Social Sciences, students select from among 16 concentrations and eight minors or build their own individual programs. There are several lessons here for Bridgewater. One is that interdisciplinary learning doesn’t happen by itself. The institutional structures of a university are highly centrifugal, leading outwards towards individual departments and their specialized courses. It
takes conscious, sustained effort, time and resources for faculty to collaborate and promote interdisciplinary learning. The interdisciplinary experiences that survive at Bridgewater, and the models flourishing in other universities, show clearly that it can be done. But we must keep in mind a few key principles. First, interdisciplinary thinking should be the clear goal of any approach. The most powerful learning for students comes from models that marry two or more disciplinary perspectives. Second, interdisciplinary pedagogy should focus on contemporary problems. Most scholars privilege interdisciplinary courses that require input from different disciplines and employ a problem-based pedagogy. Third, team teaching is powerful but problematic. It carries real risks but has the greatest potential for transformative teaching and learning. Finally, there is no one best model. Team teaching may be the most common method of interdisciplinary teaching, but other models can be highly effective.

What will work best at Bridgewater? Only our faculty can decide, but there are some concrete ideas worth pursuing. To start, we could add an interdisciplinary experience to the core curriculum, perhaps as a team-taught course. We should also foster interdisciplinary experiences in residential learning communities, with particular cohorts of students pursuing specific topics over the course of several semesters and, relatedly, develop several themed course clusters. We need to support faculty members working in interdisciplinary minors by providing resources and encouragement for team-taught introductory or capstone courses. Finally, let us encourage more ad-hoc interdisciplinary experiences. A conscious effort to add and support an interdisciplinary dimension to study tours, service learning and collaborative and independent research projects is a good start. Fostering interdisciplinaryity takes committed work and patience. Yet the payoffs are well worth the effort. For faculty, the opportunity to work closely with colleagues from other disciplines can transform both their teaching and their research. For students, the ability to make meaningful contributions to global change – even on the smallest of scales – can benefit from engagement in interdisciplinary experiences.

The interdisciplinary coursework utilizes active learning, independent inquiry and research to build skill sets that prepare students to respond to contemporary problems and meet the diverse needs of society.

John J. Kucich (right) is Associate Professor in the Department of English. Pamela J. Russell (left) is Professor in the Department of Movement Arts, Health Promotion and Leisure Studies.
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VOICES ON CAMPUS

Julian Bond, From Civil War to Civil Rights

Dr. Julian Bond was Chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s Board of Directors 1998-2010 and is now Chairman Emeritus. He is Distinguished Scholar in the School of Government at American University in Washington, DC, and Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Virginia. He visited BSU on November 5, 2013 as part of the President’s Distinguished Speaker Series. The following is an excerpted version of his talk.

Those who say that ‘race is history’ have it exactly backward – history is race. The word ‘America’ scrambled, after all, spells ‘I am race.’ And America is race – from its symbolism to its substance, from its founding by slaveholders to its rending by the Civil War, from Johnnie Reb to Jim Crow, from the Ku Klux Klan to Katrina, from Emmett Till to Trayvon. This is the third year of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, the war that claimed more American lives than all other wars combined in our nation’s history. That it is occurring during the presidency of the first black person to hold his country’s highest office is only one of many ironies that abound …

Our response to the nation’s first black president during the Civil War’s anniversary confirms that we are still a country at war with itself. But we are not the same country. We have gone from Civil War to civil rights. In 1961, when the nation observed the Civil War’s centennial, the civil rights movement was gaining momentum, as was Martin Luther King. It was only six years earlier, during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, that King had been introduced to the nation and the world. He was 26 years old. At that early age and at that early stage of the boycott, King understood how historic it would be. Four days after Rosa Parks stood up for justice by sitting down, the boycott began. That evening, at the first mass meeting, King declared: “When the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, ‘there lived a race of people, a black people … who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and civilization.’”

In 1963 alone, the year that King told the nation of his dream at the March on Washington, there were more than 10,000 anti-racist demonstrations. The result was the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act – the most sweeping civil rights legislation before or since and one of Congress’ finest hours. We look back on the years between Montgomery in 1955 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 with some pride.

…but those were not “the good old days” …When the Supreme Court announced in May 1955, in the second Brown decision, that the white South could make haste slowly in dismantling segregated schools, I was a year older than Emmett Till. He was killed, in Money, Mississippi, for whistling at a white woman, three months after the second Brown decision. Till’s death terrified me. But in the fall of 1957 a group of black teenagers encouraged me to put that fear aside. The nine young women and men who integrated Little Rock’s Central High School set a high standard of grace and courage under fire as they dared the mobs who surrounded their school. Here, I thought, is what I hope I can be, if ever the chance comes my way.

The chance to test and prove myself did come my way in 1960, as it came to thousands of other black high school and college students across the South, in a mobilization of young black people not duplicated in our country before or since. First through the sit-ins, then in Freedom Rides, and then in voter registration and political organizing drives in the rural South, we joined an old movement against white supremacy that had deep, strong roots...

From Brown in 1954 forward, the movement expanded its targets, tactics and techniques… When Martin Luther King came on the scene as the leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he articulated a new method – nonviolent resistance – of fighting segregation.
The new method required direct action through mass participation. Gains were won at lunch counters and movie theaters, bus stations and polling places, and the fabric of legal segregation came undone.

That movement then was a second Reconstruction [and] it changed our country forever. A voteless people voted with their bodies and their feet and paved the way for other social protest. It became a movement for political and economic power, and today black women and men hold office and wield power in numbers we only dreamed of before.

Racial justice, economic equality, and world peace – these were the themes that occupied King’s life; they ought to occupy ours today. We have a long and honorable tradition of social justice in this country. It still sends forth the message that when we act together, we can overcome.

But despite impressive increases in the numbers of black people holding public office, despite our ability to sit and eat and ride and vote and attend school and live in places that used to bar black faces, in some important ways nonwhite Americans face problems more difficult to attack now than in the years that went before.

We are such a young nation so recently removed from slavery that only my father’s generation stands between Julian Bond and human bondage. Like many others, I am the grandson of a slave. My grandfather, James Bond, was born in 1863, in Kentucky; freedom didn’t come for him until the 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865. He and his mother were property, like a horse or a chair. At age 15, barely able to read and write, he hitched his tuition – a steer – to a rope and walked across Kentucky to Berea College and the college took him in. My grandfather belonged to a transcendent generation of black Americans, a generation born into slavery, freed by the Civil War, determined to make their way as free women and men. Martin Luther King belonged to another transcendent generation of black Americans, a generation born into segregation, freed from racism’s constraints by their own efforts, determined to make their way in freedom.

Today, we are still being tested by hardships and adversity... People of color are more likely to be poor than rich, and they are worse off than their white counterparts. Almost every social indicator, from birth to death, reflects black-white disparities. Infant mortality rates are 134 percent higher for blacks; chances of imprisonment are 570 percent higher; rate of death from homicide 493 percent higher; lack of health insurance 33 percent more likely; the proportion with a college degree 53 percent lower... After the 2008 election, the narrative was that we had become a post-racial society. Wrong. Jim Crow may be dead, but racism is alive and well. That is the central fact of life for every non-white American, including the President. It eclipses income, position, and education. Race trumps them all.

We have work to do – none of it is easy, but we have never wished our way to freedom. There needs to be a constantly growing and always reviving activist progressive movement across America if we are going to maintain and expand victories and our vision for the country. Martin Luther King didn’t march from Selma to Montgomery by himself. He didn’t speak to an empty field at the March on Washington. There were thousands marching with him, and before him, and thousands more who did the dirty work that preceded the triumphal march...

Racial justice, economic equality, and world peace – these were the themes that occupied King’s life; they ought to occupy ours today. We have a long and honorable tradition of social justice in this country. It still sends forth the message that when we act together, we can overcome. My slave-born grandfather speaks to us today. “Wrong” he said in his 1892 Berea College commencement address, “for a time may seem to prevail and the good already accomplished seem to be overthrown. But forward in the struggle, inspired by the achievements of the past, sustained by a faith that knows no faltering, forward in the struggle.”
BOOK REVIEW
Our Schools are at Risk
J. Michael Bodi


I first saw Dr. Diane Ravitch give a keynote speech at the University of Houston in the early 1990s while I was working on my doctorate at the University of Texas, Austin. She was then Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education when George H.W. Bush was president. I was immediately put off by the things she had to say. At the time Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, (a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education), were pushing the “new accountability” for public schools. They were the conservative bulwarks arguing that the schools needed to be overhauled, that we had a crisis in our educational system, and we had to measure, collect data, measure some more, shut down schools, and fire teachers and principals as necessary. The republic was being attacked internally. With glossy overheads and rousing pronouncements we, the audience, were harangued and browbeaten for an hour. The crowd rose in adulation. I sat stunned and incredulous at what I had just heard. The hyperbole was not new to me, of course; what was most disconcerting was the audience. They liked her.

This was a time when everything changed in American public education. In 1965, the first foray into public education by the federal government was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Education had never been a federal prerogative, but the ESEA allowed for a constitutional end run. Through ESEA, the feds could offer direct grants to states or school districts in return for compliance with “national” policies. Gradually, in succeeding decades, having this capacity pushed some policy makers to conceive of national educational standards where students and educators could be held to account. The accountability movement reached full flight in the 1990s and led to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, which was essentially a revamping of the ESEA. It had a different name and a radically different approach, in which the government could intervene in public education throughout the country. The conservatives were in charge and opened the door to the public schools to corporate America.

During the Q&A in Houston, I had managed to grab the microphone to ask Ravitch a straight-forward question: did she feel that mandating standardized testing across the country in K-12 schools would solve the problems she had identified? She hemmed and hawed, but in essence said “yes,” that we had to collect valid and reliable data to determine what our children knew and didn’t know so we could then design curricula to ensure that children would be given the opportunity to “achieve their full potential.” I attempted to ask a follow-up question: how is it possible for anyone to determine if someone else has reached his full potential? But she ignored my query and moved on to another questioner.

Ravitch went on to work for the Clinton administration on national learning assessments for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a program euphemistically referred to as the “nation’s report card.”
She promoted charter schools and argued that for-profit companies (ones that received public monies) be allowed to run them. And she promoted the notion that student test scores be tied to teacher performance. Her positions in government and academia were platforms for spreading the wildfire that swept through American schools nationwide. And as a consequence, fully two generations of youngsters have been harmed by those actions and outcomes. The bleeding has not been stanch ed and more blood-letting is happening with the advent of the Core Curriculum, a movement to centralize American public schools into one system.

Ironically, in 2010 she changed her mind. “They were wrong,” she stated in her book *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, and recanted her earlier support of the “reform agenda.” Now, in her most recent book, *Reign of Error* (2013), she says there is nothing to reform. High-school graduation rates are at an all-time high, and reading scores for 4th-grade white, black, Hispanic and Asian students were significantly higher in 2011 than they were in 1992, as measured by the NAEP. For almost 400 pages in this current book she provides data that refute literally every position held by conservative reformers regarding public education in America. She laments that educational reform has been taken over by for-profit corporations and correctly observes that test scores have risen evenly and consistently for decades regardless of standardized testing and, likewise, that high school and college graduation rates have steadily increased. Ravitch assails merit pay for teachers as a flawed idea, and even attacks programs (Teach for America) and individuals (Michelle Rhee, former Chancellor of the Washington, DC public schools), and Arne Duncan (Secretary of Education for President Obama). She also criticizes President Obama’s “Race to the Top” program, in which states compete for federal dollars, as merely an extension of NCLB (now languishing for want of re-enactment) that further privatizes American education. This, she says, must stop now.

Ravitch discusses at length what should be done to ensure continuous growth and achievement in our K-12 schools. She says we must invest in our schools beginning with children in utero. Regular medical care is vitally important to ensure adequate physical and cognitive development and allow for good pre-kindergarten learning experiences for all our children. From K through 12, children and teenagers should be taught using age-appropriate learning modalities and experiences, paralleling their psychological development. Our children must have time to “sing and dance and draw and play and giggle.”(7) Standardized testing should be used for diagnostic purposes only. “Public education is a basic public responsibility.”(9)

But, in the end, *Reign of Error* merely takes us to a place where other educators and thinkers have been pointing us for some time. Much of what Ravitch discusses in this book has been done before. For example, the plight of our inner-city schools has been painfully described in detail in Jonathan Kozol’s work since the 1970s, most recently in his book *Shame of the Nation: Apartheid in American Public Schools* (2005). The President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Randi Weingarten, stated in a January 2014 speech: “It starts with investing in early childhood education, making college affordable, making public schools the center of communities, and, equipping students with essential life skills and offering multiple paths to graduation and the world of work through rigorous career and technical education programs.”

In the preface to *Reign of Error*, Ravitch states, “The purpose of elementary and secondary education is to develop the minds and character of young children and adolescents and help them grow up to become healthy, knowledgeable, and competent citizens” (xii).

Finally, we agree.

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For almost 400 pages in this current book she provides data that refute literally every position held by conservative reformers regarding public education in America.
BOOK REVIEW
Kiss This Paper

Ann Brunjes


In the 1630s or 40s, pregnant with one of her eight children, Anne Bradstreet addressed a poem to her husband Simon. In it, she grappled with the possibility that she might die in childbirth. While Bradstreet’s Puritan faith demanded that she wean her affections from the things of this life (husband and children included), the poet was bereft at the prospect of leaving no earthly trace after her death. The poem asks her husband to remember her in the faces of her children: “Look to my little babes, my dear remains.” For most women in the seventeenth century, the only trace they could imagine leaving behind was children. But Anne Bradstreet was also a poet. She was fortunate in having been born into a family that taught her to write and valued her literary gifts, and then married a man who appears – remarkably – to have enjoyed and encouraged her writing. And so she could claim more:

And if chance to thine eyes shall bring this verse,
With some sad sighs honour my absent Herse;
And kiss this paper for thy loves dear sake,
Who with salt tears this last Farewel did take.

Bradstreet had the solace of knowing her poetry would leave her mark on the world and stand in her stead, a physical reminder to those who loved her that she thought and dreamed, and that her imaginative life flew beyond the boundaries of childbearing and housekeeping. Bradstreet remains present to audiences into the current century with greater force than the men in her family, two of whom were governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But she is very nearly the only one; we have documentation of the inner lives of almost no other women of her generation. In Book of Ages, Harvard historian Jill Lepore reminds us how easy it was for women’s lives to ride out on the tide of history. Unrecorded, unnoticed, without recourse to the full protection of the law, even the youngest and most beloved sister of Ben Franklin, arguably the most famous American of the eighteenth century, is at risk of being forgotten and slipping into oblivion.

Jane Franklin was not a poet. Unlike Anne Bradstreet, she was born into a poor and obscure family, her education snatched here and there. She knew that her only “remains” would be her children, but she sought something more. And so, as Lepore tells us, “she did once write a book. She stitched four sheets of foolscap between two covers to make sixteen pages. On its first page, she wrote, ‘Jane Franklin Born on March 27 1712.’ She called it her Book of Ages. It is a record of the births and deaths of her children, a litany of grief.” (xii) Like Anne Bradstreet, whose poems record and make immortal the smallest and greatest moments of her life, Jane Franklin’s Book of Ages serves, in Lepore’s words, as her archive.

In Book of Ages we see Jane in stark comparison to her brilliant brother: while he was sent to grammar school, Jane learned to write only because he taught her. While Ben ran away from home to make his fortune in the wide world, Jane married (badly) at 15 and bore 12 children, 11 of whom predeceased her. And every American schoolchild knows Ben Franklin’s story: printer, writer, diplomat, inventor, scientist. Jane, for her part, rarely left Boston (seldom, in fact, left her own house), and spent her days caring for babies and husband, making soap and...
I have been teaching and reading Benjamin Franklin’s words for 17 years, but I have never been moved by him in the way that I was when reading about his relationship with Jane. Franklin wrote to Jane and received more letters from her than any other person.

candles in the family business, mending, washing and cooking, and, when the tide of childbearing subsided, stealing time to scratch off letters to her brother and beloved friends. She read whenever possible, and made for herself the best life she could. The brilliance of Lepore’s book is that it makes us realize, if we did not before, that Jane’s life is every bit as remarkable and meaningful, and worth understanding as that of her brother. In Book of Ages, Lepore moves the goalposts of history and decenters the traditional narrative, putting the story of ordinary women center stage. Lepore is a professional historian, and the book is meticulously researched, but it is nonetheless a gripping read for both scholars and non-specialists. Lepore is a gifted storyteller who weaves together the historical record and imagined recreations of key moments in Jane Franklin’s life with intelligence, beauty, and feeling.

I have been teaching and reading Benjamin Franklin’s words for 17 years, but I have never been moved by him in the way that I was when reading about his relationship with Jane. Franklin wrote to Jane and received more letters from her than any other person. He loved her. He valued her opinions. He rescued her son from bankruptcy (a constant threat), bought Jane a house, sympathized with her when she mourned, gave her his share of the money he inherited from his father. She was his confidante, his dear sister, his other self. In Franklin’s relationship with his sister Jane, Lepore shows us a warmer, more generous, and more fully human figure than we find through study of any of his other writings. Writing about the sister of someone as remarkable and well known as Ben Franklin, Lepore runs the danger (which she acknowledges) of being pulled into the orbit of Ben Franklin’s life and out of Jane’s. It is possible to imagine Lepore’s book solely this way: in knowing Jane we know Ben. And yet, that is not at all the case here. Rather, Lepore’s argument is more this: if we do not know Jane, we do not know Ben. This book raises an important challenge to all of us who think about how our knowledge of past lives gets preserved and written, discarded and forgotten, remembered and memorialized. Whose lives do we privilege? “What would it mean,” Lepore asks herself and the reader, “to write the history of an age not only from what has been saved but also from what has been lost? What would it mean to write a history concerned not only with the lives of the famous but also with the lives of the obscure?” The answer is this book. From this slimmest of files the author builds the compelling portrait of a life and an age.

READERS RESPOND

“It’s a cold, 0º morning here in Vermont, so, trapped by the temp. I sat down to skim the BR. Skim went to peruse. The Nov, [20]13 issue is quite a piece of work! It is not a dog’s breakfast at all but a smorgasbord of good grub. I read the whole thing, in violation of the Miss Piggy diet rule of never eating at one time something bigger than your own head. So with a cerebral belch I thank you and your fellow faculty authors for an appreciated repast. BSC (now BSU) is a good place to go out from – unpretentious, solid but still rich and varied. Like your publication.”

Paul F. Rump ’68
**The rain gutter deserves a better cleaning**

*John Bonanni*

At night my corduroy shorts take the window frame with them, a sweep of gray across one leg.

To sit & smoke on roof slats, to watch the tea billow from the curve of the tin can.

Here, the bird had a way of whistling less invasively.

*It’s time for dinner.*

A friend taught me this.
You can use almost anything—
a cigarette, a Pepsi, an apple.

Down the aluminum stairs to hear magnified a rattle of glass like plates beneath a lawnmower.

*Whose turn is it to say grace?*

I never did learn the twist of spaghetti in the cup of a spoon.
To shovel was so much easier.

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John Bonanni is enrolled in the graduate program in Special Education and serves as editor of the Cape Cod Poetry Review.

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**Call for Submissions**

*Bridgewater Review* invites submissions from full- and part-time faculty and librarians for publication. *Bridgewater Review* is published twice yearly by the faculty and librarians of Bridgewater State University. It provides a forum for campus-wide conversations pertaining to research, teaching, and creative expression, as well as a showcase for faculty art. Articles in all disciplines and genres are welcome and encouraged, including scholarship about research interests and trends, scholarship about teaching and learning, creative writing, and short reviews of other publications.

Articles should be 1700-2200 words in length, though shorter articles will also be considered. Creative writing can be submitted at lengths briefer than 2200 words. Those wishing to submit are asked to consult the *Bridgewater Review* submission guidelines (available from the Editor). In keeping with the founding spirit of our faculty magazine, the editors are equally interested in unfinished pieces of writing that may need assistance with revision and in polished pieces that are publication ready. All submissions will be reviewed, but there is no guarantee that submitted work will be published.

*Bridgewater Review* also welcomes Letters to the Editor with the hope that *BR* may become a locus for community discussion at Bridgewater State University.

Submissions should be sent electronically to:
Andrew Holman
Editor, *Bridgewater Review*
bridgewater.review@bridgew.edu

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