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# *The Independent Scholar*

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ISABELLE FLEMMING

## FROM THE EDITOR'S LAPTOP

Welcome to Volume 1 of *The Independent Scholar (TIS)*, the peer-reviewed online journal of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS). The present number contains papers delivered at the 2015 NCIS Conference, held at Yale University in June 2015 in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of NCIS. The Conference theme, "Traditions and Transitions: Independent Scholars and the Digital Landscape," examined the various ways in which digital tools have had an impact on scholarship, and this theme is reflected in the papers selected for this special conference issue of TIS. Authored by NCIS members, they include a description of a digitally-based project analyzing the depiction of books in Renaissance art; an exploration of the influence of intellectual life in the Scottish Enlightenment; a unique insight into the 'Swinging London' of the 1960s; and an informed view of adjunct activism in the twenty-first century. Even those who attended the Conference are advised to read these papers, since the authors have expanded on their original oral presentations which were originally constrained by the inevitable temporal limits.

TIS is a highly collaborative enterprise. While the undersigned serves as editor, NCIS Board member Joan Cunningham is the Science Editor and Acting President Amanda Haste is the Humanities Editor. NCIS Communications Officer Tula Connell, along with other Board members, performed the Web magic, while Secretary Isabelle Flemming obtained the ISSN number. Other Board members, particularly David Sonenschein, have provided valuable insights, and we are also grateful to Catherine Prowse for formatting the papers to conform to the TIS template and for proof reading the complete issue.

All the papers in TIS are peer-reviewed following carefully drawn-up guidelines, to ensure that what is contained within our e-covers meets the highest academic standards, so our thanks must go to the reviewers for their valuable work. The journal also contains objective book reviews, through which we hope to introduce you to some of the scholarly books published by NCIS members. In this first issue, we are pleased to present four reviews, in which all the authors and all the reviewers are scholars drawn from the ranks of NCIS.

Submissions for the next issue are already in the pipeline, and include additional papers from the 2015 Conference whose authors were unable to meet the present deadline. We look forward to your feedback on this inaugural issue, which can be sent to me on [tis@ncis.org](mailto:tis@ncis.org).

NCIS members, and members of our affiliate organizations, are welcome to submit manuscripts for peer review at any time, although a call for papers will be issued approximately six months in advance of each publication date.



SHELBY SHAPIRO

General Editor

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# TRANSITION FROM MYSTERY INTO HISTORY: HOW THE INTERNET REVIVED MY FAITH IN "SWINGING LONDON"

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## **Abstract**

*Journalists like to say that what they write is "the first rough draft of history." Although there is truth in this dictum, it ignores the fact that the original rough draft may be revised by later commentators. This paper discusses a controversial article about an equally controversial phenomenon: that phenomenon is "Swinging London," and article is the eponymous cover story about it which Time magazine published in April 1966. The author traces both the creation and reception of the article, and the changing perceptions of both phenomenon and article with the passage of nearly fifty years.*

*The paper admits that, as the author wrote the Time cover, she is an interested party; it will also suggest why her uniquely qualified views may still rate consideration in 2015. Following a brief introduction, this paper situates the cover story in the cultural and journalistic context of its period; next, it deals with the initial responses to it and the changing perceptions into the 21st century, and concludes with thoughts about why posterity has been kinder to Swinging London than the journalism of the 1960s.*

**Keywords:** *Swinging London, Time magazine, journalism, cultural history*

Journalists like to say that what they write is "the first rough draft of history."<sup>1</sup> There is much truth to this claim, but it ignores how very substantially that original draft may be revised by subsequent commentators. This paper concerns a phenomenon that has undergone just such a revision as it has made the transition from being a topic for journalists to one of interest to historians. Its transition—and revision—can be dramatized and may in part even be attributed to the following facts: firstly, those who have written about it have evolved from being primarily journalists to being primarily scholars; secondly, the birthdates of these authors have evolved from earlier to later; and thirdly, publishers of books on the subject have evolved from being exclusively trade houses to being at least partly university presses and ultimately textbook publishers.

The phenomenon I refer to was discussed in a magazine article whose name for it has passed so completely into the vernacular that most people hearing it today are unaware of its origins. Still less are they apt to be aware of the controversy originally

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase is usually attributed to Philip L. Graham, onetime president and publisher of the Washington Post, but a 2010 article in Slate cites an earlier source. See Jack Shafer, "Who Said It First?" *Slate*, posted August 30, 2010 at [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/press\\_box/2010/08/who\\_said\\_it\\_first.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/press_box/2010/08/who_said_it_first.html). Accessed October 21, 2015.

surrounding both phenomenon and article, or the fact that, nearly fifty years after the article's publication, both phenomenon and article appear to fit—and fit more favorably—into a context that reflects how history itself is defined in the twenty-first century.

The phenomenon, which could only have happened in the 1960s, was and is known as “Swinging London.” The article about it was the cover story published by Time magazine in its issue dated April 15, 1966. Originally, this cover story was to be a travel feature in Time’s “back of the book,” where cultural and feature stories appeared. The London cover was intended to help Time’s less sophisticated—and perhaps older—readers plan summer vacations. Insiders, and many younger people, already knew that London was the place to go.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1966 British pop musicians had lately become internationally famous, from the Beatles and Rolling Stones through the rest of what was known in the U.S. as “the British invasion.” Teen-aged boys all over the U.S. were growing their hair long, in imitation of John, Paul, George and Ringo. Other British performers whose fame had crossed the Atlantic included Sean Connery as the original suave James Bond, Julie Christie with an Oscar-winning role in “Darling” and the romantic lead in “Dr. Zhivago,” Peter O’Toole in “Lawrence of Arabia,” Albert Finney as the lusty hero of “Tom Jones” and Michael Caine, with his bedroom eyes, in “The Ipcress File.” Mary Quant, the dress designer, and Vidal Sassoon, the hair stylist, were likewise known in the U.S. as well as in the U.K.. The New York Times had mentioned the London scene with approval, and Newsweek had endorsed it as a hot tourist destination in 1965, but only when Time, a year later, called it “Swinging London” did the phrase stick.

In 1966 the Internet was decades in the future. Cable TV was in its infancy, and public television was still available only for educational institutions. TV and radio could and did handle headline news effectively, but for in-depth coverage of the news, and especially features, educated Americans still relied heavily on print—and on three major print news media in

particular: The Times (then as now) was the gold standard; Newsweek was hip, liberal and already beginning to question the war in Vietnam; and Time was Republican, comparatively conservative, and still supporting the war. Both the news weeklies had national publications, but, to judge from their editorial slants, Newsweek was targeted more toward the Northwest Corridor and the West Coast—which since the 2000 Presidential elections have been known as the blue states—while Time was targeted more toward the Midwest and South, which are similarly known as the red states, or, as I was taught to call when I worked there, the heartland.

In the heartland, Time was beloved by readers whom people in New York and Washington DC might have considered square, but no tastemaker or national politician, even in those more enlightened parts of the country, could afford to ignore it. In fact, ever since I had been aware of it, Time was the magazine good liberals everywhere most loved to hate. Besides being very well written, in a terminally cocky style, and on top of most (if not all) of the big stories, its circulation was roughly four times that of the weekday New York Times, three times that of the Sunday New York Times and nearly twice that of Newsweek. Many people called Time “influential” (a barbed compliment at best, almost invariably implying that the person, place or thing so described not only has influence but uses it to promote undeserving people and/or causes). The managing editor of Time, I had been told, had “the most influential job in journalism.”

#### THE CREATION OF TIME’S LONDON COVER

Shortly before the London cover story was to appear, Otto Fuerbringer, the managing editor of Time in 1966, decided to move it up to “front of the book,” and to run it in the hard-news World section. He invited me to write it, and decreed that my photograph should appear in “A Letter from the Publisher,” the “green room” section of the magazine, up next to the masthead. As the rest of the magazine was unsigned, this placement, together with some flattering text, created the impression that I had created the whole story by myself. Far from it:

"Swinging London" was a typical example of what we staffers called "group journalism."

Although this term implies that every story was created in conferences, and although conferences to discuss story lists were part of the weekly routine, what "group journalism" really meant was that every story was the product of many hands—too many to assign any one author to it—but with these hands working in sequence rather than simultaneously. In the case of the London cover, most of its textual material had been assembled by five correspondents in our London bureau, led by Murray Gart. Their "files" had been telexed to New York, where I, as the writer, created the original draft of the story, mostly by incorporating the London files, but adding some material of my own or from other sources.

After being typed up by the copy desk, my "writer's version" was then edited by the World section's senior editor, Edward L. Jamieson and, in this case, heavily edited. After retyping, the story next went to Fuerbringer for "top-editing," and—in this case—emerged from "top-editing" with only a few minor changes. After the story had thus become "checking copy," it was fact-checked by a researcher, in this case Mary McConachie. Finally, the whole story was copy-edited for spelling and grammar by somebody (I never knew who) at the copy desk.

Like McConachie, almost all the women on the editorial staff in the New York office of Time were researchers or copy editors. Women writers were still rare, and no woman within living memory had written a cover.<sup>2</sup> Since I was a woman, my colleagues may have expected me to focus on fashion and entertainment, but I felt that, if the story was appearing in the 'World' section, it should try to show why "Swinging London" was a part of history. For this reason, I introduced some social content, an outline of

political developments over the previous decade and very general comment on economic conditions.

Some of this material appeared for the first time in the writer's draft, and was based on or derived from my personal experience of London. I had visited it briefly for the first time as an adolescent in 1947, become a passionate Anglophile as a result, and followed its political and cultural developments thereafter through college courses, American newspapers and magazines, English novels, movies, plays and two English roommates, plus another brief visit to London in the spring of 1965. In addition, before the London bureau began its research, I had telexed them a "scheduling query" in which I had outlined my ideas and told these correspondents in London either to shoot them down, or to substantiate them with interviews and statistics—so some of the cover research from London indirectly reflected my experience as well.

#### OBJECTIVITY AND STYLE

I make no claims to objectivity on the subject of "Swinging London" or Time's cover story on it. After all, I participated in the creation of the story, and witnessed at least some of its subject matter first-hand. I am aware that the first person singular is not the ideal way of presenting a scholarly paper, but in this case, I cannot see any way around it. To present its findings by referring to myself in the third person would be awkward, artificial and interrupt the narrative flow of the piece.

To balance these disadvantages for a scholarly paper, I can argue that I may know more than anybody else about the subsequent relationship between the cover and its subject, having followed it for decades. I may have whatever detachment can come with the passage of all that time, plus whatever additional detachment may have come from having left my job at Time in 1969, three years after the cover (full disclosure: I still receive a pension of \$125 a month from Time Inc., and belong to the Time-Life Alumni Society, an organization devoted almost exclusively to social pursuits).

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<sup>2</sup> I was far from the first woman to write for Time, but almost all of my predecessors had been forgotten by the men on it when I started to write for it. Among those forgotten was Anna North, who wrote a cover story on Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, during World War II—when so many men were in the services that women were allowed to write for Time (and Newsweek). See A Letter from the Publisher, *Time*, June 5, 1944.

A further possible source of detachment is that I have devoted many of the years since I left *Time* to scholarly endeavors, a professional arena that may (or may not) be somewhat removed from the more temporally-bound one of journalism. This orientation leads me to emphasize that this paper is a long-distance effort, and therefore based on only very partial research. I lack the time and money to go to London myself at present, and immerse myself more thoroughly in the hundreds of books and articles that have been written—mostly in the U.K.—about “Swinging London” since the *Time* cover story appeared. Thus all I can offer about the evolving personae of both the cover story and its subject are some conclusions based on the literature I have been able to find in New York libraries, plus—in the latter part of the paper—what has crossed the Atlantic via the Internet. To me, even this long-distance view enables me to discern a pattern, although not all of my readers may agree.

#### SWINGING LONDON: VISUAL IMPACT

*Time*’s cover design for “Swinging London” was a brightly-colored collage by Geoffrey Dickinson<sup>3</sup> which can be seen on *Time* magazine’s archive.<sup>4</sup> As the reader may (or may not) be able to see (given the small scale of the image), Dickinson’s cover design for *Time* was a *mélange* of London “sights,” including rock singers, Union Jack sunglasses, mini-skirted “dollies,” a sign advertising *Alfie* (Caine’s newest hit movie, not yet released in the U.S.), Big Ben, a red double-decker bus, Prime Minister Harold Wilson, a Rolls-Royce, a discothèque, a roulette wheel, and a bingo parlor (gambling was legal in England and not yet in most of the U.S, so it was a big attraction for Americans).

The cover story was also illustrated by black-and-white photographs, a map of “The Scene,” and eight supplemental pages of color photography (color photography was still rare in newsweeklies in 1966). The color photographs (assembled by a separate

team of a senior editor named Peter Bird Martin, a researcher named Andrea Svedberg, and many photographers) enlivened the text, which discussed or at least mentioned many tourist attractions of the city: the most “In” discothèques, art galleries, restaurants, casinos, pubs, boutiques, strip clubs, and theaters. The story had five one-paragraph vignettes showing how the dozens of celebrities congregating in London were disporting themselves there. However, it also mentioned the 2,400,000 less famous young adults and working adolescents resident in London, and the rising level of affluence that was enabling so many of them to spend more than their parents had. It mentioned the living conditions of “the lesser lights” who, even if resident in the more fashionable neighborhoods of Chelsea, Earl’s Court or South Kensington, packed themselves into shared flats or bed-sitters as opposed to the private houses of models or advertising executives.

While the magazine’s color spread pictured Crockford’s, an expensive gambling club, and the Scotch of St. James, a fashionable discothèque, the little map of “The Scene” also showed The Tiles, a plebian dancing establishment on Oxford Street that served no liquor, and the text carried a reference to “little old ladies” who were now venturing their shillings in bingo halls. Both color spread and text dealt with Biba’s boutique in Kensington, where—according to its owner, Barbara Hulanicki—“a typical secretary or shop girl, earning \$31 a week, will spend at least \$17 of it on clothing, which leaves her with a cup of coffee for lunch—but happy.”<sup>5</sup> Nor did the story neglect to link “Swinging London” with the political situation, picturing a group of semi-dressed or semi-nude young men who had celebrated the Labour Party’s recent re-election in the fountains in Trafalgar Square, and listing members of the new “meritocracy,” in which aristocrats and celebrities from working class backgrounds were able to mix and mingle.

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Dickinson was a British cartoonist known in the U.K. for his work with the BBC and in *Punch*, the venerable humor magazine.

<sup>4</sup> <http://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19660415,00.html?artId=2103553?contType=gallery>

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<sup>5</sup> “You Can Walk Across It On the Grass,” *Time*, April 15, 1966, 33.

## CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OR SEXUAL REVOLUTION?

Time conceded that this was a period when Britain had lost an empire and devalued its pound, but it did not dwell upon the negative consequences of those events. Instead, it argued that in the process, the country had recovered a lightness of heart lost while bearing the burdens of world leadership. London, the story emphasized, was experiencing a cultural Renaissance akin to that in the first Elizabethan era, with great theater, movies and music. The special physical and social qualities that made it such a pleasant place to live in and visit were also outlined. The story did quote a British journalist who considered the whole phenomenon of "Swinging London" as decadent as sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Venice, but it did not linger over this quotation.

The most immediate "news" in the cover story was the several color photos of fresh-faced young women in pantsuits and miniskirts. Pantsuits for women were still novel in America, as were the flamboyant men's clothes for sale in London's Carnaby Street. Although the male fashions were more than the editors of Time dared to show its heartland readers, the miniskirts they did publish were a real shocker—hemlines three to five inches higher than any streetwear available in the U.S.!

To American women, this was simply fashion (if admittedly a fashion that looked best on very young or very petite women, and thus, as Quant pointed out, a key ingredient in the emphasis on youth so characteristic of "Swinging London" in its entirety).<sup>6</sup> To American men, the miniskirt seems to have been more provocative than anything they had seen in years. One New York psychoanalyst in all seriousness told me in 1966 that even a grown man could get an erection from looking at a woman in a London mini. One British historian, Arthur Marwick (1933-2006) was to become particularly interested in the miniskirt: in *The Sixties* (Oxford University Press, 1998), his

monumental tome on the cultural revolutions of the decade in the U.S. and in Europe, Marwick would summarize the controversy surrounding the garment's introduction to the U.S. This included an attempt by school authorities in Tennessee to prevent students from wearing it, and a nationwide survey of police which found that 91 percent believed that miniskirts were an incitement to rape.<sup>7</sup> In an earlier book dealing solely with British society, he seems to have given his own opinion: "Quite simply, as, of course, the Victorians had always known, a girl scantily dressed was a good deal easier to seduce than one more voluminously clad."<sup>8</sup>

The pictures of those minis in Time's color spread, together with another of a striptease and several occasionally quite lengthy and suggestive passages in the text, implied that Londoners had become much more uninhibited about sex. Actually, the so-called "Sexual Revolution" of the 1960s seems to have been far more advanced in the U.S. than it was in England, but one of the most durable fantasies among travelers is that far fields are always greener. At any rate, the emphasis on sex in the London cover story would enable other, dissatisfied journalists to dismiss it as about nothing but sex—or else to write more sensational stories about London for their own publications.

Before the cover appeared (and as the writer's draft said), "swinging" had two meanings. It could be sexual, but it could also mean simply lively, fun-loving or up to the minute—"switched-on" or "with-it," in the argot of the day. Jamieson deleted the reference to the two meanings, and strengthened the story's more suggestive passages. Within months, New York's Daily

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<sup>7</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 466-468.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Allen Lane, 1982) 153. This blame-the-victim observation recurs in all three later editions of this otherwise conscientious book (1990, 1996 and 2003), even though the jacket of the 2003 edition claims that it has been "extensively updated for the twenty-first century". The passage was expanded in a mid-1980s picture book by Marwick to read: "...as the Victorians had always known, it was a good deal easier to seduce a girl if, in the horizontal position, she had no skirts which she could keep pulling down." Arthur Marwick, *Britain in Our Century: Images and Controversies* ([London:] Thames and Hudson, 1984) 171-172.

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<sup>6</sup> Mary Quant, "The Young Will Not Be Dictated To," *Vogue [U.S.]*, August 1, 1966, 86. Article condensed from Mary Quant, *Quant by Quant* (New York: Putnam, 1966) 74-76.

News (and its sister publication, the Sunday News) would be using "swinger" or "swinging" to mean promiscuous or immoral in other ways (such as taking drugs). By 1969, the words would in the U.S. have come to mean couples coupling with other couples.

Where my original draft has been idealistic, and even somewhat naïve, Jamieson imparted a confident worldly wisdom more in keeping with Time's usual tone. He also added a memorable coda or conclusion to the cover. "The London that has emerged is swinging," he wrote, "but in a more profound sense than the colorful and ebullient pop culture by itself would suggest. London has shed much of the smugness, much of the arrogance that often went with the stamp of privilege, much of its false pride—the kind that long kept it shabby and shopworn in physical fact and spirit. It is a refreshing change, and making the scene is the Londoner's way of celebrating it."<sup>9</sup>

#### INITIAL RESPONSE: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

At first, the reaction to the London cover story was mostly favorable, or at least that was what I first became aware of. I received sixteen personal congratulatory notes from people within and outside the magazine. So many newspapers picked up the story, especially in the U.K., that Time's public relations office compiled a huge scrapbook of all the clippings. The magazine had a letters department, which tabulated incoming letters to the editor and issued a weekly report on them to the staff. In the first week, the cover drew ninety-eight letters from Time readers, not all favorable: thirty-nine readers loved the story; thirteen complained about it; eighteen more complained about "Swinging London" itself, mourning the loss of the British Empire and disapproving of so much money spent on pleasure.<sup>10</sup>

Still, "Swinging London" was welcomed, soon after its publication, by three small U.S. journals of opinion: *Commonweal*, *New Republic*, and *Saturday Review*. Favorable articles on London would appear over the next seven months in four U.S. mass-media

magazines: *Esquire*, *Look*, *McCall's* and *Life*. Three U.S. fashion magazines, in their August issues, would feature London miniskirts: *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle* and *Seventeen*.

By contrast, all three top U.S. news media (including *Time*) attacked both the cover and its subject. Anthony Lewis, London bureau chief of the *New York Times*, led off the campaign on June 8, 1966. To him, the frivolousness of London meant that everybody was ignoring Britain's economic problems, with gold reserves dwindling, and ports tied up by a seamen's strike. London was crowded with American tourists looking for "Swinging London," he wrote, but all they would find was "a lot of puzzled talk about what it is that is supposed to be swinging about London. Sex is probably most of it—short skirts and plays about lesbians and movies about a comic-strip character like Modesty Blaise..."<sup>11</sup>

Four days later, Henry Fairlie, a recently-transplanted British journalist, assaulted "Swinging London," and *Time's* story about it, in the *New York Times Magazine*. To him, "the scene" was narcissistic and decadent: its arts were brutalizing or perverse, and society's younger leaders, instead of going in for worthier occupations like automobile manufacture or the civil service, were compensating for the loss of Empire by bringing "marginal" trades like fashion and popular music into the center.<sup>12</sup>

*Newsweek*, on July 25, and *Time*, on September 2, ran major articles on Britain's economic problems. Conservative *Time* blamed these problems on lazy workers. Liberal *Newsweek* blamed incompetent management. Both dumped on Swinging London. "In a curious way," *Newsweek* wrote, "'swinging London' typifies not the modern professional spirit of the age to come, but the engaging eccentricities of Britain's

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<sup>9</sup> "You Can Walk Across It On the Grass," 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Time* Letters Report, April 21, 1966.

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony Lewis, "Frivolity in Britain: Nation's Problems Are Dull Stuff to People Bent on a Swinging Time," *New York Times*, June 8, 1966. Modesty Blaise was a comic-strip female action hero about whom a poorly-reviewed movie had been made, but it had not yet been released in the U.S. prior to the cover story and was not mentioned in it. The play about lesbians was *The Killing of Sister George*, an excellent drama that I saw in London in June 1966, but there is nothing about homosexuality (male or female) in the cover story.

<sup>12</sup> Henry Fairlie, "Britain Seems Willing to Sink Giggling Into the Sea," *New York Times Magazine*, June 12, 1966.

amateur past.<sup>13</sup> Time quoted Michael Shanks, the English author of a book likewise condemning the British labor force, and saying of "Swinging London," "It is gay, it is madly amusing, and it carries with it the smell of death."<sup>14</sup>

American humorists claimed that "Swinging London" did not even exist. Art Buchwald, a syndicated columnist whose flagship paper was the Washington Post, told his readers on July 21 how he had hunted all over London for it, but found it only in Time's London bureau, where he saw "reporters doing the Watusi with several comely researchers," and a champagne bucket on every desk.<sup>15</sup> Russell Baker, a humorist on the Times, recounted on November 16 how he too had hunted for "Swinging London" all over town—until a Scotland Yard inspector told him that it was only "a handful of boys who won't cut their hair and girls who don't have the decency to cover their legs."<sup>16</sup> Nor was this all of it for the Times: the magazine ran another half-dozen negative or jesting references to "Swinging London" over the summer, into the fall and as late as the following winter. On February 17, 1967—a full ten months after the Time cover had appeared—the paper would give an English editor named Nigel Buxton a full page in its travel section to present an article entitled, "In Defense of London—It Is Not a Swinging City."

More recently, I have become aware that this backlash against "Swinging London" was even more pronounced in London itself—and that the attacks there, too, began almost as soon as the Time cover story appeared. Queen, a sophisticated society magazine much admired by the "In" set, devoted a cover story of its own in June 1966 to what it called "Swingeing London" (a portmanteau word apparently combining "swinging" with "swinge" – an archaic word meaning to punish with blows, thrash or beat).<sup>17</sup> The

magazine complained that the "tenth and most dangerous muse, [...] Publicity," had blown London's charms up to such an extent that it now "the grand debunk" was going on, and London risked becoming "Last-Year's Girl," a fate it did not deserve.<sup>18</sup>

Private Eye, a popular satirical newspaper, published a "Swinging England All-Purpose Titillation Supplement," ostensibly intended to help the "very small number of American publications" that had not yet run articles on the phenomenon.<sup>19</sup> London Life, a third English journal, published a parody illustrated with photographs of Allan Sherman, the American comedian, running around to all the local "in" spots, trying—and failing—to get 'with it'. Even more damning was the fact that many and maybe most of "Swinging London" s celebrities suddenly decided that they did not want to be considered "swinging" any more. When Terence Stamp, the movie actor, overheard a fellow customer in a London shop describe some item as "swinging," he muttered furiously, "that bloody expression."<sup>20</sup>

At the time, I knew next to nothing of this negative reaction in London. For me, the best thing about the cover story had been an invitation from an editor at Coward McCann, an American publishing house. He wanted me to write a guide book to "Swinging London" for them, and I welcomed the chance to give my version of the story (as opposed to that of Time). When I visited London in June, to gather material for this book, I heard no objections to the cover story from any of the many people I interviewed. True, one Labour Party Member of Parliament (over an elegant lunch at Les Ambassadeurs) delivered a blistering attack to me on how Time was put together, with the whole magazine reflecting the views of the one man at the top, but I felt that this had more to do with its political positions in general—and most likely its Vietnam policies—than with its cover story on London.

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<sup>13</sup> "Britain at the Brink," *Newsweek*, July 25, 1966, 34.

<sup>14</sup> "How the Tea Break Could Ruin England," *Time*, Sept. 2, 1966, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Art Buchwald, "Capitol Punishment," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> Russell Baker, "Observer: Cold Feet in Swinging London," *New York Times*, November 16, 1966.

<sup>17</sup> In 1967, the British pop artist Richard Hamilton would use "Swingeing London" to title a series of paintings based on a photograph showing Mick Jagger and the London art dealer Robert

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Fraser hand-cuffed together after being arrested on drug-related charges.

<sup>18</sup> "Swingeing London: The Truth," *Queen*, June 22, 1966, 40-41.

<sup>19</sup> Max Décharné, *King's Road: The Rise and Fall of the Hippest Street in the World* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicolson, 2005) xix.

<sup>20</sup> Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go! The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London* (New York: Doubleday, 2002) 204-205.

On the other hand, I was already at least partially aware of what seems to have been a common theme in these British critiques of the cover, since it was also common to the New York ones—namely, that not all of London was as “swinging” as the cover story implied. In U.S. publications, this complaint mostly revolved around the idea that the youthful, modernistic spirit of “swinging London” only represented a small part of the city’s (and the country’s) population, and that most of Britain and even London was still as old-fashioned and traditional as it had always been. In the U.K., the emphasis was more on the socioeconomic status of “swinging London,” and the claim that it only existed among a couple of hundred wealthy movers, shakers and celebrities.

I agreed with the U.S. complaint, up to a point anyway, and dealt with it in the introduction to my book, *A Swinger’s Guide to London* (1967). The U.K. complaint, which tended to ignore the mass appeal of “Swinging London,” and even the modest extent to which the Time cover recognized this mass appeal, was to persist in books published in the U.K. for decades. As I did not become fully aware of this complaint until I revisited the story in the early part of this century, I did not deal with it in my own writing until then.<sup>21</sup>

#### WHY ALL THE NEGATIVITY?

Why all the negativity, one asks in retrospect? What had Time done to deserve so many attacks for what was intended as compliment? Some of the reaction, especially in the U.S. and among Time’s heartland readers, may have been due to shock. Boys with long hair and ruffled shirts may have seemed effeminate; girls in pantsuits mannish. Those lascivious miniskirts recalled the orgies of ancient Rome, while the notion that they were both evidence of abandoned behavior and an incitement to rape would surface—as Marwick was to indicate—in many newspapers of the day and at least two British history books since. The fact that

Merrie Olde England had for so long seemed to escape the more opprobrious aspects of modernity, and remained until so recently the land of tea, crumpets, lavender and tweed, must have added to the shock.

The fact that a mere woman seemed responsible for the cover might have been another factor in discounting it. Given the scarcity of women elsewhere in the U.S. news media, this element might have been a factor even among its more liberal men. My colleagues on Time were probably not the only journalists under the impression that women could deal only with entertainment and fashion. Most hard-news stories about politics and economics on other publications, too, were still written by men, so it might have been felt that whatever Time’s woman writer might have said about the politics, economics and social implications of “Swinging London” was not to be relied upon.

Another factor, I would guess, was that the U.S. news media were following the London media, and this would have been especially true of the New York Times. But Britons also had their own reasons for resenting Time’s coverage: Britain’s opposition at that point to the American involvement in Vietnam may have been even stronger than it was among the wider U.S. public. Time magazine, with its somewhat aggressive patriotism, represented a particularly obnoxious form of Yankee imperialism: cultural imperialism. Some Britons were already irate about other Yankee imports, from rock ‘n’ roll to Andy Warhol. The feeling was that such invasions overshadowed the local products.

In a broader sense, too, some Britons—especially the older ones—may still have been smarting over the way that U.S., following upon the commanding role it played in World War II, had taken over from the U.K. as a leader of the international community. There may even have been shame over the way that, since the war, the once all-powerful British Empire had dwindled away into only a shadow of its former self.

Yet another factor may have been the fact that, in my experience, the British—unlike Americans—did not much like foreign writers writing about them, even

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 9, “The Response: Amateur, Ruthless Girl Agent, Harlot,” in Piri Halasz, *A Memoir of Creativity: Abstract Painting, Politics and the Media* (New York: iUniverse, 2009).

favorably. Insular to the end, they were more apt to listen with approval to one of their own. An additional source of aggravation must have been the fact that many (though not all) of the hot spots mentioned by Time were expensive by local standards, but—thanks to a still very favorable exchange rate—still a bargain for Yankee tourists (and even more of a bargain for Yankee journalists on expense accounts).<sup>22</sup>

Finally, the cover story was so overdrawn that overkill became a factor. It was all too much, especially for those aspects of “Swinging London” that were supposed to be especially private, not even public within England itself. The most fashionable casinos and discothèques were (at least nominally) private clubs, and not every swinging Londoner wanted to publicize his or her sexual mores. In fact, few of the leaders of “Swinging London” wanted that much publicity, even in a more general sense.

Though they had courted it initially—especially those members of it whose livelihoods depended upon broad public acceptance of their talents—they did not appreciate having their home turf overrun by legions of common tourists. Tourists, in those days, were mostly considered archetypal outsiders (as opposed to “world travelers,” who were always “in the know”). And some—maybe many—American tourists did not counteract this impression. [I can remember feeling embarrassed in London theaters in the 1960s and 1970s upon hearing American accents (which carry, especially the female ones) complaining about a play clear across the lobby at intermission. Other unlovely recollections of my fellow Americans include a busload of overweight middle-aged ladies in pastel-colored pantsuits debarking in Leicester Square, and a man in front of me in a queue for tickets at a Shaftesbury Avenue theater berating the ticket seller because the ticket he wanted had already sold out.]

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<sup>22</sup> See Anthony Blond, “Swingers – I hate you,” *Queen*, June 22, 1966, 46. Blond, the publisher of *Queen*, estimated that “writer Halasz” must be making \$20,000 a year in order to enjoy all of those London pleasures that less affluent Londoners could not afford. Actually, writer Halasz was making more like \$13,000, while Blond’s concern for less affluent Londoners must be taken as noblesse oblige, since all the rest of *Queen*’s content (editorial and advertising) dealt with and was presumably addressed to the moneyed classes.

Within fifteen months of the Time cover story appearing, “Swinging London” did appear to have become what *Queen* most dreaded: “Last-Year’s-Girl.” Time alone was certainly not responsible: among the many books that have since dealt with the phenomenon, the consensus is that London had already been swinging since the early 1960s, and was pretty well ready to move on when the Time cover appeared. I could see the change when I revisited the city in the summer of 1967, “Swinging London” had come to mean little more than sleazy paperback guide books to its tackier attractions, such as those being peddled off carts to the dumber sorts of tourists in Piccadilly Circus.

Meanwhile, many (if not all) members of the In-crowd, sashaying along the King’s Road in Chelsea, had abandoned Quant for the beads and tie-dyed fashions emanating from the hippie haven of San Francisco. Thanks again to U.S. news media (especially *Newsweek* and *Time*), “the flower children” of Haight-Ashbury were spreading their ingenuous gospel of “tune in, turn on, drop out” around the world, and what both Americans and Britons called “the counterculture” had arrived. My transistor radio, tuned to the offshore “pirate” stations that (in defiance to the BBC) had initially put over British pop, picked up, over and over, an American tune, “If you’re going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair...”

In the U.S., another key factor contributing to the antagonism to “Swinging London” among the journalistic community was doubtless *Time*’s hawkish Vietnam policy, directed as it was almost wholly by Fuerbringer, and despite the subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) opposition of Richard Clurman, chief of *Time Inc.*’s correspondents. In 1966, the question of whether or not the war should still be pursued was still up in the air. Admittedly, *Newsweek* was already looking for ways to disengage, but the *Times*, at least officially, was still uncommitted, and other important publications, including the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, were still supporting the war.

From what I had heard from a knowledgeable colleague, I had concluded that the U.S. could not win in Vietnam. It was also my experience that reporters from rival publications—including those from despised Time—talked extensively with each other: journalism was (and for all I know, still is) like a whole underground community. So in retrospect, I have come to believe that this conclusion regarding the futility of the war was widespread both among my colleagues in Time's New York headquarters, and even more among its reporters and other correspondents, certainly those on Newsweek and not excluding those with the Times. Yet—having very carefully read the Times for that period on microfilm and therefore been able to see everything it published—I have found no evidence that any of its reporters were yet saying in print that the U.S. should pull out.

Nobody at Time was saying it in print either, although Clurman was a fervent supporter of his correspondents and Henry Grunwald, one of Time's most popular senior editors (and the man who would two years later succeed Fuerbringer) was known to favor "a more enlightened policy on Vietnam."

As a result, all this feeling against the war must still have been simmering underground. Vietnam, not "Swinging London," was the defining issue of the period, the one that influenced how everybody felt about everything else, and one that almost nobody could remain unemotional about. To the extent that I managed to do so, it was by doing my best not to think about it at all, but in the years since, I have come to believe that many people hated Time (even more than they had hated it formerly) for—as they saw it—causing so much death and destruction by prolonging the conflict. If, in fact, the managing editor of Time in 1966 had "the most influential job in U.S. journalism," then Fuerbringer must have been the most unpopular man in U.S. journalism as well.

What is the point of all this? Simply, it leads me to believe that to the U.S. press corps as a whole (and more specifically, to its members on the Times), Time—and more specifically, Otto Fuerbringer—could do no right. Hence, any opportunity to take it, and him, down was to be welcomed. "Swinging London"

offered that opportunity, and so it was to be ridiculed, reduced to a silly joke. This is a conclusion I have come to only in retrospect, but—in light of subsequent developments—it still seems to fit the facts.

#### LOOKING BACK I:

##### THE INITIAL HISTORIES OF THE PERIOD

After my guidebook was published in 1967, I put "Swinging London" aside and, for thirty years, devoted myself primarily to the visual arts. Although I lived in London for nearly two years right after I left Time in 1969, my flat was in un-swinging West Kensington, and I went to art-historical museums and classical theater rather than discothèques or fashionable restaurants. However, in 1996, I began a memoir: its prime purpose was to introduce a theory about abstract painting, but it required revisiting Time's 1966 cover story. I found that both it and "Swinging London" itself had been dealt with in many books, most of which were by Britons and published in the U.K. but available in New York bookstores or libraries. In my memoir, I would list thirteen books discovered during this period. Though I was still unaware of how the London media and English celebrities had initially reacted to the cover story, I could see that almost all of these books were negative or ambivalent about the subject of "Swinging London" and/or the cover story.

The earliest was Christopher Booker's *The Neophiliacs*, published by the London trade house of Collins in 1969. Booker (born 1937) was a journalist who had helped to found Private Eye, and has since become known for opposing the scientific consensus on global warming and the dangers of asbestos. He maintained that the swinging society was infatuated with "the new," and emphasized that the press coverage of this society had begun a year before Time's story (as indeed it had, with John Crosby, an American television critic based in London, contributing a much more voyeuristic article than that of Time to the London Weekend Telegraph).

Bernard Levin (1928-2004) was another journalist, well-known for the often provocative positions he took in his newspaper columns; his book on "Swinging London" was *The Pendulum Years*,

published by another London trade house, Jonathan Cape, in 1970. It was mostly about Britain's economic and political problems in the 1960s, and Levin had difficulty getting beyond them. The country, he wrote, "Began to stumble, then to stagger, then to fall down. Eventually she had fallen down so often that she was not only covered in mud but the laughing-stock of the passers-by."<sup>23</sup>

A much more sympathetic analysis of "Swinging London" was taken by Brian Masters (born 1939). A popular author rather than a journalist, Masters is best known today for books on serial killers and the British aristocracy, but he also wrote *The Swinging Sixties*, published by a third London trade house, Constable, in 1985. It began with a discussion of how the phrase "Swinging London" originated: he credited it to the American Melvin Lasky, editor of the London-based little magazine *Encounter*, when Lasky was being interviewed by a *Time* correspondent preparing the cover story.<sup>24</sup> This beginning enabled Masters to work in a reference to the cover story itself without having to evaluate it or comment upon it beyond saying that it was "now-famous." His treatment of the phenomenon itself, while rich in its particulars, was similarly ambivalent. He quoted from Swinging London's detractors as well as listing its achievements, and concluded his introduction by saying, "In the end, it should be clear that the kaleidoscope of sins and boons which galloped through the decade left the country entirely different from what it had been before."<sup>25</sup>

The first author with academic credentials to deal with "Swinging London" was Roy Porter (1946-2002). Although again best known for popular books on other subjects, ranging from medicine to the Enlightenment, he did take a PhD from Cambridge in 1974, and published *London: A Social History* in 1995. It was the first book to be published by a university

press, and by an American one at that: Harvard. A "crossover" book, designed for both students and a learned adult readership, its chapter on "Swinging London: Dangling Economy, 1945-1975" conceded that the growth in industries like fashion, design, music, photography, modeling, magazines and advertising, "created wealth and provided work for almost a quarter of a million Londoners, in the process giving London a new image and its people a fresh sense of identity and vitality."<sup>26</sup> But most of the chapter was devoted to the decline of the Port of London, the loss of heavy industry and manufacturing jobs, the destruction of handsome old buildings, the erection of ugly new ones, housing shortages and problems with immigration. Porter concluded that the economic downswings of the 1970s and especially the 1980s "showed up Swinging London for what it was: a veneer of modernity on an ageing superstructure."<sup>27</sup>

Similarly patronizing discussions of the phenomenon of "Swinging London" can be found in three other books from the period between 1986 and 2001: *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties, 1960-75*, published in 1986, by Robert Hewison (born 1943); *A History of London*, published in 1998, by Stephen Inwood (born 1947); and *London: The Biography* by Peter Ackroyd, published in 2001. All three books were still the products of trade publishers, and all three were published in London (though Ackroyd's was co-published in New York). Ackroyd (born 1949) is a popular author who was especially known for his biographies of literary figures such as T. S. Eliot and William Blake; he only mentioned the *Time* cover story in passing. Inwood, a lecturer at Thames Valley College who has since published books focusing mainly upon earlier periods in English history, added a few negative adjectives to his description of the cover, saying that "The article gave American readers and potential tourists a fairly superficial guide to the clubs, boutiques, restaurants and discotheques that epitomized London's youth culture, and fed them

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<sup>23</sup> Bernard Levin, *The Pendulum Years: Britain and the Sixties* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970) 9.

<sup>24</sup> This is one of a number of theories. The phrase has also been traced to the *Weekend Telegraph* article by John Crosby, to the song "England Swings" by the American Roger Miller, and to the general use of musical terms from the 1930s among many young people in London at the time.

<sup>25</sup> Brian Masters, *The Swinging Sixties* (London: Constable, 1985) 33.

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<sup>26</sup> Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995) 362.

<sup>27</sup> Porter 363.

some lazy clichés about ‘a city steeped in tradition, seized by change, liberated by affluence.’”<sup>28</sup>

Hewison, a cultural historian best known as a Ruskin scholar and columnist for *The Sunday Times*, devoted most of his chapter on “The Young Meteors” to building a case for British pop art, pop music, fashion, photographers and “the new classlessness.” Then he attacked *Time* for describing it all. “The analytical reporting in the article is slight,” he wrote, though he admitted that “the images” were telling, and said that the conclusion “attempts” a deeper seriousness, quoting the concluding paragraph that Jamieson had written for the cover story:

“The London that has emerged is swinging, but in a more profound sense than the colorful and ebullient pop culture by itself would suggest. London has shed much of the smugness, much of the arrogance that often went with the stamp of privilege, much of its false pride—the kind that long kept it shabby and shopworn in physical fact and spirit. It is a refreshing change, and making the scene is the Londoner’s way of celebrating it.”

Hewison then suggested that the entire *Time* story was “a myth” and “for all but a very few...a fantasy.” He deflated the phenomenon itself in the same way Porter had, introducing a long discussion of economic problems with “But Britain’s economic reality could not sustain the fantasy for very long.”<sup>29</sup>

## LOOKING BACK II: RECENT PERSPECTIVES

Discouraged by these books and other developments, I put my memoir aside. But in 2000, I got an email that got me writing again, and this was my first indebtedness to the Internet. Shawn Levy (born 1961) was a movie critic for the *Portland Oregonian* who had written books about Jerry Lewis and the Rat Pack. He reached me through my website, and was writing *Ready, Steady, Go: The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London*. Appearing in both New York and London in 2002, this book was still the product of a

trade house, but the first from an author born since 1950. Levy was enthusiastic about “Swinging London” itself and the *Time* cover story about it. Making a type of claim found more often in popular histories than in scholarly ones, he maintained that London in the 1960s was “the place where our modern world began.” His book had a long discussion of *Time*’s story, much of it based on a telephone interview with me.

A second, equally enthusiastic author who reached me through the web was Max Décharné (born ca. 1960). An English musician and writer, he has published fiction as well as non-fiction, but is best known as the drummer for *Gallon Drunk* and fronting his own band, *The Flaming Stars*. His book was *King’s Road: The Rise and Fall of the Hippest Street in the World*, published by a London trade house in 2005. Décharné saw the *King’s Road* in Chelsea as “focal point and shop window for the new ‘swinging’ London,” but most of the first chapter concerned the *Time* cover story and used material from an email interview.

A third book which quoted me but was much less enthusiastic about “Swinging London” was *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, published in 2006 by Dominic Sandbrook (born 1974). Although Sandbrook’s website indicates that he has taken successively more advanced degrees at Oxford, the University of Saint Andrews, and Cambridge, and although he has held teaching positions, he is far more active and better known as “a professional writer,” and *White Heat* appeared under the aegis of a trade publisher. Sandbrook has published a handful of history books, mostly about Britain since World War II, contributed to many newspapers, and produced radio and television programs for the BBC. However, his current column in the *Daily Mail* is more apt to condemn Labour politicians than Conservative ones, and he is a forthright defender of the British Empire, so it is perhaps not surprising that his profusely-documented study of the years between 1964 and 1970 included a chapter on the Beatles entitled “Introducing the Turds,” and that his treatment of the swinging society argued that “far from being open and classless, [it] was essentially the province of a self-satisfied elite...it is hard to deny that the swinging

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Inwood, *A History of London* (London: Macmillan, 1998) 867.

<sup>29</sup> Robert Hewison, *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties, 1960-75* (London: Methuen, 1986) 76-78.

elite had simply replaced one form of snobbery for another." Given this throwback to a common plaint among British journalists of the 1960s, it is also perhaps not hard to understand why Sandbrook did not attempt to interview me himself. Instead, he lifted several quotations from Shawn Levy's book, reproducing one error that Levy had unintentionally slipped into.<sup>30</sup>

More recently, I have found other and sometimes more positive references. A Google search in 2014 revealed the fact that since I had last researched "Swinging London," some writers had treated it and even myself more kindly. The Internet listed or excerpted passages from books which were not in libraries I had used, and/or were published only in the U.K.; it also had papers and articles that had only appeared online. In June 2006 *The London Journal*, a scholarly online publication, had devoted a special issue to what David Gilbert, of the University of London, called in his introduction "'The Youngest Legend in History': Cultures of Consumption and the Mythologies of Swinging London." Although Gilbert suggested that "Swinging London" was nothing more than "national mythology and internationalized stereotypes," the special issue was a commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the Time cover story, and Gilbert's first illustration was a full-page reproduction of Time's map of "The Scene."

One book that I learned about at this stage of my investigations was *Empire, State and Society: Britain Since 1830*, published in 2012 by Jamie L. Bronstein (born 1968) and Andrew T. Harris (born 1968). Another was *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics*, published in 2005, by Mark Donnelly (born 1967). Both books were by academics: Bronstein is on the faculty of New Mexico State University, Harris at Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, and Donnelly, at St. Mary's University College in London. Moreover, both books were published by textbook publishers, the former by Wiley-Blackwell and the

latter by Pearson Longman, suggesting a new level of acceptance in academic circles.

Bronstein and Harris led off their chapter on "Meet the Beatles: Cultural and Intellectual Developments 1945-1979" with "On May [sic] 15, 1966, Time magazine ran a cover story on 'Swinging London' that, fairly or not, embodied the cultural meaning of Britain in the 1960s, both for Americans and for the British themselves."<sup>31</sup> The ensuing discussion of a wide range of culture, from design and music to literature and theater, was equally straightforward and nonjudgmental. Donnelly's tone was likewise impartial, though warmer toward "Swinging London" as mythology. "Of course, 'swinging London' was always a highly selective composite," he wrote, "But, as with all constructions, it corresponded to an important imaginative reality, and the myth had a cultural resonance which transcended the tiny cliques who made up London's interconnected 'scenes.'"<sup>32</sup>

Further googling of 'Piri Halasz' and 'Swinging London' showed newer references: there were still complaints, and that ambivalent adjective "influential" had not disappeared from the "Swinging London" lexicon, but some references were more favorable. The most favorable I saw online was by Jerry White (b. 1949), a specialist in the history of London who teaches at Birkbeck College, University of London. In a paper delivered in 2007 at a workshop sponsored by the London School of Economics, he said "It was fashionable then and later to decry the myth of Swinging London, and, of course, it was a grossly misleading tag. But despite her breathless prose, Piri Halasz in Time was onto something real enough. She was right to stress the attraction of a city where youth and the new combined so intriguingly with tradition, and where upper-class elements of the London Season seemed to blend effortlessly with working-class talent...."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Both Levy and Sandbrook reported that I had found "Swinging London" reduced to a tourist cliché when I returned in the summer of 1966; in reality, as indicated above, this did not happen until the summer of 1967.

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<sup>31</sup> Jamie L. Bronstein and Andrew T. Harris, *Empire, State, and Society: Britain Since 1830* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) 259.

<sup>32</sup> Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2005) 92.

<sup>33</sup> "Jerry White: Social and Cultural Change in 1960s London," [http://www.lse.ac.uk/GeographyAndEnvironment/research/London/Events/HEIF/HEIF2\\_06\\_08/glctothegla/social\\_and\\_cultural\\_change\\_in\\_1960s\\_london.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/GeographyAndEnvironment/research/London/Events/HEIF/HEIF2_06_08/glctothegla/social_and_cultural_change_in_1960s_london.pdf). Accessed September 24, 2015. In fact, White was

Another recent book I learned about online was *Swinging City: A Cultural Geography of London, 1950-1974* by Simon Rycroft, published in 2010 by Ashgate, another academic house. Rycroft (born 1966) is a cultural geographer who teaches at the University of Sussex; in his book, he was concerned with showing how the over-publicized, materialistic phenomenon of "Swinging London" could be related to the under-publicized but far more idealistic "counterculture" that succeeded it, despite the seeming dichotomy of the two. He devoted a full chapter to the Time cover, but (bless him) has also read *A Swinger's Guide to London*, saw a difference between the two, and believed that my original ambition in writing the cover was "to suggest that there was something quite serious and profound about the swinging city, its lifestyle and aesthetics."<sup>34</sup> This is true, although the passage from the cover story that Rycroft quoted as "perhaps where Piri Halasz's voice emerges less scathed by the editing" was the closing passage by Jamieson already quoted (above) by Hewison.<sup>35</sup>

Double-checking library databases, I finally discovered *Swinging Sixties: Fashion in London and beyond 1955-1970*, published in 2006. This scholarly catalog to an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) had an introduction by Christopher Breward (born 1965), a professor of cultural history and now principal of the Edinburgh College of Art; he was, in 2006, still teaching at the London College of Fashion and deputy head of research at the V&A. At the beginning of his introduction, he wrote, "Perhaps more than any other artefact from the mid-1960s [the Time cover] expressed all that was distinctive about the culture of the British capital...." And, after outlining what the other chapters in the catalog would contain, he concluded: "Benefitting from recent scholarship in social history and consumption studies while also looking to surviving objects for complementary evidence, [this catalog] unpacks the myths, but also re-emphasizes the importance of the period, giving

retrospective credence to Time's final assertion:...." And again he quoted Jamieson's conclusion to the cover story.<sup>36</sup>

Today, Time has had many women writers (it now has a woman managing editor, and recently had a woman publisher). Journalism in general has many other female success stories, and women have risen to prominence in many other areas of competence, from business and economics to politics. All this means that women writers in general are more likely to be taken seriously now. Miniskirts are common (especially in summer) and I suspect that today only an adolescent male would find them unbearably seductive. Assuredly, we no longer see them as invitations to an orgy—or to rape.

The war in Vietnam is long since over, to be succeeded by other and if possible, more divisive international conflicts. Even before the war in Vietnam ended, Time—under the leadership of Grunwald—had turned against it and joined journalism's liberal flock. Today, Time is no longer as ominously "influential" as it once was—struggling as it is, along with every other print news medium, to survive.

Britain's economic problems of the 1960s seem equally remote. Although at great cost, the country has survived them, to face still more seemingly insoluble ones in the present. More recent history books about the 1960s do not shrink from discussing the weaknesses of the British economy during that period, but they see it in a broader perspective, tend to agree that the first two-thirds of the decade were more prosperous than put-upon, and see the cultural revolution encapsulating "Swinging London" as more of a benefit than a hindrance to the country's economic well-being.

Meanwhile, many (if not all) of the stars and outstanding aspects of "Swinging London" have proved remarkably resilient. Sean Connery, Albert Finney and Michael Caine, though now long past romantic roles, have racked up decades of successful movie-making. Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney still

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rephrasing a passage from his earlier book, *London in the Twentieth Century: A City and Its People* (London: Viking, 2001; pb, Penguin 2002), 341. But I first learned about it from the LSE web version.

<sup>34</sup> Simon Rycroft, *Swinging City: A Cultural Geography of London, 1950-1974* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010) 81.

<sup>35</sup> Rycroft 72.

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<sup>36</sup> Christopher Breward, "Introduction," in *Swinging Sixties: Fashion in London and beyond 1955-1970*, eds. Christopher Breward, David Gilbert and Jenny Lister (London: V & A Publications, 2006) 8, 21.

make music, to the delight of gray-haired baby boomers. The U.S. pop music scene has become much more insular than it was in the 1960s, but over the years, it has continued to welcome at least some English stars, such as the Bee Gees, the Spice Girls, and Elton John. Even in 2015, a few contemporary British groups, among them Muse and Florence and the Machine, have reached the top of the U.S. Billboard album charts.<sup>37</sup>

Stella McCartney (daughter of Paul) and Alexander McQueen, two recent British designers, still enjoy international reputations. London's Fashion Week is still one of the top four, along with Paris, New York and Milan. London plays still win Tony awards in Manhattan, and British movies still attract audiences in the U. S. London itself is still a top tourist destination. According to one index, set up by MasterCard, the city by August 2014 was on track to attract more visitors that year than any other city in the world.<sup>38</sup> Admittedly, the most popular tourist attractions within London continue to be the historic ones, from the Tower of London to the British Museum, but fun-seekers in search of pubs and other hangouts for the livelier set—the latter-day equivalent of 1960s “swingers”—can still find them in the capital (though not in Soho or the West End any longer: the last I heard, onetime working-class areas like Shoreditch and Spitalfields in the East End have become as chic and gentrified as Brooklyn, New York).

## CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can I draw from this latter-day turnaround? I am flattered, of course, but I think these references reflect not only changed perceptions of women writers and Time, but also changing perceptions of “Swinging London.” These latter and more important changes reflect several factors.

First, popular culture in general is far more widely respected by scholars today than it was back in the 1960s. This reflects changes in perceptions caused by

the widening impact of the revolution that started much more narrowly inside the art world in the 1960s with the overthrow of the “high” art of abstract expressionism, the triumph of pop art, and pop art's emphasis on popular culture as source material and inspiration. Pop music, movie stars, and fashions in clothing are now more likely to be seen as significant historical artefacts, as are mass-media magazines.

To me, it is no coincidence that—as I have shown—the authors of books about “Swinging London” are now much less likely to be journalists, and much more likely to be scholars. Similarly, the promulgators of books about “Swinging London” have become much less likely to be trade publishers, and much more likely to be academic ones. Here are two concrete demonstrations of how a once-journalistic phenomenon has survived the passage from a mystery that provoked controversy among its contemporaries to a primarily cultural but also somewhat social and political phenomenon deserving of a place in the history books.

Second, these changing perceptions also reflect solid economic shifts in all the fully-developed and mostly Western nations, from industrial to postindustrial economies and more specifically from manufacturing-based economies to service, white-collar and professionally-based ones. Advertising, the media and public relations—three white-collar industries—were sneered at in the 1960s, especially by observers of “Swinging London” who did not like what they were seeing. To such people, these three industries were largely responsible for creating the “myth” of “Swinging London.” Today, we may still be critical of these industries, but we also treat them with more respect; beyond that, when a phenomenon has passed from their tender mercies into history, there is more of a tendency to see it—at the very least—as fact-based myth.

Third, in the 1960s sophisticated people—Britons and Americans alike—turned their noses up at tourists, who were more than likely to be square Americans from the heartland, hoping to take in all of western Europe on a two-week holiday. Since the end of communism, though, and the rise to Western-style

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<sup>37</sup> Joe Coscarelli, “Britannia Rules Charts Again With Muse,” *New York Times*, June 18, 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Deborah L. Jacobs, “The 20 Most Popular Cities In The World To Visit,” *Forbes*, July 31, 2014, at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/deborahljacobs/2014/07/31/the-20-most-popular-cities-in-the-world-to-visit-in-2014>. Accessed September 7, 2015.

prosperity of so many non-European nations, tourists today are as likely to come from Melbourne, Beijing or Dubai as they are from Iowa. Every country in the world that is not currently a war zone welcomes them, too, including the U.S., and even sophisticated Britons—as well as Americans—sign up for tours to Uzbekistan or Angkor Wat. The cumulative economic impact of all this tourism hugely affects whole industries like aviation, hotels, fashion, retailing and food services (from five-star restaurants to fast-food outlets) on a global basis. It is all too big to patronize.

Fourth, the passage of years affords distance. What still seems relevant survives. What seemed more important then and less important now fades from collective memory. This is particularly true as the books are being written by younger and younger authors, no longer haunted—as were the earlier generations—by the shame of the lost empire. As indicated above, I have found that authors born since 1950 tend to be less censorious and more sympathetic toward “Swinging London,” both subject and cover story about it, than authors born prior to 1950, with some notable exceptions (in particular Jerry White and Dominic Sandbrook).

Finally, there is the “Pollyanna hypothesis.” A recent scientific study showed that most people prefer positive to negative language,<sup>39</sup> and this must be even truer when viewing the past. To some people, the 1960s in London may now look like a kind of golden age, and the decade can be seen today as the start of an era, instead of the end of the previous one. In the 1960s, too many people—especially the older ones—were still conscious of the recent decline of the British Empire, and could see “Swinging London” only as the ignoble postscript to a glorious past. Now that a younger generation is writing the history books, and “Swinging London” is so far in the past, it begins to look as glorious as the Empire did, nearly fifty years ago.

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<sup>39</sup> John Tierney, “Why We All Sound Like Pollyannas,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2015.

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## THE PAINTED PAGE: BOOKS AS SYMBOLS IN RENAISSANCE ART

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### **Abstract**

*Within every collection of Renaissance art, any viewer will find books, despite the fact they were rare commodities, but what does their widespread artistic representation signify? The history of the book has attracted increasing academic attention, and recently popular histories of the book have been published, perhaps inspired by uncertainties about the future of the printed medium. However, sustained studies of the visual appearance of books within Renaissance works of art are either missing or elusive, so the 'Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art' (BASIRA) project, operating in the border zone between art history and the history of the book, offers perspectives to both.*

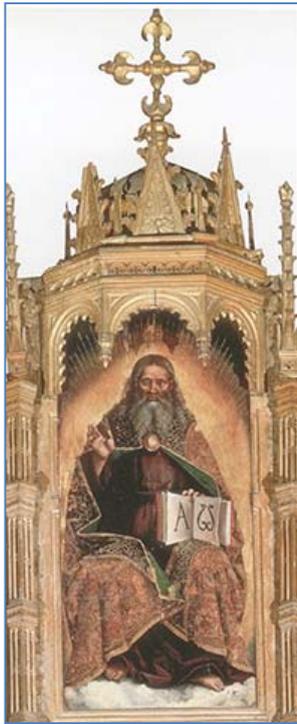
*This paper discusses the construction of the BASIRA digital database and its supporting taxonomy, for which our initial focus is on works created between 1400 and 1601 in northern Italian states and the Holy Roman Empire. In this paper we present our methods and describe preliminary patterns observed. We anticipate that the BASIRA Project will be of interest to art historians, European cultural historians, to scholars in media studies, religious history, and the history of reading, and we hope that our work will enable adding visual substance to studies of changing cultural expectations of power, literacy, class, and even knowledge during the European Renaissance.*

**Keywords:** *Renaissance art; books; iconography; BASIRA project*

### INTRODUCTION

Odds are excellent that, if you look at any collection of Renaissance art—be it from areas now known as Italy, Spain, Belgium, France, or Germany—you will see books. Saints hold books, sometimes displayed face out, sometimes closed and folded under an arm. Women carry books, fingers turning pages. Princes and priests and teachers sit among books, which at times are held on handsome lecterns, at other times piled on shelves. Angels sing from books and children play with books. And when God has a book, it is characteristically facing out—so viewers can see the text that God is “speaking.” (Figure 1). A survey of this widespread portrayal of books in late medieval and early modern art poses a range of questions. What do all of these books convey? Might there be patterns, as yet undiscerned, in ways that artists depict books being held or presented? Would a systematic study of portrayals of books enhance our understanding of European culture in a time of rapid change? To address these questions, two colleagues—a book designer/historian and an art historian—began a collaboration that has come to be known as the BASIRA Project (Books as Symbols in Renaissance Art).

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**Figure 1. (left) Detail from St. Medard Altarpiece, Luca Signorelli, c. 1490 [Collegial Church of San Medardo, Ancona, Italy. Artstor and Scala Archives].**



**Figure 2. (right) St. Benedict detail from Frari Triptych, Giovanni Bellini, 1488 [Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. Creative Commons, Wikimedia].**

After taking the preliminary step of surveying existing literature in both art history and book history on the symbolism of books during the fifteenth century, the need for developing a database to hold and sort research images became essential. Subsequently, that effort in turn required devising a taxonomy for both the books and for the figures portrayed holding them. This paper outlines the parameters of the research project, and describes the methodology adopted to collect and order information. Although the BASIRA research endeavor is still under development, some preliminary findings will be shared in this paper's conclusion.

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It is known that small early Christian communities began to adopt the codex in the second or third centuries, and by 400CE the codex had become the dominant book form used in Christian communities. Reading was an important part of the new faith, as

witnessed by St. Augustine (343–330CE). A critique of Augustine tells us:

“In Augustine’s thinking, the act of reading was ‘a critical step in a mental ascent: it is both an awakening from sensory illusion and a rite of initiation, in which the reader crosses the threshold from the outside to the inside world. This upward and inward movement takes place when the appropriate text is transformed into an object of contemplation. *Lectio* becomes *meditatio*.”<sup>1</sup>

St. Benedict of Nursia (depicted in Figure 2) further embedded reading with the religious life when he included prescriptions for widespread reading in his rules penned to govern the monastic order that bears his name. Writing recently to emphasize Benedict’s focus, Alberto Manguel suggests that:

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<sup>1</sup> Sabrina Corbellini, *Introduction to Cultures of Religious Reading in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2013) 3.

"For Saint Benedict, the text—the Word of God—was [...] immutable and the author (or Author) the definitive authority."<sup>2</sup>

By the late Middle Ages, books stood as symbols for inherited knowledge and tradition, for culture and wealth, for access to the power of the Divine Word. Indeed, in some Christian communities, The Book (Holy Scripture) was a symbol for Logos, for the Almighty Divine. It appears, that, by association, individuals with access to books were then held up as figures of authority, worthy of respect. As Sarah Wall-Randell summarizes in *The Immaterial Book*:

"Before the wider distribution of print, the book was as much an idea, an emblem, as an object; books provided an imaginative framework for the abstract or transcendent, as when medieval writers speak of the Book of Life, the Book of Nature, or the encyclopedic *liber universalis*. As actual books move into the metaphorical spaces of these figures . . . they become potent intersections of the physical object and the metaphysical imaginary. Literary and dramatic representations of books are attended by an aura of mystery and wonder finally irreducible to the material circumstances of production and consumption."<sup>3</sup>

Recent academic attention to the history of reading has brought scholarly attention to visual examples of reading practice. Alberto Manguel, in his *A History of Reading*, discusses so-called *Biblia Pauperum*, or Bibles of the Poor. These large picture books carried two images per page for each liturgical date of the Church calendar: the top half of the page an illustration of an Old Testament text; the lower half a corresponding image from the New Testament. Often chained to lecterns in a church, these books made texts accessible as visual narratives to illiterate congregants. (Figure 3)

"For the illiterate, excluded from the realm of the written word, seeing the sacred texts in a book—in that almost magical object that belonged almost exclusively to the learned critics and scholars of the day—was very

different from seeing them in the popular decorations of the church, as they always had in the past. It was as if suddenly the holy words which had until then appeared to be the property of a few, to share or not share with the flock at will, had been translated into a language that anyone ... could understand."<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3. Anonymous Austria, *Biblia Pauperum*, 1331 [Kunsthistorisches Institut, Vienna. Wikimedia Commons].

Following the twelfth- and thirteenth-century rise of universities, with increasing literacy and the subsequent growth in vernacular language texts, an increasingly urban population began to evolve into secular communities of literate intellectuals. Renaissance scholars began to recover and study classical Greek texts; books, therefore, became less automatically associated with teachings of the Church. Then, in the middle of the fifteenth century, Gutenberg and associates brought mechanical printing to the knowledge economy of Europe. Suddenly, books—which had been rare objects available only to wealthy or highly educated individuals—became much more common and much

<sup>2</sup> Alberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Penguin Group, 1997) 115.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Wall-Randell, *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (University of Michigan Press, 2013) 6.

<sup>4</sup> Manguel, *A History of Reading*, 107.

more widely accessible.

This dramatic cultural shift has been the focus of increasing academic attention since the 1970s, when Lucien Febvre and Elizabeth Eisenstein published studies of cultural changes brought by printing technology to early modern Europe. Some scholars have explored the material culture of books (example: Jeffrey Hamburger, in "Openings").<sup>5</sup> Others, such as Andrew Pettegree,<sup>6</sup> encourage a view of Renaissance cultural upheavals as a lens through which to view the technical/media upheavals of our present time. Recent years have brought us popular histories of the book, perhaps inspired by uncertainties about the future of the printed medium. When represented in works of art, however, books are material objects, and they are objects that beg to be interpreted symbolically.

#### STUDIES OF VISUAL TRADITIONS

Throughout most of the history of Christianity, visual symbols (attributes) were used to identify specific saints or historical figures, such as St. Peter's key, St. Barbara's tower, St. Lucy's eyes and St. George's dragon. For a populace with limited literacy, these symbols provided clarity about specific figures and the stories being depicted. However, unlike the specificity of each saint's attribute, books were portrayed in the hands of a wide variety of figures, from children, to creatures such as lions, and even God.

From the early artistic biography penned by Giorgio Vasari in the sixteenth century,<sup>7</sup> through Erwin Panofsky's magisterial studies of iconography in the twentieth century,<sup>8</sup> up to the present, metaphors posed by saints' attributes remain matters of study and interpretation. However, even reference works on symbols in Christian art scarcely mention the book as an object or attend to books' presence and meanings. We propose to add books to that line of study and interpretation.

This is not to say that books have been entirely ignored in the history of art. From the later Middle Ages onward, a not-to-be missed element in images of the Annunciation is Mary's open book or the many tomes associated with the Evangelists. (Figs. 4 and 5)

Yet with so many books in so many Medieval and Renaissance paintings, books themselves—in spite of, and perhaps because of their ubiquity—are rarely commented upon in scholarly analyses of the paintings in which they are shown. The specific particularity of the book—why it is rendered and held in the manner that is present in the painting, what is meant by the placement of a book on a table or on the floor—has been relatively unremarked. Because it appears that the books themselves in a work of art are not perceived, the specific depiction of a book and what that might reveal, seems to have eluded scholarly discussions. For example, in the catalog entry for the National Gallery's Kress Collection images, great attention is paid to the background and to depicted saints and their accompanying attributes in Campin's *Enclosed Garden*:

St. Catherine of Alexandria, in a pink robe, is seated at the lower left, on the step of a Gothic portal opening upon a tiled interior. Her attributes are a broken wheel and a sword (the crescent of Islam is on the heart-shaped pommel; figures of Adam and Eve, on either side of the Tree of Knowledge, are incised on the blade). St. John Baptist stands at the upper left in a voluminous green robe, holding a small lamb in his left hand, blessing it with his right. A camel-skin (?) is seen under his robe, above his left knee. St. Barbara, in an orange, fur-trimmed dress, is to the right of Christ in a half-kneeling posture, extending an apple which he is about to grasp. Her attribute, a masonry tower, is in the upper right corner of the enclosed garden. St. Anthony Abbot stands in the lower right foreground, in monastic garb. His hands (one holding a scroll) are placed upon the Tau-shaped stick. A rosary hangs from his belt and the head of a pig, his emblem, is to the left.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Hamburger, "Openings," *Imagination, Books, and Community in Medieval Europe* (Melbourne: Macmillan Art Publishing, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (London: Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists; A Selection* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965).

<sup>8</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).

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<sup>9</sup> Colin Eisler, *Complete Catalogue of the Samuel H. Kress Collection: European Paintings Excluding Italian*. (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1977) 6.

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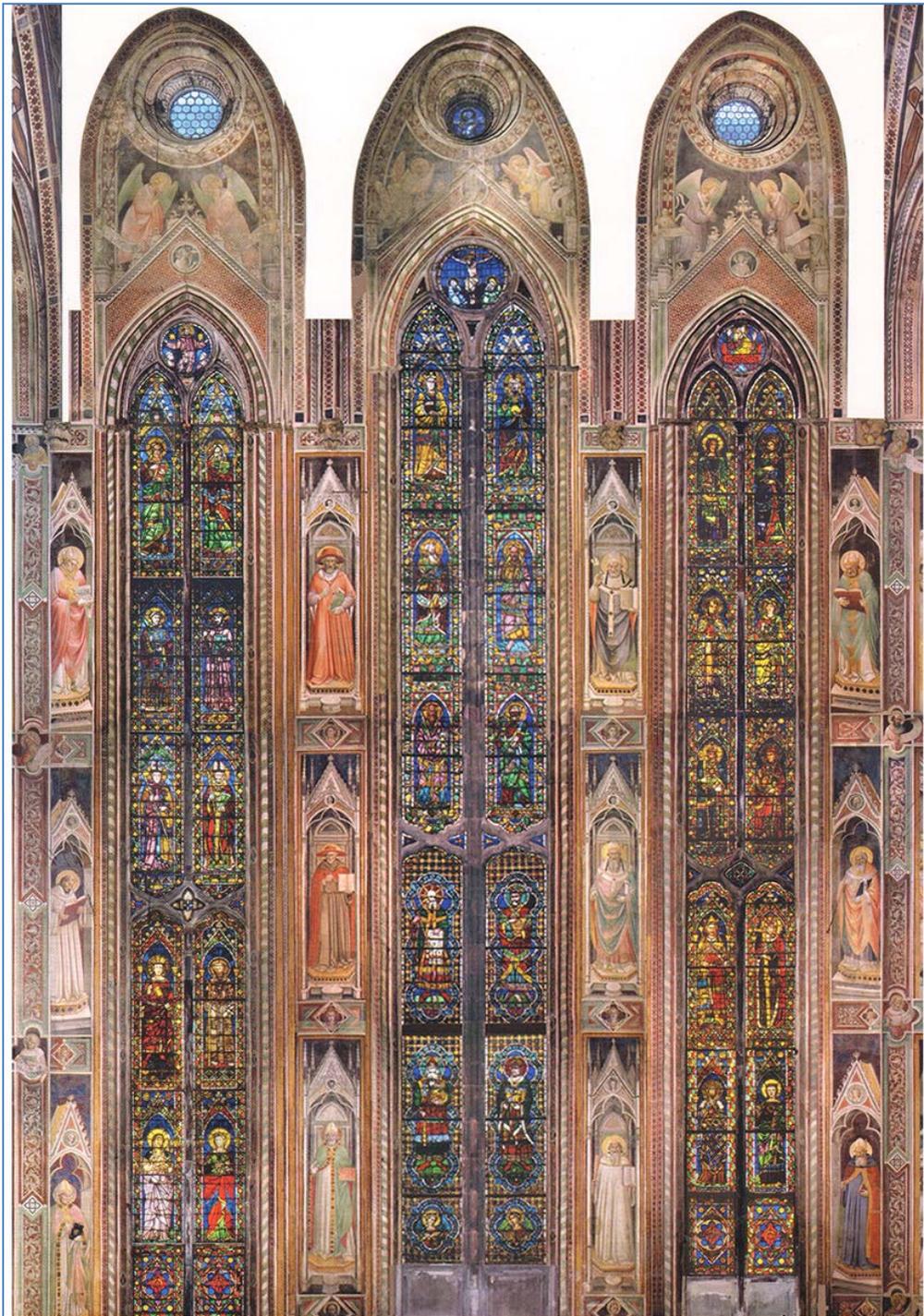
Figure 4. Gerard David, *Annunciation*, 1490  
[Detroit Institute of Art. Artstor].



Figure 5. Albrecht Durer, *Four Apostles*, 1526  
[Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Artstor].



Figure 6. Robert Campin (Follower), *Madonna and Child with Saints in the Enclosed Garden*, c. 1400  
[National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. National Gallery of Art, Open Access].



**Figure 7.** *Cappella Maggiore, Santa Croce, Firenze.* Image copyright © Opera di Santa Croce.

The description continues in great detail, delineating the background and the garments worn by other figures, and detailing the directions in which figures gaze. The book prominently open on St. Catherine's lap is only mentioned later in the Kress Catalog entry, where the author gives no details but makes a sweeping symbolic interpretation: "Catherine's book and Anthony's scroll both point to the prophecy of redemption."<sup>10</sup> (Figure 6) For perspective on the ubiquity of books in Medieval European visual culture, consider the Cappella Maggiore of Santa Croce in Florence. In 1380, Agnolo Gaddi frescoed these walls with The Legend of the True Cross. Surrounding the narrative panels, he painted eighteen figures of Church fathers and leaders: sixteen of them carry and display books. (Figure 7)

#### THE BASIRA PROJECT

For a systematic study of images of books in European Renaissance art, one naturally turns to the time-honored tools of iconographic study: collection, classification, and analysis. Given the sheer quantity of images that fall within the BASIRA study's parameters (1400 to 1600), constructing an electronic database was the most practical strategy. As described below, the artwork and book detail records for each image include as many details of each book's appearance as is feasible. As with many scholarly projects born from perceived lacunae, the BASIRA Project, operating in the border zone between art history and the history of the book, hopes to detect patterns not yet identified or explored by examining and analyzing artists' portrayals of books across time. For example, as printing technology spread books became more widely available, with subsequent increases in literacy: were changes in power, literacy, and class then revealed in the ways that books were portrayed in the art of the time?

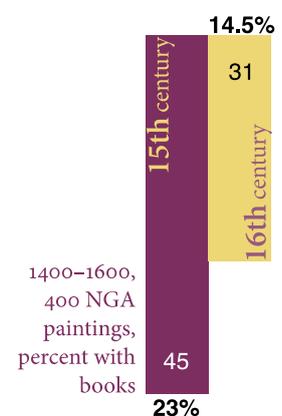
#### IMAGE COLLECTION

Collecting images which show a book or books being held, displayed or read in a work of art is by its very nature a random process. Individual museum

collections sometimes feature only selected works for online viewing, while others have sophisticated keyword searchable databases of their entire collections available online. Large image archives such as the Bridgeman Library, which gather works from a variety of collections, are helpful resources, On-line databases in museum websites and the ever-increasing files available via Artstor allow perusal, study, and collection of publicly accessible images. Image database initiatives in such museums such as the Walters Art Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam are invaluable.

For ease of study, it was decided to include as much of the entire images as possible, and also to retain the artistic integrity and context of each portrayed book. Details of prominent books within an artwork are recorded in linked "sub-records." So far, the BASIRA database uses only images that the researchers have themselves photographed, or ones that are publicly available, e.g. through Open Access, Creative Commons and Artstor.

Given that the sheer survival of images from the European Renaissance is somewhat random, one can still analyze data from those that survive. While the BASIRA database in its current form may still be too limited for reliable statistical inferences, we found a census of the National Gallery of Art's permanent collection to be informative. The NGA's viewable permanent collection contains 400 European paintings that were created between 1400 and 1600; of these, an analysis reveals that, from one century to the next, the percentage of works that depicted "sacred" topics (such as saints or scenes from the Bible) decreased from 75% to 42%. The number of images (of all types) that contain books decreased from 23% to 14.5%.



<sup>10</sup> Eisler, *Complete Catalogue* 47.

## DATABASE TAXONOMY

Devising the taxonomy used as the framework in the BASIRA database was a challenge which often seemed like an exercise in scholarly divination: the categories were defined in anticipation of questions future scholars might wish to ask. Several iconographic formats and databases provided answers to framework questions. For systematic iconography, the classification schemes that support the Dutch Iconographic system Iconclass<sup>11</sup> were helpful.

The BASIRA taxonomy counts all books in an image and records detailed information for those that are “prominent.” After primary divisions of “open” versus “closed,” details of the physical book are recorded (binding style, size, color, etc.) Another main section sorts the book holder into such categories as “animate” “inanimate” and then within those to “mortal,” “immortal” etc. The posture of the holder and the presentation of the book are all noted and categorized. Suggestions and input on data fields and structure are sought and actively welcomed. (Figures 8, 9, 10)

The screenshot displays the Basira database interface for the 'Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)'. The top section contains metadata: Title, sort order number (6), Date Created (1427-1432), Dimensions (64.1632615), Medium (Painting), Patron (Petrus Engelbrecht), Name (Petrus Engelbrecht), Nationality (German), Religious Order, Context (Annunciation), and Commissioned For (Church or Chapel). Below this is a thumbnail of the artwork. The 'Artist Information' section lists the artist as 'Workshop of Campin', with first and last names 'Workshop of Campin', nationality 'Netherlands', and life time '1375-1444'. The 'BOOK DETAIL' section includes a 'Location' grid with '1A' selected, 'Book\_locator grid' (1A), 'Action' (Breathing), 'Position' (Fully open, outward), 'Support' (Inanimate, furniture), 'Book as Table', 'Spine Position', 'Binding type' (Hard Case), 'Binding color' (Tan), 'Bookmarks', 'Bookblock Edges' (tooled / diapered), 'Book Size' (Octavo), 'Book Type' (Bible), 'Language' (Other), 'Text Style' (Rubricated, multiple), 'Text transcribed', 'Notes' (Book is resting on green drawstring bag, and on a partially unfurled scroll), 'Support' (Other), 'Gender' (Male/Other/Female), 'How held' (On Table), 'Fingers in Book?', 'Holy Hold', 'Encoped', and 'FEATURES' (Bosses, Clasps, Edge-pattern, Embossed case, Spine Ball, Straps).

Figure 8. Basira database image. Artwork record for Merode Altarpiece, showing one of two linked Book Detail records.

<sup>11</sup> Iconclass is a specialized library classification system designed for art and iconography. Originally conceived in the early 1950s as the Decimal Index of the Art of the Low Countries (DIAL) by Henri van de Waal, it was further developed by a group of scholars after his death in 1972. The Netherlands Institute for Art History (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie) currently maintains the Iconclass system.

**Title** Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)

sort order number 6 Date Created 1427-1432 Dimensions 64.1632615 Medium Painting PATRON Name Petrus Engelbrecht Religious Order German Nationality German Context Annunciation Commissioned For Church or Chapel



**Artist Information** **FMP Image Information** **Repository**

FMP Image Source Metropolitan Museum of Art. #470304  
Photographer Name  
Image permissions OASC. Open Access for scholarly use. #470304  
Image Dimensions 13.06 x 6.64 inches Resolution 100  
Hi res URL <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the->

NUMBER OF BOOKS Total 2 Presentation Image?  Yes  No  
Prominent 2  
BETA

Started by BWE  
Started date 4/30/2015  
Last changed 10/6/2015

Other Info Dimensions are for central panel only

**BOOK DETAIL**

Location 1A 2A

Book\_locator grid 2A

Detail: Book & holder Detail: Book alone



Language Other  
Text Style  
Text transcribed

Action Reading  
Position Fully open, inward  
Book as Table  
Spine Position medial (body)  
Binding type Chemise  
Binding color white  
Bookmarks  
Bookblock Edges painted / gilded  
Book Size Octavo  
Book Type Bible

Support Animate, human form  
Book SupportER Mary, Mother of Jesus  
Gender  Male  Female  
How held Hands, both  
Fingers in Book?  
Holy Hold  Yes  No  
Encoped  Yes  No

FEATURES  
 Bosses  
 Clasps  
 Edge-pattern  
 Embossed case  
 Spine Ball  
 Straps

Notes  
Case fully covered with white chemise.

Figure 9. Basira database image. Artwork record for Merode Altarpiece, showing the second linked Book Detail record and an open tab for Image Information.

Layout: Artworks View As: [Icons] Preview A<sup>a</sup>

Title: The School of Athens

sort order number: 102 Date Created: 1509-1511 Dimensions: 762 x 580 cm Medium: Painting PATRON Name: Pope Julius II della Rovere Religious Order: [Dropdown]

Context: Teacher / student Commissioned For: Public Space



Other Info: BWE has images of some individual figures.

BOOK DETAIL

Location: [List of thumbnails 1A-3C]

Book\_locator grid: 1C

Detail: Book & holder [Image] Detail: Book alone [Image]

Language: Latin

Text Style: [Dropdown]

Text transcribed: "Ethics"

Notes: Book title written on bookblock top edge. Figure commonly thought to portray Aristotle

Artist Information: Artist: 67 Full Name: Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) da Urbino First Name(s): Raphael (Raffaello) Last Name: Urbino Nationality: Italy Life Time: 1483-1520

NUMBER OF BOOKS: Total: 8 Presentation Image? [Yes/No] Prominent: 6 BETA: [ ]

Support: Animate, human form Book SupportER: Human (not saint) Gender: Male/Other/Female How held: Hand, left Fingers in Book?: [Dropdown] Holy Hold: Yes/No Encoded: Yes/No

FEATURES: [List of checkboxes: Bosses, Clasps, Edge-pattern, Embossed case, Spine Ball, Straps]

The Basira Project, 2015

Figure 10. Basira database image. Artwork record for the School of Athens, by Raphael. A portion of the pull-down list of artist names is shown at right.

Artist Information FMP Image Information

Artist: 3

Full Name: Piero di Francesco degli Orioli

First Name(s): Pietro Cavallini

Last Name: Pietro Perugino

Nationality: Polidoro di Lanciano

Life Time: Quinten Metsys

Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) da Urb...

Robert Campin

Rossello di Jacopo Franchi

Sandro Botticelli

Sansepolcro Master

Santo di Tito

Simon Vouet

Stefano di Antonio di Vanni

Taddeo Crivelli

Tilman Riemenschneider

Ugolino di Nerio

Unknown Unattributed /

Vincenzo di Biagio Catena

Vincenzo Foppa

Vittore Carpaccio

Vittore Crivelli

Workshop of Campin

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, two highly generalized observations stand out at this point in our study.

### *I. Changes in the manner of human book-holding*

Earlier images more commonly portray an open book, face-out, mediating the space between the book holder and the viewer, and focusing the viewer's attention on the object. As the fifteenth century progresses, we begin to see more books held closed, under arms, or held face in (with the text facing the

figure in the image, rather than the viewer of the image). The text is now concealed, but access to it renders the holder of the book worthy of our attention. Bellini, for example, portrays books in the hands of Saints Peter and Jerome in his beautiful *Sacra Conversazione* paintings. But, by the 1560s, when Tintoretto and Veronese created images of Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers in the *Sala Monumentali* (part of the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice), some books have migrated to the floor. (Figures 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)



Figure 11. Luca di Tommè, *Christ Blessing*, 1355 [North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh].



Figure 12. Giovanni Bellini, *St. Jerome*, detail of *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, Venice.



Figure 13. Giovanni Bellini, *St. Peter*, detail of *San Zaccaria Altarpiece*, 1505, Venice.



Figure 14. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Philosopher*, ca. 1570 [Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice. WikiArt Public domain].



Figure 15. Paolo Veronese, *Aristotle*, ca. 1560 [Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice. WikiArt Public domain].

The book as object no longer mediates between figure and viewer; it retains its role as the foundation of authority, but the person—the individual—has emerged from behind the “shield” of the book. Would it be fair to conclude that, by the middle of the sixteenth century, artists began to represent individuality in its emergence from medieval prescriptions of community as the dominant social modality?

As the sixteenth century progresses, and secular portraits become more common, so do images which portray books near the main figure, often on a table or ledge. (Figure 16)

## II. Observations on the Book Itself: “Breathing”

When images are examined for inclusion in the database, their unique qualities are classified and recorded. While entering the image of the Merode altarpiece, it was noticed that the central book in the image was representative of a particular movement

related to the pages of a book—a movement noticeable in some Annunciation scenes and also in various images of Saints. In the Merode altarpiece, the book on the central table appears as if touched by a holy wind in the pictorial space. (Figure 17)

In the BASIRA taxonomy, representations of a book with pages flipping by themselves are tagged with an action denoted as “breathing.” Of the over 300 images presently in the BASIRA database, twenty show books with this trait. Almost a century after the Merode Altarpiece, an Annunciation painted the Northern Renaissance painter, Gerard David, also shows the Virgin’s book with pages flipping—as does a work by Carlo Crivelli depicting a Saint’s visionary moment. (Figures 18 and 19)

Issues that would call a painter to depict a book in this manner are not definite, save for the obvious desire to manifest the presence of a spiritual act in the painting—one that might signal agency or posit temporality.



Figure 16. Andrea Mantegna, *St. Mark*, 1447 [Stadelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt. Artstor].



Figure 17. Detail, *Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece)*, 1427–32 [Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, New York, Open Access].



**Figure 18. Gerard David, *Annunciation*. 1506 [Metropolitan Museum of Art. Artstor.]**



**Figure 19. Carlo Crivelli, *The Blessed Gabriele Kneels and Sees a Vision of the Christ Child*, 1486 [National Gallery, London. Artstor.]**

## CONCLUSIONS

While this research is still in its early stages, some observations thus far suggest insights to some questions about book iconography during the Renaissance. Firstly, earlier images tend to focus central attention on the book, which we surmise is a visual "citation" of religious tradition and authority. If our observations about the changing location of books within images are borne out by further study, then the pattern of books moving to less central locations may indeed point to the increasing prominence of individual thought over collective tradition. Secondly, the visual trope of moving pages deserves deeper exploration; this preliminary view suggests that, indeed, Renaissance artists may have used representational conventions not yet studied in contemporary scholarship.

In both these and other, as yet undiscerned patterns, the ability to search a database of Renaissance images across time, location, and subject matter offers sufficient promise to encourage continued development of the project. Perhaps historians of

reading, religious history, and European visual culture could benefit from searching the BASIRA database. It might not be too far-fetched to imagine that the BASIRA Project could inform media scholars seeking to understand such twenty-first century transformations as electronic books and some of the associated changes in ways that knowledge and information are compiled, transmitted, and preserved.

Future initiatives involving crowd-sourced data entry are underway, as are connections to other digital humanities endeavors. Interested colleagues and friends are invited to stay current with BASIRA Project developments through the web site: <https://BASIRAproject.wordpress.com>

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TOWN-GOWN COLLABORATION:  
THE EXAMPLE OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SCOTLAND

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**Abstract**

*This paper, slightly revised from the one presented at the National Coalition of Independent Scholars (NCIS) conference in New Haven, CT on June 20, 2015, recounts a rare, perhaps unique historical cooperation between those in academia and those outside its walls. It has gone largely ignored in mainstream histories that Scotland, which began the eighteenth century as a remote backwater, soon became a "hotbed of genius" that in many respects provided a model for colonial America. In this paper I will first present some historical background about the relation—or the lack of it—between town and gown, and then explain how, through the excellence of both its universities and its independent societies, Scotland showed the way to the rest of the Western world and continued to influence it for the better part of a century. There is much to learn from this little-known story at a time when universities once again, as during much of their history, have a near-monopoly over the life of the intellect.*

**Keywords:** *Scottish Enlightenment; town-gown; universities; learned societies; Franklin*

This paper is an account of mutual regard and cooperation between town and gown in eighteenth-century Scotland, a phenomenon almost unique in history, and in a place one might least expect to find it. There are three facets to this story: the excellence of Scottish societies (which might suggest some ideas for NCIS); the collegiality within its universities, something that hardly goes without saying (although where should we expect to find collegiality if not in colleges?); and the easy rapport between these two worlds, which have historically been separate and unequal. Nor were the glory days of Scotland confined to its borders. Scottish Enlightenment literature dominated American college curricula from the Revolutionary to the Civil War, and its philosophy had a pronounced influence on the direction of American history. Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism* (1762) was in use at Yale by the 1770s (Martin, 1961, 19); Hugh Blair's *Rhetoric* was in use by the 1780s at both Harvard and Yale (Charvat 1936, 31); and John Quincy Adams taught this same book at Harvard from 1806 to 1809 (Daiches 1990, 213). By the 1830s these two texts were required reading at Pennsylvania, Columbia, Brown, North Carolina, Middlebury, Williams, Amherst, Hamilton and other institutions (Martin, 1961, 24).

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There exists some crucial historical background about the relationship between town and gown that somehow tends to be omitted from college curricula. From its birth at Bologna in 1088 the Western university has dominated intellectual life, but then came movable type in 1443. The result was that, along with the printed Bible, Gutenberg spawned another new creature, one that has never received much press: the educated layperson. To all appearances the university remained at the peak of its power but, as the Galileo scholar Stillman Drake tells us in "Early Science and the Printed Book: The Spread of Science Beyond the Universities" (1970, 46), by 1550 there was both U-science and non-U-science ('U' denoting 'university-based'). [Drake, incidentally, was an independent scholar who made his living as a financial consultant. He taught only for twelve years in later life, when the University of Toronto recognized his invaluable independent studies of Galileo's life and science, and offered him a full professorship. Thus Drake was never dependent on academia for his livelihood or his reputation.]

By 1660, when the Royal Society of London was founded, the university was a sorry has-been. In 1665 the Royal Society launched its *Transactions*, which instantly became the center of scientific communication worldwide, and established scientific journals as the means, to this day, by which scientific discoveries are put forward. Nearly all the great seventeenth- and eighteenth-century figures in science and letters worked outside academia: Pascal, Descartes, Boyle, Huygens, Hobbes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Laplace, Locke, Voltaire, Buffon, Montesquieu, Rousseau, La Mettrie, d'Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, Maupertuis, Lavoisier, Priestley—the list is very long. Newton held the Lucasian chair at Cambridge for upwards of thirty years, and was the great exception, but he was such a loner that it hardly mattered where he was. And for the last quarter-century of his life, when he was not associated with Cambridge, he served as president of the Royal Society.

To support and publish the work of these men—and of course they were virtually all men—societies sprang up almost spontaneously, dotting the globe to within three degrees of the Arctic Circle. In a system "completely without precedent," as James McClellan writes in *Science Reorganized: Scientific Societies in the Eighteenth Century* (1985, 3, 126-7, 153), the informal learned society was "the characteristic form for the organization of culture throughout Europe and the

West in the eighteenth century." Up to a point this development was almost to be expected, because the mission of the university has traditionally been the preservation, study and teaching of established ideas rather than the development of new ones. Consequently a *de facto* division of intellectual labor developed between town and gown, one that continued through the nineteenth century. Immanuel Kant, for example, said in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798; 1992) that "associations of independent scholars constitute the 'workshops' [*Werkstätte*] of research, while government officials and clergymen trained at the university may be called the 'merchants' or technicians of knowledge." And "the government should not attempt to meddle," Kant said, with "this scientific free market" (quoted in Fleischacker 1996, 390).

But if there was a cooperative aspect to the division between town and gown, the overriding spirit was one of conflict. As we know, fear can take two forms, fight or flight. In England it was flight: Oxbridge dons simply slept and drank their way through the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. Adam Smith, who attended Oxford during the 1740s, later remarked in *Wealth of Nations* (1776; 1976) that professors there had "given up altogether even the pretense of teaching" (1976, 761 & n.6). On the Continent it was fight: the University of Paris (the Sorbonne) oversaw the Index of prohibited books, and did not hesitate to impose it. Its *Grand Amphithéâtre* (which I visited during a Scottish Enlightenment conference held at the Sorbonne in 2013) is rimmed with six statues, three representing a history of the university, and three—Descartes, Pascal and Lavoisier—representing science, or natural philosophy, as it was then called. When we were leaving the chamber, one distinguished senior scholar whispered to me, "None of these men would have been caught dead at the Sorbonne." Nor would the Sorbonne have been caught dead associating with them. Not until the 1690s was Descartes included in the curriculum; and at that point professors had little choice, for their income depended on the number of students they taught, and continuing to champion Aristotle "would have made them the laughing stock" of the Paris elite (Brockliss 1981, 66). Thus in Paris, as elsewhere, gown followed town.

During the nineteenth century universities returned to life. But there continued to be a natural division of labor between professors and independent scientists, including Charles Lyell, arguably the most important geologist in history, and Charles Darwin, the most

important biologist. Meanwhile in Germany a new university model emerged, which was mathematical, theoretical, specialized and professionalized, and which emphasized research over teaching (Wittrock 1993, 316-19). Centered in Gottingen, it first surfaced in America at Johns Hopkins, founded in 1876, and Hopkins became known as "Gottingen at Baltimore" (Cole 2011, 17-21).

Only in the twentieth century, for the first time in its history, did the Western university adopt the dual mission of teaching and research. And this effectively put learned societies out of business: some, like the Royal Society, still exist; but they have become largely honorary.

### SCOTTISH SOCIETIES

At the turn of the eighteenth century Scotland was a remote, backward country from which nothing whatever could be expected. But with the Unification Act between England and Scotland in 1707—the Act recently reaffirmed in the Scottish referendum of September 2014—the Scots' watchword became 'mutual improvement'. By 1712 there was a club for "Mutual Improvement in Conversation": the Rankenian Club, formed in 1716 for "mutual improvement by liberal conversation and rational inquiry," lasted forty-eight years and published thirty books (McElroy 1969, 15, 22; Phillipson 1974, 433). Glasgow's burgeoning commerce gave rise to perhaps the earliest Political Economy Club (c.1743), whose members included tradesmen; and Adam Smith learned much from these men in the early gestation of *Wealth of Nations* (McElroy 1969, 30, 41). The Honourable Society of Improvers of Knowledge of Agriculture, the first in Britain, flourished in Edinburgh from 1723 to 1745 (see Phillipson 1973, 131), while the Society for Improvement of Medical Knowledge, founded in 1731, published case studies that attracted foreign students to the Edinburgh Medical School (McElroy 1969, 27). Membership of the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh (1737), which grew out of its Medical Society, included fifteen doctors and surgeons, but also twelve lawyers, four soldiers, two clerics, two professors, an architect, a printer and librarian, an optician, an iron master and a mining company manager (Emerson 1979, 172). The Philosophical Society published three volumes of *Essays and Observations*, including a treatise on lightning rods by Benjamin Franklin.

The most influential Scottish society of all, as it turned out, was not in Edinburgh or Glasgow, but in the even more remote town of Aberdeen. Launched in 1758 by

Thomas Reid and a few other professors from Marischal College, the Aberdeen Philosophical Society was soon nicknamed the Wise Club, and it was just what we would want a learned society to be. Members generously supported each other's book projects, several of which were published and made names for their authors. The club met fortnightly for about three hours, at which a paper was read, followed by discussion of a separate topic. These topics covered the gamut: 'Why is the sky blue?'; 'Is proportional taxation equitable?'; 'What is it that provokes laughter?'; 'When is lime a proper manure?'; 'Do brutes have souls, and if so, how do they differ from those of humans?'; 'Is there reason to believe that friendships of this life might continue after death?'; and not least, 'How to structure the course of education so as to provide the best preparation for the different businesses of life?' (McCosh 467-73).

These questions were so wide-ranging that it is tempting to write them off as just bull sessions. But everything in Aberdeen was scientifically up to date. Immediately after its formation in 1758 the Wise Club began preparing for the transit of Venus of June 1761; the far more prestigious Royal Society dawdled until June 1760, and only acted then because it was prodded to action by a communication from the French astronomer Delisle (Wood 1984, 93).

Reid's first and most influential book, *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764), interestingly enough, came out of the Wise Club, not Marischal, where Reid was a regent. This philosophy swept Scotland, France and America, where it dominated college curricula from the Revolutionary to the Civil War; Emerson (1817-21) and Thoreau (1833-37) were steeped in it as Harvard undergraduates (Howe 1970, 50). In 1776 Thomas Paine, a bankrupt English émigré corset-maker with two failed marriages, published the first American instant bestseller, *Common Sense for Eighteen Pence*, which managed to convince even those for whom war with England was anathema—and they included many, if not most—that it was just a matter of common sense.

### SCOTLAND'S UNIVERSITIES

In 1700 the University of Edinburgh was still an institution dominated by "conservative, scholastic Presbyterianism" (Phillipson 1974, 426). Yet because of a few outstanding mathematicians, Newtonian science was already being taught there, fifty years before it was even introduced at Paris, and a generation before

it received wide acceptance at Cambridge, where Newton himself held the Lucasian chair. As Leonidas Montes notes (2006, 262) "it was through the Scots that Britain rapidly became Newtonian," because Edinburgh had a few exceptional men who could present the highly abstruse Principia in a form accessible to a wider public.

By 1710 the leader of the Edinburgh Town Council and the president of the university were collaborating on reforming the university, instituting changes that would make Edinburgh "the most influential single institution in the higher education of the western world in the later 18th century" (Montes 428). Its medical school—the first in Britain—was founded in 1726, and by the 1750s it was surpassing the University of Leiden, which had dominated medicine for a century and more; the first American medical schools, in Philadelphia (1765) and New York (1767), were founded and staffed almost exclusively by Edinburgh graduates. The field of medicine also stimulated the development of specialized fields such as chemistry, botany, geology and paleontology, and Edinburgh thus "led the way in the early academic institutionalization of science" (Sloan 1971, 230, 231 and n.13).

In Scotland, as elsewhere, the university had to prove itself. The difference is that in Scotland it did prove itself. Its colleges—in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St. Andrews—were all superior to those of Oxford and Cambridge, and Francis Hutcheson, generally considered the father of the Scottish Enlightenment, began lecturing in English (rather than Latin) at Glasgow in the 1730s, thirty years ahead of Cambridge. That eased the flow of communication between town and gown, as did the fact that Scottish professors, like everyone else, were dedicated to mutual improvement, and considered it their job to turn out constructive members of society. Universities in England and on the Continent, on the other hand, could hardly make that claim, and today the idea sounds positively quaint.

The country that most patterned itself after Scotland was America, itself a budding nation dedicated to mutual improvement. Philadelphia aspired to be "the Edinburgh of North America" (May 1976, 207). John Witherspoon, the most important American educator, came from Scotland in 1768 to become president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. There he taught a moral philosophy course which was tailored "to the needs of ordinary Americans;" and his students included future President James Madison,

thirteen future college presidents, twenty U.S. senators, thirteen governors, and three Justices of the Supreme Court (Martin 1961, 6).<sup>1</sup>

Given the caliber of its universities, learned societies figured to be less of a necessity in Scotland, but they nevertheless multiplied like rabbits. It is impossible to say just how many there were, although Adam Smith is known to have belonged to at least nine (Redman 1997, 101). "All the world," as David Hume noted, clamored to join the Select Society, founded in Edinburgh in 1754 (Phillipson 1974, 444), just as many people today aspire to be a student or a professor at Harvard. But Harvard's exclusivity is part and parcel of its prestige (Kirschner 2012, B9) whereas the Select Society, notwithstanding its name, simply ballooned from fourteen members to 135 in five years (Phillipson 1974, 444). Scottish universities were second to none; yet almost anyone who could afford the comparatively modest lecture fees could attend (Cosh 2003, 55-7; Phillipson 2010, 39). Inclusivity did not diminish, but if anything, enhanced the quality of both its universities and its societies. Hume's skeptical philosophy was anathema to professors and the lay public alike; but that put no damper on his leadership of Scottish culture or his international renown. So who cared that he could not get a job in academia?

#### THERE AND HERE, THEN AND NOW.

Here we should further consider Ben Franklin, partly because of his important and close Scottish connections, partly because he was the very embodiment of common sense, and partly because he was an independent scholar *par excellence*. As a 21-year-old Philadelphia printer, Franklin started his Leather Apron Club (the "Junto,") for fellow tradesmen in 1727, expressly for the purpose of "mutual Improvement." In 1743 this club morphed into the American Philosophical Society, the first American learned society. Franklin, with a total of two years of schooling by his own account (1964, 52-3), was our most important eighteenth-century scientist. The reason he was called "Dr. Franklin" is that he received an honorary doctorate—not from Cambridge or the Sorbonne, but from the University of St. Andrews—in recognition of his groundbreaking work in electricity.

In his 1956 book *Franklin and Newton* (37, 70) the Newton expert I. B. Cohen points out that Newton

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<sup>1</sup> On the influence of Scottish philosophers (particularly Adam Smith) on the framing of the American Constitution (especially Federalist 10), see Fleischacker 2002.

developed his theory of gravitation over twenty years in an ivory tower, whereas Franklin tossed off his science of electricity in scattered "moments snatched from public and private business during the 1740s and '50s." But in his 1995 book *Science and the Founding Fathers* Cohen saw fit to remark (118) that one reason Franklin is often not regarded as "a 'proper' scientist, and is relegated to the class of gadgeteers and inventors, is that he was not a university man." No one would have said such a thing in the eighteenth century, nor in the nineteenth; and Cohen himself had not spoken in these terms in the 1950s. At that point the number of scholarly references to Franklin were roughly equal to those to Newton; but within a decade Newton's citations had doubled, while Franklin's had been halved (Theerman and Seeff 1993, 20).

Franklin's eclipse coincided with the thorough 'universitization' of intellectual life during the 1960s. The American Council of Learned Societies was established in 1919, but its title has become a total misnomer, since its membership now consists almost entirely of universities. I attended the 2006 ACLS meetings as a representative of NCIS: this conference was held in the historic district of Philadelphia where Franklin lived and is buried, and where the first American learned society is located. In addition, 2006 was the big Franklin tercentenary and yet, so far as I know, no one ever mentioned his name. By contrast, at the NCIS meetings in Princeton a month later, we celebrated Franklin's tercentenary with a toast and birthday cake.

Throughout Western history, professors have written almost exclusively for other professors, rarely bothering to "truck, barter and exchange" ideas with anyone else, to borrow a phrase from Adam Smith (1976, 25). As a result, Louis Menand writes in *The Marketplace of Ideas* (2010, 106):

The weakest professional has an almost unassailable advantage over the strongest non-professional (the so-called independent scholar) operating alone, since the non-professional must build a reputation by his or her own toil, while the professional's credibility is given by the institution.

In terms of independent scholarship, this statement demonstrates the importance of eighteenth-century Scotland: this country, where many in 1700 had never seen a wheeled cart, was soon a "hotbed of genius" (Trevor-Roper 1967, 1650; Daiches 1986). While

French may be considered the *lingua franca* of the Enlightenment, who today considers Rousseau the equal of Hume, and what economist mentions Quesnay in the same breath with Adam Smith? The 35-volume *Encyclopédie*, compiled by Denis Diderot and 150 French scientists and philosophers (1751-72), which spread the ideas of the Enlightenment across Europe and beyond, was soon collecting dust, whereas the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, launched in Edinburgh in 1768, became a household name. And when it comes to collegiality between town and gown, the Scots invented the wheel.

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## A FUTURE FOR ADJUNCTS: FROM PLIGHT TO FIGHT

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### **Abstract**

*Much has been written about the poor working conditions facing those responsible for more than 50% of the teaching in American colleges and universities. Adjuncts, contingent academic labor, are hired from term to term, at low wages without benefits. Blame for this situation has focused on the corporatization of the university and the economic stress on higher education in an era of decreased public funding. However, there is quite another side to this story if we focus on the increasing activism and successes of the adjunct organizing movement. When we look beyond the university, we see that adjunct issues are part of the larger conditions facing many American workers in a changing labor force for whom part-time work has become the norm. Adjunct activism then takes on a more urgent and more positive outlook, in which organizing efforts by unions, international organizations of adjuncts such as the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL), and local efforts of adjuncts all provide examples of successful strategies in different types of institutions. This paper closes by addressing a most critical emerging issue—the digitization of education.*

**Keywords:** *Adjuncts; university teaching; unions; education justice*

It is easy enough to talk about the plight of adjuncts:<sup>1</sup> it is lived reality for many of us. In January 2014, the Democratic Staff of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce published *The Just-in-Time Professor*, their report on the responses they had elicited from contingent faculty. They summed up the situation thus:

...contingent faculty earn low salaries with few or no benefits, are forced to carry on harried schedules to make ends meet, have no clear path for career growth, and enjoy little to no job security. (U.S. House of Representatives, House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Democratic Staff, 2014, p. 2)

It is interesting to note that the report goes to indicate that the difficulties of adjunct employment are part of a larger picture:

The contingent faculty trend appears to mirror trends in the general labor market toward a flexible, 'just-in-time' workforce, with lower compensation and unpredictable schedules for what were once considered middle-class jobs. (Idem.)

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "adjuncts" (or "adjunct faculty"), "contingents" (or "contingent faculty") and "non-tenure track faculty" are the terms most widely used to designate those instructors, many with advanced degrees, who perform most of the teaching on the majority of campuses of community colleges, four-year colleges, public and private universities. While many of these teachers are "part-time faculty," the category also includes some who teach full time and some graduate students. What marks them most strongly is the lack of any expectation of tenure and the dominance of short-term hiring practices, from one semester to several years. The status of these teachers, their problems and working conditions, will be discussed in this paper. We will also consider the causes of the reliance on part-time, non-tenure track teachers in post-secondary educational institutions.

Thus it seems that the plight of adjuncts might have continued unnoticed and unremarked for another twenty years or more if it were not for the growing ranks of fast food workers, retail part-timers, freelancers, car washers and other underpaid workers in a growing precariat<sup>2</sup> class.

The topic of this paper concerns our future as adjuncts, and how we will shape that future through the fight to improve conditions; my own perspective is that of the anthropology of work, which includes the cultural, social, historic, economic and individual conditions and meanings of work as human activity. Our work as adjuncts is embedded in very large institutional problems: improving our conditions will necessitate changes to the structure and future of higher education, which are, in turn, entangled in political and economic issues that are grounded in fundamental visions of the future of our society. This is a topic of interest to everyone with a concern for the future of higher education in the United States. It is of special interest to many independent scholars who support themselves by teaching as adjuncts; in addition, many adjuncts, excluded from the institutional support that full-time faculty receive, pursue their independent scholarship on their own. The National Coalition of Independent Scholars provides invaluable assistance with access to resources and network support for adjuncts in these circumstances.

I begin by presenting some background of today's situation in higher education as it affects adjuncts, before moving outside the university to situate adjuncts as workers within the conditions of the contemporary meaning of work. Finally, I will highlight some of the gains adjuncts have made, and end with some thoughts on directions for present and future action. A very brief overview of the situation in the larger category encompassing both part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty is shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>2</sup> The "precariat" (a portmanteau word combining 'precarious' and 'proletariat'), is a term first used by Guy Standing in "The Precariat—The New Dangerous Class" in Policy Network (May 2011) to describe people living in economic and social insecurity, with only short-term jobs, and "without a narrative of occupational development."

According to figures from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) for 1975 through 2011, part-time and full-time non-tenure-track faculty accounted (as of 2011) for 70.8% of the faculty of 4,537 public and private post-secondary degree-granting institutions; these include community colleges, colleges, and universities (Curtis, 2014, p. 65). What is very telling is that not only has the percentage of full-time tenured faculty decreased in this period but, most significantly, the percentage of full-time tenure-track faculty (those who expect or aspire to obtain tenure) has been more than halved. In other words, there is proportionately less and less opportunity for full-time tenure-track employment, while the largest growth has been the two groups that lack job security and hopes for career advancement.

One of the most significant factors in the new world of higher education is not only the great number of contingent faculty, but also the major increase in administrators. According to a report by the New England Center of Investigative Reporting in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research, the number of non-academic administrators at post-secondary institutions (community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities) has more than doubled in the last 25 years, at a rate greater than that of student enrollment (Marcus, Jon, n.d.) The article includes a searchable table,<sup>3</sup> which I used to examine the position of my own employers, Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY): the data are shown in Figure 2.

Between 1987 and 2011, full-time administrative positions went up 79.3% while student enrollment increased by 54.6%. These figures are not atypical, either for Hunter or for all the schools listed in the survey. Some are much worse, a few are a little better, but the overall trend is the same: large increases in administration and professional staff with moderate increases in student enrollment. Furthermore, predictions by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that the job market for postsecondary administrators is expected to continue growing. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.)

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<sup>3</sup> ([http://college-table.wqbh.org/college\\_local](http://college-table.wqbh.org/college_local)).

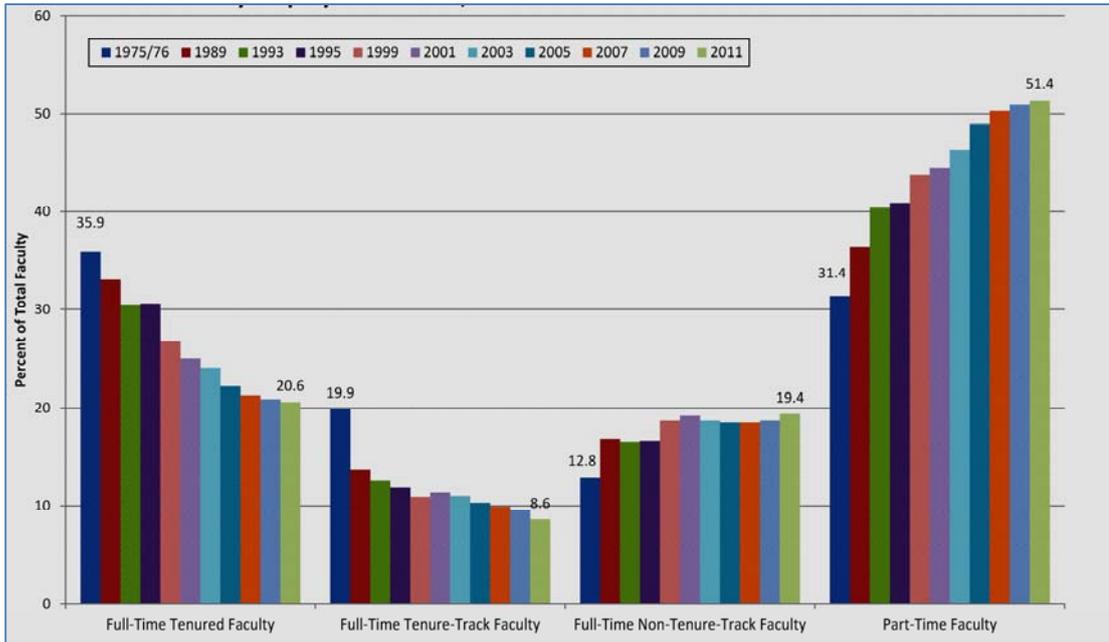


Figure 1. (Curtis, 2014, p. 4)

Notes: Figures in this chart have been updated from those published by AAUP in 2013. 1975-76: Figures for full-time faculty are for 1975 and are estimated; part-time figures are for 1976. Source: US Department of Education, IPEDS Fall Staff Survey. Tabulation by John W. Curtis, American Association of University Professors, Washington, DC.

<b>Administrative Growth</b> <b>CUNY Hunter College, New York State</b>		
Full-time Administrators (1987)  87	Full-time Administrators (2011)  156	<b>Full-time Administrators</b> <b>% Change 1987-2011</b>  <b>79.30%</b>
Full-time Professional Staff (1987)  209	Full-time Professional Staff (2011)  235	<b>Full-time Professional Staff</b> <b>% Change 1987-2011</b>  <b>12.40%</b>
Enrollment Total (1987)  11814	Enrollment Total (2011)  18259	<b>Enrollment Total</b> <b>% Change 1987-2011</b>  <b>54.60%</b>

Figure 2.

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job market for postsecondary administrators is expected to grow in the period of 2012-2022 at a rate of 15%, which is considered faster than average for all occupations. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.) The rate of growth for postsecondary teachers is also high (19% for the period) but the Bureau notes that most of those jobs are expected to be part-time (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.).

The developments that we are seeing here in higher education, and especially in public higher education, are the results of global social and economic changes and they are intrinsically connected with developments in the world of work. Some of the major factors that have changed what we know as work are: the increasing influence of financial control in a post-industrial economy, globalization, and neoliberalism<sup>4</sup> as economic theory and dogma, with its emphasis on austerity for the 99.9%. In such a world, education is reduced to the most utilitarian practices; it becomes focused on training for work, with the threat of joblessness hanging over students from pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) to graduate school. Competition between national economies, classes, and individuals becomes a dominant idea, leaving no room for cooperation or social support or the development of the individual. Schools are seen as an important part of this competition, and teachers are attacked for failure to achieve the rigid standards imposed upon them, even though support for education is cut and cut again in the name of reducing taxes and eliminating state programs. In the United States, this has been expressed in efforts to eliminate as much as possible the role of the federal government in education. There is now legislation in

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<sup>4</sup> Neoliberalism and neoconservatism are two political/economic theories that have their basis in classical economic theory and in the social welfare liberalism that developed during the late nineteenth century. Both theories have their modern roots in the reaction to the counterculture of the 1960s as well as the economic stagnation of the 1970s. The focus of the neoconservatives tends to be on international affairs, where they support American military strength and its use to promote American interests abroad, especially the development of democratic regimes. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, while it advocates free trade, focuses more on reducing the size and activities of American government at home, reducing expenditures on social services, and encouraging privatization of many social institutions, such as schools and prisons.

Congress to decrease greatly the role of the Department of Education, and several of the Republican candidates for President have announced their desire to eliminate the Department entirely. (Bruni, 2015)

In this world, our present and possibly future world, there is no room for education in the humanities, for the development of critical thinking, for the flourishing of the arts or for the ideal of the richly developed human individual. Public higher education is especially badly affected, as those in office who control spending attempt to assess its value with evaluations of numbers of students who complete the degree within a stated time and the salaries of students after graduation. This is particularly true of the underfunded community colleges, now that there are proposals to provide “free” access to them for two years. Although some students may use that free time to prepare for 4-year colleges, much of the emphasis in the plans is focused on the courses designed to help prepare students for a workplace that requires more than a high school diploma, but not much more.

The corporatization of higher education has been exacerbated and accelerated by several factors, especially the current economics of neoliberalism and austerity, and political focus on reducing the size of government and the amount of expenditures on public programs. At the state level, state after state has reduced public funding of public higher education. This has resulted in higher tuition fees and more student debt, and it has also created situations in which the hiring of adjuncts becomes much more reasonable and economically efficient than hiring full-time faculty. In addition, we must consider the political function of the debates about education in general as well as the attacks on higher education in particular. Issues of testing, Common Core, teacher training and assessment have become tokens in the political contests. While conservatives have always been wary of the general liberal intellectual bent of most higher education professors, current struggles over scientific issues such as evolution and climate change have become red flag political issues, with argument over whether—and if so how—they should be taught at all levels of education.

Furthermore, education has now become a big business, as we can see in the development of charter schools. Charter schools are very profitable and their proprietors' have the political clout to make them even more so; efforts to reduce or limit the numbers of charter schools in New York have largely failed, and the continued reduction in funding for public schools only widens the gap. Textbooks, testing, and online materials are also very profitable; teacher training is affected by the requirements of testing and common Core standards and by the companies like Pearson which dominate the business of providing these materials.

Nor is higher education exempt from the spell of privatization. In New York State, we now have a plan in which properties belonging to the State University of New York (SUNY) can be used in joint activities with private companies. In this program, START-UP NY (The SUNY Tax-Free Areas to Revitalize and Transform Upstate New York) businesses are invited to relocate on public university grounds, with a 10-year tax-free period because it is believed they will increase industry-sponsored research and provide some business experience for students. (Myers, 2015)

Results of the program are so far rather meager: one year after Governor Cuomo announced the Start-Up NY program, a Forbes article referred to the program as a "bust" because few jobs had been created in spite of large state expenditures (Sinquefeld, Rex, 2015). Proponents of the project say that it is too soon to judge and that there is continued support from participating universities. Another Forbes reporter wrote that a private institution, New York University (NYU) wanted to expand the program from upstate campuses to Manhattan. (Narea, 2015)

Although these factors may seem removed from the central issue of adjuncts, it is important to see them as the climate in which the adjunctification of the university takes place—a weakening of tenure and shared governance in which administrators take on more and more power, and the control of faculty over course content and university policies decreases. At the City University of New York (CUNY) the administration initiated widespread curriculum

changes with its implementation of the Pathways Program over the protests of the faculty and their union, the Professional Staff Congress. The decrease in full-time professors protected by tenure who can object to the administration's efforts to control curriculum, and the increase in the number of adjuncts who have no job security and very little influence on course content, provide the perfect atmosphere for the administration's efforts to weaken shared governance. Although some adjuncts may serve on the Faculty Senate, their numbers are typically very low (for example, in the Hunter College Senate, 44 of the 100 members are full-time faculty while 13% are Lecturers (full-time), Lecturers (part-time), Adjunct faculty, all other part-time members of the teaching faculty who are not also serving in full-time appointments, and non-faculty department member in the title series College Laboratory Technician and Higher Education Officer.

These figures give some idea of the influence of adjuncts in the Hunter Faculty Senate. These proportions are also typical for other CUNY colleges, while the University Faculty Senate has 120 full-time representatives and 16 part-timers. Furthermore, while increasing Senate membership for adjuncts would go some way toward improving their role in curriculum and internal institutional faculty affairs, it would not address issues of wages, hours, and working conditions which are best settled through collective bargaining.

When we look at all these factors, we come to see the connections between our lives as adjuncts, the institutions employing us and the larger context of global economic, political and social developments. As we begin to contest the role that confines us, we acknowledge our place in "the precariat," as described by Guy Standing in his post, "The Precariat—The New Dangerous Class" (2011): "[members of the precariat] have a more restricted range of social, cultural, political and economic rights than citizens around them." I believe that the term "precariat" very clearly identifies the lives of adjuncts both in terms of their economic conditions and as their role as part/not part of the university, where they do not enjoy either the rights, recompense, or status of the "citizens" who are

the tenured faculty. Standing describes “the precariat’s relations of production [as] defined by partial involvement in labour combined with extensive ‘work-for-labour’, a growing array of unremunerated activities that are essential if they are to retain access to jobs and to decent earnings.” (idem.)

We see ourselves in this description when we think of all the unpaid work we do in class preparation, syllabus development, grading and correcting papers, as well as meeting with and advising students, although our wages are based only on actual teaching hours, and the tenured faculty sometimes like to say that “all adjuncts do is teach.” As Standing points out, “... [A member of the precariat] has to allocate so much time to handling bureaucratic demands, to chasing one short-term insecure job after another,” which has the ring of familiarity to adjuncts. And, he adds, the worker has to devote time and energy to “learning new bags of tricks called ‘skills’ that could become obsolescent before they have a chance to use them.” (Idem.) Adjuncts are increasingly required to learn (usually at their own expense of time and money) how to use social media in teaching, to keep up with changes in the platforms that support their classwork, and to develop online classes or whole online courses in order to maintain their adjunct positions. This is another sign that we are members of the precariat, and another area in which we adjuncts have to extend our fight.

This is not limited to New York City or the United States, but it is part of the global reshaping of the economy and of education, with universities in Europe and Latin America also facing similar conditions (Rhoads and Torres, 2006): Marina Warner has written an article in the *London Review of Books* about the effect of the increase in administrative control over universities on scholars and teachers in England (2015), and at the August 2014 meeting of the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) there were more than 200 registrants, representing institutions in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Argentina.

#### CHALLENGING PRECARITY

Thus we see that we are not alone and that the problems adjunct face are part of a much larger, world-wide, socio-economic and political configuration. How, then, have we lived up to the promise of this paper to move beyond plight to fight? How is the recognition of our precarity a step forward? Most importantly, precarity is not the self-involved, self-pitying concept that is plight; precarity is an objective condition that affects millions of people around the world. It is the result of specific decisions and programs by people in power and, as such, it is amenable to change. Once we recognize precarity, we begin to move beyond plight to fight. It is a big fight, circling out from our own immediate issues to involve many other people and to call for major social and economic changes. We can begin by challenging the conditions of our employment as adjuncts. There are also specific actions we should take as independent scholars. Finally, as individuals and citizens, as adjuncts and independent scholars, we can move forward to challenge the basis of precarity in many areas (see Table 1).

#### **Challenge to the Conditions of Employment in Higher Education: Organization**

- **Professional associations, e.g.:**  
*American Association of University Professors (AAUP)*  
*Modern Language Association (MLA)*
- **Adjunct associations, e.g.:**  
*New Faculty Majority (NFM)*  
*Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL)*
- **Unions:**
  - *Institution-wide unions*
  - *Union of all faculty, full- & part-time*
  - *Local branch of national union*
  - *Adjuncts-only union*
  - *Graduate students unions*

**Table 1.**

The professional associations of some disciplines have begun to address issues of contingent academics in recent years, largely because their PhD members have found it increasingly difficult to find full-time, permanent work and their graduate student members have become increasingly vocal. To cite only two examples, The Modern Language Association has issued a recommendation for a \$7,230 minimum salary for adjuncts for a three-credit course (MLA, n.d.); and the American Anthropological Association, of which I am a member, has made some moderate efforts in the direction of recognizing the issues of contingent faculty, with articles in the peer-reviewed journal *Anthropology of Work Review* (e.g. Sharff and Lessinger, 1995) as well as papers and proposals presented at annual meetings. On a broader scale, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has instituted a One Faculty Campaign to help their chapters and collective bargaining units make gains for contingent faculty.

There are also several national membership adjunct associations, such as the New Faculty Majority (NFM) and the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL), which are important sources of information and as support networks, especially if your school does not have an active adjunct organization yet. The New Faculty Majority (NFM), founded in 2009, works to improve the quality of higher education by improving the working conditions of adjuncts who are now the majority of the faculty in most institutions of higher education. The organization's motto is "Faculty Working Conditions are Student Learning Conditions." NFM's activities include research and education about the status and role of adjuncts, advocacy, and information about significant legal cases affecting adjunct organization. NFM is the coordinator of the annual event, Campus Equity Week, during which adjuncts participate in events to publicize their role and their demands for equity on each campus.<sup>5</sup>

The Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) is an organization of North American activists working to improve the working conditions of all non-tenured

faculty, including graduate students. The organization had its start in 1996 at a conference of contingent workers that was held in Washington DC, concurrently with a conference of the Modern Language Association. The founding group expanded membership and developed the organization from its base on the East Coast to become an international organization whose conferences draw participants from the United States, Mexico and Canada.<sup>6 7</sup>

Unionization is, I believe, the most productive path to take for adjunct progress, not only because the social and economic scope of the problems fall within the realms addressed by union action, but also because collective bargaining gains can be much wider and stronger than just wages. They can extend to conditions of employment, job security, training and many other issues, and they can be readjusted as conditions change. That said, there are many different forms that adjunct unionization can take and this paper can only offer a review of the principal ones. I urge you to look into the variety of unionization possibilities if your institution is not already organized, and to investigate the possibilities for adjunct action within your own union if you are already a member of one.

In some institutions, such as CUNY, there is one stand-alone union which is institution-wide and includes both full-time and part-time faculty. The large size of a combined union is effective in negotiating with the huge, complicated administrative structure of CUNY, which is funded both by New York City and State governments. However, there are internal tensions between full-time and part-time faculty within the union. I have advocated for the adoption of the motto: "One Faculty, One Union," because I feel these conflicts weaken the union as a whole as well as

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<sup>5</sup> More information can be found at their website <http://www.newfacultymajority.info/>.

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<sup>6</sup> Their next Conference will be held in August 2016 in Canada, at the University of Alberta. Additional information about the organization can be found at their website <http://cocalinternational.org/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> These are only two sources for news about activities and organization of adjuncts, but a quick search of the Internet will bring you to many other groups and individual blogs, important sources for information as you build your adjunct association on your campus. One of the most vital sources of information about international adjunct activities and issues is COCAL Updates, archived at <http://precaritydispatches.tumblr.com/COCAL-Updates-Archive>.

requiring an ongoing effort by adjuncts for status and equity within the union. This struggle continues.

There are some adjunct unions which have been formed as local branches of national unions, such as the Kaplan Teachers Union in New York City (Newspaper Guild) and the New School, a private university in New York City (United Auto Workers). The adjunct faculty at Tufts University decided to join the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) which is conducting an "Adjunct Action Campaign" in the Boston area. In this "metro campaign," the goal is to organize all or most of the adjuncts in universities in a given area, thus arriving at a position from which they can dominate the discussion of wages and working conditions.

Some adjuncts tend to reject unionization efforts either out of fear of reprisals by the administration (an anxiety commonly met in all organizing campaigns) or because they identify as "professionals" and do not want to be connected to what they perceive as "blue-collar" activity. This identification with the professorial class, in spite of the actualities of their working conditions and experience, can be described in terms of Marxist theory as "false consciousness" in which individuals' self-image chides the reality of their exploitation. The stigma and lack of status associated with being an adjunct in many institutions lends itself to the denial of the low esteem associated with this condition and an effort to see oneself as part of the higher class. Although this is a topic for a future paper, it is mentioned here as a factor that activists have to acknowledge as they attempt to organize on their campus.

One of the most energetic and broadest organizing efforts currently underway is the growing organization of graduate students who share the insecurity, low pay and lack of benefits or advancement with adjuncts and the non-tenure-track faculty. Graduate students are now a significant part of the contingent picture, with the AAUP reporting them as 19.3% of the instructional staff in 2011 (Curtis, 2014, p. 1). Their efforts are significant, not only because of the gains they are able to make for graduate students but because it appears that they may be able to invigorate

the labor movement by creating unions focused on organizing the unorganized rather than just servicing members. (A. Rhoads and G. Rhoades, 2005; (Kitchen, 2014)

As we consider these efforts at organization to improve the conditions of adjuncts, there are some areas which are especially critical for independent scholars. (Table 2)

<b>Of Particular Importance to Independent Scholars</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognition of scholarship by the departments and/or by the institutions in which we teach</li><li>• Funding for professional development (travel, conferences) especially if our work is outside the department in which we teach</li><li>• Control of the online courses and materials we develop</li></ul>

**Table 2**

It is important that we aim to improve the recognition of all adjuncts as more than people "who just teach." Areas that are particularly significant for independent scholars include recognition of our research and publications, so that they are on a par with those of our full-time colleagues. We should also seek to obtain funding for research by the institutions in which we teach, and their support for adjuncts who seek outside funding for professional development, travel, conferences, and research expenses. Finally, as there is more emphasis on the development of online classes and whole courses, adjuncts must be vigilant about securing protection for their work as well as obtaining recompense for the time spent in development and the provision by the institution of the necessary technical help and equipment. The recent contract at the New School (UAW, Local 702) includes such language to provide for specific additional payments, such as when a teacher converts a course previously taught in the classroom to an online course.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The AAUP provides Sample Policy and Contract Language on Distance Education and Intellectual Property as well as other

There is also a more general 'to do' list, and we can all find some little piece of it that we can focus on and thus start unraveling the cocoon that shrouds adjuncts in silence and invisibility in the world of higher education.

<b>All of Us</b>	
•	Surveys
•	Organize a union if we don't have one
•	Be active in our union if we do have one
•	Join adjunct organizations such as NFM, COCAL
•	Create wider awareness of adjunct conditions
✓	Bring up adjunct issues at our professional associations
✓	Raise adjunct issues at any political organizations to which we belong
•	Build alliances
✓	Find allies in our own department/institution
✓	Make alliances with student and graduate student organizations
✓	Develop alliances with others who have a stake in higher education

**Table 3**

## TAKING ACTION

A good way to start taking action is by surveying the needs, conditions, and goals of the adjuncts at your institution. It is fairly neutral, i.e., not overtly organizational, and it is a good way for adjuncts to get to know each other and to discuss common concerns. For those of us who remember the days of Women's Liberation, the "consciousness raising" discussions usually led to some action plan. In the same way, drawing up survey questions, circulating

the survey encouraging people to respond, and then finding a way to publicize the results, perhaps in an adjuncts meeting or an online mailing list, may be the spark that leads to further action. The needs and aims of the adjuncts in each college vary so widely that it is important to survey them to see where your efforts at organization should lead. Surveys are also an excellent way to identify and recruit adjunct activists as well as to develop contact lists.

Organization is essential: as the analysis of the adjunct condition has shown, it is not just an individual problem for one person, or on one campus. The issues are national and even international. If there is no union in your institution, and if forming a union is too big a step right now, start with forming an adjuncts group where you can discuss areas of common concern and investigate activities appropriate to your campus. Conditions will vary from department to department and group discussions can lead to some ideas for improvement and suggestions of best practices, such as listing all the adjuncts' names and office hours on the department website, or suggesting that adjuncts be invited to attend department meetings.

If your institution has a union, become active in it and develop an adjuncts committee if one does not already exist. Your adjuncts group can formulate specific items for the union to gain for adjuncts in bargaining sessions, such as job security (guarantees of continued employment after a specific number of terms), health insurance, payment for last-minute cancellation of courses, and provisions for the development of online courses.

In addition to your union activities, it is good to join larger organizations like NFM and COCAL, where you can find information about adjuncts' activities in other places, get new ideas, and broaden your view of the adjunct struggle. The newsletters of adjunct groups also provide important information about significant court cases and rulings of the National Labor Relations Board that affect adjunct organization.

We have to work to create awareness of adjuncts, the work we do and our working conditions. The general public is unaware of the role adjuncts have in teaching

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Resources on Copyright, Distance Education, and Intellectual Property on their website [www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org).

the majority of classes at most institutions. The parents of many of our students, and our students for the most part, do not realize how often the “professor” standing in the front of the classroom lacks decent pay, benefits, and job security. The more we talk about adjuncts’ problems in our professional organizations, and the more we raise these issues with our elected representatives, the stronger our organization becomes.

Alliances are extremely important: make alliances with students—they often do not know the issues confronting adjuncts and they are usually very sympathetic and supportive when they learn about them (to paraphrase the NFM Motto: “Our working conditions are their learning conditions”). Make alliances with the full-time, tenured faculty: they are not the enemy, although sometimes they seem like an obstacle; some will be supportive. Make alliances with graduate students, many of whom will be the adjuncts of tomorrow and who are already suffering the same working conditions if they are employed as teachers.

Make alliances with all stakeholders: parents who pay the tuition, students and taxpayers who pay for these exorbitant administrative costs, groups that oppose privatization of education at every level, elementary teachers who oppose the drive to teach to the test, and all progressive social movements and professional academic organizations. As the leaders of the Chicago teachers’ strike say:

We were determined to change the discussion about public education to focus on our students [...] The dialogue about public education can no longer simply assume that teachers are the problem, that no other issues exist. Parents will not be passive actors when it comes to policies that affect their children. And we showed that teachers unions are not merely protectionist organizations but can be a progressive force for education justice. (Bradbury, Brenner, Brown, Slaughter, Winslow, 2014, pp. 2–3)

“Education justice”—now there is a goal we can rally around. The political and economic outlook is gloomy followed by dismal. The attacks on education, especially public education, have become the focus of the neoliberal drive to destroy the economic and

social position of most workers and reduce us all to the precariat. I think that many people who support and repeat the rhetoric of privatization really think that they will be exempt from the deluge, that they enjoy some kind of special status. When they wake up it will be too late. But that is material for a dystopian novel, not a plan for those of us awake, aware, and ready to act.

## CONCLUSIONS

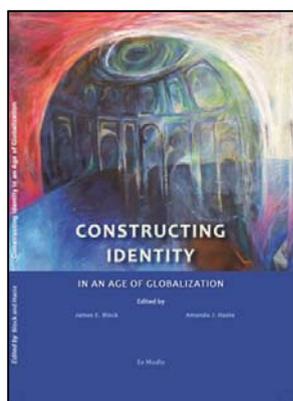
There is a lot to be done, but the good news is that beginnings have been made and there are directions in which we can move. We have the numbers and, if we have the will, we can not only improve our own conditions but also take part in the process of creating a better and more just society as well as a meaningful and humanistic higher education. As the Chicago teachers said, the fight is for much more than our own needs.

Yes, it is a lot of work, unpaid work at that, but my experience has been that it is more fun to be a troublemaker than to be a victim. I have found that in social movements—community organizing, civil rights, antiwar protests—there is a great energy that makes us grow. I believe that adjuncts today are on the cusp of being able to turn their frustration into that kind of positive action and help to make wide-ranging social change.

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## ***Constructing Identity in an Age of Globalization***

**Ed. James E. Block and Amanda J. Haste** (Paris: Ex Modio, 2015).

Soft cover. 219 pp + Index. ISBN 978-2-9549731-0-4.

[http://www.academia.edu/4190881/Constructing\\_Identity\\_in\\_an\\_Age\\_of\\_Globalization](http://www.academia.edu/4190881/Constructing_Identity_in_an_Age_of_Globalization)

*Constructing Identity in an Age of Globalization* consists of sixteen essays in four Parts crossing borders, disciplines and methodologies. The essays represent a mixed bag in terms of quality and insight, most of the exemplary papers being in Parts II ("Embracing Hybridity") and III ("The Challenges of Assimilation").

Throughout the book, authors invoke the concept of "post-modernism." That we live in a post-modern world is a taken-for-granted assumption by many of the writers. But are we truly living in a post-modern age or, as social theorist Anthony Giddens maintains, in a period of late modernity? What does being a "post-modern" individual mean? At no point do authors present specific examples of such beings. Monica Colt, for example, in "Cultural Values and Identity Formation in M. G. Vassanji's *The Assassin's Song*," uses the phrase in her very first sentence, after which it thankfully drops from sight as she examines a novel about an author born in India who moves first to Canada and then to the United States. Nowhere do the authors present examples of people who are fragmented, decentered or deconstructed, the usual terms used when discussing post-modernism.

A particularly interesting piece is Lelania Sperrazza's "Arabizi: From Techno-lution to Revolution," which deals with the phenomenon of an identity developed through language fusion and the Internet. Arabizi combines Arabic and English, the language of the Internet, as it has developed into a mode of communication for Egyptian youth, coming into its own with the Egyptian Revolution which mobilized

tech-savvy young people. Although Sperrazza does not make this comparison, the same process has occurred elsewhere, for example the development of "Yeshvish" among ultra-Orthodox Jews, a fusion of Yiddish, Hebrew and English used by those going to Yeshivas in the United States.

Efrat Sadras-Ron's interesting paper, "Ethnicity as a New Model for Jewish Identities: The Case of Cuban-Jewish Identity," would have benefited from casting a wider historical, cultural or global net. Jewishness as a form of ethnicity exists in the United States, Canada, and had roots in Eastern and Central Europe before and after World Wars I and II. Sadras-Ron rightly posits learning Hebrew as a linguistic glue, but misses Cuba's rich Yiddish cultural life before and after Fidel Castro. For example, *Der Onheib [The Beginning]*<sup>1</sup> contained a number of articles discussing Yiddish life in Cuba, and in November 1993 reproduced the title page of a journal entitled *Kuba-yisrael* [Cuba-Israel], with the flags and symbols of both countries.<sup>2</sup> Another useful addition would have been Robert M. Levine's *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba* (1993); using these authors would have added considerable heft and weft to an interesting article.

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<sup>1</sup> The publication of the Coordinating Committee of Yiddish Culture Clubs in Miami Florida.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Onheib's* founder, Osher (Khaim/Jaime) Schuchinsky (1907-1995) emigrated from Poland to Cuba in 1926 at age 19; in 1961, he made his final migration, to the United States; while in Cuba he wrote for a Yiddish newspaper, *Havaner leben* (Havana Life). Schuchinsky's writings concern his "three homelands": Poland, Cuba and the United States.

One of the most fascinating papers is "A Third Gender? Expression of Gender Identity in Celibate Monasticism through Words and Music," by musicologist Amanda J. Haste. Examining the music composed and played by monks and nuns in Anglican, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic institutions in the United States, Great Britain and Canada, she convincingly demonstrates how gender impacts on the music of the Religious. This is an extremely nuanced, well-researched and jargon-free piece of research, brimming with fresh insights.

Sadly, the same cannot be said for Ankita Haldar's "Feminine Self-Fashioning through Culinary Fiction: A Reading of Priva Basil's *Ishq and Mushq* [Love and Smell]," with sentences such as "In her work 'Towards a Feminist Narratology' (1997) Susan Lanser has advocated the need for a review of the narratology form: although feminine experiences have been narrated before, the tradition of "Female Narratology", supposedly rooted in mimesis, has gradually developed a semiotic interpretation which has been gaining ground, and it can be noted that there is often a heavy reliance on culinary tropes to express this need." (177) Haldar's view of women shifts from the perception of ages past—"the Feminine Form Divine"—to the following: "A woman's body, sexuality and her biological difference bestow uniqueness to her, and also shape her identity as she becomes a secreting, smelling, discharging, oozing, bleeding, lactating and procreative individual, to a greater extent than the male." (175-176) She also refers to "the kinds of tropes being used in fiction oozing out of the South Asian diaspora by means of some of its contemporary female members . . ." (178): as far as this reviewer is concerned, not only do the women ooze, but apparently their fiction does as well.

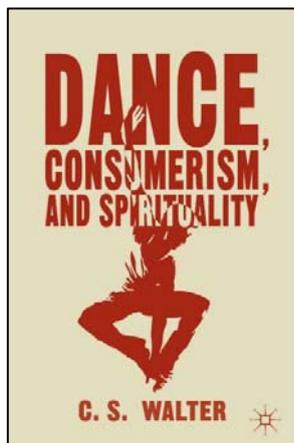
Syed Rizvi's "Group Cohesion and Assimilation: Ethnic Trust Networks and Global Economic Pressures" on

how ethnic entrepreneurs raise capital deepens our understanding of ethnic economic niches, shifts the focus of the collection from groups in the U.S. to those in the U.K., and is likewise well constructed. Rizvi offers insights into the value systems and trust networks of several generations of British immigrant communities whose origins lie in the Indian subcontinent. This essay is well worth reading.

On balance, this book is well worth buying, especially for the papers in Parts II and III. The range of topics is wide: in addition to those already mentioned, Brendan Wocke examines the impact of students studying abroad in terms of their self-identification—an extension of the rootlessness/adopted roots among people such as Franz Fanon—while Frances Pheasant-Kelly draws parallels between the film *Avatar* and post-9/11 American politics. Some of the remaining essays concern identity issues expressed through literary pieces, from African women's literature to Indian poetry, so this book offers a wide range of variations on the theme of identity. There is a thematic index, and careful NCIS readers will note that the author list contains several independent scholars.

SHELBY SHAPIRO

*Shelby Shapiro is an independent scholar who obtained his Ph.D. in American Studies with a dissertation on the Yiddish press and how various publications of differing political and religious viewpoints sought to construct different identities for Jewish immigrant women. He has written about Jazz, Anarchism, and the labour movement, and presently is Associate Editor of Records of the State of Connecticut.*



## ***Dance, Consumerism, and Spirituality***

**C. S. Walter** (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

208 pages. Hardcover, E-Book. ISBN 9781137463524.

<http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/dance,-consumerism,-and-spirituality-c-s-walter/?sf1=barcode&st1=9781137460332>

Dance is a powerful and dynamic expressive form that may be read through diverse lenses. Since ancient times, dance has evolved as aesthetic and participatory phenomena. Communities have evoked gods, venerated ancestors, and commemorated epic events through dance. Historians, social scientists, and theologians have contemplated the value of dance in various spheres. Contextualization of rhythmic movements and gestures associated with dance is informed by historical, cultural, and social functionality.

In *Dance, Consumerism, and Spirituality*, dancer and scholar C.S. Walter explains how dance rituals perpetuate mystical awareness, and fulfill human desire for self-actualization. This desire drives consumption of dance and dance-related products. Walter's proposed *womanist transmodern* (6) frame of reference demarginalizes dance rituals as mystical experiences and cultural commodities. Two prevalent constructs supporting her frame of reference are *thedanceecology* and *cyberity*. *Theodanceecology* refers to "the study of dance, its power, and its assets in spiritual/mystical and emotional service to humanity, over time" (8). *Cyberity* is "the place where consciousness is connected to brands and symbols, where marketing messages are conceived, received, and delivered and where the consumer buys into hegemonic memory structures of purchase to create

identity" (8). Walter's approach also provides a refreshing exploration of dance and mysticism rooted in human consciousness and cultural authenticity. Her analysis circumvents the tendency of ambitious scholars to sterilize the integrity of cultural artifacts in the process of excessive interpretation.

Throughout the text, Walter effectively analyzes various forms of qualitative and quantitative scholarship to concretize critical concepts supporting her perspective. In addition to referencing traditional research, the author relies on the strength of auto-ethnography to substantiate her claims. In the tradition of Isadora Duncan, Walter associates "deep levels of mystical connection" with repetitive dance practice (32). She acknowledges the manner in which dance allows her to remain emotionally and spiritually connected to her higher self and ideals (8). Like anthropologist, legendary choreographer, and dance scholar Katherine Dunham, she has the capacity to lift the spiritual and emotional elements of dance from the field. While Walter's shared experiences as participant observer are limited, they legitimize her procedure for writing about dance in the contexts of aesthetics, mysticism, and consumption.

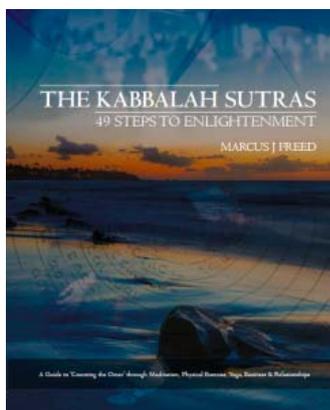
Walter accomplishes the task of defining concepts and validating frames of reference in six chapters. Chapter 1 contains adequate definitions of religion and spirituality, with excellent justification for using

mysticism as a more suitable concept relevant to discourse on the emotional and cultural significance of dance rituals. The author also establishes innovative correlations between the consumption of "spiritual gifts" (24) and the business of spirituality. In chapter 2, Walter discusses the circulation and consumption of Black social dance through a womanist transmodern lens (43) to exemplify how dance is consumed in different cultures. Chapters 3 and 4 address the functionality of aesthetics, spirituality, and transmodern dance motifs in the creation of mystical identity. Chapter 5 examines dance consumption in cyberity and the impact of dance on the human experience in parasocial contexts. In chapter 6, the author urges spiritual empowerment through direct engagement of dance rituals that promote mystical awareness. She also encourages advancement of womanist transmodern discourses relevant to dance and consumer behavior.

*Dance, Consumerism, and Spirituality* will advance scholarship across multiple disciplines. Walter's extensive discourse on dance rituals, mysticism, and consumption will appeal to scholars of dance, anthropology, cultural studies, gender studies, religious studies, sociology, and visual communication. The text would also be a suitable resource for advanced undergraduate or graduate courses emphasizing anthropological or spiritual approaches to dance.

ANITA H.W. BAHATI

*Anita H. W. Bahati is an independent scholar, ethnographer, folklorist, interculturalist, and visual storyteller. Her areas of specialization are in cultural anthropology and Africana studies.*



### ***The Kabbalah Sutras: 49 Steps to Enlightenment***

**Marcus J. Freed** (Los Angeles, CA: Freedthinker Books, 2015)

ISBN: 9780996350600 (Print); ISBN: 9780996350617 (E-Book).

[www.marcusjfreed.com](http://www.marcusjfreed.com)

In today's Kabbalistic world there are three main streams: Theosophical, Prophetic, and Practical Kabbalah. Each of the streams provides a different spiritual path, but all have the same end goal: creating a more direct connections with the transcendental. The most developed and well known out of the three is Theosophical Kabbalah, which aspires to deepen our understanding of the world and its relation with the Divine. In its classic form, it requires years of

learning and experience to reach the inner depths of this spiritual practice, but modern era Kabbalah has seen an opening towards the lay world. As part of this modern movement in Kabbalah we see its syncretism with other spiritual practices, especially in meditation, and it is this intersection between classic Kabbalistic teachings and meditation practices, most notably Yoga, that we encounter in Marcus Freed's *Kabbalah Sutras: 49 Steps to Enlightenment*.

In *The Kabbalah Sutras* Freed sets out to offer his readers a practical manual for the improvement of quality of life in general, and more specifically of spiritual life, through the syncretism of Jewish Kabbalistic and Yogi practices. The book is also an application of Kabbalistic principles for the non-Kabbalistic spiritual practitioner. Finally, it aspires to be 'a practical guide to experiencing the [Kabbalistic] teachings in your body' (p.12). Freed writes that "The more we activate the Divine spheres, the *sefirot*, within our body, the more we become attuned to our Godly nature." (p.14) Thus, *The Kabbalah Sutras* are a practice through which we can reveal our God within, working our emotional selves through our physical selves and in contrast to our over-exercised, 'masculine' as the author names it, rational selves.

The book focuses on seven of the ten Kabbalistic *sefirot*, the 'ten categories of universal love'. Freed conceptualizes these seven *sefirot* as 'emotional attributes' connected to the physical body, and as possible channels to the Divine. The '49 Steps' are in fact forty-nine daily practices divided into seven weeks (Sunday to Saturday). They provide a cumulative process, each daily practice within a week building on the practice from the previous day, and culminating with a longer practice on the seventh day. Each week's practice concentrates on one of the *sefirot* as the overarching theme for the week, and each day within the week is a contemplation of one of the seven *sefirot* within the context of the thematic *sefirah* of the week.

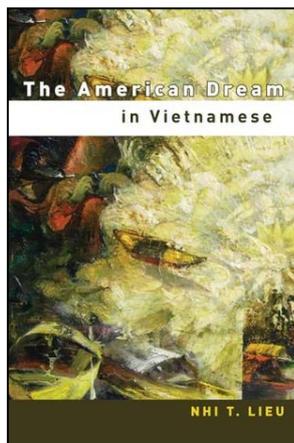
Freed presents the reader with a preface to the week, in which he introduces the reader to the weekly *sefirah*, its meaning, its relevance to mundane life, and any other anecdotes that might help shed light on the ways in which a lack of balance in this area can distort one's life. He ends with a set of questions intended to help reveal dysfunctionality and/or bring balance within the weekly *sefira*. Each daily combination of the weekly *sefirah* with the daily *sefirah* is a Kabbalah sutra. Freed offers practitioners a wide array of applications of these teachings from intimate relations to familial relations, to career related relationships, and to one's own relation with oneself.

Each day begins with a naming of the relevant Kabbalah sutra and the intention behind it. From there Freed continues with contemplation, helping the reader to better understand the meaning of the specific Kabbalah sutra and where it might be relevant to everyday life. This is followed by a 'Today's Practice' section which includes guidelines for yoga practice, and guidelines for gym practice. At the end of each daily sutra the reader is presented with a set of questions to meditate on, and both gym and yoga sequences relating to the part of the body corresponding to the combined *sefirot* of the daily sutra.

As Freed himself attests, the book is not written in a rational linear manner, but rather is a circular contemplation on the *sefirot* as they are arranged as 49 sutras. Thus, this is not a technical manual with the rational structure of a flow chart. This is instead a contemplative work looking to connect physical exercise with spiritual exercise. As such it is not for complete beginners—those just starting out in both physical and spiritual practices. It is a practical guide to any Yoga/Gym practitioner looking to expand their physical practice to the spiritual realm; conversely, it provides a practical guide to any Kabbalah/spiritual practitioner looking to expand their philosophical spiritual practice into the physical realm. As Freed himself notes, the book can be used as a guide to a 49-day program for self-empowerment, and/or as a motivator in either class settings or individual practice.

EFRAT SADRAS-RON

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## ***The American Dream in Vietnamese***

**Nhi T. Lieu** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011)

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The Vietnamese who arrived on American shores after the fall of Saigon in 1975 entered as homeless exiles. They were determined to create a niche for themselves in the American culture without giving up their own cultural values or memories. While the first wave of immigrants tended to be educated and from higher social circles, those who arrived later, the “boat people”, were poor, desperate refugees who brought little with them. The earlier arrivals sought to replace the image of boat people or helpless refugees with a vision of robust people who fit well into the American culture and did not drain its resources for their needs. They chose to retain their memories of the homeland but were vigorously opposed to the communist regime of the old country. They sought a vehicle for their integration into the American mainstream and found it in capitalism and cultural production. Conservative and unwilling to be anathematized in their new country, the American Vietnamese have striven to project themselves as non-dependent, to distance themselves from the image of unfortunate “boat people,” and have begun to enter into American politics.

Carving a new niche in studies of Vietnamese immigrants, Nhi Lieu focuses on how cultural and media creations of the immigrants shaped their Vietnamese American identity. Through vehicles such as beauty pageants, movies, live shows and music

they were able to convey a sense of community and respect for their own roots. These cultural productions fostered nostalgia but also carried messages about appropriate behavior, female beauty and, indirectly, about consumerism.

Reflecting the desire of their Vietnamese audiences, who wished to model themselves to fit into American culture without losing their sense of Vietnamese identity, the creators incorporated notable American concepts such as capitalism and conspicuous consumerism into their productions. American companies in Viet Nam had hired the Vietnamese, introducing them to a capitalist economy. Further, the government hired newly arrived social elites from Viet Nam as counselors and mediators to resettlement in America. These same elites would eventually regain their social standing and prove influential in governing the American Vietnamese communities.

The satisfying experience of having jobs and income with which to purchase goods and luxuries was not lost on the immigrants. Although not foregrounded, the book’s mention of American activity in Viet Nam, and subsequent withdrawal without keeping the promise of freeing the Vietnamese from communist rule, makes it clear that our role in that country was not entirely welcomed or appreciated by the Vietnamese. Nevertheless, in their adopted land, they

embrace democracy and work to enter America's main culture, even seeking political positions.

American Vietnamese have built communities throughout the United States that serve as a venue for cultural production, for stores that sell Asian American and specifically Vietnamese foods and merchandise, as well as providing a gathering place where the native language can be spoken and ideas exchanged. In her book, Lieu has focused on an area called Little Saigon located in Orange County, California. Little Saigon, a home to roughly 200,000 Vietnamese Americans is a major source of the production of cultural media and a place where social and political issues can be discussed and absorbed. A large part of *The American Dream in Vietnamese* is dedicated to in-depth discussion of the Vietnamese entertainment industry and its influence on its consumers. A series of videos, comprised of variety shows created by Thuy Nga Productions and called *Paris by Night*, commemorates the past while also addressing contemporary issues such as cultural assimilation. There is another aspect to their great popularity: "[T]hey actively poach American popular culture." [93] Most significant is the fact that they introduce messages about Vietnamese female beauty and appropriate modes of behavior, gender, political issues, and other matters that shape the Vietnamese American experience. Lieu states, "I maintain that the *Paris by Night* stage both reinforces and tests the boundaries around notions of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and identity for the Vietnamese diaspora." [106]

The *Paris by Night* series, other popular media productions, and beauty pageants have given young Vietnamese women models that they wish to imitate. While advertisements encourage purchase of clothing and beauty products, a more radical means to achieve the ideal of the Vietnamese female is through plastic surgery. For those with the means, plastic surgery is a widely accepted procedure for enhancing beauty. This very conspicuous show of consumption deepens the sense of fitting into American culture in its role as a capitalist, consumer-oriented society. As Lieu says, "This selective participation in whiteness is intimately linked to the narrative of assimilation and the

increased commodification of bodies in American popular culture." [76] Aside from their entertainment value, all these media types also carry a strongly anticommunist message, reflecting the conservative nature of the American Vietnamese culture.

Nhi Lieu is well equipped to explore and discuss the tenets proposed in her book. As a Vietnamese American herself, and with parents who can represent attitudes of the older generation, she has direct *entrée* into the culture she studies. She has also done an outstanding job of research to reinforce her suppositions. Surveys conducted online, review of the literature, and close scrutiny of the cultural productions themselves, have provided a wealth of information that Nhi Lieu weaves into a fascinating story of the Vietnamese seeking the American Dream, and of their now global presence on the Internet.

I highly recommend reading this book, which is notable both for the new insights and information it conveys but also for the well-conducted research that went into the project. The book includes end notes and a full Index. There is far more in this book than is discussed in the review, and it merits the attention of other scholars and the general public alike.

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