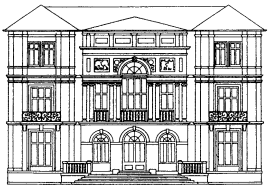
Fractured Modernity
America Confronts Modern Times, 1890s to 1940s



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Fractured Modernity

America Confronts Modern Times, 1890s to 1940s

Herausgegeben von
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unter Mitarbeit von
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Schriften des Historischen Kollegs
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Das Historische Kolleg fördert im Bereich der historisch orientierten Wissenschaften Gelehrte, die sich durch herausragende Leistungen in Forschung und Lehre ausgewiesen haben. Es vergibt zu diesem Zweck jährlich bis zu drei Forschungsstipendien und zwei Förderstipendien sowie alle drei Jahre den „Preis des Historischen Kollegs".

Die Forschungsstipendien, deren Verleihung zugleich eine Auszeichnung für die bisherigen Leistungen darstellt, sollen den berufenen Wissenschaftlern während eines Kollegjahres die Möglichkeit bieten, frei von anderen Verpflichtungen eine größere Arbeit abzuschließen. Professor Dr. Thomas Welskopp (Bielefeld) war – zusammen mit Prof. Dr. Gian Luca Potestà (Mailand), Dr. Martina Giese (Düsseldorf) und PD Dr. Jörg Ganzenmüller (Jena) – Stipendiat des Historischen Kollegs im Kollegjahr 2008/2009. Den Obliegenheiten der Stipendiaten gemäß hat Thomas Welskopp aus seinem Arbeitsbereich ein Kolloquium zum Thema „American Modernism: Die Vereinigten Staaten auf dem Weg in multiple Modernen, 1900–1940?" vom 16. bis 18. April 2009 im Historischen Kolleg gehalten. Die Ergebnisse des Kolloquiums werden in diesem Band veröffentlicht.

Das Historische Kolleg wird seit dem Kollegjahr 2000/2001 – im Sinne einer „public private partnership" – in seiner Grundausstattung vom Freistaat Bayern finanziert, die Mittel für die Stipendien stellen gegenwärtig die Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, der Stiftungsfonds Deutsche Bank, die Gerda Henkel Stiftung und der Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft zur Verfügung. Träger des Historischen Kollegs, das vom Stiftungsfonds Deutsche Bank und vom Stifterverband errichtet und zunächst allein finanziert wurde, ist die „Stiftung zur Förderung der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und des Historischen Kollegs".

Thomas Welskopp wurde im Kollegjahr 2008/2009 von der Fritz Thyssen Stiftung gefördert.

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Safety Last 1923 Harold dangling from clock – 2, courtesy Harold Lloyd Entertainment, Inc., Los Angeles HLE102635.

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Vorwort

Dieser Band versammelt ausgewählte Beiträge zu einem Forschungskolloquium zum Thema *American Modernism*: *Die Vereinigten Staaten auf dem Weg in multiple Modernen, 1900–1940*?, das vom 16. bis zum 18. April 2009 am *Historischen Kolleg* München stattfand. Der experimentelle, offene Charakter eines Workshops und der Mix der Beiträger, Kommentatoren und Gäste trugen zu einer außergewöhnlich intensiven Diskussionsatmosphäre bei, die für einen auch inhaltlich außergewöhnlich reichhaltigen Ertrag sorgte. Dieser Ertrag wird mit den folgenden Beiträgen dokumentiert, ergänzt durch den Essay aus der Feder Christopher McKnight Nichols', der nach der Konferenz eingeworben wurde.

Die hier abgedruckten Beiträge haben von den engagierten Kommentaren Angelika Epples, Andreas Etges', Wolfgang Knöbls, Christof Mauchs und Kiran Klaus Patels auf der Tagung ungemein profitiert, deren Einlassen auf die Themen und Bereitschaft zu sorgfältiger Kritik nicht zuletzt auch dadurch motiviert waren, dass ihnen kein druckfertiges Manuskript abverlangt wurde.

Um die Ergebnisse der Diskussion eines „amerikanischen" Themas auch für die amerikanische Fachwissenschaft zugänglicher zu machen, haben sich die Herausgeber auf Anregung der Tagungsteilnehmer entschlossen, den Band in englischer Sprache zu veröffentlichen. Das konnte deshalb relativ unaufwändig geschehen, weil mit dem Mitherausgeber Alan Lessoff ein begnadeter muttersprachlicher *Copy Editor* zur Verfügung stand, der ein bewundernswertes Stück Arbeit in die finale Gestaltung dieses Bandes gesteckt hat.

Zum Gelingen des Forschungskolloquiums und zur Motivation für den vorliegenden Band hat schließlich fraglos der *Genius Loci* des *Historischen Kollegs* beigetragen, der meiner Ansicht nach optimalen Form der Forschungsförderung in der Geschichtswissenschaft. Hier sei für die Organisation der Tagung Frau Dr. Elisabeth Müller-Luckner ganz speziell gedankt und allgemein Herrn Dr. Karl-Ulrich Gelberg und dem ganzen Team von der Kaulbachvilla.

Thomas Welskopp *Bielefeld, im März 2012*

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Thomas Welskopp, Alan Lessoff

Fractured Modernity – Fractured Experiences – Fractured Histories: An Introduction

This collection of essays presents selected contributions to a conference held at *Historisches Kolleg* in Munich, April 16 to 18, 2009, under the theme "*American Modernism*: *Die Vereinigten Staaten auf dem Weg in multiple Modernen*, *1900–1940*?". Without being expressly required to do so, most of the conference papers did indeed explicitly or implicitly deal with the problem of "modernity". Whether or not the people or groups or institutions and organizations the authors analyzed made the question of "the modern" a topic of discourse, the papers gravitated towards issues such as the "dark underside" of modernity, its moral ambiguities and normative deceptions, its manipulative features, exclusionary tendencies, inherent violence, and cultural margins. Most papers focused on phenomena related to facets of modernity and reactions to them regardless of whether the term itself played a role in the contemporary debate or not. For the present volume, the papers have been reworked into essays which have markedly sharpened this perspective. We as the editors now have the impression that they correspond with each other and constitute an exemplary sample of how a group of experts in the early twenty-first century would approach the question of American modernity, even if – and in part because – they by no means offer a comprehensive panorama of American history in the period that Detlev J. K. Peukert once, for the German case, famously termed "classical modernity"[1].

There is no doubt that the original conference theme was formulated from a distinctively German or European perspective that turned out to be misleading when applied to the United States. The theme seized on the impression – more than a century old and still widespread among both European intellectuals and the public – of the United States as a "laboratory of modernity", as a symbol of everything considered modern at that time and as the very materialization of symbolic modernity. This tendency to regard the United States as an archetype of modernity persists into the twenty-first century as a subtext in German discourse. This helps to explain the preoccupation of the essayists with undermining or negating an outlook that might not seem so worrisome to an analogous group of American

[1] *Detlev J. K. Peukert,* Die Weimarer Republik. Krisenjahre der Klassischen Moderne (Frankfurt a. M. 1987).

scholars gathered to discuss similar themes. In recent decades, American scholars have to be sure treated the encounter with modernity as a central dimension of the country's history. They have chafed against oversimplifications that attend the concepts of modernity and modernization and have deplored various American attempts to project the country to the world as a model modern nation. But even at the height in the mid-twentieth century of classical modernization theory, which did tend toward portraying the United States as an ideal type, most American scholars did not take too literally the European and especially German way of equating of *Amerikanismus* with *Modernismus* and further with *Fordismus*. Such a reduction of ragged reality to a concept was difficult to maintain for those immersed every day in American modernity's anomalies[2].

The conference was, therefore, supposed to look behind the monolithic characterization of America-as-modernity in order to detect sediments and layers of premodern times, along with niches and countertendencies contradicting this view. The original goal was similar to Charlie Chaplin's in his movie "Modern Times", when Chaplin takes his audience for a ride from the heights of Fordist production, over traditional skilled craft work and old-fashioned shipbuilding, to the archaic toil of the chain-gang and the anachronism of folk culture. The moviemaker and some of our essayists wished to expose American Modernism as a giant with feet of clay. The contributions to the conference responded to this proposition – which was not explicit in the call for papers but which was most definitely a subtext – by taking up themes at the borderlines and faultlines of American modernity, a modernity that indeed sometimes perceived itself as monolithic and that, even more gratingly, sometimes did present itself to others as a moral as well as developmental archetype. Some of the essays are informed by Foucauldian or postcolonial perspectives, and some not. But – and this is the point that makes this book worth reading on both sides of the Atlantic – the essayists across the board depict the phenomena that they analyze less as beyond the reach of modernity or as anti-modern resistance but rather as integral parts of modernity. Until recently, the subjects of many of the essays in this volume would have been treated as falling outside standard definitions of the modern, as peripheral or opposed to the central impulses and trends of a modernized society. In this book, modernity itself appears, as Norbert Finzsch summed up at the conference, a multifaceted, incoherent whole, a "fractured" landscape full of ruins of former times and permanently under construction.

The "fractured modernity" that the essays sketch in effect debunks the original conference theme. Modernity, as portrayed by our contributors, is by no means equivalent with modernism. It can come completely without modernistic propa-

[2] Numerous writers in both German and English have dwelled upon the early twentieth-century German inclination to view of the United States as an archetype of modernity. For example, *Alexander Schmidt*, Reisen in die Moderne. Der Amerikadiskurs des deutschen Bürgertums vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg im europäischen Vergleich (Berlin 1997), which one might compare with *Thomas P. Hughes*, American Genesis. A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870–1970 (New York 1989) ch. 6.

ganda or even with anti-modernistic furor. The essays show why the distinction between *modernity* and *modernism* is useful to keep in mind. We follow a semantic distinction gaining traction in literary studies which calls *modernity* a social and societal phenomenon whereas *modernism* specifies modes of cultural expression *affirming what is perceived as "modern"* in this sense. It is also necessary to recognize that *American* modernity might just be modernity *in* America[3]. Yet the notion of modernity-*in*-America also repudiates the tentative hypothesis put forward by the subtitle of the original conference theme. The essays do not support an interpretation which tries to see the faultlines, fissures, and contradictions in the monolithic view of American modernity as symptoms of the evolution of "multiple modernities" on American soil itself.

The concept of "multiple modernities" comes, of course, from Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, who elaborated on it in numerous writings[4]. This concept served well as the heavy artillery that brought down the last bastions of the 1950s and 1960s version of theories of modernization. Modernization theory, as we recall, coalesced at the height of the Cold War into a model of modernity based upon a simplified, even stylized concept of Western, or rather Anglo-Saxon, or (even narrower) U.S. American institutional and normative outcomes. Americans in the post-World War II decades debated many versions of modernization theory; some of these were closer to Max Weber's dreary image of a *stahlhartes Gehäuse* than to any picture of American capitalist liberalism that could be made attractive in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. Nonetheless, the stage-model approach identified with policy-oriented intellectuals such as Walt Whitman Rostow overshadowed more nuanced or ambivalent treatments of this vexed theme. Formulaic models such as Rostow's became identified as the standard American theory of modernization. In Cold War rhetoric, the Western modernity at the basis of Rostow-style models became synonymous with the direction of civilization itself[5]. This theory claimed moral superiority over totalitarian barbarism – and it offered a formula for overcoming supposed developmental lags in wide parts of the (third) world[6]. The con-

[3] For a discussion of how U.S. historians have treated concepts of modernity, *Dorothy Ross*, American Modernities, Past and Present, in: American Historical Review 116 (2011) 702–714.

[4] *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities, in: Daedalus 129 (2000) 1–29; *idem*., Die Vielfalt der Moderne, translated by Brigitte Schluchter (Weilerswist [2]2008).

[5] *Walt Whitman Rostow*, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (Cambridge, New York 1960). On modernization theory as a rationale for Cold War-era development policies, *Michael E. Latham*, Modernization as Ideology. American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era (Chapel Hill 2000); *Latham*, The Right Kind of Revolution. Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present (Ithaca 2011); *David Ekbladh*, The Great American Mission. Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order (Princeton 2010). For an example of a pessimistic modernization theory, *Kenneth Cmiel*, Destiny and Amnesia. The Vision of Modernity in Robert Wiebe's *Search for Order*, in: Reviews in American History 21 (1993) 352–368. See also *Alan Lessoff*'s essay below, esp. notes 15–17.

[6] *Chris Lorenz*, Won't you tell me where have all the good times gone? On the advantages

cept ordered the world according to regional distances from the Western model and projected these distances onto a timeline which translated them into measures of "backwardness"[7].

Modernization theory thus came to function as a Whig philosophy of history and at the same time a political prognosis with the sense of a mission. It explained the histories of entities deviating from the Western standard as stories of a "not yet", whereas it foresaw a global convergence of societies ultimately reaching this stage. In Eisenstadt's words, the theory "assumed … that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe [and, even more, the U.S.] and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world"[8].

Eisenstadt's critique reflected widespread disenchantment that had set in among European and North American intellectuals by the late 1960s with modernization as either a prescriptive or a descriptive model. Indeed, by the time the Soviet bloc collapsed in the late 1980s, adherence to mid-century versions of modernization and the structuralist social science on which it was based seemed a defining characteristic of neoconservatism, precisely because the remaining proponents obstinately reasserted the West as an archetype in the face of broad and withering attacks. This explains, for example, why Francis Fukuyama's 1989 essay, "The End of History", was widely understood at the time as a neoconservative tract; the author, after all, was insisting that the collapse of Marxism as a concrete political program vindicated liberal, democratic capitalism as the central direction of development. This reading of the beleaguered Fukuyama persists, despite years of elaboration and qualification on the part of the author, who finally repudiated his neoconservative identity altogether[9].

Eisenstadt thus sought to render untenable any view that there was one dominating model of modernity and that eventually all industrial societies would converge on it. His concept of "multiple modernities" identified the beginnings of the "Great Transformation" in Europe[10]. But the Israeli scholar acknowledged the increasingly independent development of institutional and cultural constellations

and disadvantages of modernization theory for history, in: Rethinking History 10 (2006) 171–200.

7 See, for example: *Sebastian Conrad*, What Time is Japan? Problems of Comparative (Intercultural) Historiography, in: History and Theory 38 (1999) 67–83.

8 *Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities 1.

9 *Francis Fukuyama*, The End of History, in: The National Interest (1989). Repr. in: *Fukuyama*, The End of History and the Last Man (New York 1992). Also *Fukuyama*, Reflections on *The End of History*, Five Years Later, in: History and Theory (1995) 27–43. *Fukuyama*, America at the Crossroads. Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy (New Haven 2006).

10 After *Karl Polanyi*, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (New York 1944). The popularity of Polanyi's ambivalent vision of modernity among post-war American intellectuals stands as more evidence that Rostow-like stage models did not hold the field alone.

in the United States and Asia which he termed "modernities" in their own right. While the overarching course of history since the "axial civilizations" indeed was leading to the "age of modern", the actual institutional forms and cultural programs these processes brought about would differ according to regional context factors and path dependencies. As trajectories diverged further and further, variations in modernity might even widen to substantive divides[11]. According to this reasoning, even recent manifestations of anti-modernist resistance – such as, most prominently, fundamentalism of all shades and creeds – may be interpreted as a new form of modernity whose full impact is yet unknown[12].

Although recognized as an act of intellectual liberation from modernization theory, the concept of "multiple modernities" has likewise drawn considerable criticism. We will not discuss the problematic basic idea of "axial civilizations", and we will also not dwell on the widespread charge that Eisenstadt's concept retained an underlying European- or Western-centeredness, though these criticisms certainly have merit[13]. We are rather concerned with features of Eisenstadt's concept which amount to hard constraints on its further development and which are almost impossible to overcome. The first of these limitations is that despite his insistence on the word "multiple", a limited and indeed definite set of "modernities" dominated Eisenstadt's view. The second constraint on his theory stems from his tendency to depict the development of "multiple modernities" as a set of path-dependent trajectories moving forward in one-directional evolutionary process based upon contextual factors in time and space. This results in a tendency to portray different lines of development as isolated hermetically from one another, a position bound to dissatisfy historians with any understanding of transnational networks of influence. This flaw is intertwined with the third and, in our eyes most consequential shortcoming. Eisenstadt's "modernities" are still conceived as identifiable, definite, and durable sets of concrete institutions, social actors, social movements, and coherent cultural programs. In his words "modernizing" societies tended to generate coextensive *types* of institutions and cultural programs – "in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations" – which were *then* organized in diverging patterns according to regional context factors resulting in a selection of different "modernities"[14]. This repeats one of the most-criticized flaws in classical modernization theory, the structuralist impulse to reify the set of social arrangements that exist alongside one another in a place and time into a coherent order or a system.

This should suffice to highlight where the subtitle of the original conference theme in Munich went wrong: Eisenstadt's own view of the "American modernity" is too coherent and hermetic as to allow for competing modernities within the

11 *Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities 2.
12 *Eisenstadt*, Vielfalt der Moderne 174–176.
13 See the contribution of *Norbert Finzsch* to this volume.
14 *Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities 1–2.

place and historical period to which we were applying his model. Even if such an internal competition among variants of modernity could be accepted in principle, the "multiple modernities" approach would lose all conceptual grasp over what these alternative "modernities" on American soil would consist of. There is no hint in the present essays that such alternatives could be interpreted as patterns of foreign (European, Asian, pan-fundamentalist) "modernities" intruding upon and usurping the American subtype. And even if additional endogenous "modernities" could be introduced conceptually, widening the spectrum that Eisenstadt sketched out, empirical analysis would have demonstrated that they lacked exactly the coherence, durability, path dependency, and positive programmatic unity needed for them to qualify as an identifiable "modernity" á la Eisenstadt.

Eisenstadt still shares with most theoreticians and historians the sense that "modernity" means a delimitable period of history spawned and defined by the emergence of concrete institutions, norms, and processes, even if the outcomes differ according to context factors in time and space. For example, Dorothy Ross, one of the most accomplished historical analysts of American social science, can still insist: "I take modernity to denote a stage of history characterized by national state formation, industrialization, and the rise of new ideas of reason, human agency, and historical progress."[15] Ross, too, sees modernity as a system or a *Gestalt*. According to such a view, the institutions and ideas that comprise modernity in any one country would have a recognizable face. They would come together into a constellation of fixed elements that interrelate in predictable ways, a stable overall pattern, even if some elements are constantly in flux.

The essays in the present volume point into a different direction. This calls for a brief, tentative attempt to provide the term coined at the conference, "fractured modernity", a measure of theoretical depth. From this angle, modernity has no *Gestalt*. Its only universal institutional feature is, in the words of Niklas Luhmann, structural differentiation, which is also its principal element of motion[16]. Modernity should, therefore, best be conceived of as "a mode of institutionalizing change". This does not mean that modernity does not produce patterns of social order and stability. On the contrary, because of the inherent instability and insecurity of irresistible dynamics, such patterns are generated in surplus, though in most cases, they end up as future ruins along the path of historical development. Structural arrangements in modernity are, therefore, plentiful, but their outcome is contingent and their relative stability depends on systemic integration of processes. Static or rigid ways of describing modernity in any place or period are misleading at best. The structural arrangements of modernity survive by selection and adaptation. They frequently usurp older institutional constellations, subject them to their services, and exploit their resources, turning them into ruins eventually[17].

15 *Ross*, American Modernities 702.
16 *Niklas Luhmann*, Why Does Society Describe Itself as Postmodern?, in: Cultural Critique 30 (1995) 171–186.
17 *Thomas Welskopp*, Kontingenz als Prognose. Die Modellierung von Zukunft in der Struk-

Capitalism itself offers the best example of the feature of modernity we are positing. Capitalism's resilience has been as noteworthy as – for some – frustrating. Yet this resilience has not been the product of long-lasting institutions but of institutions that organize constant change and that continually absorb new influences as a means of adapting to change, even at the risk of repeated deep structural crises. Joseph Schumpeter, of course, applied the term "creative destruction" to this quality of capitalism[18]. People confronted with the overwhelming and accelerating changes prompted by modernity – capitalist or otherwise – react within a broad spectrum. Such reactions range from outright resistance to utopian enthusiasm, the latter being a form of thought and action that hinges on the perception of all-encompassing change as offering a clean slate, a chance to build social orders from scratch[19].

In such a view there are no multiple modernities in the sense of distinguishable, relatively stable entities. Rather, we find an incoherent, ruptured modernity with transitional local and regional solidifications of institutional arrangements. Some people thrived on this atmosphere of fracturing and disruption. But most people's responses were ambivalent, embracing and resisting in ways that confuse the historian and probably confused the people involved. A good proportion of people reacted with outright hostility, treating modernity as a set of uncontrollable and apparently threatening changes[20]. The present essays describe an array of expressions and practices which can best be understood as diverse and often contentious reactions to this fundamental experience. They were accompanied by an equally broad spectrum of emotional and ideological stances that range from pragmatist – or even stoic – adaptation to social-democratic, progressive, reformist, cynical, or racist or ethno-nationalist utopian visions, and finally to "fire- and brimstone" fundamentalisms. Whether they made it an explicit point of debate or not, the heroes, crooks, and victims in the stories in this volume seem particularly obsessed with finding answers to the challenges of modernity.

If this is the case, does that mean that American people had special experiences during the decades when Europeans were inclined to consider the United States a "laboratory of modernity"? Maybe. Dorothy Ross's recent, sweeping analysis of the theme of modernity in American historiography points into that direction. She demonstrates that the debate over modernity and modernization always served American self-orientation in the historical process, most prominently by linking

turierungstheorie à la Anthony Giddens, in: Zukunftsgenese. Theorien des zukünftigen Wandels, ed. by *Victor Tiberius* (Wiesbaden 2012) 281–296.

18 *Joyce Appleby*, The Relentless Revolution. A History of Capitalism (New York 2011).

19 *Thomas Etzemüller* (ed.), Die Ordnung der Moderne. Social Engineering im 20. Jahrhundert (Bielefeld 2009).

20 *Thomas Welskopp*, Bewegungsdrang. Prozess und Dynamik in der Geschichte (Bielefeld 2011). *Gary Gerstle*, Theodore Roosevelt and the Divided Character of American Nationalism, in: Journal of American History 86 (1999) 1280–1307, offers a memorable portrait of how these contradictory impulses co-existed within the dynamic figure who represented the advent of modernity to his generation of Americans.

and relating developments in the United States to European history. This was the case regardless of whether U.S. historians put forward a defensive American exceptionalism against a modernity that stood for everything they disliked about a real or imagined Europe or whether they asserted an expansive Americanism as the embodiment of true modernity. In the guise of modernization theory, policymakers and supportive social scientists made this drive to spread Americanism – or at least their archetype of it – a global agenda of the country in the 1950s and 1960s.

Implicitly or explicitly, Ross explains, modernity also played a central role in domestic grand narratives of American history, as a positive or negative benchmark against which to measure the larger social, cultural, political, and ideological projects that emerged as contemporary answers to the challenges of the time. Interestingly enough, Ross's observes that modernism as an affirmative vocabulary for modernity was frequently outdistanced and even mimicked by different shades of Americanism.

Dorothy Ross's panorama contains hints that the fixation of American historiography on questions of modernity may have been the result of a genuine American experience. In effect, post-World War II writers such as Seymour Martin Lipset who sought to fuse modernization theory and American exceptionalism may have had a point when depicting the United States as born modern, as the "first new nation"[21]. Americans never faced the task of demolishing rigidified traditional institutions in order to meet the challenges of modern times. Nor did they have the tried-and-tested institutional and ideological resources of an old order at their disposal, resources that they could call into service in order to channel change. After revolutionary liberation from a colonial system whose institutions were only sporadically present on American soil, the United States and the American people were more squarely exposed to modernity. They had to embark on a comprehensive project from scratch, an enterprise perhaps more challenging than a departure from the time-honored traditions and anachronisms of anciens régimes. According to Samuel Huntington, nation-building in Europe, for example, as a modern project, could be disguised as an organic development whose roots reached far back into medieval times. For Americans the use of such myths as ideological cushioning from the shock of modernity was not a feasible intellectual procedure. The past could not even serve as an enemy against which to rally one's troops. It could give no orientation or guidance. Echoing again innumerable writers on American national identity, Huntington asserted, "the United States thus had its origins in a conscious political act, in the assertion of certain basic political principles, and the adherence to constitutional arrangements based on those principles"[22].

[21] *Seymour Martin Lipset*, The First New Nation. The United States in Historical and Comparative Perspective (New York 1963).
[22] *Samuel P. Huntington*, American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony (Cambridge, MA 1981) 25.

This disorienting experience of being exposed to all-encompassing change without being able to rely on foundations of tradition – whether they would be consulted affirmatively or taken as launching pads for alternative solutions – shines through in this volume's essays on ordinary Americans during the critical decades of "classical modernity". We encounter enthusiastic cults of modernity which grasped the opportunities that the new times seemed to promise. We read about communitarian attempts to reconcile the challenges of the modern world by retaining moral control over neighborhoods and selected parts of life. The effort to create controllable moral milieus regularly expanded into nativist and racist struggle when so-called old-stock Americans perceived immigration or African American migration as a particularly dangerous threat to staggering self-determination. Some analysts in the 1920s, of course, already viewed the impulse to impose a coherent, ethnically based moral vision upon the flux of modernity as itself a product of the modern age. The sociologist John Moffatt Mecklin, for example, characterized the Ku Klux Klan as a product of "the hurly-burly of our so-called industrial society", in which the "stress and strain of social competition" was revealing the "essential mediocrity" of the "average American of native stock"[23].

When paired with the new utopian sciences such as racist biology and eugenics, these outlooks went on the offensive and took on a more recognizably modernist cast. Whereas the undefined program of modernity opened venues for cultural expressionism of a new kind, the inevitability of uprooting change motivated the preservation of niches of an alleged untouched primal state – "nature". Ironically, Warren G. Harding's election as president in 1920 may be, in this sense, interpreted as an attempt to introduce conservationism in politics at the moment when capitalism went out of control and consumerism took over. The essays show, in sum, how much American history can instruct us when we ask about the characteristics, the aporias, and the course of a "modernity" we no doubt will have to conceive as "fractured". They also demonstrate why and in how far the question of modernity may serve as a key to understanding the American history of the twentieth century.

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The agenda among our essayists to expose and explicate the fractured qualities of modernity – a goal they often pursue by emphasizing the modern elements of groups and movements that hitherto have seemed peripheral or opposed to modernity – means that the essays fuse into no coherent system. It is futile to search for order in them, though they do exhibit clusters of themes.

The first two essays, by Jürgen Martschukat and Daniel Siemens, draw upon unusual sources and experiences to study a conventional theme: what comprises modern identity and consciousness, when and how did this emerge, and how in retrospect can historians examine such subjective aspects of modernity. The bach-

[23] *John Moffatt Mecklin*, The Ku Klux Klan. A Study of the American Mind (orig. 1924, repr. New York 1963) 107–108.

elor world that surrounded New York's YMCA, on which Martschukat focuses, was "a distinctly modern and urban phenomenon". Industrial urbanization entailed creation of enormous concentrations of unmarried men of greater or lesser mobility who lived for varying stretches in homosocial environments. As the essay further emphasizes, bachelors such as Robert McBurney, the northern Irish immigrant and YMCA official at the center of Martschukat's story, already created unease within Victorian culture, since their lives took place outside the accepted structures of family and responsibility. In the decades after McBurney became a target of a recognizably Victorian set of indirect imputations about his behavior, however, social scientists undertook the enterprise of classifying McBurney as *homosexual* and analyzing his relationships as deviating from a particular norm. Both McBurney's life, therefore, and the discourse surrounding it "emerged hand and hand" within modernity.

Siemens tackles the even more elusive subject of self and emotional style. Since the early twentieth century, both American and foreign observers have struggled to express a shift they perceived away from the Victorian concept of *character* to the modernist notion of *personality*, to borrow the dichotomy as formulated by cultural historian Warren Susman. In his own essay in the America-as-modernity mode, *In de Schaduw van Morgen* (1935), Johan Huizinga, the great Dutch historian of culture, lamented that Americans had replaced traditional values of responsibility and self-sacrifice with "a belief in the right to happiness", a hollow "worship of life". Researching the self and emotional style inherently entails chasing shadows. But as Siemens explains, the evidence is overwhelming for the psychological pattern that Huizinga, Susman, and Peter Stearns, among others, have in different ways identified as pervading modernity in America and elsewhere. Siemens's essay illustrates the value of the fractured-modernity approach by chasing the new self-fulfillment ethic into unexpected corners: murder trials, popular eugenics tracts, even the evangelical modernism of Bruce Barton's Jesus-as-businessman tract, *The Man Nobody Knows* (1925).

The next two essays shift perspective from the self to the international realm. While Eisenstadt pointed to the diversity of modern societies as a device for assailing modernization theory, Frank Uekötter and Alan Lessoff start from the opposite line of criticism. By treating modernity as a set of phenomena intertwined across national borders, transnational perspectives on history undermine modernization theory's tendency to treat national states as entities passing through stages of development that are roughly the same from country to country, though proceeding at different rates. Uekötter perceives environmentalism and Lessoff perceives progressivism as transnational as well as modern phenomena with American manifestations. Significantly, both conclude that conventional modernization theory retains value "despite all the criticism it has received", as Uekötter puts it. In both instances, urban, industrial, capitalist societies appear to generate an analogous set of ideological, political, professional, and institutional changes. As the transnationalists insist, environmentalism and progressivism were both strongly marked by the circulation of ideas, expertise, and people across the oceans. But

both authors point to limitations of the transnational critique of the modernization model. For better and for worse, the activists and officials who set in motion the American conservation movement and who pursued the array of social reforms and policy innovations known as progressivism insisted – with reason – that their approach was not simply a repeat of what they had encountered in Germany, France, Great Britain, India, or Brazil. Historical, political, and ideological conditions in the United States led these movements into what Uekötter posits as "a peculiar modernism", affirming the value of Eisenstadt's approach in this book that emphasizes its limitations.

As a context for American divergence from European approaches, Uekötter reiterates a standard explanation that runs through U.S. historiography. Longstanding disputes over the West and its resources and over federal involvement in resource issues created a different context than in European countries for a variety of reasons. In Lessoff's account of progressivism, a decentralist, anti-monopoly tradition that had no precise counterpart elsewhere played a similar role. This leads Lessoff to a cautionary note: In day-to-day practice, most United States-based historians exhibit only distended or ephemeral interest in this volume's social-theory agenda; few American historians devote themselves in a sustained way what the United States might reveal about modernity, whether it is fractured, multiple, or whatever. Even when U.S. historians are versed in comparative and transnational arguments and repudiate old-fashioned forms of exceptionalism, most pursue what Lessoff labels an "Americanist" agenda, which he elaborates as "the posing of questions or the defining of subjects so as to address internal American concerns with little reference to how these concerns might be relevant to other countries". Themselves often inheritors of the anti-monopoly tradition, U.S.-based scholars are more inclined to dwell upon what progressivism – to use the example at hand – illustrates about the complexities and shortcomings of American democracy than upon what it reveals about modernity, professionalism, Weberian rationalization, or corporate capitalism[24]. Historical writing is in this way an episode in fractured modernity. The writers in this book exhibit shifting agendas half-tacitly derived from German intellectual and political contexts. The same is true of the American scholars into whose hands the book may fall and who may appropriate bits and pieces of it in constructing their myriad useable pasts.

The next two essays concentrate on media, mass politics, political economy, and the state, standard themes in studies of modernizing societies. Linards Udris draws on the history and theory of mass media to offer a detailed and in places surprising analysis of the role of the press in reflecting and shaping public opinion about Prohibition. It was impossible to tell where press reporting of Prohibition

[24] For an explication of the tendency to examine the Gilded Age and Progressive Era as episodes in democracy and not modernization by a scholar devoted to that perspective, *Robert Johnston*, The Possibilities of Politics. Democracy in America, 1877–1917, in: American History Now, ed. by *Eric Foner*, *Lisa McGirr* (Philadelphia 2011) 96–124.

ended and media-induced framing of Prohibition politics began. The 1929 shift of the Hearst chain against Prohibition seems to illustrate the power of the press to shape perceptions on which opinions are based. Into the twenty-first century, virtually every young person in the Chicago area, where legends of Al Capone still abound, grew up *knowing* that Prohibition collapsed amid a crisis of popular lawlessness and official corruption. Whatever one thinks of Prohibition as a public policy, Udris suggests that the sense of *crisis* surrounding this social-engineering experiment by the late 1920s resulted as much from the rhythms of news and the cycles of politics as from underlying shifts in behavior in the country. Udris's account recalls the mordant views put forth at the time by Walter Lippmann, who in works such as *Public Opinion* (1922) offered a self-consciously modernist critique of modern mass politics. Public opinion was constructed, Lippmann believed, of fragments of half-digested facts filtered through preconceptions and misperceptions. Where information and ideas are fractured – where "the threads of memory and emotion are in a snarl", as Lippmann put it – one could not count on coherent public policy based on a reasoned discussion of a situation[25].

Christopher McKnight Nichols of Oregon State University builds on such concerns in his overview of the trajectory of political economy from the New Era of the 1920s to the New Deal of the 1930s. Similar to Udris, Nichols takes note of the disjuncture between familiar narratives of politics and the half-perceived constraints and forces acting upon governance and civic life. In popular accounts, the Great Depression discredited the trite consumer-as-citizen model that had taken hold among the American middle class and much of the country's working class by the 1920s, "the belief that to be an American was to be a consumer, and perhaps a player in business and investment". The Depression inspired a vigorous, broad-ranging debate over "the attenuation of political, economic, and civic life, a process which [critics] saw as inherent in an unrestrained mass modern society". Efforts to replace "the consumerist view of modernity" with a more civic-minded, social democratic vision, however, ran aground against limits of politics. The simple need to keep the political system together and the economy going in the crisis of the Depression pushed New Deal liberalism toward reinforcing "modernity as a mass consumption-mass production culture and modernity as state management of political economy". In the only essay in this volume whose first draft came after the original 2009 conference, Nichols had the chance to incorporate the editors' doubts about multiple modernities as an organizing concept and their interest in the ways that contemporary commentators drew upon the concepts and techniques of intellectual and artistic modernism to critique social, cultural, and political modernity.

The image of a fractured modernity – whose components recombine in varying ways in different places and situations and among different groups and movements – proves especially useful in this book's essays on racial identity and conflict. Liberal-minded Americans have often distanced themselves from lynching

25 *Walter Lippmann*, Public Opinion (orig. 1922, repr. New York 1997) 254.

and other forms of race-based terror by labelling such phenomena relics of backward eras. These survivals from more brutal eras would, as Manfred Berg writes, "disappear with the advance of progress and civilization". The hollowness of this reassuring scenario has prompted some authors to overstate the extent that modernity itself generated lynching and similar systematized forms of violent oppression. But the notion of violence as a *product* of modernity threatens to become its own unsubstantiated cliché. Berg adopts a more subtle approach. While clearly not *distinctly* modern, Berg demonstrates that lynching was infused with modern elements and intertwined with modernization in numerous ways. The practice burgeoned in the 1800s, the author explains, "in tension with the rise of the modern state". Diverse evidence supports this analysis; extralegal violence thrived in areas disrupted by and infused with modernity in terms of economic development, mass communications, and mobility, but where the state had not yet asserted its monopoly of legitimate violence. In Berg's view, modern humanitarian values and respect for order and rights did not end lynching. It was supplanted by "improved law enforcement against lynch mobs and the death penalty as a substitute intended to satisfy popular demands for retributive justice".

Even if racial violence were intertwined with modernity, its portrayal as a relic of earlier, brutal stages of civilization amounted to a powerful delegitimizing device. In his study of NAACP strategies concerning forced confessions and other forms of police abuse, Silvan Niedermeier builds on the work of recent scholars who are as interested in the provenance and function of *claims* to modernity as they are in modernity as a set of social, cultural, and political arrangements. As Niedermeier notes, pervasive abuse by southern police of African American suspects by the second third of the twentieth century may have been in part a consequence of southern states' efforts to use more effective policing to limit lynching. His essay concurs with Berg's conclusion that the pressure for speedy convictions became overwhelming in a legal system pervaded by the same racist assumptions about black criminality that had earlier animated extrajudicial violence against blacks. For such reasons, the NAACP "perceived police torture as an issue intertwined with lynching", observes Niedermeier.

When assailing extralegal racial violence such as lynching or the official violence carried out by southern police and sheriffs, the NAACP took pains "to emphasize the backwardness" of such practices. This rhetoric made a mockery of southern arguments for white supremacy. The self-proclaimed master race's own behavior marked it as primitive, as an enemy of the civilization that southern whites pretended to preserve from supposedly retrograde southern blacks. Moreover, the NAACP's insistence that it championed civilization against barbaric threats within the United States reinforced African American efforts to identify the nation with the black struggle for civil and political equality. In combating "barbarous police practices" and in expanding "the constitutional rights of black *and* white American citizens", NAACP activists "portrayed themselves as the true modernizers". The abuse and oppression of blacks, in this discourse, defied "America's self image as a 'modern', 'civilized', and 'democratic' society". By

implication, Niedermeier suggests that modernity is often an ascribed quality. People, practices, institutions, causes, and ideas can become modern simply because groups succeed in labelling them as such.

The final two essays illustrate the intellectual advantages of dissolving the notion that modernity has cores and margins. Since the 1920s, observers have recognized that the Harlem Renaissance "had a lot in common" with white intellectual and artistic modernists, as Norbert Finzsch writes; they shared "concerns with alienation, primitivism, and experimental forms". But in general, black writers, scholars, and artists have seemed outsiders who appropriated elements of an intellectual and aesthetic movement whose central tendency was defined by whites. With the assumptions that sustained such a view no longer tenable, Finzsch perceives possibilities for examining the Harlem Renaissance as an exemplary episode in modernity, precisely because "artistic modernity, nonmodernity, and antimodernity cannot be readily distinguished" and because "the Harlem Renaissance, like other artistic movements, had a tendency to make use of the forms and contents of other movements". Intrigued by the theoretical possibilities of such liberating insights, Finzsch considers how concepts ranging from Foucault's *heterotopia* to postcolonialism might illuminate the modernity of the Harlem Renaissance. The one model whose elements he adamantly rejects is Eisenstadt's multiple modernities, for reasons similar to those expressed above: Eisenstadt's modernities barely interact, while the Harlem Renaissance thrived on hybridity, critical appropriation, and transcultural flow.

Michael Hochgeschwender applies similar reasoning to another well-known episode from the 1920s which looks different if one fractures one's presumptions about modernity. Centering his analysis on the 1925 Scopes Trial, Hochgeschwender reviews the large amount of evidence that has accumulated in recent years that the fundamentalist side of the argument was, in its way, as modernist as the defense of evolutionary science. For U.S. scholars aware of the burgeoning of revisionist religious history since the 1990s, this essay has value as a synthesis of analyses that they may have encountered in a disparate way. But Hochgeschwender's essay goes further. Drawing upon his knowledge of the philosophy and intellectual history of history itself, the author asks a question we hope all readers will ask as they go through this book: Why do scholars want to overturn preconceptions and fracture concepts of modernity now? In the case of the Scopes Trial and fundamentalism, the first-level answer starts with the discrediting of the secularization paradigm tied to classic models of modernization. Since the 1980s–90s, fundamentalism's relation to modernity has seemed more relevant. But beneath that contemporary issue one finds a long process of disenchantment among western intellectuals – secular as well as religious – with the notion of Enlightment reason as universal and progressive. In this atmosphere, the "structuralist and functionalist universalisms of the 1950s and 1960s" gave way before a host of attacks ranging from historicist cultural anthropology to post-structuralism, post-modernism, and post-colonialism. When one adds the professional circumstances of academic life – where new "images and interpretations … guarantee attention and

thus success" – the ground was well-prepared for efforts to overturn received wisdom concerning fundamentalism's reactionary or modernist qualities. Indeed, the ground was so well prepared that one might wish to stop and reflect upon the reasons the old archetypes and dichotomies took hold in the first place.

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These essays reveal the invigorating possibilities of Norbert Finzsch's *fractured modernity*. This image broadens opportunities for understanding the interchange, appropriation, flux, conflict, competition, and resistance that characterized the United States or any intricate society amid and after modernization. The shortcomings of this image are also manifest. As the essays demonstrate, the intellectual inclination to explore modernity at its fractures and differentiated points may lead scholars to overlook the unifying patterns emphasized by conventional modernization theory. This book provides new perspectives on some older, standard themes in studies of modernization and modernity, for example the self and social psychology, mass media, and political economy. But the authors have little to say about professionalization, rationalization, bureaucracy, corporate enterprise, finance, industrialism, labor relations, science, technology, transportation, urbanization, planning, and similar fodder for unreconstructed proponents of the modernization model. What could the authors of this volume say, for example, to the equally distinguished gathering of economic historians who recently and reasonably titled a volume on international banking in the years covered by this book, *Finance and Modernization*[26]?

On a deeper level, the book's particular formulation of fractured modernity may dissatisfy the melancholy among us, those who appreciate Max Weber's mood of *stahlhartes Gehäuse*, who approve Henry Adams's dictum, "man has mounted science, and is now run away with"[27]. In the 1960s-70s, social scientists around the world revolted against Rostow's formulaic, stage-model version of modernization not simply on account of its western ethnocentrism, but because of its cheerful determinism[28]. More recently, Francis Fukuyama spent two decades apologizing for inviting the implication that he equated universal, liberal-capitalist modernization with bright times ahead. Since the 1970s, a healthy recognition of modernity's capacity to generate ever more diverse and innovative forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and oppression has taken hold. The essays in this book have absorbed that lesson admirably. But it is hardly original to admonish that the dissolution of structuralism carried the danger of a subjectivism tethered by no material limitation, of culture and discourse as trumping sources of power.

[26] *Gerald D. Feldman, Peter Hertner* (eds.), Finance and Modernization. A Transnational and Transcontinental Perspective for the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Burlington, Ashgate 2008).
[27] Quoted in *Ernest Samuel*, Henry Adams (revised and abridged edition Cambridge, MA. 1989) 61.
[28] Cf. *Alvin W. Gouldner*, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology (New York 1970).

If the concept we have introduced implies that modernity has no definitional or structural core but shifts boundlessly from group to group and situation to situation, *fractured modernity* might amount to a new way of presuming that the clearing away of modernity's wreckage is mainly a task of changing the way we narrate modernity's story. A doubter will long for a partial return to determinism, a leavening measure from those classic themes in modernity that emphasized economic, geographic, environmental, and technological *constraints*, a little more of the language of objective class relations, segmented urban ecologies, paleotechnic civilization, and mechanization taking command.

With such admonitions and qualifications, one can make productive use of the diverse perspectives offered by the essays in this book on a modernity whose fractured character invites diffuse and inconclusive analysis. One returns to the issues raised in two essays that close the book. With regard to study of the United States, the disenchantment with Enlightenment scenarios of progress stressed by Hochgeschwender has played out in the attempt to provincialize American history described by Finzsch. Structuralist, 1960s-style modernization theory was the last major model of United States that presented the country not as a place, space, or nation-state but as an archetype. To provincialize the United States would amount to normalizing it, to weaving the country into humanity's typical story of struggle, confusion, fragmentation, and interchange. Especially over the past decade, other peoples, including the German scholars of the United States who wrote most of this book, have displayed a deep desire for the North American republic to grow into a normal country in this sense, For the most part, however, Americans have reacted with hostility to an agenda that would probably benefit them, and American scholars have shown only sporadic interest in it. Germans themselves have engaged in an intense debate over what, if anything, could finally make their scarred country *normal.* Germans have a great deal to say to Americans about the danger of treating one's country as an archetype and projecting one's nation to the world as an ideal.

Summary

Die Einleitung geht von der Beobachtung aus, dass die Beiträge des Bandes von einer großen Bandbreite im amerikanischen Diskurs um die "Moderne" zeugen. Offensichtlich waren in den USA des ausgehenden 19. und der ersten Jahrzehnte des 20. Jahrhunderts „moderne" Positionen derart dominant, dass sie auch in den Randbereichen und „dunklen" Seiten der amerikanischen Gesellschaft eine Rolle spielten. Deshalb beschäftigen sich die meisten Beiträge des Bandes exemplarisch mit solchen hybriden oder negativen Dimensionen der amerikanischen „Moderne" und der Debatten darüber. Das wirft die Frage auf, ob der amerikanische Diskurs um „Modernität" intensiver und durchdringender gewesen ist als in der „Geburtsregion der Moderne", dem westlichen Europa. Wenn man, wie die Ein-

leitung vorschlägt, „Modernismus“ als affirmativen ideologischen Ausdruck und „Modernität“ als Struktur- und Prozessmodus unterscheidet, kann man diese Frage bejahen, weil dann ein Großteil der positiven Zuschreibungen von Erscheinungen einer von Europa aus als solcher beurteilten „Ultramodernität“ in den USA in der Rhetorik des „Amerikanismus“ formuliert wurde, während man mancherorts „Modernismus“ als europäische Marotte oder gar Verfallserscheinung abtat. Die besondere Intensität der amerikanischen Debatte erklärt sich dann aus einem größeren Bedarf an Ordnungsentscheidungen, die als „Tabula rasa“-Situationen empfunden wurden, weil der Rückgriff auf traditionelle Werte, Institutionen und Strukturmuster in den USA, anders als in Europa, nicht möglich war. Das deutet zugleich auf den Charakter „der Moderne“ hin, die nicht in eine – immer noch begrenzte – Anzahl von Einzelentwicklungen zerfiel („multiple modernities“), sondern sich als unumkehrbare historische Epoche erweist, deren Grundmodus permanenter Wandel ist und deren gestaltlose Landschaft von den Ruinen immer neuer Ordnungsentwürfe gesäumt wird, die – vergeblich – auf Dauer zielen. Insofern haben wir es mit einer fragmentierten, geborstenen, zerklüfteten „Moderne“ – „fractured modernity“ – zu tun.

1. Constructions of Consciousness

Jürgen Martschukat

"Peculiarly a phenomenon of modern times"[1]: Bachelors, Urban Vice, and Strategies of Regulation in Modern America, 1870–1930

In the summer of 1854, Robert R. McBurney migrated from Ireland to the United States. Not even eighteen years old when he arrived in New York's harbor, he was on his own and without support of a family, like so many other young men who moved from overseas or the near and far countryside to one of the growing urban centers in America. Robert McBurney would remain unmarried and without children for the rest of his life. Many Americans viewed bachelors such as him as a special species deserving extra attention because they were without the guidance and control of a family. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, bachelors epitomized the social and cultural transformations of a thriving urban and modern world, simultaneously bringing forth new ways of living and new strategies for their control and containment.

Half a century later, Robert McBurney's former colleagues and fellows would stress how charming a man he was even though he had never gained the reputation of being a "ladies' man"[2]. He had never conquered a woman's heart but had made a fabulous career in New York's Young Men's Christian Association. This bachelor displayed "a knowledge of young men's hearts" more profound than anybody else's. According to Henry Orne, his successor as head of New York's YMCA, the young men associated with the city's Y became McBurney's "family", and like a good father, he gave them guidance and advice[3]. The YMCA was one of several homosocial groups gaining momentum in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries[4]. On the one hand, the YMCA was designed as a Protestant

[1] *Ernest W. Burgess*, Sociological Aspects of the Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult, in: The Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult. An Inquiry into and an Interpretation of Current Sex Practices, ed. *Ira S. Wile* (New York 1934) 116–154, 118 [henceforth *Burgess*, Sociological Aspects].
[2] John Glover, secretary of the international committee of the YMCA, during a memorial service for Robert McBurney at 18 April, 1899, acc. to *Lawrence L. Doggett*, Life of Robert R. McBurney (Cleveland 1902) 267 [henceforth *Doggett*, Life of Robert R. McBurney].
[3] Henry Orne, 18 April, 1899, acc. to *Doggett*, Life of Robert R. McBurney 268–269.
[4] A Ladies Christian Association was founded in New York in 1858 only seven years after the first YMCA, finally turning into the YWCA in 1866, but the men's and the women's sectors operated strictly segregated.

antidote to urban vice, which seemed particularly attractive and dangerous to young and unmarried men between age 15 and 40. At the same time, the YMCA stood for a specific type of male bonding, generating its coherence not only through homosocial forces, but also through its homoerotic appeal. By the turn of the twentieth century, the YMCA had become one of the most famous cruising spots in the "gay male world", as described by historian George Chauncey[5].

As a distinctly modern and urban phenomenon, bachelors were exposed to meticulous observation and definition by contemporary commentators. From the moment they appeared as an identifiable social group, their ambiguity and equivocality led their study and classification by adherents of the new disciplines of sociology and sexology. As we shall see, researchers defined multiple sexual differences and categories, creating inclusions and exclusions that revealed much about contemporary assumptions about modern, urban society, as well as significant aspects of the new modern order itself. By using the term "modern", I do not refer to a teleological process nor to an ethical judgement, but to a historically specific social and cultural configuration, defined by shared values, practices, and systematizations. Thus, the sexual and social sciences belong as much to modern culture as does the bachelor and his way of life in the emerging urban environment that I will describe in this chapter through the lens of Robert McBurney's life.

McBurney's biography was shaped by numerous experiences which illustrate the lives and environments of unmarried urban men in the second half of the nineteenth century. He migrated to the city, where he experienced varied housing conditions and had diverse homosocial and homoerotic ties as a New York bachelor. In private and in his work, he enjoyed the company of like-minded men from the YMCA executive staff, as well as from the many young men living in the city and spending their time at the Y, young men whom he was eager to guide and enlighten with his experience. As we will see, some of McBurney's fellows would become critical of his homosocial world, which they perceived not simply as a firewall of protection against urban vice, but potentially also as a hotbed of homoerotic entanglements and therefore a part of the deeply disturbing modern urban swamp itself. Thus, the YMCA and the world of the bachelor seemed to threaten a socio-cultural order that was deemed morally sane. They represented sexual, cul-

[5] *George Chauncey*, Gay New York. Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940 (New York 1994) [henceforth *Chauncey*, Gay New York]. On the emergence of the urban world, see the classic *Paul Boyer*, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920 (Cambridge, Mass. 1978) [henceforth *Boyer*, Urban Masses]. On the YMCA and homoeroticism see *John D. Gustav-Wrathall*, Take the Young Stranger by the Hand. Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA (Chicago, Ill. 1998). On homosociality, homoeroticism, and the specific historicity of male bonding see *Jürgen Martschukat, Olaf Stieglitz*, Geschichte der Männlichkeiten (Historische Einführungen 5, Frankfurt a.M. 2008), 113–115; *Michael Meuser*, Männerwelten. Zur kollektiven Konstruktion hegemonialer Männlichkeit, in: Schriften des Essener Kollegs für Geschlechterforschung 1 (2001) 13. On the nexus between sexual and political order, with a focus on the *German Kaiserreich*, see *Claudia Bruns*, Politik des Eros. Der Männerbund in Wissenschaft, Politik und Jugendkultur, 1880–1934 (Köln 2008).

tural, social, and political dangers that needed to be contained and tamed by the simultaneously emerging social and sexual sciences and their corresponding practices and patterns of definition and control[6].

Bachelors before the "Age of the Bachelor"

According to historian Howard Chudacoff, "the age of the bachelor" only began after the Civil War, with "the peak years of bachelor subculture in America" occurring between 1880 and 1930[7]. However, numerous unmarried men lived in the United States before the Civil War. In those early years, the stereotype of the bachelor was that of a bizarre and whimsical fellow, sometimes good-natured and sometimes coarse, rarely equipped with enough talent to live a fulfilling social life. Private and public spheres were hardly separated in bachelor life, a problematic matter in Victorian culture. Focused on himself, exhibiting little sense of the public good, and not controlled by a family, the bachelor was depicted as an irresponsible man who wasted time in coffee houses or – even worse – in the subculture of the saloon, where he became prone to violence and laziness. Often lonesome and misanthropic in old age, the bachelor was considered a sexual, social, and political menace, someone not sufficiently equipped for the life of a good citizen. An exception to the rule was the celibate, a discarnate figure in popular stereotype, who had dedicated his life and body to the community. In this case, being without wife and family meant having a very particular type of freedom, which made a man an even more virtuous citizen than a good family man might ever become. We will later see how the concept of the celibate social worker was mobilized with regard to Robert McBurney, whose life was described as being "the most useful of all lives – an example most precious to our young men", but who, at the same time, had to face skepticism from some of his fellows[8].

Let us take a glance at the social history of unmarried men before "the age of the bachelor". Due to immigration patterns and notions of individual freedom, many young (and also not so young) men sought their fortunes in different parts of the

[6] In addition to *Chauncey*, Gay New York, crucial texts are *Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick*, Epistomology of the Closet (Berkeley, Cal. 2008) [henceforth *Sedgwick*, Epistemology]; *Howard P. Chudacoff*, The Age of the Bachelor. Creating an American Subculture (Princeton, N.J. 1999) [henceforth *Chudacoff*, Age of the Bachelor]; *Katherine Snyder*, Bachelors, Manhood, and the Novel, 1850–1925 (Cambridge, New York 1999) [henceforth *Snyder*, Bachelors].

[7] *Chudacoff*, Age of the Bachelor 5.

[8] *Mark E. Kann*, A Republic of Men. The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics (New York 1998) 52–78; *Christopher Lobby*, Republican Bachelorhood. Sex and Citizenship in the Early United States, in: Historical Reflections 33/1 (2007) 89–100; *Elliott Gorn*, The Manly Art. Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America (Ithaca, N.Y. 1986), on the „bachelor-culture" in America before the Civil War; "the most useful …" by Rev. Dr. Howard Crosby in 1887 on the occasion of McBurney's 50th birthday, here acc. to *Richard C. Morse*, Robert R. McBurney. A Sketch, in: Robert R. McBurney: A Memorial, 1837–1898, ed. by *Richard C. Morse* (New York 1899) 21 [henceforth *Morse*, McBurney].

United States without ever creating a family[9]. On the frontier, numerous working and living options existed outside the family pattern. Westward expansion attracted a disproportionate number of men in many Western regions who gathered in railroad and mining towns and similar male-dominated environments. In frontier cities in the mid-nineteenth century, 30–70 percent of the workforce consisted of unmarried men. For California mining cities, this figure was even higher. But also in the rapidly growing cities of the West and East Coasts, such as San Francisco, Boston and New York, a third of the male population was unmarried. In the age group between 25 and 35 the share of the "bachelors" rose up to 50 percent. They mostly lived in particular lower- and working-class neighborhoods, such as Manhattan's Lower East Side, where about three quarters of the residents were male and unmarried. Without doubt, the bachelor from the Early Republic to the Civil War was hardly an eccentric bohème or a grouchy misanthrope, but much more likely a poor migrant, worker, or adventurer, who could not afford a family or who avoided or deserted it[10].

Modern Cities, Modern Men

Only in the final third of the nineteenth century did Americans pay more attention to the bachelor as a social, cultural, political and sexual phenomenon. In this period, a variety of observers scrutinized bachelors as being a driving force in the profound changes that American society was experiencing. In 1868, the renowned magazine *The Nation* asked why single life had become so popular – a topic that captured not only the attention of mothers and daughters (which suggests that bachelorhood was attractive primarily to men), but also of philosophers, statisticians, social commentators, and many more. The author of the article, J. Bixby, explained this phenomenon in part by stressing well-known reasons such as the westward migration of young men. Yet, Bixby also delved into new territory by alluding to "the growing self-assertion, masculinity, independence" of many young women, which made matrimony less attractive to young men[11]. Besides a dynamic women's movement, he described growing trade, communication, and wealth as reasons, along with burgeoning desires and amusements. Modern cities would offer "new gratifications and pleasures", physical, spiritual, and aesthetic stimuli which were more profoundly and easily enjoyable for bachelors: "The city is the habitat of the single. The country town or even the small city is an uncongenial clime for the species. The single must have public amusements and public resorts, and these only flourish in great cities."[12]

9 *Anthony Rotundo*, American Manhood. Transformations of Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era (New York 1993) 279–80.
10 *Chudacoff*, Age of the Bachelor 21–44.
11 *J. Bixby*, Why Is Single Life Becoming More General?, in: The Nation (5 March, 1868) 191–192 [henceforth *Bixby*, Single Life].
12 *Bixby*, Single Life 191.

Single life and urban temptations appeared mutually interdependent. Not only was the unmarried man in need of a big city, but the big city made being single more attractive. For those who were bound to a home and a family, the city lost its potential rewards. Of course, Bixby warned, cities might also draw men into a swamp of evil amusements because cheap substitutes for matrimonial pleasures were easily available. Here, Bixby referred to prostitution and the custom of "slumming" that would become even more popular in the following decades. Members of the middle and upper classes came for brief visits to sexualized zones in disreputable neighborhoods to enjoy the pleasures of an exciting and exotic night life. Historian Kevin Mumford described these spaces of interaction across the boundaries of race and class as "interzones"[13].

Thus, already by 1868, the image of the urban bachelor had solidified, though it would go through many twists and turns in subsequent decades[14]. The so-called bohème who seemed to throw traditions and social habits overboard emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, gradually becoming a clichéd character in urban imagery, until the 1920s, when the bachelor was "an object of desire or ridicule, but a fact of American life", as cultural historian Tom Lutz relates in his book *Doing Nothing*[15]. Cooking recipes for single men began to appear in magazines, newspapers, and books, as did fashion advice for single men-about-town. For a brief time, a special bachelor magazine appeared on the market, illustrated with drawings of relaxed and smoking men and good-looking girls. "Single blessedness" was a frequent topic in popular periodicals – admired and praised, or rejected and ridiculed as "grotesque misconception of the true status of the bachelor". Either way, the bachelor resounded throughout modern discourse. By 1934, the renowned sociologist Ernest W. Burgess summarized the bachelor as "peculiarly a phenomenon of modern times"[16]. Bixby's brief article in *The Nation* sixty-six years earlier had already described this new lifestyle as a phenomenon identified with urban modernity. Bixby interpreted the increasing urban supply of sensual and aesthetic

[13] See *Kevin Mumford*, Interzones. Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century (New York 1997), and *Chad C. Heap*, Slumming. Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife (Chicago, Ill. 2009) [henceforth *Heap*, Slumming]; see as well *Elizabeth A. Clement*, Love for Sale. Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900–1945 (Chapel Hill, N.C. 2006) [henceforth *Clement*, Love for Sale]; and on London, *Seth Koven*, Slumming. Sexual and Victorian Politics in Victorian London (Princeton, N.J. 2004).

[14] *Bixby*, Single Life 190, explicitly writes about "modern civilization". Also, *Kevin White*, The First Sexual Revolution. The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America (New York 1993) [henceforth *White*, First Sexual Revolution].

[15] *Tom Lutz*, Doing Nothing. A History of Loafers, Loungers, Slackers, and Bums in America (New York 2006) 137–140.

[16] *George Ade*, Single Blessedness and Other Observations (Garden City, N.Y. 1922) 17; *Burgess*, Sociological Aspects 118. See the magazine "The Bachelor Book", published between March and November 1900 in Chicago. Furthemore, brief books with aphorisms for and by bachelors existed that associated the bachelor with an easygoing, brisk lifestyle, such as *Howard K. Jerome*, The Reflections of a Bachelor (New York 1911). On the popularity of the bachelor in contemporary writings see *Snyder*, Bachelors.

pleasures as sign of a progressively refined taste in an advancing civilization. The rising number of unmarried men did not appear problematic to him. On the contrary, he favored such adaptions of social and cultural norms to modern times.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many commentators agreed with Bixby's diagnosis of the bachelor as a peculiarly modern phenomenon, but only a minority shared his optimistic tone. Even though bachelor life seemed tempting in many respects, with its promise of "exotic" pleasures, most social commentators feared a loss of order, guidance, and social and familial control. They conceived of the bachelor as a downside of modernity. The census data of 1890 were interpreted to reveal the threat of the bachelor to a stable social order: 41.7 percent of all men older than 15 years and about 20 percent of all men around 40 years of age were still unmarried. In 1890, Chicago had 170,000 single men, a number which would more than double by 1920. Even though the share of bachelors in the overall urban population slightly diminished in this period due to the massively growing city population, large concentrations of unmarried men lived in big cities like Chicago and New York, and their presence was disturbing to many social commentators[17].

The attention given to bachelors was nourished by the bourgeois fear that specific socio-cultural patterns would emerge that would satisfy the needs of single men, negating the functions and attractions of the Victorian middle-class family. Mostly cheap restaurants provided nourishment, barbershops and public bathing houses were facilities for hygienic care, saloons, clubs, pool halls, dance halls, and amusement parks were places of recreation and for the satisfaction of sexual pleasures. Men could meet women at these places who were not necessarily prostitutes but still available (though urban brothels were also commonplace). Many of the women belonged to the growing group who worked in industry or retail. These young women had often escaped from the control of the family and had greater leeway but still had too small an income to enjoy the public pleasures of a modern urban nightlife. So-called "charity girls" at times traded sexual favors for a night in town. As early as in February 1866, a memorandum by the New York YMCA pedantically listed the dangers of the metropolis: 653 pool tables, thirteen theatres, an unknown number of amusement arcades and lotteries, 7,786 bars, 223 music halls with 1,193 bar girls, who were reputed to offer sex for money or other gratifications and who served about 29,900 customers per day. On top of that, there were 730 real brothels in town, with 3,400 women offering their bodies for sale. As stressed by YMCA director William E. Dodge, brothels and the dubious "boarding houses" often were unfortunately the only places in town welcoming young men with open arms. Dodge pleaded for the YMCA as a counterweight to these forces of evil[18].

[17] *Chudacoff*, Age of the Bachelor 48–55, offers more statistical information.

[18] *William E. Dodge, Jr.*, A Memorandum Respecting New York as a Field for Moral and Christian Effort Among Young Men, Its Present Neglect, and the Fitness of the New York Young Men's Christian Association as a Principal Agency for Its Due Cultivation (New York 1866), acc. to *Doggett*, Life of Robert R. McBurney 75–77.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, bourgeois moral-reform groups attempted to counteract the new sexual liberties of this "first sexual revolution"[19]. Besides the YMCA, Anthony Comstock's crusade against obscene literature, which started in the 1870s, anti-prostitution movements such as New York's Committee of Fourteen's are only famous examples of such efforts, which occurred in numerous cities besides New York[20].

Robert R. McBurney and the New York YMCA

A closer look at the story of the YMCA and Robert McBurney will make the fuzziness of this cultural configuration even more apparent. On the one hand, the New York YMCA and especially "Brother McBurney", as he was called by Anthony Comstock, supported Comstock's crusades financially and spiritually. The New York YMCA even buttressed Comstock's activities by creating the notorious Committee for the Suppression of Vice, led by McBurney and his YMCA colleagues Cephas Brainerd, Morris K. Jesup, and Charles E. Whitehead[21].

This is only one of many examples of McBurney fighting in the front line against urban vice. On the other hand, he was a life-long bachelor and therefore deemed a questionable character. After all, the life of single men was considered a substantial challenge to a stable social and cultural order. Let us, therefore, focus more narrowly and at more length on McBurney, his life, and the interzones he traversed.

Robert McBurney was not yet eighteen years old when he came from a Northern Irish small town to New York City in the summer of 1854. These were the final years of the wave of massive Irish immigration to America, when sometimes up to 50 percent of all immigrants to America were Irish; in 1854 those were still 101,606 from a total of 427,833. More than half of them were without job skills, about 20 percent were classified as "laborers", another 20 percent as "farmers". Men exceeded women by 65,000, most of them 15–40 years old[22].

[19] *White*, First Sexual Revolution.

[20] On Comstock see *Nicola Beisel*, Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America (Princeton, N.J. 1997), and *Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz*, Victoria Woodhull, Anthony Comstock, and Conflict Over Sex in the United States in the 1870s, in: Journal of American History 87/2 (2000) 403–434; on the Committee of Fourteen and the battle against prostitution and various types of sexual exchanges from 1905 onwards see *Clement*, Love for Sale. One manifestation of this agitation was the federal Mann Act of 1910, intended to fight forced prostitution of white women, but also intended to hold young women's growing liberties in check; see *Mary E. Odem*, Delinquent Daughters. Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920 (Chapel Hill, N.C. 1995); *David Langum*, Crossing Over the Line. Legislating Morality and the Mann Act (Chicago, Ill. 1994).

[21] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 107–109; see also *Walter Kendrick*, The Secret Museum. Pornography in Modern Culture (Berkeley, Cal. [2]1996) 125–157.

[22] Historical Statistics of the United States. Colonial Times to the Present – Part 2, ed.

As a young Irish lad without proper job training who stayed in one of the urban centers at the East Coast after his arrival in America, McBurney was the prototype of a young male immigrant, who was greeted in the United States with growing anxiety. With neither money nor job, McBurney was a stranger in town and lonely, wrote the YMCA official L.L. Doggett in 1902 in his biography of his colleague and friend. The loneliness of young immigrant men was a crucial topos in bachelor discourse at the turn of the century. Upon his arrival in America, McBurney was not at all predestined either for the life of an urban "bohème" or of a celibate social worker. His more likely fate was as a single man with neither sufficient means nor proper guidance, who made a living as day laborer and lived as a "lodger" in one of the cheap and over-crowded lodging houses in New York's notorious and disreputable Bowery district in the Lower East Side. Yet, McBurney's biographer retrospectively described his early years in New York as an apprenticeship that provided him with training and experience he would need in his later life: "He knew young men – their temptations, their struggles, their needs, their possibilities, their peril. He had been alone in a great city, he had been without money, and almost without friends. He knew what it was to need work, he knew what it was to overcome temptation."[23]

McBurney belonged to the fortunate group of young strangers, who were "taken by the hand" by a good friend (in his case a former teacher from his Irish hometown who had migrated to New York earlier) to the YMCA upon the day of his arrival[24]. The New York branch of the Young Men's Christian Association had only existed for two years, and it had been founded to set a Protestant counterweight to the devastating erosion of the moral order which YMCA founders perceived to be caused by migration, urbanization, and industrialization. The Y was a counterweight *in the city*; it reacted to the temptations of urban life by providing an inner city meeting point for young men that offered fun and Christian education at the same time. Character building was the Y's ultimate object. The strategy was to substitute the lack of familial conduct with friendly and wholesome Protestant guidance in a purely homosocial world. As historian Justin H. Pettegrew observes, the Christian clubhouse would replace the saloon and provide young men with the ability to develop proper means of self-conduct[25].

U.S. Bureau of the Census (Washington, D.C. 1975), Series C 89–101, p. 103, Series C 120–137, p. 111, Series C 138–142, p. 112.

[23] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 20–21.

[24] Here, I am paraphrasing the *John D. Gustav-Wrathall*, Take the Young Stranger By the Hand. Same-Sex Relations and the YMCA (Chicago 1998) [henceforth *Gustav-Wrathall*, Young Stranger].

[25] Pettegrew argues that the mid-nineteenth century saw the beginning of a masculinization of American Protestantism which then would have gone hand in hand with the development of a concept of the political as emerging from male-male relationships; *Justin H. Pettegrew*, Rescuing Young Men from the "Ruin of the City". Religion, Masculinity, and the Founding of the Chicago YMCA, 1853–1858, in: Journal of Illinois History 10 (2007) 191–212. A similar argument is made by Clifford Putney, focusing on the emerging body culture and its interaction with a Protestant youth movement, men's movement, and the YMCA. *Putney*,

In his early years in New York, McBurney learned the trade of a hatter and then made a living as a clerk[26]. Upon his arrival, he became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mulberry Street and began to teach Sunday School. He also helped out in the YMCA, located only two blocks away on the second floor of the Stuyvesant Institute on South Broadway. Thus, he cruised through an urban space that was still part of the Bowery with its crowded tenement houses, where, as his biographer wrote, "the gates of sin stood wide". The area was filled with theaters, saloons, and other places of temptation, seduction, and violence; the Bowery had the reputation of merging with the loneliness of young men to create a dangerous and explosive social blend[27].

In 1862 Robert McBurney's life took another turn. After eight years in New York, he found a position as librarian at the YMCA, a change that his biographer described as the dawn of a period when he began to learn the art of governing from experienced men and prepared to dedicate his life to the progress of young men. Up to this point, recalled his mentor Cephas Brainerd, McBurney had been a subdued character. The leadership qualities he soon exhibited had not yet been evident. Learning from men of older generations, receiving guidance from "strong and leading characters", and experiencing homosocial bonds beyond family ties were described as immensely important in McBurney's education as a leader of young man[28].

"Being attractive to young men", which McBurney himself described as his greatest asset, convinced him to make the YMCA the great task of his life. Likewise, it was the attractiveness of young men to him that made the Y so important and the work so pleasant. Obviously, running into a "young English sailor boy" in the YMCA on Christmas' Eve in 1863 was a crucial moment in his life. His friends and colleagues stressed that this sailor boy was representative of thousands of young men who had been lonesome, sad, and homesick before they found their way to the YMCA and enjoyed McBurney's warm-hearted affection[29].

A few years later, a new and more professional board of directors appointed McBurney as secretary of the New York YMCA. At this point of his career, he also moved in with his mentor Cephas Brainerd and his wife at 190 East Nineteenth Street, where he spent the next four years. This move put some distance between him and the notorious Bowery, and it confirmed McBurney's social climb. Brainerd was senior member on the board of directors. Friends and colleagues noted that the two men experienced a most "intimate and mutually influential"

Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920 (Cambridge, Mass. 2001); for the general context, *Boyer*, Urban Masses. On the founding of the Chicago-YMCA see also *Paula Lupkin*, A Temple of Practical Christianity, in: Chicago History 24/3 (1995) 22–41.

[26] See *Thomas Augst*, The Clerk's Tale. Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America (Chicago 2003).

[27] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 24–28; also *Morse*, McBurney: A Sketch 5–10.

[28] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 51, 58, 59.

[29] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 92–95.

friendship during this period. Howard Chudacoff emphasizes how common it was among bachelors of higher social status to live as boarders with close friends, mentors, or kin[30].

The next step on the social ladder was a "bachelor apartment", which would make McBurney's difference from the workers, lodgers, and loafers of the Bowery and the Lower East Side even more manifest. Such an apartment symbolized the life of an urban bohème. A bohemian lifestyle seemed disreputable and dangerous and attractive, appealing and exotic at the same time. Around the turn of the century, the bachelor apartment was the apex of bachelorhood and signified the ability to create a specific type of domesticity, cosiness, and intimacy even without a family, something unachievable for a boarder or a lodger. Commentators stressed, with a hint of envy, that unmarried men in "bachelor apartments" were "better housed than any other class of persons in town". Usually, apartments of this kind had a small bedroom and a large salon, which contained enough space for the arts and memorabilia which high-class bachelors had a reputation for collecting. Such apartments generally had no kitchen, since almost every block in New York provided unmarried men with bars and restaurants of different quality and style. Well-to-do bachelors could have meals delivered. In 1870, the first building of this kind was the Stuyvesant Apartments on Eighteenth Street, in a prosperous new quarter uptown from the Bowery and its problems. This building was just one block south of where McBurney lived with the Brainards[31].

According to his friend, Richard C. Morse, McBurney had dreamed for a while of his own bachelor apartment[32]. In 1870, the YMCA's board of directors had a new building – renamed the McBurney YMCA in 1943 – constructed at 23rd Street and 4th Avenue. The five-floor building contained a library and lecture rooms, bathing facilities and a gym, all of which served to foster the social, intellectual, moral, and physical development of young men[33]. The building was crowned by a little tower, which captured McBurney's imagination and provided a fantastic view of the streets of Manhattan, including all its young drifters. It was impossible to dissuade McBurney from his plan of moving into a personal apartment in the tower, even though the board of directors worried that the dissolution of the boundary between the YMCA and McBurney's private life would seriously harm his health. Yet, McBurney was not the only one who moved into the YMCA building. Several, mostly younger members of the staff who were described as the secretary's "special friends" took rooms on the floor below McBurney's tower

30 *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 88; *Chudacoff*, Age of the Bachelor 81–82.

31 *Katherine Snyder*, A Paradise of Bachelors. Remodeling Domesticity and Masculinity in the Turn-of-the-Century New York Bachelor Apartment, in: Prospects 23 (1998) 247–284 [henceforth *Snyder*, Paradise]; the contemporary commentator is *E. Idell Zeisloft*, The New Metropolis (New York 1899).

32 *Richard C. Morse*: My Life With Young Men. Fifty Years in the Young Men's Christian Association (New York 1918) 327 [henceforth *Morse*, Life].

33 *Paula Lupkin*, Manhood Factories. Architecture, Business, and the Evolving Role of the YMCA, 1865–1925, in: Men and Women Adrift. The YMCA and YWCA in the City, ed. by *Nina Mjagkij*, *Margaret Spratt* (New York 1997) 40–64, 44–47.

apartment[34]. His longtime companion Richard Morse commented on the closeness of their lives as follows: "I took the room below, and then we came together in the closest relations we had ever had. I helped him and he helped me in every possible way. Eugene Peck came into the work as his assistant, and after him Henry Webster. We were all together, aware of course, of one another's failings as well as of one another's excellencies … We never thought of separating; it was essential that we should be together."[35]

The living arrangements at the YMCA reflected the organization's hierarchy, with McBurney at the top, the rest of the Y staff one floor below, and the young men staying in the building's temporary residences on lower floors. This pattern reflected the homosocial structure of the YMCA, with experienced members as first among peers, guiding the others and passing on their knowledge and experience to the group. At the same time, in several respects the tower apartment stood for McBurney's recent "upward mobility": The social climb went along with a step-by-step move from downtown to midtown Manhattan and then to the top floor of the new YMCA building.

The McBurney tower apartment was an ideal bachelor apartment, consisting of a smaller bedroom and a larger living room. McBurney had developed into the archetype of a bohème bachelor in even more respects: He diligently took care of the way he dressed, and he enjoyed a living comfort and cosiness that was considered characteristic of bachelors. Besides his many books, he decorated his rooms with all sorts of bric-a-brac that he collected in antique shops of the neighborhood, such as old prints, thick rugs, and antique furniture. In general, well-to-do bachelors had a reputation for loving a heavy and often "oriental" atmosphere, merging notions of the bohème bachelor with the urban homosexual and the cosmopolitan connoisseur. McBurney was a male consumer, depicted as living at the fringes culturally, socially, sexually, and last but not least territorially. The image of the bachelor corresponded with a dynamic orientalism, with its distinctive sexualization of the Orient, which reconfirmed both the bachelor and the East as beyond the normative. It might be a coincidence that in the spring of 1892 McBurney's one and only longer vacation trip took him to Palestine, which was not only the promised land of Christianity, but also the embodiment of the stylistic dreams of a bachelor life[36].

Soon, the tower rooms at 23rd Street and 4th Avenue became famous in Y circles nationally as a place of rendezvous. According to his biographer and other sources, McBurney dedicated his life not only to the young men of the city, but also to a nationwide network of YMCA leaders from all parts of the country. As he became one of the country's most experienced Y secretaries, he supported col-

[34] *Morse*, McBurney 18; *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 117.
[35] Richard Morse at the memorial service for Robert McBurney, 19 April, 1899, acc. to *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 259–260.
[36] *Snyder*, Paradise 265–266; *Morse*, McBurney 30; *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 117. *Edward Said*, Orientalism (New York 1978); *Dipesh Chakrabarty,* Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (Princeton, N.J. 2000).

leagues in other cities in word and deed like a father: "He was as watchful as a father over his fellow-secretaries", wrote Doggett. "He encouraged them, and whenever he thought they needed it, he reproved them." In his apartment, McBurney also hosted friends overnight, reports Morse. Jacob T. Bowne from the Y's international committee confirmed that he was always welcome whenever he had business to do in New York. Bowne, John Glover, also from the international committee, and George Hall, secretary for the state of New York, all stressed that they had the most fruitful conversations with McBurney in the morning hours while he shaved or dressed. The intimacy among the men is well expressed by one of Hall's memories: "The best time to see him was in the morning. I found it a good plan to come to his room – not too early – and wake him up. While he was dressing his mind was free and he could advise."[37]

Sometimes, this companionship was even more intimate, for instance when men took care of their sick friends or when they went for fishing and camping trips into nature. Above all, their closeness is expressed by their mourning and tenderness in cases of separation or loss. In 1889, for example, a young member of the New York Y staff named H.P. Andersen moved from New York to North Carolina because of a pulmonary disease. McBurney is reported to have shed tears. Andersen himself stressed that "he showed to me that day a heart of love that no one has shown me except my own mother". Yet, friends stressed that nothing surpassed the pain McBurney felt when in June 1883 his long-time companion Richard Morse finally married at the age of forty-two. For six years, Morse had lived with McBurney in the Y, and Jacob Bowne recalled "the struggle through which he passed when Mr. Morse was married. He seemed to feel as if he were left alone."[38]

The "Gay Male World" of the YMCA

Obviously, homosocial life at the YMCA was full of homoerotic moments and connotations. Each biographic or autobiographic entry provides ample material for queer readings[39]. Many quotations that appear on the preceding pages are characteristic of the flow and diction of texts that scholars would identify as "queer". Writings by and about McBurney abound with references to his love for "unruly boys", his "attractiveness to good-looking young men", his "tender-

[37] All the statements are from the memorial service for McBurney on 19 April 1899, acc. to *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 259–267.

[38] *Morse*, Life 196–198. Even though this marriage lasted thirty-four years, it covers not more than two pages in Morse's biography; on Bowne see *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 262.

[39] On queer readings see *Sedgwick*, Epistemology; *Andreas Kraß*, Queer Studies – eine Einführung, in: Queer Denken. Gegen die Ordnung der Sexualität, ed. by *Andreas Kraß* (Frankfurt a. M. 2003) 7–28; *Annamarie Jagose*, Queer Theory. An Introduction (New York 1996).

ness", and the "temptations" of his job. He was constantly "looking after young fellows" who were the one and only source of meaning in his life. Contemporary commentators stressed that it was "wonderful" how much "he touched and influenced young men"[40]. The sources also contain numerous references to mutual affections between YMCA secretaries and intimate moments in their lives, such as waking each other in the morning, sharing a morning shave, embracing affectionately, or sharing a night in McBurney's tower apartment. This closeness that was obviously possible among men would have been totally inappropriate between a bachelor and a woman or a girl. For a girl, just being in a bachelor apartment (not to speak of staying over night) was dubious at best and perhaps the beginning of her social downfall[41].

The historical context seems to confirm the queerness of these expressions. Let us recall the neighborhood where Robert McBurney spent so many years of his life. The Lower East Side and the Bowery had the reputation as a hotbed of heterosexual sin, where men met charity girls or bought the services of female prostitutes. As George Chauncey emphasized in *Gay New York*, by the 1870s the Bowery began to develop also into an area of male-male sex and a gay world. We do not know for sure, but it is most likely that Robert McBurney knew the gay bars, joints, and hotels in his neighborhood. Anything else would be surprising, because there were so many of them that he could hardly have missed them when he strolled down Mulberry Street, Bleecker Street, or the Bowery. He had spent years in boarding and lodging houses which were a largely homosocial world. Since the 1860s he had moved away spatially and socially from the boarding houses and the Bowery, but his YMCA position and his social circles necessitated maintaining some contact with his old neighborhood. Although uptown by about a mile, the YMCA at 23rd Street and 4th Avenue was still within range of the centers of urban vice, both downtown and in the seedy Tenderloin district, which stretched north from 23rd Street. McBurney's constant efforts to seek and save young men gave the Bowery an unbroken attraction on him. Third, we know that many middle-class men from further north in Manhattan who were either married or had sufficient means to afford the intimacy of a bachelor apartment drove down to the Bowery regularly to go slumming or become at least temporarily part of New York's gay male world[42].

Above all, the YMCAs themselves developed into hot spots of this gay male world. Founded as Protestant counterforce to the attractions of urban vice, the Ys rapidly turned into promising meeting points for men who desired men. Chauncey describes this transformation as starting in the 1890s, when New York YMCAs began to set up dormitories. Historian John Wrathall concurs that the

[40] *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 134.
[41] *Snyder*, Paradise 274–275.
[42] *Chauncey*, Gay New York 33–45. During the 1920s and 1930s, Chicago School sociologists researched such drifting between different neighborhoods and the double life of many men; *Chad Heap*, The City as a Sexual Laboratory. The Queer Heritage of the Chicago School, in: Qualitative Sociology 26/4 (2003) 457–487 [henceforth *Heap*, City].

YMCAs turned into sexual laboratories for young men in the final decade of the nineteenth century[43]. Yet, a quarter century earlier the new sports and bathing facilities in the New York YMCA had attracted numerous young men from around the city. While this very much pleased the board of directors, the sports and bathing facilities generated new spaces for homoerotic moments and sexual encounters among men. This homoerotic space seems to have helped to prompt the staff's concern with devising and enforcing rules for the gymnasium and the bathing facilities. Right from the building's opening in 1870, a special subcommittee oversaw these matters[44].

In the 1880s, members of the New York staff themselves became the focus of national criticism. As a letter from 1886 shows, Y secretaries from the Midwest noted with alarm a degree of homoeroticism among the New York YMCA staff. The conflict emerged on the occasion of Robert Weidensall's fiftieth birthday. Weidensall, director of the international committee of the YMCA, lived in New York and was in close contact with McBurney. Reverend John C. Brandt, general secretary of the Indianapolis YMCA, despised the male closeness in New York. Brandt deplored Weidensall's career and lifestyle in a letter to the coordinator of Weidensall's birthday celebration. Wrathall provides several possible explanations for this letter. Brandt's allusions obviously created feelings of uneasiness among Weidensall and other YMCA secretaries, who considered them inappropriate for the public ear and even for their personnel records. The original, handwritten version of Brandt's letter openly disapproves of Weidensall's bachelor life among men, describes him as immature, and cites the bad influence of other, notorious bachelors such as "Morse & McBurney" on Weidensall. But a typewritten version of the letter omits these passages. Indeed, someone jotted "omit" in the left margin of the original:

> Weidensall is fifty is he? Just think of it. It seems but yesterday when we all thought we were boys. Isn't there some mistake? Why he is not even married yet. … Here he comes and says he is fifty and this important business of life is not yet attended to. It ought to have been done at least twenty-five years ago. I am sure you will agree that we would not have thought this of one so conscientious and devoted to every known duty as this dear Brother of ours has always shown himself to be. But here is another sad example of the influence of Associates. If in the early days of our association work we could have kept Weidensall away from Morse & McBurney and altogether under good wholesome western influence all this might have been different. It is some encouragement that Morse has seen his error repented and is now trying to undo the mischief of nearly a life time. But McBurney seems to be as obdurate as ever. Here he is right along side of Weidensall. Fifty years and no wife yet. I think some of you Chicago Brethren ought to lay aside all other matters for a year if necessary and teach these boys a thing or two. These young gentlemen should be shown up in their true light. They will

[43] *Chauncey*, Gay New York 152–158; *John D. Wrathall*, Taking the Young Stranger by the Hand. Homosexual Cruising at the YMCA, 1890–1980, in: Men and Women Adrift. The YMCA and YWCA in the City, ed. by *Nina Mjagkij*, *Margaret Spratt* (New York 1997) 250–270, esp. 251.

[44] Acc. to *Doggett*, Life of Robert McBurney 96–97.

be the ruin of the country if they are not stopped. You see already how…many of our brightest and best are going in the same wretched way[45].

Brandt's denunciation contained numerous references to themes that became highly visible in the sexual and social-science discourse of the following decades: Life among men and a same-sex orientation were described as signs of immaturity; male cohabitation and desire as spreading like a disease; individual lifestyles were deemed as closely related to the development of a culture and a nation; life in the Midwest, especially its small towns and rural areas, was presented as chaste and pure by comparison to the decadent atmosphere of New York. Deleting this paragraph may have been motivated by various reasons: First, a eulogy was read during Weidensall's birthday celebration, composed of quotations from Brandt's and other letters. Obviously, double-sided references to the life among boys and men were deemed inappropriate for a larger public. A purged, typed version of the letter would have provided some protection against unwanted quotations and allusions. Secondly, Weidensall was eager to create a clean, well-ordered historical record. He began to organize his personal papers at the beginning of the twentieth century, when sexual-science discourse gained momentum, pointing a figure at homosocial behavior, and the number of unmarried YMCA secretaries began to shrink. Retrospectively, he might have considered his bachelor life and Brandt's criticism of its homoerotic implications as potentially damaging to the memory of his life and career with the YMCA. He preferred to have a biography without sexual ambiguities and to keep hints of his possible "life among young men"[46] hidden in the closet[47]. Obviously, Weidensall preferred to be remembered as celibate social worker who refrained from matrimonial pleasures in the name of his Christian mission, rather than as sexual traveler between two worlds and part of the modern gay male world. If this speculation is true, it must be an accident that the handwritten letter survived in Weidensall's personal archives. Anyhow, the various complications surrounding the survival of Brandt's original letter and its subsequent editing show that contemporaries noticed the homoerotic connotations of a life among men. Leading figures in the YMCA movement took note of such behavior, which they either decried or sought to cover up, depending on how they were involved[48].

As mentioned before, nineteenth-century YMCA secretaries were often single. This is particularly true for New York, where two out of four leading staff members remained unmarried for their lifetimes, while Richard Morse married at the age of forty-two. Around the turn of the century, the YMCA began to im-

[45] Quoted in *John D. Wrathall*, Provenance as Text. Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections, in: Journal of American History 79/1 (1992) 165–178 [henceforth *Wrathall*, Provenance]. The letter from John B. Brandt to W.W. Vanarsdale, April, 14, 1886, is in Business Correspondence, Robert Weidensall Papers, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, University of Minnesota. See also *Gustav-Wrathall*, Young Stranger 70–90, 72–75.

[46] Morse called his autobiography, "My Life With Young Men".

[47] *Sedgwick*, Epistomology.

[48] *Wrathall*, Provenance, and *Gustav-Wrathall*, Young Stranger 70–90.

prove the living and working conditions for married men with the explicit intention of raising their number among the staff. Obviously, the Y was concerned about the sexual, social, and emotional stability of older bachelors living among young men. Bachelors now seemed prone to immaturity and negligence, as the Brandt letter suggested already in 1886. By the 1930s, finally, almost all the Y secretaries were married[49]. Nevertheless, during the same period of the early twentieth century, the YMCA became famous as a prime gay cruising spot, part of a vibrant and sexually loaded nightlife that extended from Greenwich Village to the Tenderloin district and then uptown to Harlem. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, not only jazz music, but also cabarets, shows with "pansy acts", and "drag balls" attracted numerous New Yorkers, no matter whether they considered themselves queer or straight[50]. During the same decades a sexual and social-science discourse gained momentum, becoming commonplace in New York and creating new conditions for the perception of McBurney, his friends and colleagues. This sexual science discourse and its relevance to the contemporary understanding of the bachelor shall be briefly presented in the final section of this chapter.

Sexual and Social Sciences as a Modern Strategy of Regulation

In 1886, the year that a Midwestern YMCA leader announced his uneasiness regarding male life in New York, Richard von Krafft-Ebing's book, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, was published in Stuttgart. Seven years later, the first American edition of the book appeared. And in 1900, Random House in New York published Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. In September 1909, Sigmund Freud synthesized his sexual theories in five lectures at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. Even though Freud was not yet a star in the United States, for a couple of years the reception of his work had been on the rise. Psychologists as renowned as William James had been interested in Freud for years already. Representatives of American psychology and medicine, as well as members of the press and the public, were eager to hear what Freud had to say. His trip to America proved a catalyst for the reception of his work among American researchers and the public alike. Beginning in the 1910s, the influence of psychoanalysis and sexual sciences expanded in the United States. The influence was especially visible in large cities such as New York. Freud himself regularly complained about the widespread, but superficial reception of his work in America[51].

[49] *Gustav-Wrathall*, Young Stranger 70–90.
[50] *Chauncey*, Gay New York 331–354; *Heap*, Slumming 231–276.
[51] On Freud see *Peter Gay*, Freud. Eine Biographie für unsere Zeit (Frankfurt a. M. 2006) 236–44 on the lectures at Clark, 636–641 on Freud's U.S. reception [henceforth *Gay*, Freud]; on Freud in the United States, see *Nathan G. Hale*, *Jr.*, Freud and the Americans. The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876–1917 (New York 1995) 3–23 on the Clark

Krafft-Ebing's, Ellis's and Freud's concepts varied substantially, and they represented only three positions in a large, dynamic field. Since the 1880s, a substantial number of voices had contributed to the creation of a field of knowledge known as "sexuality" or "sexology". These voices were diverse, but they shared several common features. First, they were expressions of the modern idea that objective and impartial knowledge of things, people, and their relations could be identified with the intention of transforming disorders of desire and behavior into proper patterns. Second, these many voices came together to form a powerful field of sexual knowledge that remained rich and multifaceted. Sexology and the social sciences focused on and interacted with the sexual and social diversity evident in urban centers by the second half of the nineteenth century. Third, the observation of sexual diversity went hand in hand with an effort to differentiate sound, healthy, and "normal" desires on the one side from multiple types of pathologies on the other. Sexual science concepts diffused into popular culture and everyday life, where they came to guide and instruct Americans. These seemingly easy-to-use sexual theories invited Americans to analyze themselves, to observe the own behavior, and to seek to determine and interpret their innermost secret desires. In the 1920s, for example, an American publisher planned a popular source book with short pieces of Freud's writings on psychoanalysis and sexual sciences that people would use in a do-it-yourself, self-help fashion, an approach that Freud abhorred as superficial[52].

This sexual discourse developed in two directions. First, it revolved around a description and understanding of sexual variations which gained apparent validity through constant reiteration. Secondly, this discourse put these variations in relation to a sexual and social "normal", which led to the reaffirmation of the nuclear family as the normative ideal in the center of American society and culture. This reaffirmation was now based on sociological and psychological analyses that seemed modern, scientific, and therefore true.

The discursive definition of sexual diversity and variation merits a closer look. In the 1890s, an understanding of sex drives was emerging which dissolved the close ties between sexual desire and reproduction that had been predominant up to this point in time. The concepts of "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" began to emerge. Initially both were related to sexual desires and activities outside

lectures [henceforth *Hale*, Freud]; see also the second volume by *Hale*, The Rise and Crisis of Psychoanalysis in the United States. Freud and the Americans, 1917–1985 (New York 1995), and *Ann-Louise S. Silver*, Psychoanalysis and Psychosis. Players and History in the United States, in: Psychoanalysis and History 4/1 (2002) 45–66. On the history of the sexual sciences in the United States, see *Jennifer Terry*, An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society (Chicago 1999) [henceforth *Terry*, Obsession], and *Jonathan Ned Katz*, The Invention of Heterosexuality (New York 1995) [henceforth *Katz*, Invention].

52 *Hale*, Freud 6; *Gay*, Freud 636. Pathbreaking of course is *Michel Foucault*, Sexualität und Wahrheit, Vol. 1: Der Wille zum Wissen (Frankfurt a. M. 1983) [henceforth *Foucault*, Wille zum Wissen], as well as *Foucault*, Sexualität und Wahrheit, Vol. 2: Der Gebrauch der Lüste (Frankfurt a. M. ^{6}2000) particularly 9–45.

of the ideals of romantic love, monogamous matrimony, and reproduction. Therefore, both were considered as describing sexualized beings beyond the normal. Homosexuality was understood as an abnormal desire directed at the same sex, heterosexuality as directed at the other sex. As *Dorland's Medical Dictionary* from 1901 told readers, heterosexuality meant "abnormal or perverted appetite toward the opposite sex". Thus, until the first decades of the twentieth century, heterosexuality signified non-normal, pathological sexual desires. Yet, at the same time it expressed a consumer's attitude towards sex that was in harmony with the paradigms of an emerging modern consumer society[53]. The image of the urban bachelor took shape precisely amid this ambiguity: He embodied a modern culture dominated by the search for consumption and pleasure, even with regard to the innermost desires. At the same time, it was precisely this consumption-pleasure-desire nexus that experts deemed problematic and even pathological, because the bachelor's sex led to a sphere beyond monogamous matrimony and had, therefore, the potential to be socially destabilizing. This was deemed true no matter if the bachelor's behavior inclined toward homosexuality or heterosexuality.

Freud made his own contributions to this particular form of linkage between the sexual and the social. Freud's thought was based on recognition of a libido, a force that sought satisfaction in numerous ways. Even so, his thinking was highly normative, for instance when he explained to his readers which types of desires and satisfactions were considered adequate, proper, and – above all – conducive to cultural progress. Desiring the opposite sex with a focus on a partner's sexual organs indicated a successful, healthy sexual development from early childhood to maturity. Freud considered everything else, particularly oral and anal lust and satisfaction, to be immature for an adult, less developed, less civilized, something that should have been left behind in childhood, and therefore pathological[54].

Freud's model of sexuality concurred with most competing sexual theories in deeming the nuclear family as the one and only social and cultural sphere that would provide the child with an environment for a proper development. According to Freud and his contemporary sexologists, only a nuclear family would nurture a child through the complex process of acceptance and rejection, of desire and rivalry, of grappling with incestuous lust and patricide in order to form the sort of desire for the opposite sex that seemed the basis of individual normality as well as

[53] *Katz*, Invention 14–30, Dorland's Medical Dictionary is quoted on 86. Katz finds the first appearance of the term "heterosexual" in U.S. discourse in *James G. Kiernan*, Responsibility in Sexual Perversion, in: Chicago Medical Recorder 3 (1892) 185–210, and then in 1893 in the first American edition of Krafft-Ebing's "Psychopathia Sexualis". On sexuality and consumerism see *Heiko Stoff*, Ewige Jugend. Konzepte der Verjüngung vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis ins Dritte Reich (Köln 2004), and *Stoff*, Der Orgasmus der Wohlgeborenen. Die sexuelle Revolution, Eugenik, das gute Leben und das biologische Versuchslabor, in: Geschichte schreiben mit Foucault, ed. by *Jürgen Martschukat* (Frankfurt a. M. 2002) 170–192. *Laurence Birken*, Consuming Desire. Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance, 1871–1914 (Ithaca, N.Y. 1988).

[54] *Sigmund Freud*, Three Contributions to Sexual Theory (New York 1910), first published in German in 1905.

of a stable culture and civilization. Only rarely did Freud use the term "heterosexuality", but his writings contributed a great deal to its emergence as a key term in the definition of opposite-sex desires as normal and healthy, particularly when such desires were acted out through the creation of a family. From this perspective, the bachelor may have been the embodiment of a modern order, shaped by urbanization, industrialization, consumerism, sexual diversity, and scientific thinking, and yet at the same time, he stood at the fringes of this order. In the same decades around the turn of the century which Chudacoff describes as the "age of the bachelor", sexual sciences emerged and shaped the knowledge and even the certainty that only the nuclear family was a fertile ground for a healthy sexual development and the seedbed for enduring social and cultural stability.

In 1934 Vanguard Press in New York published a volume that analyzed the bachelor from multiple scientific viewpoints as "peculiarly a phenomenon of modern times", as the Chicago sociologist Ernest W. Burgess wrote in his contribution to the book. The title clearly indicated the book's focus on "the sex life of the unmarried adult". The editors sought to understand the bachelor, his sexuality, and his meaning for modern society by gathering expert voices from multiple fields of modern, scientific knowledge. Sociology, economy, anthropology, literature, medicine, psychology and several other disciplines were represented in the book. Both topic and approach made the book a peculiarly modern effort, which Erich Fromm praised in a review as "highly remarkable". All in all, stressed psychologist Ernest R. Groves in his essay, the volume expressed a finding based on Sigmund Freud's writings, "that sex has a larger meaning for the human career than appears on the surface". In recent decades, Chicago School sociologists had paid more and more attention to sexuality. They had conducted interdisciplinary research projects that had contributed to understanding the relation of "sexual" and "social pathologies", as the title of one of Burgess' classes at the University of Chicago indicated. The modern city was the laboratory of their research. In numerous studies, the Chicago School strove for the definition of "urban personality types" according to their relation to the sexual[55].

This research suggested that the bachelor was one of the crucial personality types of the modern, urban world. His sexual life was perceived as possibly homosexual, though not necessarily so. According to Burgess, homosexuality was caused by a combination of social, psychological, and biological factors. The urban environment itself spurred many new, specialized types of sexual desires and interactions, including those that involved only brief and peripheral exchanges between people in the city. Burgess analyzed the rise of the bachelor as expression of modern, urban life, characterized by a specific type of popular cul-

[55] The Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult. An Inquiry into and an Interpretation of Current Sex Practices, ed. by *Ira S. Wile* (New York 1934), particularly the articles by *Burgess*, Sociological Aspects 116–154, and by *Ernest R. Groves*, Sex Psychology of the Unmarried Adult 97–115, here 100. Groves's chapter focused on premarital sexuality of juveniles. Erich Fromm's review was published in the Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung 4 (1935) 114–115. On sexuality and the "Chicago School" see *Heap*, City.

ture, a larger equality among the sexes, and, last but not least, more leeway for individuals. At the same time, Burgess identified a disproportionate share of unmarried men and women among criminals, lunatics, disabled, and those afflicted by venereal diseases. Thus, he nourished the understanding that bachelor status went along with a higher likelihood of malfunctioning in society. Therefore, Burgess concluded, even though a widespread acceptance of sexuality and desires outside the boundaries of matrimony existed, marriage still remained the culturally and socially preferred type of sexual relationship[56].

A year later, in 1935, the so-called Committee for the Study of Sex Variants was formed in New York. Sponsored with funds from the prestigious Rockefeller Foundation, this project brought together social scientists, urban researchers, and eleven medical doctors from endocrinology to psychiatry, who were to cooperate on an analysis of the obvious sexual plurality in New York. The idea was to research the variations of sexual behavior in their medical, psychological, and sociological dimensions. The research team was dominated by experts from the medical profession, who seemed best suited to come to terms with the twists and turns of thirty-three individuals whose biographies were under consideration. The project provided the interviewees with an opportunity to make their voices heard, but even so, they were observed, described, classified, and presented in a sexual taxonomy in a way that threatened to depersonalize their stories[57].

In 1941, the New York study was published in two volumes covering over 1,000 pages. It displayed how modern social, medical, and sexual-science research participated in shaping "the homosexual" as "a species", to paraphrase Michel Foucault's famous dictum: observed, analyzed, categorized, standardized, registered as deviant and psychopathological[58]. According to the head of this research group, psychiatrist George Henry from the Payne-Whitney Psychiatric Clinic, the gay male world was populated by a deviant sex type. In accordance with Freudian theory, Henry described this sex type as never having reached maturity and as being a side product of the modern world, with its increasingly complex demands for the creation of functional families. If families emerged from this sexually deviant context at all, they were mostly dysfunctional, and the developmental deficits and pathologies were transmitted over the generations. The only viable antidote was support for functional nuclear families, which were deemed as pro-

[56] *Burgess*, Sociological Aspects 153. See also *Robert L. Dickinson*, Medicine. Medical Reflections Upon Some Life Histories, in: The Sex Life of the Unmarried Adult, ed. by *Wile*, 186–211.

[57] *George W. Henry*, Sex Variants. A Study of Homosexual Patterns, 2 Vols (New York 1941); *Terry*, Obsession 178–215.

[58] *Foucault*, Wille zum Wissen 58. This is not of course meant to imply that sexualized subjects did not exist before the nineteenth century or that there existed only one specific homosexual identity since the late nineteenth century. It hints much more at historic specific mechanisms of specification and classification which came along with the description of manifold and diverse desires. On the controversial debate on Foucault's "act of polemical bravado" see *Sedgwick*, Epistemology 44–48, and *David M. Halperin*, How to Do the History of Homosexuality (Chicago 2002) 10–14, 104–137.

viding children with parental role models who could teach them proper, "natural" sex roles. Sexual pathology, dysfunctional families, and social chaos were understood as mutually interdependent, a mélange described and explained by modern science.

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Modern life appeared to be urban, diverse and highly ambiguous – culturally, socially, and sexually, with bachelors like Robert McBurney at its center, with their distinctive way of living and their fuzzy and conspicuous desires. Such bachelors lived beyond the boundaries of Victorian families in every respect. The YMCA confirms the ambiguity of the modern world: Created as institution to counteract urban vice and modern desires, it turned into a hotspot of gay male life and culture. As the example of Robert McBurney shows, the same person could shape history in both ways. Bachelors (and the YMCA) were neither an effect nor a cause of modernity; they emerged hand in hand with it. Even though single life existed before the mid-nineteenth century, it took center stage only with the advent of modernity. The same is true for concomitant strategies of sexual regulation, which were meant to create order from chaos and fuzziness, especially since sexual ambiguity threatened momentous social consequences. Like bachelorhood, the sexual and social sciences emerged as part of the modern configuration; they put forth specifically modern strategies for the creation of a new order from a chaos, which was itself "peculiarly a phenomenon of modern life".

Summary

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit dem Junggesellen, der in den Dekaden um die Jahrhundertwende als spezifisch moderne Lebensform eines zunehmend urbanen Amerika konturiert wurde und umfassende Aufmerksamkeit von Sozialreformern sowie in den sich etablierenden Sozial- wie Sexualwissenschaften erfuhr. Dabei avancierte das Leben als „Bachelor" einerseits zum Inbegriff von den Verlockungen eines sozial wie sexuell uneindeutigen städtischen Lebens durch das Laster, zur Verkörperung einer spezifisch modernen und urbanen „Bohème". Zugleich stand es andererseits gleichsam als Gegenentwurf für die sich zölibatär inszenierende Existenz städtischer Sozialreformer, die ihre Askese gegen die sexuellen wie sozialen Gefährdungen der Stadt in die Waagschale warfen. Durch einen genauen Blick auf das New Yorker YMCA und die Biografie Robert McBurneys, der eine seiner prägenden Figuren in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts war, werden die Komplexität dieser Konfiguration, ihre vielen Unschärfen, Verwicklungen und Überlagerungen deutlich gemacht. Die verschiedenen Formen homosozialen Lebens im YMCA mit ihren vielfältigen erotischen Momenten wurden bald auch Gegenstand von Kritiken und Konflikten. Diese sind ihrerseits im weiteren Kontext eines in zunehmendem Maße sexualwissenschaftlich argumentie-

renden Diskurses zu verstehen, der um verwissenschaftlichte Klassifizierung bemüht und Ausdruck und Motor eines spezifisch modernen Ordnungsbemühens war. Soziale und sexuelle Uneindeutigkeiten als Ausdruck von Urbanität verschmelzen mit spezifischen Anstrengungen zu ihrer Einhegung und lassen sich analytisch in der Figur des Junggesellen bündeln, den der Soziologe Ernest W. Burgess im Jahr 1934 als „peculiarly a phenomenon of modern times" beschrieb.

Daniel Siemens

The "True Worship of Life": Changing Notions of Happiness, Morality, and Religion in the United States, 1890–1940[1]

In 1979, the cultural historian Warren I. Susman published an influential article on changing notions of the self and their relation to modernity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Basing his case on the analysis of popular self-help literature, Susman argued that during these decades a shift took place from a notion of selfhood based on character to one based on personality[2]. Whereas nineteenth-century Americans discussed *character* as an organic and permanent attribute of a person and as intertwined with a self potentially governed by rationality, twentieth-century Americans connected the alternative concept, *personality*, to adjectives such as dynamic, energetic, and masculine. This new notion of the self emphasized not self-control and self-sacrifice for high moral values, but personal self-fulfillment and – even if it may sound paradoxical – a kind of affectionate supremacy over others, to be achieved by self-mastery and hard work: "Every American was to become a performing self."[3] Susman, along with other authors making similar arguments, such as David Morgan, Judy Hilkey, Jackson Lears, and Richard Rabinowitz, interpreted this shift in hegemonic ideas about the self as resulting from the developing culture of mass consumption. The changing social order and its newly negotiated rules, they asserted, should be understood in relation to the sort of competitive society associated especially with the country's urban centers[4].

[1] I would like to thank Angelika Epple, Bielefeld, and Alan Lessoff, Normal/Ill., for their most valuable comments on an earlier version of this article.

[2] *Warren I. Susman*, "Personality" and the Making of Twentieth-Century Culture, in: *John Higham*, *Paul K. Conkin* (eds.), New Directions in American Intellectual History (Baltimore 1979) 212–226 (reprinted in: *Warren I. Susman*, Culture as History. The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century [New York 1984] 271–285).

[3] *Susman*, "Personality" 220.

[4] *David Morgan*, Protestants and Pictures. Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production (New York, Oxford 1999) 340–341; *Judy Hilkey*, Character is capital. Success manuals and manhood in Gilded Age (Chapel Hill 1997); *T. J. Jackson Lears*, From Salvation to Self-Realization. Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880–1930, in: *Richard Wightman Fox, T. J. Jackson Lears* (eds.), The Culture of Consumption. Critical Essays in American History, 1880–1980 (New York 1983) 1–38. According to Richard Rabinowitz's study of Protestant piousness in New England, this change was

Susman was by no means the first observer to consider the concept of personality as a distinct sign of the modern age in America. Already in 1935, Dutch historian Johan Huizinga – whose writings ranged well beyond his renowned intellectual and cultural histories of the Renaissance and the Early Modern era[5] – had used different terms with similar intent in his observations on American society. In the essay, *In the Shadow of Tomorrow*, Huizinga remarked:

> The increase of security, of comfort, and of the possibilities of want-gratification, in short the greater ease of living, has had two results. On the one hand, it has prepared the soil for all forms of renunciation of life: philosophical denial of its value, purely emotional spleen of aversion from life. On the other hand it has instilled the belief in the right to happiness. It has made people expect things from life. Related to this there is another contrast. The ambivalent attitude which wavers between the renunciation and the enjoyment of life is peculiar to the individual alone. The community, however, without hesitation and with more conviction than ever before, accepts earthly life as the object of all striving and action. It is indeed a true worship of life[6].

At first sight this looks like a typical example of the cultural-pessimistic, conservative-idealistic criticism of contemporary society that was formulated in those days by many European intellectuals, particularly conservative Germans as varied as Oswald Spengler and Thomas Mann but including even liberal authors such as Siegfried Kracauer[7]. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes obvious that Huizinga pointed to an important aspect of a new cult of worldliness which later became essential to Susman's analysis of changing constructions of the self. The new outlook on selfhood and its related emotional style, which gave priority to well-being and self-fulfillment, contained ambiguities and contradictions that were plain to an observer with Huizinga's cultural-pessimistic perspective[8].

becoming evident already by about 1850; see *Richard Rabinowitz*, The Spiritual Self in Everyday Life. The Transformation of Personal Religious Experience in Nineteenth-Century New England (Boston 1989).

[5] See *Johan Huizinga*, America. A Dutch Historian's Vision, from Afar and Near, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by *Herbert H. Rowen* (New York 1972); *Christoph Strupp*, *Johan Huizinga*, Geschichtswissenschaft als Kulturgeschichte (Göttingen 2000) 150–160.

[6] *Johan Huizinga*, In the Shadow of tomorrow. A diagnosis of the spiritual distemper of our time (London 1936) 91–92.

[7] See *Oswald Spengler*, Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte, 2 vol. (München 1918/1922); *Siegfried Kracauer*, Das Ornament der Masse, in: *idem*, Das Ornament der Masse. Essays (Frankfurt a. M. 2005) 50–63. On the overall subject, *Georg Bollenbeck*, Eine Geschichte der Kulturkritik. Von Rousseau bis Günther Anders (München 2007) 199–232.

[8] Moritz Julius Bonn offered a typical, almost clichéd version of the cultural-pessimistic view of modern American society. Sarcastically, he noted: "The delicate promptings of the softly swinging human soul, as it rises to the ether, are killed in favour of a kind of materialism which is satisfied with being greedy and hedonistic but nevertheless stays to be suffering from life … What has been developing by reverence is replaced by that which is boldly wanted, what is warmly and emotionally flowing is driven away by sober-cold thought, what is unique-personal is strangled by the conventional-factual." (*Moritz Julius Bonn,* Die Kultur der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika [Berlin 1930] 6).

This essay builds upon these observations by Huizinga and Susman. It puts them to the practical test demanded by Susman, who noted that "more specific analysis of the cultural forms of our century" would be needed to provide empirical support for his generalizations concerning the emergence of a prevalent "concept of personality"[9]. While historians such as Andrew R. Heinze have raised important objections to Susman's thesis, most recent research seems to follow Susman in the assumption that during the period under discussion the hegemonic concept of the self did change fundamentally[10]. In this essay, I will offer two possible illustrations of the change that Susman's posited. The cases presented here underscore how widespread the patterns identified by Susman probably were, since they concern matters on which scholars of selfhood and emotional style do not usually concentrate: the popularization of eugenic thought and new interpretations of Jesus Christ offered in Protestant publications aimed at mass markets. My starting point is simple: If cultural change concerning the concept of the self was indeed as far reaching as scholars have claimed, it must have had been manifest in areas outside the focal points of contemporary discourse on the self as well.

The following analyses amounts to a kind of historical exploratory test drilling intended to check the plausibility of this well-known hypothesis about cultural change. My analysis draws as well upon Peter Stearns's hypotheses concerning changes in American "emotional style", an approach to modernity and cultural change that parallels Susman's explorations of the cultural dimensions of selfhood. In the mass-media discourse on which this essay depends, changes in emotional style as conceived by Stearns are right away manifest, while the concepts of personality outlined by Susman are usually implied or an undercurrent, though they are visible upon close reading[11]. In contrast to Susman, this essay does not delve into causal explanations of these changing cultural patterns; instead it investigates ways of identifying and tracing these new forms of identity and expression[12]. My approach moves from popularizing discourses evident in media – so to speak from the surfaces themselves – to the substantive changes of attitude. This has the advantage of avoiding some of the unprovable assertions about cause and effect that have invited criticism of Susman's formulation.

[9] *Susman*, "Personality" 222.

[10] According to Andrew R. Heinze, the concept of personality did not at all supersede that of character. Rather personality and character were overlapping concepts at least until the 1930s. Furthermore, the changing meaning of the "self" was not a consequence of consumer culture, in Heinze's view, but instead was connected to the apparently increasing ethnic fragmentation of society and, parallel to this, to new psychological interpretations of the self as being pathologically split. Within this framework, "self-adjustment" seemed essential; an "integrated personality" became the goal. Notwithstanding his criticism of Susman, even Heinze does not deny a fundamental change in the concept of the self but offers different reasons for it. See *Andrew R. Heinze*, Schizophrenia Americana. Aliens, Alienists, and the "Personality Shift" of Twentieth-Century Culture, in: American Quarterly 55/2 (2003) 227–256.

[11] See *Hanno Hardt*, In the Company of Media. Cultural Constructions of Communication, 1920s–1930s (Boulder, Colo. 2000).

[12] *Susman*, "Personality" 222.

In the essay's first section, I will explain the basic elements of this new "worship of life", to refer again to Huizinga's term. I will then describe how the newspaper coverage of a spectacular case of murder in Chicago in 1930 illustrated the mass-media staging of this new personality concept. In a second section, I am going to analyze the popularization strategies of the eugenics movement, which was influential in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century; and I will show how certain lines within the popularization of eugenics indeed manifested the new "worship of life". Finally, in the third section, I will pursue the question of to what degree this new emotional style could also be grounded on religion. My analysis reveals that the famous bestseller, *The Man Nobody Knows* by Bruce Barton (1925), also illustrates the new cultural patterns described in their different ways by Huizinga, Susman, and Stearns.

"Worship of Life" as a New Emotional Style

In the first decades of the twentieth century, many Americans were convinced that a fundamental change was happening within their society. Especially Protestants from older ethnic groups, who had either been born and raised in the country or in small towns or who identified with small-town values though they lived in an urban environment, understood rapidly increasing divorce rates, the new leisure-time culture of cinema, jazz, and dance halls, as well as changing behavioral norms to be indications of a cultural decline. This sense of decaying standards frequently prompted xenophobic reactions[13]. World War I and its aftermath, meanwhile, severely damaged the optimistic outlook on politics and society that had animated progressivism[14]. In the post-war era, resentment against the seemingly negative effects of modernity became increasingly apparent among the native, white, middle classes. The underside of the clichéd cultural experimentation of the era was widespread cultural suspicion, political rancor, and social tension, themselves stereotyped as animated by xenophobia and fundamentalism[15].

Many historians have questioned the more simplistic versions of this familiar account of the Jazz Age. However, this version of the 1920s contains a large el-

[13] On this see recently *Thomas Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Prohibition (Paderborn 2010). Also informative on popularization discourses: *David E. Ruth*, Inventing the Public Enemy. The Gangster in American Culture, 1918–1934 (Chicago 1996).

[14] *Maureen A. Flanagan*, America Reformed. Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s–1920s (New York 2006) 261–282; *Arthur S. Link*, What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's, in: American Historical Review 64/4 (1959) 833–851.

[15] See *Lynn Dumenil*, Modern Temper. American Culture and Society in the 1920s (New York 1995); *Flanagan*, America Reformed; *Morton Keller*, Regulating a New Society. Public Policy and Social Change in America, 1900–1933 (Cambridge, Mass. 1994); *Richard M. Abrams*, The Burdens of Progress, 1900–1929 (Glenview, Ill. 1978); *William Leuchtenburg*, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914–1932 (Chicago 1993 [1958]).

ement of truth, though it insufficiently accounts for radical cultural changes, for example changes in emotional style evident in different ways among moderns and fundamentalists alike. Only in the course of the past few years has the history of emotions developed into a thriving field of research. Many basic questions about such research still remain unanswered, such as how far one should take into account a natural-scientific understanding of emotions and thus to what degree emotions must be imagined as anthropologically stable or culturally variable[16]. Researchers into these matters often ignore epistemological problems; heuristic approaches predominate. This leads historians to conceptualize the analysis of supposedly emotion-based expressions more or less hermeneutically. This essay shares this potential flaw because it assumes that the way in which individuals and groups deal with emotions depends on social situations and that ideals and norms of emotion depend essentially on the parameters of social inequality such as class, gender, or ethnicity and race[17].

The works in this field published by Carol and Peter Stearns since the 1980s provide for the United States an empirically valuable foundation on which one may build. Essential for their approach is the concept of "emotionology", which they define as the "attitudes or standards that a society, or a definable group within a society, maintains toward basic emotions and their appropriate expression"[18]. The Stearns concede the obvious point that emotional life and individual emotional experiences are hardly accessible to the historian[19]. In line with this general approach, in this essay, I will try to show by way of two examples that in the United States between 1890 and 1940 an emotional style gained acceptance – as an idea, not necessarily in practice – which understood vitality and individual happiness both in the material and the spiritual sense to be the result of physical strength, control of emotional states and rational thought. Following Huizinga, I call this emotional style "worship of life". The Dutch scholar's formulation effectively indicated what this style was replacing: the feelings of sympathy and grief

16 *William Reddy*, The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions (Cambridge 2001), is a useful exception.

17 On the historiography of emotions in the United States and elsewhere, *Peter N. Stearns*, Emotions History in the United States: Goals, Methods, and Promise, in: *Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht* (ed.), Emotions in American History. An International Assessment (New York 2010) 15–27; *Jan Plamper*, The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns, in: History and Theory 49/2 (2010) 237–265; *Ute Frevert*, Was haben Gefühle in der Geschichte zu suchen?, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 35/2 (2009) 183–208; *Frank Bösch, Manuel Borutta*, Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne. Historische Perspektiven, in: *the same* (ed.), Die Massen bewegen. Medien und Emotionen in der Moderne (Frankfurt a. M. 2006) 13–41.

18 *Carol Zisowitz Stearns*, *Peter N. Stearns*, Emotionology. Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards, in: American Historical Review 90 (1985) 813–836, here 813. For examples of case studies: *Carol Zisowitz Stearns*, Anger. The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History (Chicago 1986); *Peter N. Stearns*, Jealousy. The Evolution of an Emotion in American History (New York 1989); *Peter N. Stearns*, American Cool. Constructing a Twentieth Century Emotional Style (New York 1994).

19 See, most recently, *Frevert*, Was haben Gefühle in der Geschichte zu suchen? 206–207.

which in the United States of the Victorian era had been understood to be essential points of reference for the *conditio humana*[20].

Such a development was not specifically American. In Europe as well by the early 1900s, ideas began to take hold concerning the training of one's own body as a necessity for fulfillment and success in modern society. This discourse assumed the well-trained body to be male, while the emotions that one needed to master were for the most part categorized as female[21]. In Europe, however, these changes were conditioned by the priority given in doubtful circumstances to the general welfare as opposed to individual well-being, as explained in Inge Baxmann's comparative study of Germany and France, among other works[22]. Even with regard to modern free dance, a genuinely individualist fashion of the 1920s, or vegetarianism and similar tendencies within the so-called life reform movement, national or collective well-being, at least in theory, stood at the center of the worldview and politics of such movements[23]. According to these ideas, the individual's perfection was always a means toward higher ends.

In contrast to the nationalistic or collectivist tendency within European movements for self-cultivation, in the United States a way of understanding emerged which recognized the individual's personal development as an end in itself, without reference to an overriding social or collective well-being. Even within politicized discourses about population, the individual was now understood as the "nucleus" from which everything else would develop[24]. This trend had consequences, particularly for couples and for family life. In place of the older "morality of self-denial", a "morality of self-fulfillment" came to predominate[25]. These changes

[20] See *Peter N. Stearns*, American Cool. Constructing an Twentieth Century Emotional Style, (New York 1994) 16–57; *Stanley Coben*, Rebellion against Victorianism. The Impetus for Cultural Change in 1920s America (New York 1991) 157–158; *Michael McGerr*, A Fierce Discontent. The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870–1920 (New York 2003) 248–278; *Daniel Joseph Singal*, The War Within. From Victorianism to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919–1945 (Chapel Hill 1982) 11–33.

[21] For an overview, *Daniel Siemens*, Von Marmorleibern und Maschinenmenschen. Neue Literatur zur Körpergeschichte in Deutschland zwischen 1900 und 1936, in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 47 (2007) 639–682.

[22] See *Inge Baxmann*, Mythos Gemeinschaft. Körper- und Tanzkulturen in der Moderne, München 2000; *Michael Brenner*, *Gideon Reuveni* (eds.), Emanzipation durch Muskelkraft. Juden und Sport in Europa (Göttingen 2006).

[23] See *Ivonne Hardt*, Politische Körper. Ausdruckstanz, Choreographien des Protests und die Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik (Münster 2004); *Daniel Siemens*, "Wahre Tugend mit Beefsteaks unvereinbar". Diskurse um Ethik und Ästhetik im deutschen Vegetarismus, 1880–1940, in: *Jens Elberfeld*, *Marcus Otto* (eds.), Das schöne Selbst. Zur Genealogie des modernen Subjekts zwischen Ethik und Ästhetik (Bielefeld 2009) 133–168. On vegetarianism see also *James Gregory*, Of Victorians and Vegetarians. The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain (London 2007).

[24] See *Betsy L. Nies*, Eugenic Fantasies. Racial Ideology in the Literature and Popular Culture of the 1920's (New York 2002) 33.

[25] See *Anita Ernst Watson*, Fading Shame. Divorce Stigma in American Culture, 1882–1939, (diss. thesis, Reno, Nev. 1997); *Elaine Tyler May*, Great Expectations. Marriage and Divorce

prompted widespread insecurity, along with confusion between old and new emotional standards, which overlapped and coexisted uneasily. It was most of all in the mass media – especially the daily newspapers until the 1930s – where depictions of these changes appeared and where they gained sometimes inadvertent support. This was particularly clear in some cases of intensively covered, sensationalized criminal proceedings. Such accounts hinge on discussions of norms and their violation and thus illustrate changing assumptions about behavior standards and the rationale behind them[26].

I would like to illustrate this by an extreme but nevertheless indicative example, the coverage of the murder trial of Dorothy Pollak in Chicago in 1930. She was accused of having shot her husband, who had been almost thirty years her senior. As a motive for her deed, allegedly committed in the heat of the moment, she stated that her husband had regularly beaten her. Furthermore, he was said to have betrayed her several times, and he threatened her with a knife before she shot him. However, all evidence indicated that the murder had been premeditated. The husband, who had seen his wife's future most of all in the home, had prevented the perpetrator from pursuing her own outside ambitions[27]. A number of observers – especially female commentators – justified the murder by referring to changes in shared emotional standards. For them, Dorothy Pollak was a model of justified rebellion, both as an avenger against oppression by unfaithful and violent males and as a self-confident young woman who intended to become self-supporting and successful. Her deed enforced the right to individual happiness granted to everybody. Emotions of lasting personal dissatisfaction were perceived as a grave burden that, many now believed, one was entitled to fight, even violently.

Newspaper reporting on this trial was highly gendered: All journalists described the defendant's beauty and her stylish clothes. They emphasized her blue eyes and several times referred to the age gap between her and her husband. As suggested by such reports, her beauty and youth compared to her husband's older age and his alleged philandering might have helped to justify the deed. "It was all his fault. He was too old for her", a twenty-eight-year-old female observer of the trial stated. A thirty-four-year-old man remarked: "He was too old for her. She was entitled to shoot him."[28] One should not overestimate this case, which was natural for newspaper sensationalism and exaggeration. Nevertheless, statements such as those quoted above afford an idea of the intense, even violent character of efforts to attain individual happiness and indirectly a happy society. Beauty and youth were not just aesthetic categories. In the context of the bio-political dis-

in Post-Victorian America (Chicago 1980); *Paula S. Fass*, The Damned and the Beautiful. American Youth in the 1920s (New York 1977).

[26] *Daniel Siemens*, Metropole und Verbrechen. Die Gerichtsreportage in Berlin, Paris und Chicago, 1919–1933 (Stuttgart 2007) 43–57, 267–269.

[27] *Robert J. Casey*, "Widow Who Killed Husband Wins on Reasonable Doubt", in: Chicago Daily News (September 1, 1932).

[28] Quoted in "Closing Scenes of Pollak Case", Chicago Tribune (September 2, 1932). For more on the press coverage of this trial: *Siemens*, Metropole und Verbrechen 356–359.

course, they also conveyed a sense of struggle and conflict. This sensibility was reinforced by the eugenics movement, which since the turn of the century had employed aggressive rhetoric in its fight for the genetic improvement of American society and which drew conclusions about alleged genetic qualities from people's outer physical features[29]. For this reason, it makes sense to analyze evidence of the "worship of life" mindset in the eugenics discourse of those days.

The Eugenics Movement as a Contingent Utopia: The Promise of Happiness through Good Genes

Since the early twentieth century, eugenics-related ideas had gained a considerable following among the white middle classes. At the center of this movement was the notion that the selection of a partner according to allegedly science-based heredity principles contributed to "race betterment". Eugenicists claimed to offer a key to the improvement not just of people's physical qualities but also their mental capabilities. In the late nineteenth century, Francis Galton, the English formulator and proponent of eugenics, defined it as "the study of the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally"[30]. Spread and popularized by European scientists, especially criminologists and psychiatrists, eugenics gained currency as a domain of science that promised solutions to a variety of social problems. Its spread in the United States has seemed to historians to be an indicator of the collective fears of the Anglo-American upper and middle classes in the face of an increasingly pluralist, urban society[31]. The fact that by 1928, 376 universities and colleges offered eugenics lectures illustrates the pervasiveness of this trend[32].

[29] Publicist Albert E. Wiggam offered a typical mixture of aesthetics, racism and pseudoscience in his book The Fruit of the Family Tree: "We can have almost any kind of race of human beings we want … We want ugly women in America and we are getting them in millions. For nearly a generation until the recent immigration law was enacted, three or four shiploads have been landing at Elis Island every week. If they are all allowed to breed the future 'typical American', then the future typical American is going to be as devoid of personal beauty as this vast mass of humanity … And the moment we lose beauty we lose intelligence." *Albert E. Wiggam*, The Fruit of the Family Tree (New York 1924) 262.

[30] *Francis Galton*, Inquiries Into Human Faculty and Its Development (New York 1907 [1883]) 17n.

[31] Within those segments of society to which eugenic thought appealed, it tended to reinforce prevailing notions of gender roles within families, through the assumption that a dominant father and a subordinate mother was more or less a law of nature that served the welfare of children. *Laura L. Lovett*, Conceiving the Future. Pronatalism, Reproduction, and the Family in the United States, 1890–1939 (Chapel Hill 2007); *Wendy Kline*, Building a Better Race. Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom (Berkeley 2005 [2001]).

[32] *Laura L. Lovett*, "Fitter Families for Future Firesides": Florence Sherbon and Popular Eugenics, in: The Public Historian 29/3 (2007) 69–85, esp. 76. On the history of eugenics in

The founding of the American Eugenics Society in 1922 marked the start of a period of intense pro-eugenics campaigning. In the previous two decades, an alarmist attitude had become commonplace, characterized by dire warnings about the alleged dangers of genetically based criminality, the spread of "inferiors" who threatened the foundations of society, as well as the alleged misery of bearing disabled children[33]. The tone shifted in the 1920s, with more positive messages taking over from fear-mongering in pro-eugenics publications aimed at a popular audience. Increasingly eugenicists counted on advertising to spread their ideas. Although not exclusively eugenicist in nature, the period's fitter-family competitions were infused with eugenicist and scientific-racist attitudes. Families from rural Kansas would, for example, compete for "Kansas' best crop". These events, often located next to the animal husbandry exhibits at county and state fairs, allegedly promoted "Fitter Families for Future Firesides". They followed the tradition of earlier "Better Baby" competitions and like them combined the spread of eugenic thought through public health campaigns. However compared to the better-baby competitions, fitter-family events had a more elaborate program usually finishing with an extended festival for the entire family or – even more up to date – a motorcade through town. By the 1930s, such competitions took place in more than forty states[34].

the United States, *Mark A. Largent*, Breeding Contempt. The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States (New Brunswick, N.J. 2008); *Nancy Ordover*, American Eugenics. Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism (Minneapolis, Minn. 2003); *Steven Selden*, Inheriting Shame. The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America (New York 1999); *Ian Robert Dowbiggin*, Keeping America Sane. Psychiatry and Eugenics in the United States and Canada, 1880–1940 (Ithaca 1997); *Nicole Hahn Rafter*, Creating Born Criminals (Urbana 1997); *Marouf Arif Hasian Jr.*, The Rhetoric of Eugenics in Anglo-American Thought (Athens 1996); *Mark H. Haller*, Eugenics. Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought (New Brunswick, N.J. 1963). For international comparisons, *Mathew Thomson*, Mental hygiene as an international movement, in: *Paul Weindling* (ed.), International health organisations and movements, 1918–1939 (Cambridge 1995) 283–304; *Stefan Kühl*, Die Internationale der Rassisten. Aufstieg und Niedergang der internationalen Bewegung für Eugenik und Rassenhygiene im 20. Jahrhundert (Frankfurt a. M. 1997); *idem*, The Nazi Connection. Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism (New York 1994).

[33] See *Martin S. Pernick*, The Black Stork. Eugenics and the Death of "Defective" Babies in American Medicine and Motion Pictures since 1915 (New York 1996); *Harry Olson*, Crime and Heredity, in: Research Studies of Crime as Related to Heredity, edit. by Chicago Municipal Court (Chicago 1925) 9–29. For examples of popular, non-fiction books see *Richard L. Dugdale*, The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity (New York 1877); *Henry H. Goddard*, The Kallikak-Family. A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindness (New York 1912); *Lothrop Stoddard*, The Rising Tide of Color against White World-Supremacy (New York 1920).

[34] *Christine Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics. Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement (New York 2004) 111–114; *Lovett*, "Fitter Families for Future Firesides". On "Baby-Contests", also see *Annette K. Vance Dorey*, Better Baby Contests. The Scientific Quest for Perfect Childhood Health in the Early Twentieth Century (Jefferson, N.C. 1999). On the popularity of eugenics in the 1930s, see *Susan Currell*, *Christina Cogdale* (eds.), Popular Eugenics. National Efficiency and American Mass Culture in the 1930s (Athens, Ohio 2006).

One of the most influential promoters of eugenic thought in the 1920s was Albert Edward Wiggam (1871–1957). His books exemplify the ways that American eugenicists mixed individuality, morality, and religiosity. Like so many figures in the eugenics movement, Wiggam, born in a small village in southern Indiana, was a self-educated scientist and at the same time a gifted showman. Between 1910 and 1930, this unprepossessing man became a sought-after freelance lecturer who traveled throughout the United States and, according to his own accounts, reached more than one million paying listeners from New York to Los Angeles[35]. In addition, his popular books on eugenics, published by respectable publishing houses every three or four years after 1922, had excellent sales figures[36]. Wiggam concentrated on an urban audience, whereas the "Fitter Family" competitions – with their nostalgic glorification of healthy country life and the farmer family with many children – addressed rural America. At eugenics events in rural areas and small towns, the family took precedence over the individual[37]. By contrast, Wiggam was a representative of a more individualistic, urban-oriented version of eugenics. He addressed listeners' "worries for themselves" and brought more to the center of discussion the struggle for social and economic success, which was taken as proof of a moral way of life and evidence of one's moral superiority[38].

The goal of all eugenics-related efforts, as continually stressed by Wiggam and his compatriots, was "permanent race improvement" – race in this context implying white, Nordic Americans. He celebrated North American civilization as superior to the rest of the world, a perspective of course not exclusive to eugenicists but certainly embraced by them[39]. In his view, people were shaped not only by their inherited characteristics but also by their environment. Unfortunately, Wiggam explained, education and religion could not be inherited, but some degree of "religious temperament" could[40]. From this situation, he concluded that each individual was obliged to use his or her talents in the best possible way in order to live autonomously and to lead a morally exemplary life.

Wiggam postulated that economic, creative, or intellectual skills were immediately linked to a moral way of life. As he put it: "The higher up we go in skill – that is, in intelligence – the higher up we go in sound morals and good citizenship."[41] For Wiggam, morality meant not only the orientation of one's own way of life

35 *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 128–132; *Albert E. Wiggam*, "The Apostle of Efficiency" (brochure, no place, no date), http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/traveling-culture/chau1/pdf/wiggam/6/brochure.pdf, p. 4 (accessed: March 20, 2009).

36 By 1926, four years after its initial publication, The New Decalogue of Science reached its ninth printing, by which time The Fruit of the Family Three, published in 1924, was in its eighth printing. *Nies*, Eugenic Fantasies 31.

37 *Lovett*, "Fitter Families for Future Firesides" 79–84.

38 The title of one of his last publications is telling: *Albert E. Wiggam*, New Techniques of Happiness (New York 1948). On economic success as a component of the concept of personality, *Susman*, "Personality" 221.

39 See e.g. *Albert E. Wiggam*, The Next Age of Man (New York 1927) 171.

40 Ibid. 171–173.

41 Ibid. 191.

based upon a well-developed conscience, religious rules, or a set of abstract values. A moral life also entailed letting oneself be guided by "scientific" research and its insights. In recent centuries, Wiggam asserted, science had reshaped the world, making possible an unprecedented degree of well-being and material prosperity. "Morality is merely adequate and effective adjustment", he proclaimed[42]. Here, the shift toward the concept of personality as postulated by Susman becomes particularly obvious, with morality depicted by Wiggam very much in relational and instrumental terms. Wiggam's incoherent counsel also raises one of the essential paradoxes of this new concept of the self: How in practice could people square the oft-repeated requirement of modern life, "Express your individuality!", with the idea of "adequate adjustment"?

Nevertheless, one of the advantages of this perspective was obvious. People who were economically successful and socially accepted could also believe themselves to be ethically exemplary. Furthermore, such people could now assume themselves bearers of "good" genes. In this way, Wiggam provided his audience with biological and – as might be particularly important in times of intensified social change – stable criteria for the positive and permanent exclusion of other, less-favored segments: African Americans, immigrants, criminals. He interpreted existing social inequality as the logical result of different hereditary factors. In this way, differences of class and race were naturalized. Wiggam claimed that poor people were in that situation for the most part "because they do not possess by nature the ability, temperament and energy to become rich"[43]. And even if for environmental reasons African Americans supposedly developed much better in America than in Africa, they were simply overtaxed by the complexity of American reality. On account of their innate characteristics, Wiggam stated, blacks were not able to perform the necessary "higher integrative processes of the nervous system"[44].

Eugenics promoters such as Wiggam intended to speed up social change, which they imagined to be inevitable. In effect, they sought to accelerate the selection of the best, while leaving the social status quo basically untouched. Nothing makes this more obvious than a look at the gender relationships that Wiggam postulated: All the values and emotions he cited in a positive way had traditionally male connotations. Wiggam's ideal of economic, political, or intellectual leaders were exclusively Nordic males, whose superiority over women and seemingly effeminate immigrant males was clearly marked by the body-images he used[45]. While also useful for and adept at supporting their husbands, Nordic women were to per-

[42] Ibid. 162; *Heinze*, Schizophrenia Americana 231–233.
[43] *Wiggam,* The Next Age of Man 236. Elsewhere he wrote that the higher classes of society were biologically different from the lower classes, see ibid. 272.
[44] Ibid. 140. This idea was also central to legitimize the military segregation of blacks in the U.S. Army prior to the Korean War, *Christine Knauer*, "If We Must Die, Let Us Die as Free Men Not Jim Crow Slaves!" The African American Community, Military Service, War, and the Black Soldier in Postwar America (PhD thesis, Tübingen 2009).
[45] On male body images in the 1920s see *Nies*, Eugenic Fantasies 1944.

ceive their highest contribution to society (and thus their greatest happiness) in giving birth to and raising "well-born", healthy children[46]. Through the use of such slogans, Wiggam appealed to the attitudes of many males still influenced by Victorian morality. The pressures for success faced by such men, along with the perceived increase in competition from women and immigrants, were shaking their confidence in their social status and in the security of their position as the family's breadwinner and legitimate head[47].

Wiggam endeavored to make his praise of eugenics not look like a break with traditional ideas of happiness and morality. An undated leaflet – which he probably distributed during public evening lectures and in which he praised himself in the common semantics of the time as the "Apostle of Efficiency" – insisted "Mr. Wiggam Does *Not Lecture on Sex-Hygiene*". Such disclaimers recognized that much of his audience came from a traditionalist-religious background. The leaflet explained that eugenics was related to sexual hygiene, but that it had more in common with issues such as factory legislation, the currency, and immigration policy[48]. Wiggam also rebutted accusations that he saw human reproduction as a merely technical problem. Quite the opposite was true, he insisted. Applied eugenics was *the* means for a happy, romantic, heterosexual relationship: "Eugenics Does Not Take The Romance Out Of Love. It Keeps The Romance Forever In Love." For this claim – and for numerous others – the brief leaflet provided no evidence at all. In his 1924 book, *The Fruit of the Family Tree*, however, Wiggam elaborated on this line of reasoning by asking the rhetorical question: "Can anything more completely blast the romance out of love than defective, neurotic and uncontrollable children?"[49]

For Wiggam, and for other promoters of eugenics, both traditional values in matters of sexuality and family and religious reference points were essential elements of their argumentation. In his first book, *The New Decalogue of Science*, published in 1922[50], Wiggam called the program of eugenics a "new social and political Bible". He and other eugenicist publicists regularly quoted passages from the Bible as evidence for the ancient character of eugenic thought, and by implication the divine origins of it. Also, Wiggam claimed, birth control according to eugenic criteria had always been a predominant goal of religion[51]. From his point of view eugenics, as an attempt to guide human evolution was itself a kind of new religion. At the least it would mean the "completed Christianizing of mankind"[52].

46 *Wiggam*, The Next Age of Man 256.
47 *Michael Kimmel*, Manhood in America. A Cultural History (New York 1996) 195–205.
48 *Wiggam*, "The Apostle of Efficiency" 5; *Wiggam*, The Fruit of the Family Tree 296–297.
49 Ibid. 6. In his rhetoric at least, Wiggam reflected the continuing influence of the "radical social purity movement" of the pre-World War I years. *Catherine Cocks*, Rethinking Sexuality in the Progressive Era, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 5/2 (2006) 93–118, quotation 103.
50 Quoted in *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 129.
51 *Wiggam*, The Next Age of Man 356.
52 Ibid. 398–399; *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 129.

The fact that Christianity was employed by eugenicists to legitimate their program is illustrated by the medal the American Eugenics Society gave to winners of Fitter Family competitions. The medal depicts a baby being given a burning torch by its parents who wear ancient robes – a symbol for passing on extraordinary genes. On another version, seeds in a carafe are passed on to the child. Above both images, a verse from the King James Bible version of the 16th Psalm appears: "Yea, I Have a Goodly Heritage." The New American Standard Bible underscores the eugenicists' misappropriation of this phrase – which refers to divine and not genetic inheritance – by rendering it: "Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me."[53]

Many leading clergymen supported eugenics, as demonstrated by Christine Rosen in her study *Preaching Eugenics*. Leaders of liberal wings of various Protestant denominations were susceptible to eugenics arguments, which seemed to conform to their agenda of a socially relevant church open to new intellectual and scientific developments. Conventional religious leaders had only minimal interest in the details of genetics; however they saw their cooperation with eugenicists as way to enhance their own social relevance through cooperation with "scientific research". A pronouncement by Rev. Kenneth C. MacArthur of the Federal Church in Sterling, Massachusetts, was typical: "Eugenics offers great assistance in this effort to establish a race of people who approximate the Christian ideal."[54] Likewise in Germany, the elites of the major churches and political parties were open towards eugenic and race-hygiene ideology[55]. On both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, eugenics represented a mixture of modern social technology and a regenerated, modernized Christianity. This combination made eugenics attractive to religious people.

The acceptance of eugenics thought by many American Christians was due in part to a popular interpretation of Jesus Christ that gained influence during the second half of the nineteenth century and which eventually became known as "muscular Christianity". This perspective questioned the traditional image of Christ as the Lamb of God who turned the other cheek to his tormentors and who accepted his own execution without resistance. This image of a Son of God who submitted meekly to suffering was increasingly replaced by a new interpretation which imagined Jesus as decidedly masculine, physically and mentally strong[56].

53 For images of the medals: http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/html/eugenics/static/images/1564.html (accessed March 31, 2009). See also *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 114. For the various English versions of the 6th line of Psalm 16 see Parallel Bible, http://bible.cc/psalms/16–6.htm (accessed March 31, 2009).

54 Quoted in *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 126. On the links between "religious perfectionism" and eugenics thought in the nineteenth century, *Ronald G. Walters*, Primers for Prudery. Sexual Advice to Victorian America (Baltimore 2000) 143–159.

55 See *Ingrid Richter*, Katholizismus und Eugenik in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich. Zwischen Sittlichkeitsreform und Rassenhygiene (Paderborn 2001); *Michael Schwartz*, Sozialistische Eugenik. Eugenische Sozialtechnologien in Debatten und Politik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1890–1933 (Bonn 1995).

56 See *Clifford Puttney*, Muscular Christianity. Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920 (Cambridge, Mass. 2003).

By the 1920s, this assertive, manly Christ acquired virtues highly appreciated during the interwar period: "leadership skills". Emblematic of this new emphasis was Bruce Barton's book *The Man Nobody Knows*, which will be analyzed in the third section of this essay. In its own way, Barton's book also exemplified the "worship of life" mentality that intrigued and worried Huizinga.

Bruce Barton's Case for Christianity Free of Suffering or Transcendence

The Man Nobody Knows was the book hit of the years 1925 and 1926. Bruce Barton, an influential advertising expert and political adviser, offered his new interpretation of Biblical Jesus: In the first place, he had not been – as depicted in theological tradition – a figure who suffered, who was persecuted and tortured, but a physically strong, hardened, and attractive young man, an early advertising genius and a successful recruiter and leader of men. As Barton wrote: "Jesus pushed a plane and swung an adze; he was a successful carpenter. He slept outdoors and spent his days walking around his favourite lake … The vigorous activities of his days gave his nerves the strength of steel … [Later] he was the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem."[57]

Barton, a kind of modernist evangelist, recounted the life of this Jesus in seven short chapters. He wrote simple, accessible prose, using clear arguments and avoiding theological controversies. In this book, Barton displayed no interest in metaphysical speculation. According to him, the success story of Christianity – a kind of global human-service enterprise – was primarily due to Jesus's advertising and public relations skills. Barton turned Jesus into a sort of founding figure of modern capitalism, even entitling a chapter "The Founder of Modern Business". As the author saw it, Jesus's primary achievement was not so much a better product, which is to say a superior theology or religious doctrine, but his success in entering and operating in the highly competitive religious market, thanks especially to innovative advertisement: "Assuredly, there was no demand for a new religion; the world was already oversupplied."[58] Elsewhere in the book, Barton makes Jesus a fighter for democracy and equal rights, maybe even an early prophet of the American independence movement: "He called upon men to throw away fear … and claim the Lord of Creation as Father. It is the basis of all revolt, all democracy … No wonder the authorities trembled."[59] In the 1920s, Barton was by no means the only one who sought to enable Americans to relate better to Jesus as someone

[57] *Bruce Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows, intro. *Richard M. Fried* (Chicago 2000) 4. The book was fourth among American bestsellers in 1925 and first in 1926. *Richard M. Fried*, The Man Everybody Knew. Bruce Barton and the Making of Modern America (Chicago 2005) 101.
[58] *Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows 45.
[59] Ibid. 47.

who enjoyed life and knew how to live in the world[60]. Some Protestant churches sought to gain attention by proclaiming themselves as "The House of Happiness". Others resorted to slogans such as "Christianity Makes People Healthy, Happy and Prosperous" – a perspective that overlapped with that of the eugenicists[61]. As Richard M. Fried notes in his biography of Barton, the publicist was particularly interested in showing how religious belief could be reconciled with modern times. The son of a Protestant minister who had published his own writings aimed at popular audiences, though more traditional in style and content, Barton sought neither to abandon nor surpass Protestant Christianity. Instead, he wanted gradually to change it to make it compatible with the demands of a modern, capitalist consumer society[62]. If this adaptation succeeded, he argued, religion would be able to regain its traditional task of creating meaning and order[63].

The time for a popular book on religion and modernity was well chosen. Barton clearly drew upon familiar themes in contemporary American culture in his version of the widespread effort to reconcile religion and modernity[64]. By way of comparison, *völkisch* movements within German Protestantism propagated an Aryan Christianity that shared some features with Barton's muscular Jesus or with pro-eugenicist lines in American Protestantism but that absorbed German nationalist attitudes as well. By the 1890s, for example, the Lutheran minister and author Arthur Bonus demanded nothing less than a Germanization of Christianity[65]. To some extent, then, national-religious strands in German, British, or American Protestantism almost certainly were a feature of trans-Atlantic religious history[66].

60 The cinema also turned Jesus into an entertainment icon, with movies about him made from both liberal-progressive and conservative-fundamentalist perspectives. See *Richard Wightman Fox*, Jesus in America. Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession (San Francisco 2005) 307–318.

61 Quoted in *R. Laurence Moore*, Touchdown Jesus. The Mixing of Sacred and Secular in American History (Louisville 2003) 64.

62 William E. Barton's books included Jesus of Nazareth. His Life and the Scenes of His Ministry (1903); Bruce Barton devoted himself to the popularization of religion in numerous writings, including A Young Man's Jesus (1914) and The Book Nobody Knows (1926), a successful follow-up to his 1925 bestseller. *Fox*, Jesus in America 318.

63 *Fried*, The Man Everybody Knew 84–85. For a contrasting argument, *Coben*, Rebellion against Victorianism 26–27.

64 See, for example, the essay by *Michael Hochgeschwender* in this volume.

65 *Arthur Bonus*, Von Stöcker zu Naumann. Ein Wort zur Germanisierung des Christentums (Heilbronn 1896); *Rainer Lächele*, Protestantismus und völkische Religion im deutschen Kaiserreich, in: *Uwe Puschner*, *Walter Schmitz*, *Justus H. Ulbricht* (eds.), Handbuch zur "Völkischen Bewegung" 1871–1918 (München 1999) 149–163; *Uwe Puschner*, Weltanschauung und Religion – Religion und Weltanschauung. Ideologie und Formen völkischer Religion, in: Zeitenblicke 5/1 (2006), http:www.zeitenblicke.de/2006/1/Puschner (accessed: Aug. 5, 2008).

66 On the effort to build a trans-Atlantic history of religion, *Hartmut Lehman* (ed.), Transatlantische Religionsgeschichte. 18.–20. Jahrhundert (Göttingen 2006). For case studies, *Thomas Hahn-Bruckart*, Friedrich von Schlümbach. Erweckungsprediger zwischen Deutschland und Amerika. Interkulturalität und Transkonfessionalität im 19. Jahrhundert

Also contributing to the success of Barton's book was the fact that he turned Jesus's life into an analogy for the experiences and desires of many of his readers. Jesus, Burton wrote, came from a small, obscure place on the country, where already at an early age he did hard physical labor and was increasingly burdened by his father with responsibilities for the family enterprise, a carpenter's workshop[67]. Jesus, however, had greater ambitions and finally went to the capital, where he sought to implement his religious (or rather business) vision and become powerful and influential. The parallel to the experience of urbanization in the United States between 1890 and 1940 leaps out. Barton himself, along with many of his readers, grew up in small towns and moved to the cities as young adults, where they sought professional success and a better life. Basically, the book offers the venerable American dream in a new religious guise. It adapts the gospels for the developing consumer society. It justifies modern American values by reference to religion, while at the same time contributing to the period's "deification of businessmen"[68].

From the perspective of the history of emotions, Barton's interpretation of Jesus illustrates in an almost-paradigmatic way the "emotionological change" postulated by Stearns. "Victorian" emotions such as guilt, grief, and romantic-irrational love, all of which had hitherto seemed essential for an understanding of the New Testament, gave way in Barton's account to the new "emotional setting" of cool rationality and control of emotional states[69]. Barton's Jesus had "nerves of steel". He was masterful in tense critical situations, "one of the finest examples of self-control in all human history"[70].

It is a commonplace of the iconographic analysis of religion that visual images of Jesus mirror hegemonic ideals of beauty in different periods[71]. Against this background, Barton's descriptions are telling. When recounting the story of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (from chapter 5 of the Saint John's Gospel), the sufferer looked up and saw "the calm assurance of those blue eyes, the supple strength of those muscles, the ruddy skin that testified to the rich red blood beneath" – and, as Barton adds, "the healing occurred"[72]. A few lines later, Barton describes the encounter of his Nordic-Aryan Jesus with Pontius Pilate: "In the face of the Roman were deep unpleasant lines; his cheeks were fatty with self-indulgence; he had the colorless look of the indoor living. The straight young man stood inches above him, bronzed and hard, and clean as the air of his loved mountain and lake."[73] At a Fitter Family competition, this Jesus, a kind of Aryan Greek

(Göttingen 2011); *Wolfhart Pentz*, Sozialprotestantismus in den USA und Deutschland. Social Gospel und christlich soziale Bewegung bis 1914 (München 2005).

67 See *Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows 22.

68 See *Leuchtenburg*, The Perils of Prosperity 188–189.

69 See *Stearns*, American Cool 139–182.

70 *Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows 28.

71 See *Morgan*, Protestants and Pictures 265–304.

72 *Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows 24.

73 Ibid. 29.

à la Leni Riefenstahl, would have probably have received a Grade A, whereas Pilate, the Roman, conformed to negative images widespread among the American middle classes of Southern European immigrants to their country: an unrestrained type, a parasite formed by city life and suited only to it, a burden upon hard-working rural and small-town Americans[74]. That Barton's Jesus might also have been useful as an advertising icon for the American Eugenics Society provides further indication of the popularity of eugenic thought and symbolism among American Protestants during the 1920s.

Even eighty years after its initial publication, Barton's book still wins support from many religious Americans. At least one has that impression when reading comments on the current edition of the book at Amazon.com. Only a few consider Barton's interpretation a "bizarre anachronism … something just short of obscene" or regard it as merely an historical source; the majority of readers seem uncritically enthusiastic. For example, a reviewer from Utah writes: "The Man Nobody Knows is a wonderful tool for examining Christ's life as a smiling, divine businessman. As the wheel of big business turns and men spend their lives striving to make millions of dollars, Barton reminds us of one businessman who gave his life in comforting millions of souls." Another reviewer remarks, again without any trace of irony: "One of the greatest falsehoods about the message of Jesus has been exposed … Revealing the 'Jesus Business Plan', Barton points out that to be successful in business, love, and life … One must be a SERVANT. Ford 'served' us with transportation, Edison with light, Bell with communication, Disney with fantasy. Choose what you want to 'receive' and then GIVE IT AWAY. A lesson for the ages."[75]

Conclusion

Both Wiggam's popularizations of eugenics and Barton's updating of Jesus offer paradigms of the new emotional style emerging in the United States in the early twentieth century. Such images propagated notions of vitality and individual happiness as essential material and spiritual values. Both authors emphasized physical strength, control of emotional states and cool rationality, all of which they perceived as to some degree products of heredity. While Susman and Stearns characterized this new, highly masculine emotional style in their own ways, Huizinga was perceptive in describing it as the "worship of life". The Dutch scholars' term underscores the phenomenon's essential "emotionological" feature: the radical

[74] On this contrast between imagery of Nordic, old-stock Americans and decadent, undisciplined southern Europeans, *Nies*, Eugenic Fantasies 28–39.

[75] See customer reviews of *Bruce Barton*, The Man Nobody Knows, http://www.amazon.com/Man-Nobody-Knows-Bruce-Barton/product-reviews/1566632943/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_summary?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending (accessed Mar. 20, 2009).

orientation towards this world commonplace in popular religious writings of the era. In contrast to the apocalyptic scenarios hitherto presented by eugenicists, Wiggam and Barton in their different ways glorified the traditional American social order as a sort of heaven on earth. Even if elements of this style were present earlier, the "worship of life" exemplified a modern idea of the self that became conventional in the United States between 1890 and 1940. While this development was contradictory in many respects, it reveals a specifically American confluence of science and religion, of progressive-liberal attitudes and traditionalist, paternalist-hierarchical views. It was modern precisely because of its contradictions, an American episode in the transnational history of modern identity and emotion in the first half of the twentieth century.

Summary

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht, in welcher Weise sich in den USA zwischen 1890 und 1940 das hegemoniale Verständnis des Selbst veränderte. Er schließt damit an Überlegungen von Warren I. Susman sowie von Carol und Peter Stearns an, die für diese Zeit einen Wandel vom viktorianischen Konzept des Charakters hin zu einem modernen Verständnis von Personalität postulieren. Ihnen zufolge sei die zumindest als Ideal bis zum späten 19. Jahrhundert vorherrschende „morality of self-denial" in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts von einer „morality of self-fulfillment" abgelöst worden. Der niederländische Kulturhistoriker Johan Huizinga sprach schon 1935 von einem „wahren Kult des Lebens", der die amerikanische Moderne kennzeichne. Anhand einer Analyse von auf den ersten Blick so disparaten Quellen wie der Berichterstattung über einen seinerzeit sensationellen Mordprozess, der Rhetorik eines populären Vortragsreisenden in Sachen Eugenik sowie von Bruce Bartons Erfolgsbuch „The Man Nobody knows", einer Adaptation des neutestamentarischen Evangeliums für die kapitalistische Moderne, wird an konkreten Beispielen gezeigt, wie durchgreifend dieser emotiologische Wandel war. Zugleich verdeutlicht dieser Aufsatz, dass die skizzierten Veränderungen nicht nur als Bruch mit älteren Traditionen anzusehen sind, sondern in vielerlei Hinsicht eine radikale Zuspitzung dessen bedeuteten, was die soziale Ordnung in den USA schon im 19. Jahrhundert zusammengehalten hatte. Physische Stärke und kühle Rationalität, die zur Befriedigung des eigenen Anspruchs auf Glück eingesetzt werden konnten und sollten, waren zentrale Elemente eines Individualitätsentwurfs, der gerade in seiner Widersprüchlichkeit ein hervorstechendes Element der US-amerikanischen „fractured modernity" war.

2. Transnational Perspectives

Alan Lessoff

American Progressivism: Transnational, Modernization, and Americanist Perspectives[1]

"We are doing very different things in this country; we are animated by different motives; we are living in different ages", remarked urban affairs writer Frederic Howe at the end of his 1913 book, *European Cities at Work*[2]. During the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, Howe was an influential advocate for American cities emulating European initiatives in urban social services, public administration, and planning. Yet even self-consciously cosmopolitan writers such as Howe emphasized that European innovations needed to be adapted to conditions and traditions distinctive to the United States. American observers of European reform did not always understand the context and details of the German, British, and French ideas and measures they wrote about. Moreover, American reform writers were aware of their vulnerability to the charge of importing foreign statist, authoritarian, and collectivist ideas, and so they did not always present European debates in unvarnished terms. Still, the insistence of progressives such as Howe that while American progressivism overlapped with European social democracy, American reform movements had historical roots and qualities distinct from European counterparts arose from observation, understanding, and choice more than from patriotic pandering, dissimulation, or self-referential exceptionalism.

This essay takes a skeptical look at the transnational interpretations of American progressivism put forth by prominent historians during the late twentieth century. While recognizing the usefulness of a transnational analysis of this major episode in American political development, the essay draws attention to alternate perspectives that have remained popular and retained analytical utility. One durable mode of interpretation, familiar to scholars in different countries, arises loosely from modernization theory and emphasizes the comparative – as opposed to transnational – study of reform movements in different modernizing countries. The second alternate mode of analysis, which I label *Americanist*, was perhaps more vibrant and was certainly more reflective of the day-to-day practice of his-

[1] The author thanks Ian Tyrrell and Walter Nugent for lengthy comments on an earlier draft. He also thanks Robert D. Johnston for sharing with him relevant work-in-progress.

[2] *Frederic Howe*, European Cities at Work (New York 1913) 360.

tory in the United States than transnational or comparative methodologies. In many countries, the word *Americanist* refers to anyone who studies the United States in an academic way, but here I mean studies of progressivism (or other matters) animated by concerns *internal to* the United States. The overall point is that transnational research and argument has deserved the attention it has received for broadening the context of American history and combating intellectual and popular parochialism. Nevertheless, American scholars in practice continue to follow alternate frameworks and agendas.

In this international book of skeptical essays about modernity, the word *progressive* can be a distraction. The word and criticism of it have an international history intertwined with myriad modernist discourses on modernity. Despite stereotypes of the country as heedlessly devoted to progress with few doubts or even reflection, the United States has produced a powerful literature of misgivings, represented by writers as diverse as William James, Henry Adams, Lewis Mumford, and Christopher Lasch[3]. Nevertheless, an overriding tendency to identify aspects of American society with progress itself has long existed, and this became a volatile element in transnational history as United States influence expanded beyond North America. Embraced by American social and political reformers early in the twentieth century, *progressive* did suggest an identity between American institutions, culture, and technology – at least aspects which progressives saw as modern-minded and not retrograde – and the advance of civilization. Against such a background, many foreign and American readers cannot encounter *progressive* applied to an era of United States history and resist the impulse to deconstruct the notion in a way that highlights its triteness, presumptuousness, ethnocentrism, and frequent amorality. For the moment, one might leave aside the question of whether the United States has stood for progress defined as the advance of humane values. The question at hand is how to analyze the reform movements that gave the Progressive Era its name in relation to analogous movements elsewhere.

Transnational Perspectives

The 1990s and 2000s saw an upsurge in efforts to apply the concept of transnationalism to progressivism, among other aspects of United States history. The notion of a *transnational* analysis has suffered the defect of being fashionable and tied to intellectual good causes; people spread the term so readily onto whatever they write about that it threatens to lose analytical usefulness. The defining characteristic of a transnational approach, according to Ian Tyrrell, the excellent Australian historiographer and practitioner of transnational history, is de-emphasis on

[3] See *Christopher Lasch*, The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics (New York 1991). For a critique, *Andrew Hartman*, Christopher Lasch: Critic of Liberalism, Historian of Its Discontents, in: Rethinking History 13 (2009) 499–519.

events and trends within the boundaries of the nation-state in favor of cross-border events, trends, and movements that reveal a country to be "culturally, economically, and socially porous", shaped by interactions with other parts of the world. Transnationalism stresses "the movement of peoples, ideas, technologies, and institutions across national boundaries" and envisions the national-state as "not the only historical 'actor'", but as only one, albeit an important locus of activity and power in a world that is "multilayed, including regional and global dimensions"[4]. As Tyrrell explains, starting with Progressive Era scholars such as Frederick Jackson Turner and Charles Beard, many American historians did try to place the United States in a broad geographic, economic, and political context. Still, transnationalists are correct to charge that for much of the twentieth century, Americans often wrote and talked as though the main shaping factors of United States history were internal, with even neighboring countries such as Mexico only episodically impinging on developments within the country's borders.

Starting in the 1980s, the Organization of American Historians gave significant support to initiatives such as the La Pietra conferences to work through the conceptual problems of transnationalism and to develop professional frameworks to sustain such research. Some reasons for the turn within United States history toward transnationalism arose from internal developments in fields such as foreign relations, immigration and ethnic history, cultural and intellectual history, slavery and race, economic, environmental, and urban history, and so on. But the overarching context was a strong sense among an influential group of American academic historians that insufficient intellectual integration with scholars around the world analytically impoverished the study of the United States. Projects to upgrade international connections arose amid politicized scholarly debates within the United States over globalization and world-systems theory, the nation-state and its future, and the costs of the West's and America's self-referential, arrogant sense of an exceptional mission and character. Transnational perspectives on the United States perform a "civic purpose", writes Thomas Bender, another formidable advocate. By encouraging "a cosmopolitan appreciation of American participation in a history larger than itself", historians could help "imbue our national history and civic discourse with appropriate humility"[5].

In 1991, Tyrrell defined the debate in an *American Historical Review* essay that began by asserting that "nation-centered history" had proved especially "resilient" in the United States. From nineteenth-century German historiography, which had enormous influence on the American historical profession in its formative phases, Americans absorbed the idealistic-nationalistic concept of history as the unfolding story of the nation and "grafted [it] onto an existing tradition of exceptionalism". In a spirited response, political historian Michael McGerr

[4] *Ian Tyrrell*, Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789 (Basingstoke 2007) 2–4. Also *Ian Tyrrell*, Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice, in: Journal of Global History 4 (2009) 453–474.
[5] *Thomas Bender*, Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History (New York 2006) 298.

laid out what became a standard critique of the transnationalist approach. Few first-rank American historians took seriously the exceptionalism of popular discourse, McGerr protested. Most insisted that the United States shared much with other industrial, capitalist countries but also had distinctive features that had to be taken into account. "Perhaps a more rigorous comparative history", McGerr argued, "scrupulous in its assessment of national difference, could shield us from the toxic effects of exceptionalism and allow us to continue with our work as American historians."[6]

Progressivism offered an obvious area for transnational scholarship. During the decades before World War I, reform groups in the United States were aware that the problems they dealt with had parallels elsewhere. Experts on social welfare, urban affairs, and public administration, among other concerns, communicated with counterparts in other countries and reported on measures attempted abroad. Equivalent migrations and interchanges across the Atlantic took place among labor, socialist, and radical activists. On an intellectual level, Robert Kelley's 1969 book, *The Transatlantic Persuasion*, established the cosmopolitan character of Victorian liberalism[7]. Historians have long understood both the Social Gospel and its nemesis, social Darwinism, as transatlantic tendencies. Historians of higher education and the social sciences routinely cited Jürgen Herbst's 1965 book, *The German Historical School in the United States*, though not until Robert Crunden's *Ministers of Reform* (1982) and Dorothy Ross's *Origins of American Social Science* (1991) did the extent of the influence of German-trained academics on progressive thought sink home with historians of progressivism[8].

The first major book in the current transnational approach to progressivism was James Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought* (1986), a reconstruction of the interconnections among British, French, German, and American formulators of social democratic theory. Kloppenberg's skill in placing American pragmatist and progressive thought within the Euro-American attack upon formalist liberalism, neoclassical economics, and Hegelian idealism brought the United States to the center of the story of intellectual and political modernism[9]. Subsequent transnational studies of

[6] *Ian Tyrrell*, American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History, in: American Historical Review 96 (1991) 1031; *Michael McGerr*, The Price of the "New Transnational History", in: American Historical Review 96 (1991) 1056, 1062.

[7] *Robert Kelley*, The Transatlantic Persuasion: The Liberal-Democratic Mind in the Age of Gladstone (New York 1969). Also: *Murney Gerlach*, British Liberalism and the United States: Political and Social Thought in the Late Victorian Age (New York 2001); *Leslie Butler*, Critical Americans: Victorian Intellectuals and Transatlantic Liberal Reform (Chapel Hill 2007).

[8] *Jürgen Herbst*, The German Historical School in American Scholarship: A Study in the Transfer of Culture (Ithaca 1965); *Robert M. Crunden*, Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization (Urbana ²1984); *Dorothy Ross*, The Origins of American Social Science (New York 1991).

[9] *James Kloppenberg*, Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920 (New York 1986).

progressivism built upon Kloppenberg's account by tracing the movement across the Atlantic of institutions, professions, and policies, as well as ideas. Both Daniel Rodgers, in *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (1998), and Axel Schäfer, in *American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875–1920* (2000), depict the pre-World War I decades as fluid culturally and politically, a period of experimentation when reform-minded American scholars and professionals were open to the socially based ethics of Gustav Schmoller or the state-centered economics of Adolph Wagner[10].

Yet even before World War I, American reformers with an international perspective recognized that the political practices and social class relations of Imperial Germany were unpalatable in the United States, where a classless, republican society remained an ideal and the transcendence of class consciousness and interest a widely espoused goal. Reformers accepted that they would need to adapt German schemes for cooperative housing or town planning to American philanthropic culture and property law[11]. And then, amid the xenophobia, nationalism, and intolerance of the World War I era, Schäfer and Rodgers argue, foreign ideas and policies became tainted by association. To cite probably the most important example, the Progressive Era campaign for universal health insurance ran aground against the difficulty of recasting social insurance to conform to American traditions of private-sector control and individual self-reliance. American advocates of social insurance had long based their case on German-derived notions of social interdependence, theories now identified with Prussian authoritarianism. After World War I, the United States did tend to revert to the exceptionalist vision of itself as the most progressive nation, with little to learn from the decadent world and much to teach it. Still, the xenophobia, intolerance, reaction, and sullen nationalism of World War I and its aftermath were also transnational phenomena.

Research such as that of Kloppenberg, Rodgers, and Schäfer takes the analysis of progressivism in a direction that can discomfort American historians, with their ideological bias toward grassroots as opposed to elite reform. To the extent that progressivism was a transatlantic phenomenon, these writers imply, it was a top-down, diffusionist one. That is to say, professionals, activists, and academics brought back ideas and programs and reformulated them for American conditions, at which point they diffused across the country and down in the social scale. With the partial exception of the labor and radical ideas carried into the United States by working-class immigrants, most transnational analyses of American reform concentrate on prominent, privileged people whose foreign experiences gave direction to their activism back home.

[10] *Daniel T. Rodgers*, Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age (Cambridge 1998). *Axel R. Schäfer*, American Progressives and German Social Reform, 1875–1920 (Stuttgart 2000).

[11] *Shelton Stromquist*, Reinventing "The People": The Progressive Movement, the Class Problem, and the Origin of Modern Liberalism (Urbana 2006). *Thomas Adam*, Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s–1930s (Bloomington 2009) ch. 2.

To dwell on a significant example of this tension between top-down and grassroots sources of reform, American scholars now concur that women activists played a huge role in defining and pushing the social reform dimensions of progressivism. Typically, American writers perceive the Progressive Era women's reform movement as originating in a vast variety of local movements for what was called "municipal housekeeping", for improved housing and working conditions, and for upgraded public health, education, social services, and morals regulation[12]. This emphasis on community activism as the source of women's progressivism exists alongside a transnational narrative that stresses efforts by figures such as Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and Florence Kelley to adapt ideas encountered in Great Britain or Germany. Likewise, the transnational story of the women's suffrage movement is by its nature leader-centered. It emphasizes younger activists such as Lucy Burns and Alice Paul, who sought to reinvigorate the American suffrage campaign with a militant, direct-action approach brought back from England. Or it dwells on figures such as Carrie Chapman Catt, who hoped to build an international women's suffrage movement, or on the organizers of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Progressive Era movements for temperance and urban planning likewise had a strong foundation in local movements in different parts of the United States, as well as a transnational dimension that hinged on the diffusion of proposals and practices carried across oceans by professionals, activists, and scholars[13].

Foreign relations history, long stereotyped as an especially elite-oriented field, has by contrast allowed for broad pictures in social terms of American interactions with the world. This is because of the range of groups besides educated professionals who participated in American ventures in Latin America and the Pacific. For example, Paul Kramer's study of American rule in the Philippines traces the dealings of mid-level Americans – officials, teachers, and missionaries – with elite and ordinary Filipinos. In *Reforming the World* (2010), Tyrrell uses missionary activity to illustrate the breadth and variety of the "networks" and "webs" that American religious activists built in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. In *The Canal Builders* (2009), Julie Greene details the work and lives of the multinational population drawn to the Panama Canal, an organizational and engineering feat that epitomizes the American Progressive Era. U.S. officials in the Philippines, Cuba, and especially the Panama Canal Zone had far more latitude for experimentation than in the United States itself. Contemporaries thus understood

[12] *Maureen A. Flanagan*, America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s–1920s (New York 2007), sums up much recent research on women in progressive reform. Also, *Elisabeth Israels Perry*, Men Are from the Gilded Age, Women Are from the Progressive Era, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 1 (2002) 25–48.

[13] *Ian Tyrrell*, Woman's World/Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930 (Chapel Hill 1991); *Anthony Sutcliffe*, Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, and the United States, 1780–1914 (New York 1981); *Jon A. Peterson*, The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840–1917 (Baltimore 2003) esp. ch. 11, 14.

American imperial ventures as proving grounds for the statist version of progressivism. In the Canal Zone, Greene observed, "the government owned the railroads, the hotels, the stores, and the restaurants and even provided free housing to every resident". Greene emphasizes, however, that this success hinged on ethnocentric methods for classifying the Canal Zone's polyglot population and technocratic methods for managing it[14].

Comparative Perspectives

As McGerr noted, the most common way that American historians have examined progressivism's international context has not been through a *transnational* approach but a *comparative* one. The basic distinction is that transnationalists emphasize *entangled* developments that take place across national borders. Writers who espouse a transnational perspective usually intend to cast doubt upon the emphasis customarily placed upon the nation-state, national politics, and national culture. Comparativists are more apt to regard national differences of institutions, politics, and culture as crucial matters to study. They seek to trace how transnational social and economic forces have divergent manifestations in different national contexts. Most commentators in the end accept that comparative and transnational perspectives are not inherently opposed. Still proponents of applying one or the other methodology to United States history have quarreled in part because of transnationalists' suspicion that any stress upon national difference might inadvertently reinforce exceptionalist ideas about the United States[15].

Comparative analyses of the United States were well-established before the Progressive Era. In fact, a comparative understanding of urbanization and industrial capitalism animated the progressives' search for solutions in Germany, France, and Britain. In Europe and North America, the new social science of the late nineteenth century hinged on a reform Darwinist perspective on social development. Reform Darwinists such as Lester Frank Ward lambasted the Herbert Spencer version of social Darwinism. They insisted instead that competitive individualism was not an innate characteristic, but a backward, transient stage in human evolution, which was moving toward cooperation, social awareness, and humanitarianism. This social evolutionary mindset could ratify assimilationist

[14] *Julie Greene*, The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal (New York 2009) 180–186, *Paul A. Kramer*, The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines (Chapel Hill 2006). *Ian Tyrrell*, Reforming the World: The Creation of Americ a's Moral Empire (Princeton 2010). Also *Alan Dawley*, Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution (Princeton 2003) 76–92.

[15] *Tyrrell*, Reflections on the Transnational Turn. *George Fredrickson*, From Exceptionalism to Variability: Recent Developments in Cross-National Comparative History, in: Journal of American History 82 (1995) 587–604. *Ballard Campbell*, Comparative Perspectives on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 1 (2002) 154–177.

approaches to supposedly backward immigrants and scientific racist approaches to supposedly incompetent racial minorities. It could also reinforce a civilizing-mission, white-man's-burden outlook on non-Western societies. From a reform Darwinist perspective, laissez-faire capitalism was backward, but pre-capitalist societies were even more so.

Still, the evolutionary outlook helps to explain why progressives understood themselves as progressive: They believed that they were pushing forward the evolution of civilization. Social evolutionism also encouraged a sense of commonality with other developing nations and a search for answers in them. Only at the end of the Progressive Era did serious critiques of such evolutionary models filter into American social and political thought. For example, neither Franz Boas's anthropology, with its relativistic denial of a hierarchy of cultures, nor Max Weber's sociology, with its haunting picture of dehumanizing modernity, as yet exerted widespread influence[16].

After World War I, this evolutionary outlook gradually gave way to theories of modernization, the most common comparative framework applied to American history. Modernization amounts to an alternate stage-model mode of thought that depicts urban, industrial capitalism as dissolving traditional cultures and inherited behavior patterns, status relationships, and moral systems. Social evolutionary thought, by contrast, depends on Darwinian mechanisms of variation and adaptation; advanced civilizations retain elements of their predecessors even as they build upon and diverge from them. The vogue for formulaic, politicized versions of modernization theory, such as that presented in W.W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* (1960), was fairly brief. Still, in one form or other – often implied rather than explicit – modernization models endured as an undercurrent in American analysis of the great transformations of recent centuries. Especially between World War II and the 1970s, Weberian typologies such as tradition and reason or Ferdinand Tönnies's dichotomy of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* or concepts traceable to Henry Maine, Georg Simmel, Émile Durkheim, or Karl Polanyi provided theoretical scaffolding in American writing on the country's development[17].

By the 1950s, when the academic historiography of progressivism took definite shape, most professional historians were inclined to see it as an episode in modernization, comparable to other country's efforts to adapt their institutions to corporate capitalism and urban industrialism. Within this broad framework, histori-

16 *Alan Lessoff*, Progress before Modernization: Foreign Interpretations of American Development in James Bryce's Generation, in: American Nineteenth Century History 1 (2000) 69–96.

17 For overviews of the influence of modernization models on mid-twentieth-century United States history: *Walter Nugent*, Structures of American Social History (Bloomington 1981) esp. ch. 1. *Thomas Bender*, Community and Social Change in America (Baltimore ²1982); *Ian Tyrrell*, The Absent Marx: Class Analysis and Liberal History in Twentieth-Century America (Westport 1986). For a cross-national perspective on modernization's character and influence, *Hans-Ulrich Wehler*, Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte, in: Die Bielefelder Sozialgeschichte, ed. *Bettina Hitzer* and *Thomas Welskopp* (Bielefeld 2010) 185–251.

ans argued over meaning and emphasis. In Richard Hofstadter's iconoclastic "status anxiety" formulation, the progressives' penchant for self-defeating, moralistic gestures reflected the lingering mentality of the Anglo-American, merchant-patrician elite from which professional-class Americans in the early 1900s still generally descended. The generation of reform professionals who came of age after 1900, Hofstadter argued, had fewer psychological roots in preindustrial Protestant culture; they leaned toward the humanitarian, social-service ethic eventually identified with New Deal liberalism. Hofstadter's argument anticipated the "urban liberal" thesis of the 1970s. This influential argument portrays concrete improvements in urban life as achievable when progressives dropped their aversion to urban machine politicians and sought a fusion between their own professionalism and organization and the urban ethnic ethos – derived in theory from European village traditions but still functional in modern society – of mutuality and nonmoralizing service[18].

A competing line of analysis also rooted in modernization theory depicts progressivism as an attempt by the new middle class of managers, technicians, and professionals to reshape society in its image. Whatever their family backgrounds, in this view, progressives had cast aside the premodern, merchant-patrician mindset for the ethos of efficiency and science. "Most [progressives] lived and worked in the midst of modern society", Robert Wiebe argued in his widely read *The Search for Order* (1967). "Theirs was an unusually open, expansive scheme of reform which took them further and further into modern society's hitherto unexamined corners."[19] One version of this analysis, the so-called organizational synthesis, named by Louis Galambos in 1970 and linked to structural-functional sociology, saw progressivism as a trend toward rationalization in the sense intended by Max Weber or Talcott Parsons. Public-sector reforms such as municipal reorganization, upgraded education, a professional civil service, improved public health and social services, and expert regulation of business were analogous to private-sector movements for corporate restructuring, professional and scientific management, and welfare capitalism. All these rationalized a society that had transformed from being localized and small scale to interwoven and modernized[20].

Yet another formulation of the modernization model of progressivism – known as the "corporate liberal" school and derived from neo-Marxist and New Left thought – saw the governmental restructuring, regulatory agencies, and social welfare measures of the Progressive Era as elite maneuvers to adapt society and

18 *Richard Hofstadter*, The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R. (New York 1955) 204.
19 *Robert Wiebe*, The Search for Order, 1877–1920 (New York 1967) 165. Also *Samuel P. Hays*, The Response to Industrialism, 1885–1914 (Chicago 1957); *Samuel P. Hays*, American Political History as Social Analysis (Knoxville 1980).
20 *Louis Galambos*, The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern American History, in: Business History Review 44 (1970) 279–290. *Galambos*, Technology, Political Economy, and Professionalization: Central Themes of the Organizational Synthesis, in: Business History Review 57 (1983) 471–493.

politics to the requirements of corporate capital and to co-opt or assuage enough of the working class and the reformist middle class to ensure capitalism's legitimacy. Over the decades, the aura of conspiracy that surrounded early New Left writing on progressivism faded, but many American authors with left-leaning sympathies still see progressive reform as a defensive adjustment to preserve a threatened social and political system amid what Theodore Roosevelt called "the great dumb forces set in operation by the stupendous industrial revolution" of the 1800s[21].

Modernization models of progressivism, as well as of other social and political phenomena, eventually make historians impatient for reasons that various critics have sketched. Modernization analyses can fall into the defects of both systems theories and stage models. As to the first problem, writers from a modernization perspective frequently go beyond using concepts such as the "social system" or the "political system" as analytical tools; they impute a tangible existence to these heuristic concepts. Such reification tends to underplay the significance of ambiguities, contingencies, and conflicts within societies or political systems over how to respond to and how to shape social, economic, or political change. The broad, deterministic brushstrokes with which modernization writers generalize about progressivism – a political phenomenon so diffuse and contradictory that some scholars have denied it had coherent existence at all – counts as an example of this problem.

The stage-model character of modernization can reinforce the error of treating systems as entities apart from the people who comprise them. Modernization models can envision modernity as emerging through a set of preordained steps that work roughly the same in every society. This outlook underemphasizes social change as the contingent result of people's thoughts and actions. If the political and social reforms of the Progressive Era amounted to predictable responses to urban industrialism and socio-cultural modernity, then the era's searching debates on society and politics and its intense political and policy movements would in turn amount to sound and fury that signify little. Progressive Era social and political thought stressed engagement, civic responsibility, and the efficacy of activism; it seems paradoxical for historians to treat as inevitable a series of movements devoted to the notion that people could improve society through deliberate effort. The transnational scholars of progressivism – with their emphasis on the creation and exchange of ideas and these ideas' translation into policy in different national and local contexts – have proved a healthy influence against modernization's tendency to trivialize progressive thought and activism.

21 Quoted in *Eric Rauchway*, Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America (New York 2003) 93. An early formulation of the New Left thesis: *Gabriel Kolko*, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900–1916 (New York 1963). Later versions, more sophisticated in research and argument, include *James Weinstein*, The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900–1918 (Boston 1968); *Martin J. Sklar*, The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890–1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics (New York 1988).

Nonetheless, modernization models invite a comparative approach because, as George Mowry, a prominent post-World War II historian of progressivism, explained, "As elsewhere in the world, social democracy in the United States was the obvious product of large-scale industry and modern urbanization", even taking into account the "many idiosyncratic factors in American society that gave it a somewhat different character from its European counterparts". Writing at the height of modernization's influence in 1970, Mowry noted "the extensive international borrowing of American Progressives" and deplored the extent that American historians, himself included, failed adequately "to treat the institution of social democracy as an international one"[22]. In subsequent decades, the comparative approach continued to unfold alongside the transnational perspective. For example, the New Institutionalist school of the 1980s and 90s – a variant of the "political development" approach within modernization scholarship that studied the implementation of policy and the operation of public agencies – examined progressivism from the angle of comparative state development, paying special attention to the formation of American social welfare systems by comparison to European counterparts.

The modernization mindset, however, obstructs a comparative perspective on American agrarian movements, which had a huge influence during the Progressive Era in railroad and banking regulation, antitrust policy, tax reform, and governmental restructuring. Progressive political majorities and policy innovations in key midwestern states such as Wisconsin and Iowa depended on rural support, while agrarianism molded progressivism in California, the South, and in national politics, dramatically so in Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom reforms. Modernization models tend to accept the city as embodying *Gesellschaft* and the country *Gemeinschaft*. They tend as well to depict the expansion of government and social services as rationalizations in response to urban industrialism. For these reasons, analyses of progressivism founded on modernization theories overemphasize the urban professional classes. They reinforce the pre-existing inclination among U.S. historians to identify the heartland as the stronghold of distinctively American communities and traditions. Historians of progressivism have thus tended not to define agrarian reform as a matter that needs comparative study. This despite the fact that the variety and comparative strength of agrarian influences (as opposed to the urban working and professional classes) may have been the most tangible cause of the divergent state-building patterns in the United States and Western Europe[23].

After the 1980s, some historians rooted in labor and working-class history developed a comparative analysis of progressivism that owed little identifiable to modernization theories. These authors' starting point was a revisiting of the fa-

[22] *George Mowry*, Social Democracy, 1900–1918, in: The Comparative Approach to American History, ed. *C. Vann Woodward* (New York 1970) 274, 276, 279–280.
[23] For a clear, succinct explanation of this issue, *Walter Nugent*, Progressivism: A Very Short History (New York 2009) 82–84.

mous comparative question posed by German sociologist Werner Sombart in 1906: "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" Scholars of labor and social reform increasingly renounced the Sombart question as a misguided distraction. These writers emphasized that the United States did produce a vigorous, indigenous socialist movement, albeit one that failed to evolve into a durable social democratic party. More important, writers on both sides of the Atlantic cast doubt on the assumption behind Sombart's question: that working-class socialism is a logical product of modernization whose absence requires explanation. Rather than fall into the "absence fallacy", scholars such as Alan Dawley in *Struggles for Justice* (1991) tried to reformulate the problem to invite more open-ended comparison: Why, given similarities in social and economic conditions, did American social reform veer toward progressivism and New Deal liberalism, while other countries developed divergent responses? For Dawley, the Sombart question arose from the conceptual error of defining the United States "against a model of Continental Europe, with its feudal legacy, class division, statist rule, and working-class socialist movements". The practice of comparing the reality of the progressive United States against an abstraction of social democratic Europe was as misleading, Dawley insisted, as the German *Sonderweg* theory, which measures Germany's troubled history against a stereotyped "Anglo-American liberal capitalism"[24].

Americanist Perspectives

Exceptionalist ideas about the United States thrived in the Progressive Era itself, but by comparison to other areas of United States history, they have not profoundly influenced the historiography of progressivism. More common is a mindset that can look like exceptionalism but is really something else: the posing of questions or the defining of subjects so as to address internal American concerns with little reference to how those concerns might be relevant to other countries. Many writers about American progressivism are versed in and sympathetic to transnational and comparative approaches, and in principle they repudiate exceptionalism. Still, these writers' interpretive and political priorities lead them away from the transnational or comparative implications of their research. At the risk of confusing overseas readers, for whom the word has another meaning, the label *Americanist* may be more appropriate for this tendency than *exceptionalist*. Such writing provides insight for outsiders into the foreignness of the United States,

[24] *Alan Dawley*, Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State (Cambridge 1991) 10–11. Among many discussions of this issue from the 1980s–90s, see *Jean Heffer* and *Jeanine Rovet* (eds.), Why Is There No Socialism in the United States? (Paris 1988). *Ian Tyrrell*, The Scholarly Odyssey of an Activist Historian: Alan Dawley in Historiography, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 8 (2009) 29–49.

into how Americans discuss among themselves historical issues with political implications.

For example, nearly all recent discussions of progressivism quickly bring in themes of race or gender. These themes, which of course pervade recent historical writing in the United States and elsewhere, have transnational dimensions and comparative implications. And both are not mere present-minded impositions upon the Progressive Era; they are necessary to explain the period. The early twentieth century, after all, saw the solidifying of the Jim Crow system, at times rationalized by lines in progressive social and political thought. Alternative lines in progressive thought, however, inspired the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Urban League, and other civil rights organizations founded in the period. Women activists and women's issues, as noted earlier, played an indispensible role in progressive action and thought. Still, historians of the race and gender dimensions of progressivism are often less animated by the analytical implications of their work than by its usefulness to present-day movements to spur pride among African Americans and women, overcome inequities based on race and gender, and press the country to live up to its egalitarian ideals. In this sense, this writing is new version of the so-called New History or progressive history promoted in the Progressive Era by James Harvey Robinson and Charles Beard, who emphasized reinterpretation of the past in service of contemporary issues and agendas.

To cite another example, much domestic American discussion of the Progressive Era centers on dramatic political personalities who symbolize aspects of the era and stances on its problems. American writing on these pivotal figures can have an internal-conversation quality whose assumptions are hard to penetrate. Theodore Roosevelt, the public figure most identified with American progressivism, should be recognizable to Europeans, even given his belligerent chauvinism and his romantic embrace of the West and frontier lore. TR's fusion of a nationalist foreign policy with a nationalistic domestic reform agenda – along with his patrician sense of social responsibility and his imaginative engagement with the economic, social, and cultural implications of modernity – had many counterparts across Europe.

Contemporaries contrasted and historians still contrast Roosevelt with his main rival among Republican progressives, Robert La Follette, who perceived a big-city, Tory element in Roosevelt out of sympathy with the country's heartland democracy. La Follette, a figure much less known overseas and less comprehensible as well, has generally evoked affection among professional historians who are habitually ambivalent about Roosevelt. Since Turner and Beard, swaths of American historiography have originated from the American Midwest and manifest the region's mindset and concerns. As the intellectual historian David S. Brown observes, such historiography exhibits "an interior-minded historical consciousness" based upon "a typology of progressive thought and politics – democratic, populist, isolationist – different from the liberal typology – elite, urban, interventionist – favored by [eastern] cosmopolitans" such as Hofstadter.

From this midwestern intellectual perspective, La Follette and a few other regional figures epitomized "a uniquely American key" in progressivism, as Brown explains. La Follette fought for midwestern and western emphases in progressivism: direct democracy; primaries, initiatives, referenda, and recalls; the people versus the interests; antitrust; civil liberties; antimilitarism; abhorrence of Great Power politics. Few of these issues played a consistent role in Roosevelt's New Nationalism, the most statist, collectivist, and cosmopolitan of the major syntheses of progressivism. The New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson's Democrats likewise drew upon southern and heartland notions of the middle-class, liberal democracy that much of the country espoused[25].

In an influential 1982 essay, "In Search of Progressivism", Daniel Rodgers identified three clusters of discourse that characterize American progressivism. Of these, the *social-bonds* discourse most evokes transnational interpretations of progressivism, with their concentration on the trans-Atlantic atmosphere in which social-democratic thought and policy emerged. Comparative and modernization perspectives highlight what Rodgers labeled the *efficiency* discourse, which had parallels in Great Britain's Fabian socialism and other technocratic visions of progress in Europe as well as Latin America. Rodgers's third discourse, the *antimonopoly* discourse represented by La Follette and Wilson's New Freedom, is surely the most Americanist, with weak connections and tenuous parallels elsewhere[26].

Progressive writers and activists strove to show that imported methods and measures could be Americanized so as to reinforce and not undermine the country's democratic, republican, and popular traditions. Likewise, historians commonly ask where progressivism fit within the career of American republicanism and democracy. What legacies resulted and lessons can be learned from Progressive Era struggles over the theory and practice of popular government in an era of cities, class and ethnic conflict, corporations, interests groups, and bureaucracies? Robert Johnston, an articulate proponent of analyzing progressivism as an episode in American democracy, emphasizes the extent that urban progressives drew upon the antimonopoly, grassroots-mobilization mindset identified with populism, a political tendency usually understood as an outgrowth of agrarianism. Johnston's local, urban perspective dovetails with the research of Elizabeth Sanders and others concerning agrarian influences at the national level.

[25] *David S. Brown*, Beyond the Frontier: The Midwestern Voice in American Historical Writing (Chicago 2009) 1, 20–21. *Glen Gendzel*, *Jørn Brøndal*, *Nancy C. Unger* and *Matt Rothschild*, Forum: La Follette's Wisconsin in Perspective, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 10 (2011) 329–368. La Follette, likewise, viewed Europe and its problems from a thoroughly American perspective. See *Nancy C. Unger*, "I Want to Learn": Meanings of the European Tour of Senator Robert M. La Follette, 1923, in: Mid-America 84 (2002) 5–25. *John Milton Cooper Jr.*, The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt (Cambridge 1983), contrasts the cosmopolitan-patrician dimension of Roosevelt with Wilson's middle-class liberal mindset.

[26] *Daniel T. Rodgers*, In Search of Progressivism, in: Reviews in American History 10 (1982) 113–132.

American reviewers for the most part overlooked the comparative implications of Sanders's *Roots of Reform* (1999). They stressed instead her emphasis on the continuing relevance of grassroots, Jeffersonian republicanism, which modernization interpretations – following progressive theorists like Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann – had depicted as an backward-looking antithesis of progressivism, with the latter understood as rationalistic, urban-based, and modernity-inclined[27].

Indicative of this vigorous interest in American grassroots traditions and their enduring relevance is Charles Postel's widely praised 2007 book, *The Populist Vision*. This intellectual and policy history of populism envisions the country's agrarian politics not as a provincial, antimodernist precursor of progressivism, but as an alternative, perhaps more democratic version of modernity. Likewise, Michael Kazin's 2006 biography of William Jenning Bryan – a heartland, grassroots democrat even more distant from Europe than La Follette – culminates a re-examination by historians of the Democratic Party's turn toward liberalism during the Progressive Era. Urban-inclined writers since Hofstadter have viewed the Great Plains and southern Democrats who supported Bryan as provincial millstones upon the party's urban, liberal wing. The new writing, by contrast, stresses the creativity and initiative of the agrarian wing and even the relative tameness of labor and the urban professionals[28].

A variant of this quest for progressivism's meaning for American democracy is evident in historians such as Philip Ethington, Kevin Mattson, and James Connolly, who place Progressive Era struggles over popular government not within the agrarian, populist tradition but within the civic republican tradition. This analysis does draw upon transatlantic discussions of modernity and the public sphere identified with Jürgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt, as well American theorists such as Richard Sennett. But its agenda is to revive appreciation of old republican notions of citizenship, civic culture, and deliberation. The great transformations of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, in this analysis, led to the triumph of an consumerist approach to public life and a service-delivery approach to government. The public sphere ceased even to pretend to function as a forum for engaging the citizenry in the civic activity of working out shared principles and determining the overall public good. The public sector narrowed into a mundane broker adept at satisfying the particularistic demands of a pluralistic society[29].

[27] *Robert D. Johnston*, The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland (Princeton 2003); and *Johnston*, Re-Democratizing the Progressive Era: The Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 1 (2002) 68–92. *Elizabeth Sanders*, Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877–1917 (Chicago 1999). For *Johnston*'s review of Sanders, Roots of Reform, Peasants, Pitchforks, and the (Found) Promise of Progressivism, in: Reviews in American History 28 (2000) 393–398.

[28] *Charles Postel*, The Populist Vision (New York 2007). *Michael Kazin*, A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan (New York 2006); also *Book Forum*, Kazin's Bryan, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 8 (2009) 259–280.

[29] *Philip Ethington*, The Metropolis and Multicultural Ethnics: Direct Democracy versus

Historians with this civic-republican perspective do not dwell on comparative issues, but progressive theorists and activists did discuss the practice of democracy in a mass, urban society as a point of intersection between the American and cosmopolitan dimensions of reform. Progressives drew on the longstanding American belief that a healthy democracy relied upon the transcendence of class conflict, but all versions of social democracy stressed interdependence, mutuality, and humanitarianism, Rodgers's *social bonds* discourse. The prospects for a deliberative, democratic political culture in a diffuse, segmented urban environment preoccupied transatlantic-minded progressives, including John Dewey, Jane Addams, and Frederic Howe, whose best-known book carried the evocative title, *The City: The Hope of Democracy.* Between books on European urban governance and social welfare policy, Howe devoted himself to initiatives such as the People's Institute. This New York organization worked to rejuvenate democratic civic culture "in a city". Howe wrote, "of surging and changing population, of complex nationalities, of furious political antagonisms, of radicalism and idealism as brought by the immigrants from the oppressed nations of Europe". Howe's "interest in American democracy is", observed a close colleague, "at its fountainhead, a spiritual interest"[30].

Like Howe and his fellow progressives, American historians usually exhibit a civil-religious preoccupation with the quality of American democracy. The civic purposes of American history – articulated by progressive historians like Beard and Robinson – reinforce the Americanist mindset and overshadow international perspectives and methodologies. When McGerr published his own interpretive history of progressivism, *A Fierce Discontent* (2006), no American commentator noticed that the book manifested almost none of comparative concerns that the author had earlier advocated in his debate with Tyrrell. In Americanist fashion, McGerr instead portrayed progressivism not as an American manifestation of an international trend, but as a tragic "epic" in the "disappointing" career of American liberal reform. Similarly, in *Rebirth of a Nation* (2009), an interpretive history with an explicitly presentist critical agenda, the cultural historian Jackson Lears noted in passing, "Numerous Progressive reformers were more inspired by German social democracy and civic pride than by homegrown visions of moral reformation." But Lears right away sets aside the international context of developments in the United States for his main purpose: an extended exposition of spiritual/cultural anxieties, aggressions, and other maladies that the author sees as derived from deep Anglo-American cultural and religious patterns and that governed American responses to modernity. (*Causes* of modernity – whether international or indigenously American – seem of not much interest to the author.)

Deliberative Democracy in the Progressive Era, in: Progressivism and the New Democracy, ed. *Sidney M. Milkis* and *Jerome M. Mileur* (Amherst 1999) 192–225. *James Connolly*, Democratic Visions: The Urban Political Imagination in Industrializing America (Ithaca 2010).

[30] Quotations from *Kevin Mattson*, Creating a Democratic Public: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy in the Progressive Era (University Park 1998) 42–43. Also *Stromquist*, Re-Inventing "The People".

These patterns account for the perverse sides of progressivism, Lears argues, as well as some of its admirable aspects. They then survived, in the author's view, as an aggressive, moralistic set of psycho-political impulses underneath American politics[31].

Such preoccupations with the spiritual/moral condition of the republic – which seem to put historical study to the service of national group psychotherapy – can flummox advocates of an international perspective. The inclination within American historical writing, critical as well as celebratory, toward inward conversation is so persistent that transnationalists and comparativists might in turn feel inclined to try to drain American history of any moral or spiritual character, good, bad, or mixed, apart from modern human history generally. This would be an exaggerated response, leading to its own distortions. American republicanism and democracy and American debates over them – which often do fall into the Protestant-epic, degeneration-and-redemption pattern explicated by Lears – amount to central episodes in the transnational and comparative history of democratization and popular rights, if only because of the international influence of the United States and the example of its political system. Moreover, the Americanist tendency itself needs to be comprehended as an intellectual history phenomenon rather than merely deplored as stubborn self-absorption. As McGerr warned in his debate with Tyrrell, distinctiveness is real too, and intellectuals and activists operate in absorbing local environments.

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Over the last decade, experience should have driven home to observers of the United States in Europe and elsewhere that major aspects of the mindset of American conservatism do not have reliable analogues elsewhere, that deliberative communication with this formidable element in American society is not a straightforward affair. American progressive and liberal mindsets are more accessible to foreigners and easier to abide, but only to a point. In 2008, American voters brought to power the most cosmopolitan political movement that the country is likely to produce. American writers noted that the reformers of 2008–09 espoused the adjective *progressive*, not just as a code word for *liberal*, but because they meant it. In its first two years, the Barack Obama administration indeed seemed neoprogressive in its social and civic outlook on the country's problems, as well as in its penchant for governance by professionals and for data-driven policymaking, Rodgers's *efficiency* theme reawakened. As quickly became evident through intense domestic debates, mystifying to outsiders, the movement that Obama represented contained perplexing Americanist features from the start. In any case, these neoprogressives came under withering attack precisely on account of their progressivism, let alone the dash of transnational consciousness that they displayed.

[31] *Michael McGerr*, A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America (New York 2003) xiv, 316. *Jackson Lears*, Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920 (New York 2009) 10.

Many Americans will continue to champion the cosmopolitan perspective, but the United States will keep losing itself in insular disputes over its democratic and republican ideals and how to live up to them.

Summary

Im Zentrum der Untersuchungen stehen die internationalen Wechselwirkungen der Reformbewegung in den USA, die Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts als *Progressivism* bekannt wurde. Nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg haben theoretisch interessierte amerikanische Historiker häufig – wenn auch oft nur implizit – auf Spielarten der Modernisierungstheorie zurückgegriffen, wenn sie diesen erklären wollten. Aus dieser Perspektive erschien die Reformbewegung, analog zu sozialdemokratischen oder neo-korporatistischen Bewegungen in Westeuropa, als Reaktion politischer Institutionen und der Zivilgesellschaften auf die Herausforderungen der Urbanisierung, des entwickelten Industrialismus und des „entfesselten" Großkapitalismus. In den letzten 25 Jahren hat eine engagierte Gruppe von Historikern transnationale Ansätze für die Interpretation des *Progressivism* fruchtbar gemacht. Ihre Analysen haben die strukturalistischen und mechanistischen Verengungen der Modernisierungsmodelle gesprengt und die Aufmerksamkeit auf die lebendigen transatlantischen Netzwerke und die intensiven intellektuellen und politischen Debatten gelenkt, die die amerikanischen Reformbewegungen prägten wie ihre europäischen Entsprechungen. Trotzdem behalten Modernisierungsmodelle einen gewissen Wert, wenn es gilt, die vielen vergleichbaren Elemente des *Progressivism* und der Sozialdemokratie zusammenzubringen, die ohne greifbare Verbindung untereinander entstanden waren. Ungeachtet dessen, so die Argumentation, hätten die meisten amerikanischen Historiker den Problemen einer komparativen Sozialwissenschaft, wie sie durch Themen wie Modernisierung und Transnationalisierung aufgeworfen werden, nur sporadisches Interesse entgegengebracht. Auch diejenigen Historiker, die sogenannte „exzeptionalistische" Argumente für die Erklärung des *Progressivism* zurückweisen, haben überwiegend die lange amerikanische Tradition fortgeschrieben, die Vergangenheit als Fortschritt bei der Verwirklichung der demokratischen und republikanischen Ideale des Landes zu deuten. Diese Perspektive auf die amerikanische Geschichte, hier als *Americanist* bezeichnet, bleibt letztlich einem inneramerikanischen Selbstgespräch verhaftet, das für komparatistische und theoretische Fragen der Geschichtsschreibung wenig Relevanz besitzt. Amerikanische Geschichte nach solcher Rezeptur wird selbst zum Zeugnis einer *fractured modernity*.

Frank Uekötter

Conservation: America's Environmental Modernism?

A few years ago, there would have been an obvious way to start an article on "environmental modernism": emphatic declarations that the two words are by no means anathema. In the twenty-first century, one can probably do away with these conventions. With the threat of global warming apparent to anyone willing to see and a U.S. president touting the potential of green technology, it is a given that environmental sustainability is a key goal of any modern society. In fact, it now seems that labeling environmentalists as anti-modernists was first and foremost a ploy to derail inconvenient initiatives. After all, chastising people for standing in the way of progress sounds more high-minded than lamenting about costs and priorities. In any case, there is no longer anything spectacular about "environmental modernization", and scholarly articles, rather than fighting rearguard actions against those who continue to assert that environmentalists harm business, are well advised to focus on conceptual merits. From a historian's perspective, the remarkable thing about the concept of environmental modernism is that the rise of American modernism coincided with a growing concern for the environment, and chances are that this chronological overlap was more than an accident of history.

To be sure, the coincidence is not evident on first sight. The environmentalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a fragmented one, and not only because words like "ecology" and "sustainability" had yet to gain their current meaning. The environmental question was unlike the so-called social question in that it started as a diverse set of challenges in different fields: pollution of the air, soil, and water, decimation and extinction of species, concerns for beautiful or otherwise remarkable landscapes, the supply of scarce resources, and so on. With that, environmental modernism comprised hugely different challenges. Some of the problems lay in urban areas, while others concerned rural America or wild, mostly unexplored areas. Furthermore, environmental problems required different types of knowledge and different types of policies on different levels, and that made for a great deal of heterogeneity. In the early 1900s, people thought about environmental issues as mostly isolated challenges. It was a key innovation of environmentalism to develop ideas and concepts that highlighted similarities and linkages between the diverse array of issues.

The diversity of environmental challenges was – and is – evident in all modern societies across the globe, from England, the motherland of industrialism, to present-day China. However, in making sense of this diverse set of themes and issues, environmental historians of the United States are more fortunate than most in that they can identify a concept from the period that built bridges in quite a similar way to today's environmentalism. In the early 1900s, "conservation" emerged as a buzzword in many different arenas, ultimately becoming part of the enduring legacy of the Progressive Era. Furthermore, conservation embodied a key element of progressive thinking between the 1890s and the First World War, namely its penchant for "efficiency". In his pioneering monograph on the conservation movement, Samuel Hays spoke of a "gospel of efficiency", and Daniel Rodgers emphasized "efficiency" as one of the pillars of progressivism, itself a rather heterogeneous cluster of groups and issues[1]. "Efficiency" and "conservation" were versatile concepts: They had a meaning for many different problems and on different levels, providing a compass for administrative procedures as well as forest or water management issues. In fact, one of the great charms of conservation was that it came along with a powerful historical narrative. It was a classic American theme, the spectacular conversion from a sinful to a benign life. So far, the American people had exploited its abundant resources in a reckless manner – but now, with a new mindset, conservation would inaugurate a new era of thoughtful, *efficient* resource management.

This essay explores the topic in four stages. The first section describes the sudden appearance of the conservation movement around the turn of the century. The article then takes a closer look at the peculiar interplay between the state and the public sphere that characterized the U.S. approach to environmental issues. Third, the article analyzes how the conservation movement fared when it found itself confronted with environmentalist concerns in the post-World War II era. Finally, it considers to what extent conservation defines a distinct style of environmental management in the modern era. Of course, it goes without saying that these are broad themes, each of which could easily fill a volume of its own. Furthermore, it is a task that defies any attempt at comprehensive annotation, and the minimalist footnotes that follow merely scratch the surface. However, it seems that this is precisely the value that modernization theory retains despite all the criticism it has received: The concept of modernization challenges us to ask broad questions that transcend the conceptual barriers that usually demarcate our fields of investigation. Both "modernism" and "environmentalism" are big terms, and yet they have shown a remarkable resilience. It is easy to highlight the vagueness and ambiguity of "modernization", but the term has proven impossible to exorcise. With that, the first goal of this essay is to raise and draw attention to crucial

[1] *Samuel P. Hays*, Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency. The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890–1920 (Cambridge 1959); *Daniel T. Rodgers*, In Search of Progressivism, in: Reviews in American History 10/4 (December 1982) 113–132, esp. 126.

questions. Whether it can also achieve a second goal, namely providing satisfying answers, is up to the reader to decide.

A Sudden Debut

Conservation has never been uncontroversial. That makes the conservation movement's sudden entry unto the political stage around 1900 all the more remarkable. In order to highlight the suddenness of conservation's debut, it is helpful to compare it with the rise of the current environmental movement in the post-World War II years. All in all, environmentalism emerged gradually after 1945, with singular events that only converged into a broad movement over time. For instance, it is only in retrospect that we can identify Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) as a milestone in the rise of environmentalism. From grassroots beginnings, the movement gathered momentum until it could finally weld a new polity on the federal level. In contrast, the debut of the conservation movement looked more like a daring raid on the existing political system. That is especially true on the federal level: Within a few years, a whole host of new agencies came into being, usually with the brash air of a youngster eager to transform the style of resource management from top to bottom. Even more, conservation made a lasting difference, quite unlike other movements that emerge, flashmob-style, out of nothing. U.S. history knows a number of movements that suddenly grow into giants, only to collapse with similar speed – from the populist revolt to the technocratic movement. In contrast, conservation dominated the stage for decades after its spectacular coming-out.

To be sure, it is possible to detect some traditions in hindsight which provide historical context. For example, the charismatic leadership of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, makes it easy forget that there had previously been a Division of Forestry within the Department of Agriculture. After two unremarkable division heads, Bernhard Fernow became chief in 1886, and the German-trained forester initiated significant reforms in the 1890s, including the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 which proved indispensable for the work of the Forest Service. But even with this prehistory, the rise of sustainability-oriented forestry is impressive: Within a single generation, the United States embraced the European tradition of a professional corps of foresters managing the public domain. With the creation of a nationwide network of field stations and research institutes, Pinchot and his successor Henry Graves created an administrative machine that embraced and embodied the idea of conservation[2].

While the preservation of forests was a concern in many parts of the United States, the management of scarce water resources was a classic issue of the American West. Once again, activities of the Progressive Era built upon previous activ-

[2] Cf. *Harold K. Steen*, The U.S. Forest Service. A History (Seattle, London 1991).

ities which, though limited in scope, opened the door for the conservation movement. In 1888, Congress asked the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct hydrographic surveys in order to identify regions suitable for irrigation. The initiative soon stalled, not least because John Wesley Powell, then director of the Geological Survey, conceived the authority much more broadly than intended, resulting in a backlash driven by land speculators. However, when Congress passed the Newlands Reclamation Act in 1902 to boost irrigation, Roosevelt located the new Reclamation Service within the Geological Survey; in 1907, it became a separate agency under the broad roof of the Department of the Interior[3]. In order to improve the management of fossil resources, the federal government set up the Bureau of Mines in 1910[4]. However, the trend was also evident on the local level. As the present author has shown, the Progressive Era led to the development of smoke abatement bureaus on the municipal level. Staffed with trained engineers, these bureaus became a major component of air pollution control in the United States. They defined the approach to urban pollution until far into the post-World War II era[5].

It is a matter of discussion whether one can include the preservation of wild nature in a list of Progressive Era achievements in conservation. Textbooks tend to stress the tension between preservation and conservation. While the latter sought to manage resources in a more efficient and just manner, the former sought to stop all kinds of human intrusions. The crucial episode illustrating this dichotomy is usually the Hetch Hetchy controversy over the construction of a dam in Yosemite National Park. The battle pitched John Muir, the founding president of the Sierra Club, against urban, water, and electric power interests, generating so much heat and attention that no history of conservation can avoid an extended discussion of the affair[6]. And yet, as a number of scholars argued by the early twenty-first century, the sides shared more than they conceded. After all, the protection of nature is a type of human intervention and use. One could discuss this on a philosophical level: A powerful strand within the debate over wilderness holds that the notion of untamed nature, like every idea of nature, is a human construct that needs to be discussed as such[7]. However, the more down-to-earth historian will probably be more comfortable with the view that the national parks were indeed *constructed* to a significant extent. Linda Flint McClelland has shown that the experience of pris-

[3] *Richard N. L. Andrews*, Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves. A History of American Environmental Policy (New Haven, London 1999) 140n.

[4] A little-known overview on the first fifty years is available at the National Archives of the United States, RG 70 A 1 Entry 10. Running at more than 1,500 pages, it presents a chronological summary of activities.

[5] *Frank Uekoetter*, The Age of Smoke. Environmental Policy in Germany and the United States, 1880–1970 (Pittsburgh 2009).

[6] *Robert W. Righter*, The Battle Over Hetch Hetchy: America's Most Controversial Dam and the Birth of Modern Environmentalism (New York 2005).

[7] Cf. *William Cronon*, The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature, in: *Cronon* (ed.), Uncommon Ground. Rethinking the Human Place in Nature (New York, London 1996) 69–90.

tine nature resulted from a vast but sensitive building program. Without roads, lodges, and other types of human infrastructure, the experience of the national parks would be vastly different. In the twentieth century, the national parks became a crucial resource for tourism, thus blurring the distinction between conservation and preservation even more[8]. Finally, it is telling that the Progressive Era also led to the formation of a National Park Service in 1916. In short, if we conceive the creation of protected areas as a special type of land use, there is little reason to refrain from including preservation into a broader understanding of the conservation movement.

The spectacular debut of conservation on the national stage was probably more impressive than the actual results. The backlash from vested interests was significant, but the problems went deeper than that. It turned out that efficiency was a rather ambivalent guiding principle, open to numerous interpretations as to instruments and goals. As a result, the concept has drawn just criticism from environmental historians. For instance, Hugh Gorman has argued in his investigation of pollution problems in the American petroleum industry that efficiency, rather than solving the problem, allowed industrialists to sidetrack anti-pollution efforts. In his reading, abatement did not start with vigor until the efficiency-based pollution control ethic was replaced by another[9]. There is no need to stress that discussions of the overall impact of conservation deserve a prominent place in environmental history. However, with a view to American modernism, it seems more worthwhile to look at the general political style and specifically the interplay between state actors and the public. That is what the following section intends to do.

Public Issues

In order to understand the significance of the Progressive Era for the American approach to environmental problems, it is helpful to compare it with the second boom of environmental issues during the New Deal. Of course, it goes without saying that the 1930s saw more than a reinvigoration of previous trends. For instance, the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps had much more resemblance with the Labor Service in Nazi Germany than with anything happening before World War I[10]. And yet it seems that, in the long run, the New Deal was far less influential in the field of environmental policy than it was for, say, the American welfare state. For example, the dams of the Tennessee Valley Authority did not differ all that much from those built by the Bureau of Reclamation and the

[8] *Linda Flint McClelland*, Building the National Parks. Historic Landscape Design and Construction (Baltimore, London 1998).
[9] *Hugh S. Gorman*, Redefining Efficiency. Pollution Concerns, Regulatory Mechanisms, and Technological Change in the U.S. Petroleum Industry (Akron, Ohio 2001).
[10] Cf. *Kiran Klaus Patel*, Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945 (New York 2005).

Army Corps of Engineers. Reforestation was a key concern of the New Dealers, but ineffectual ideas such as the Great Plains Shelterbelt exerted far less influence over time than Gifford Pinchot's legacy. Even controversies of the New Deal era provoke a sense of *déjà vu*. Harold Ickes' plan to transform the Department of the Interior into a Department of Conservation looks much less spectacular when one takes into account that the Department of the Interior had already been a key battlefield for conservationists during the Progressive Era, as the famous clash between Pinchot and Richard Ballinger shows[11]. Only some activities were actually new: In 1933, the Soil Erosion Service joined the ranks of federal conservation agencies. Renamed Soil Conservation Service in 1935, it grew into a huge agency within a matter of years, taking up the fight against soil erosion and depletion that the conservationists of the Progressive Era had somehow forgotten to start[12].

The New Deal was also similar to the conservation boom of the Progressive Era in that it was followed by a period of lukewarm interest in environmental issues. Just like the early 1900s, the 1930s saw a campaign style of conservation policy, with staunch proclamations of marvelous intentions, quick expansion of bureaucracies, but then a decline of interest and activities after the first feverish years. It is tempting indeed to write the history of conservation with Arthur Schlesinger's cycles of American history in mind[13]. In such a reading, the start of the Progressive Era gave way to the *laissez-faire* 1920s until the New Deal picked up the torch again, to be followed by lukewarm interest after World War II until environmentalism entered the scene in the 1960s. Since then, the boom-and-bust cycles have only become shorter, as William Ruckelshaus, the first director of the Environmental Protection Agency, noted with his metaphor of a pendulum of environmental policy swinging back and forth. Writing in the mid-1990s, when the fresh Republican majority in Congress set out to dismantle much of the environmental regulation system, he took a long view: "The anti-environmental push of the nineties is prompted by the pro-environmental excess of the late eighties, which was prompted by the anti-environmental excess of the early eighties, which was prompted by the pro-environmental excess of the seventies, which was prompted …."[14] With a view to the staunch anti-environmental stance of the George W. Bush presidency, this narrative seems ever more convincing.

Of course, such a reading would be superficial. Specifically, it would replicate the mistake of progressive history in that it looks at activities without simultaneous attention to interests, let alone to categories like class, race, and gender. It would be rather easy to lay out the elite views behind much of the agenda of conservation, as Samuel Hays attempted to do with urban governance in his classic if

11 *Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.*, The Age of Roosevelt. The Coming of the New Deal (New York 1958) 348n.
12 Cf. *D. Harper Simms*, The Soil Conservation Service (New York 1970); *Douglas Helms, Susan L. Flader* (eds.), The History of Soil and Water Conservation (Washington 1985).
13 *Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.*, The Cycles of American History (Boston 1986).
14 *William D. Ruckelshaus*, Stopping the Pendulum, in: The Environmental Forum 12/6 (November/December1995) 25.

much-disputed article on municipal reform in the Progressive Era[15]. The late emergence of "environmental justice", a blend of social and environmental concerns, is revealing here, as is the rediscovery of many traditions of environmental activism in ethnic and poor communities, all of which became apparent once historians looked beyond the standard constituencies of conservation[16]. However, it seems more rewarding in the present context to reflect on what this means for the general style of handling environmental problems. Why did America's environmental modernization rely to such a great extent on campaigns?

It is important to look beyond the standard reference to the extraordinarily weak American state. Many scholars have noted the aversion to a strong federal government throughout the nineteenth century and how that changed to some extent during the Progressive Era. Furthermore, it is difficult to envision an impressive conservation policy as long as governments on all levels were firmly in the grasp of political machines, Tammany-style. And yet it seems that there were also other factors at play. For example, it was no accident that the Progressive Era also coincided with a coming-of-age of American academia. It would be too simple to state that all conservation efforts were driven by a burgeoning profession. For instance, the soil conservation drive in the 1930s essentially preceded the development of a corresponding scientific community, as feverish efforts at training and research during the New Deal demonstrate. And yet it seems that conservation campaigns during and since the Progressive Era drew much of their power and vigor from the fact that they were also about professional recognition and jobs. From its inception, knowledge was a key currency of conservation, and scholars have paid less attention to this connection than it deserves.

It also deserves more recognition that when Americans were inventing their regulatory state around 1900, they were also importing it to some extent. References to Europe, and specifically England and Germany, abound in the conservation literature, although no historian has as yet studied these connections thoroughly. In any case, if we conceive the state as a European invention, as Wolfgang Reinhard has done, it is not difficult to identify a number of American peculiarities[17]. First, in spite of all emphasis on civil service, U.S. officials lacked the degree of independence that members of European bureaucracies so proudly displayed. Second, the idea of entrepreneurial freedom had a special resonance in the United States. Even more, it remained strong even when this notion was more image than reality, as entrepreneurs turned from independent leaders to perennial negotiators

[15] *Samuel P. Hays*, The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era, in: Pacific Northwest Quarterly 55 (1964) 157–169.

[16] Cf. *Sylvia Hood Washington, Paul C. Rosier*, *Heather Goodall* (eds.), Echoes from the Poisoned Well. Global Memories of Environmental Injustice (Lanham, Maryland 2006); and *Martin V. Melosi*, Environmental Justice, Political Agenda Setting, and the Myths of History, in: *Melosi*, Effluent America. Cities, Industry, Energy and the Environment (Pittsburgh 2001) 238–262.

[17] *Wolfgang Reinhard*, Geschichte der Staatsgewalt. Eine vergleichende Verfassungsgeschichte Europas von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart (Munich 2000) 15.

with all sorts of public and private corporations. Third, corruption plagued U.S. agencies far more than their European counterparts, though quantifying this difference may be difficult. After all, corruption is to a great extent a matter of context; perhaps some European countries were spared the equivalent of a Teapot Dome scandal for lack of oil fields?

In any case, the weakness of the state had much to do with the vigor of America's civil society, a key theme of transatlantic comparisons since Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*. It does not take much searching to find quotations illustrating the passion which accompanied environmental debates in the United States. For example, the Smoke Abatement League in Cincinnati asserted that a notorious producer of dense black smoke in the city "must be looked upon as one who openly defies the law, the rights of the people and the demands of municipal decency and should be treated as an enemy of the public welfare"[18]. Many activists were indeed speaking of their campaigns as "crusades", thus evoking a burning fervor unchecked by any kind of administrative routine or penchant for proper procedures. However, passion was not limited to the pro-environmental camp. Statements from the opponents of conservation were no less extreme, especially after environmentalism had come out as a popular force around 1970. James Watt, Ronald Reagan's first secretary of the interior, provides one of the more drastic examples with his remark: "If the troubles from environmentalists cannot be solved in the jury box or at the ballot box, perhaps the cartridge box should be used." This is certainly a unique quotation among cabinet-level environmental or natural resource officials in Western democracies[19]. However, environmentalists crossed the lines of civil, non-violent protest as well, though instruction manuals for "monkeywrenching" made a point of limiting hazards to humans[20].

When it comes to environmental issues, one factor seems to boost the degree of civic activism: uncertainty as to what the "interests of nature" really are. Unlike other social issues, environmental problems do not speak for themselves. Endangered species do not file petitions. As a result, defining an environmental problem is more open to divergent interpretations, and it should come as no surprise that there were many conflicts where both sides claimed to pursue an interest in nature. In Hetch Hetchy, the wise use of water resources clashed with the preservation of natural beauty; the same held true for the conflicts over dam projects along the Colorado River in the 1950s and 1960s, which played a crucial role for the rise of U.S. environmentalism. Even in the age of ecology, the definition of the environmental interest remains contested. For instance, the "wise use" movement

[18] *Charles A. L. Reed*, The Smoke Campaign in Cincinnati. Remarks before the National Association of Stationary Engineers, Cincinnati, July 10, 1906 (n.l., n.d.) 9.
[19] Quoted in *Kirkpatrick Sale*, The Green Revolution. The American Environmental Movement, 1962–1992 (New York 1993) 102.
[20] Cf. *Dave Foreman*, *Bill Haywood* (eds.), Ecodefense. A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching (Tucson, Ariz. [2]1987).

claimed green credentials, as the general idea seemed to loop back to the original ideas of the conservation crusade.

Conservation in the Age of Ecology

When the Reclamation Service became an independent agency in 1907, it was a milestone in the history of conservation. Some eighty years later, Marc Reisner published *Cadillac Desert*, a famous indictment of much of the work of the Reclamation Service as well as the Army Corps of Engineers[21]. Reisner portrayed the Reclamation Service as a reckless agency that had long abandoned its roots in the conservation crusade, instead concentrating on the perpetuation of dam construction for its own sake. To be sure, Reisner was not completely averse to the idea of river development and water management, and yet his book provides a fitting demonstration of the change of mood in late twentieth-century America. At some point in the post-war years, conservation left the stage, or at least faded into the background, to be replaced by a new paradigm that one might call, for lack of a better term, environmentalism.

It is clear that this transition deserves attention in a discussion of conservation as the American path towards modernity. Unfortunately, nearly everything about this transition is disputed; its chronology is open to debate, as are the underlying causes. Did it really mean something that the early environmental movement was also known by the name "new conservation movement"? Was Earth Day 1970, the much-touted event with an estimated 20 million participants, the birth of the movement, or was it merely a milestone in its long-term rise? And what should we make of the link between environmentalism and post-material values that Ronald Inglehart put forward in his famous *The Silent Revolution*[22]? In a book co-written by Christian Welzel, Inglehart recently put forward one of the most stimulating versions of modernization theory – an inspiring and provocative proposal that will be ignored here only because it would entail a detour into an altogether different direction[23].

However, one thing that can safely be said about conservation and environmentalism is that they could not coexist easily over a long period of time. To be sure, it was impossible to make a clear-cut distinction through much of the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, the Sierra Club was a conservationist organization by tradition but also became a powerful environmental pressure group under David

[21] *Marc Reisner*, Cadillac Desert. The American West and its Disappearing Water (New York 1986).

[22] *Ronald Inglehart*, The Silent Revolution. Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics (Princeton 1977).

[23] *Ronald Inglehart*, *Christian Welzel*, Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy (Cambridge 2005). For a short summary, see *Ronald Inglehart*, *Christian Welzel*, How Development Leads to Democracy. What We Know about Modernization, in: Foreign Affairs 88/2 (March/April 2009) 33–48.

Brower's energetic leadership[24]. But as soon as environmentalism had become a public force around 1970, the lines were clearly drawn between "old" conservation and "new" environmentalism, a situation which led to an interesting and understudied phenomenon: the deliberate "burning" of conservation traditions. Instead of trying to reform institutions from the conservation tradition, environmentalists demolished them in order to start from scratch. The present author first came across this phenomenon in his study of air pollution control, where the year 1970 marked a general watershed. Since then, institutions from the smoke abatement (i.e., conservation) tradition no longer carried any legitimacy, and environmentalists eagerly set out to write new laws and create new agencies[25]. The same happened in the field of soil conservation. Environmentalists criticized the U.S. Soil Conservation Service vigorously, pointing for instance at its drainage projects in wetlands. Reisner's critique of the Reclamation Service provides another case in point.

However, the distinction was clear only from the point of view of the environmentalists. Members of the agencies under fire were less confident about their loyalties, and at times they were aghast. "It was a shock", Norman A. Berg, who had joined the agency in 1943 and ultimately became chief of the Soil Conservation Service from 1979 to 1982, noted in a retrospective interview[26]. Another official who had joined the Soil Conservation Service in 1935 voiced a similar sentiment in an interview of 1981: "The word 'environment' is a poisonous word with a lot of our people."[27] And yet this mattered only to the bureaucratic insider, as conservation traditionalists were fighting an uphill battle in the environmental era. Mel Davis, Berg's predecessor as chief administrator from 1975 to 1979, reported, "Those environmental groups, and I can take the National Wildlife Federation as a specific example, gave me hell up one side and down the other, yet they never came to my office to sit down and talk to me about these problems. They would leave it up to you to come over there because they thought that they were in the driver's seat now."[28]

It is not easy to make sense of these divergent views. To some extent, the dynamics of knowledge provide an explanation. During the Progressive Era, fostering the knowledge base of the new agencies was an important part of conservation policy. The merits were clear: In order to manage resources properly, conservationists needed professional skills and a wide range of information. But as these agencies became part of the bureaucratic establishment, the situation changed.

[24] *Michael P. Cohen*, The History of the Sierra Club 1892–1970 (San Francisco 1988).
[25] Cf. *Uekoetter*, Age.
[26] *Steven E. Phillips, Douglas Helms* (eds.), Interviews with Chiefs of the Soil Conservation Service: Williams, Grant, Davis, and Berg (United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Economics and Social Sciences Division, NHQ, Historical Notes Number 3, August 1994) 174.
[27] Iowa State University Library, Special Collections Department, MS-198 Box 3 Folder 4, Oral History Interview with Gordon K. Zimmerman, p. 102.
[28] *Phillips*, *Helms*, Interviews 99.

With their accumulated wisdom, agencies saw information as one of their key resources and the base of their power, making control of knowledge a key issue. As a result, numerous environmentalists experienced conservation agencies as closed, unaccountable giants. In any case, it seems that the divergence between conservation and environmentalism was more a matter of practical politics and everyday experiences than a matter of principle. After all, the philosophies overlapped on numerous points; both included ethical commitments as well as political agendas; and when it came to concrete measures, the differences was sometimes non-existent and frequently hard to pinpoint. The one key difference lay in their geographic scope: While U.S. environmentalism was part of a general trend in Western societies, conservation was a quintessential American philosophy. And yet it does not seem that this divergent scope mattered much in the beginning of environmentalism. In fact, it seems that the global dimension of environmentalism did not come into view forcefully until after conservation was dead for all practical means and purposes.

In retrospect, the interplay between global and U.S. trends carries an even deeper irony. After all, the end of conservation coincided with the end of what Charles S. Maier has termed the "age of territoriality". According to Maier, the regulatory powers of nation-states reached a new level in the late nineteenth century, due to a combination of new technological means and political reforms. Since the 1960s, however, these powers were gradually undermined in the wake of globalization[29]. From such a point of view, the willful destruction of the conservation tradition looks even more fateful. After all, this meant that the United States left the age of territoriality without a firmly entrenched tradition of environmental regulation. Building a new tradition proved exceedingly difficult, as the ongoing conflicts over environmental policies attest. When comparing European and American approaches in the early 2000s, one of the striking contrasts is the difference between the stability of European environmental policies and the dramatic fluctuations of agendas and instruments in the United States. It seems that the U.S. system had been thrown off balance in a sensitive moment, making it difficult – if not impossible – to regain a certain degree of stability to the present day.

A Peculiar Modernism?

With that, it might look tempting to rush toward a clear conclusion, namely that conservation was indeed a peculiar style of environmental management that put the United States on a special path to this day. After all, the contrast between European and American environmental policy is familiar to everyone who reads a newspaper nowadays. While Europe has emerged as the global champion of climate policy, the United States displays a far more skeptical posture. However, the

[29] *Charles S. Maier*, Consigning the Twentieth Century to History. Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era, in: American Historical Review 105 (2000) 807–831.

present contrast is probably not a good guide when judging a century-long tradition. After all, there are also similarities; in fact, these similarities are so strong that one might argue that, from a European perspective, conservation looks like the reinvention of the wheel. Weren't the Americans doing belatedly what European administrations were already doing for decades or even centuries – managing forests, or ore deposits, or city administrations in a way that looks beyond the necessities of the day?

The transatlantic similarities clearly point to the need to reflect on the frame of reference. Modernization theory highlights the similarities between North America and Western Europe, and the merits become clear when one moves beyond the limits of the Western world. To be sure, the colonial world had its own conservation efforts, but they looked notably different from the American model. First, they rarely moved beyond rudimentary efforts until after World War I and often did not become a significant force for the interplay between man and nature until after the intensification of colonial policies after 1945. Exceptional figures like William Willcocks, the builder of the first Aswan dam in 1896–1902, merely confirm the general picture. His hydraulic one-man crusade across the British Empire was without parallel in the Western world, and it is characteristic that Willcocks was much detested, if not feared, among colonial administrators[30]. Second, colonial conservationists were ultimately part of a system of resource exploitation in the interest of the ruling state, whereas U.S. conservation movement emphasized that it was born out of enlightened self-interest. Third, the knowledge problems of U.S. conservationists paled in comparison with those in the colonial world, where many projects failed or even backfired for lack of information among the authorities. The famous Tanganyikan groundnuts scheme was only one of the more vivid examples.

It is important to see the colonial world not simply as a distant mirror which makes the United States look more attractive and effective in its quest for conservation. When we look at America before the late nineteenth century, it is not difficult to identify certain colonial traits. Specifically, the extraction of resources as if there was no tomorrow was clearly closer to colonial modes than to European practices. The distance between places of resource production and places of resource transformation carries a certain colonial ring as well: William Cronon's seminal *Nature's Metropolis* describes Chicago in a way that is not dissimilar to Liverpool and Manchester in the British Empire[31]. Against this background, the conservation movement looks like the end of a colonial tradition of resource use and an orientation after European models. Somewhat belatedly, the United States joined the trend of Western states that identified the management of natural resources as a key challenge of modernity, and it attests to the vigor of the conservation movement that the United States advanced from a latecomer to a model in

[30] *William Beinart*, *Lotte Hughes*, Environment and Empire (Oxford 2007) 132–144.
[31] *William Cronon*, Nature's Metropolis. Chicago and the Great West (New York, London 1992).

the twentieth century. Around 1970, U.S. environmental policy became an inspiration in numerous countries, including the Federal Republic of Germany[32]. Thus, from an environmental standpoint, the United States became modern with the emergence of the conservation movement.

In conclusion, it seems that a lot speaks for seeing European and American approaches as essentially one joint endeavor of environmental modernism. Seeing conservation as part of a general tradition of environmental modernism also helps to adjust the focus on European traditions of resource management. While some fields like forestry were many decades ahead from a U.S. standpoint, the distance shrank when it came to urban issues, where the late nineteenth century was a key period of reforms in many European cities as well. Only a few European cities, for example London, had a long tradition of urban resource management when American cities began to confront the problem. However, the greatest similarity between European and American models clearly lies in the limits of what was achieved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For all the respect that we owe to the energetic pioneers of that era, it is clear that they were operating within strict limits. Theirs was a repair job which usually reached the limits of its potential when change became too expensive for vested interests. Changing the path of modernity, as opposed to supporting its course through incremental reform, was out of the question; by and in itself, modernism was presumed to be environmentally sound. In short, what European and American modernism embraced around 1900 was a "get rich quickly, then clean up later" approach. Easy problems were more or less solved, while the more difficult ones were postponed indefinitely. It is this legacy of environmental modernism that we are struggling with today.

Summary

Jede Gesellschaft sieht sich im Zuge industriegesellschaftlicher Modernisierung mit ökologischen Problemen konfrontiert. Der Beitrag diskutiert, inwiefern sich dabei in den Vereinigten Staaten ein spezifischer Stil des Umweltmanagements herausbildete. Im Unterschied zu anderen Ländern gab es in den USA mit dem Begriff „Conservation" einen zeitgenössischen Terminus, der zahlreiche Dimensionen dessen, was wir heute als ökologische Frage bezeichnen, miteinander verband. „Conservation" markiert das Ende eines kolonialistischen Stils im Umgang mit Ressourcen und ökologischen Herausforderungen. Seit die „Conservation"-Bewegung um 1900 ziemlich rasch auf allen politischen Ebenen entstand, prägten eine Leitrhetorik der Effizienz sowie ein enger Nexus zu Expertengruppen mit spezifischen Wissensangeboten und Professionsinteressen die einschlägigen De-

[32] Cf. *Kai F. Hünemörder*, Die Frühgeschichte der globalen Umweltkrise und die Formierung der deutschen Umweltpolitik, 1950–1973 (Stuttgart 2004).

batten. Als wichtige Charakterzüge werden die starke Kampagnenförmigkeit der Umweltpolitik und ihre große Abhängigkeit von politischen Konjunkturen herausgearbeitet. Während der New Deal überwiegend in den Traditionen der Jahrhundertwende verortet wird, erscheint die Kluft zwischen „Conservation" und „Environmentalism" unüberbrückbar, auch wenn Chronologie und Kausalitäten in hohem Maße umstritten bleiben. Man kann von einem bewussten, geradezu lustbetonten Kappen der „Conservation"-Tradition sprechen, wobei der symbolpolitische Gegensatz markanter war als der Sachkonflikt. Die Schwäche langlebiger Traditionen im Umweltbereich ist nicht der unwichtigste Grund, warum ökologische Themen in den USA bis heute in so großen Umfang Gegenstand heftiger Konflikte sind.

3. Media, Politics, and Political Economy

Linards Udris

The Press and the Repeal of National Prohibition

"You can lead the American people to water
but you cannot MAKE them drink."
William Randolph Hearst,
Chicago Herald and Examiner,
January 4, 1929

In early 1929, newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst changed his mind over one of the era's controversial issues – Prohibition[1]. Progressive Prohibitionists such as Hearst had believed that the "dry law" would be an adequate measure to uplift the country. But by January 1929, Hearst was conceding that Americans could actually not be forced to drink (just) water. In demanding an end to the "noble experiment", Hearst intensified the dynamic which led to the rapidly eroding acceptance of Prohibition, which just years before had enjoyed widespread support. Soon afterwards, numerous newspapers pointed out that "public opinion" had shifted and that a "wet tide", "wet groundswell", or "wet sentiment" was sweeping the country[2].

In hindsight, it seems clear that Prohibition simply had to fail: Enforcement turned out to be impossible in most areas of the United States. The promise that a ban on drinking would make America a safer, more prosperous place was broken. However, two points are worth reiterating. First, the broken promises of Prohibition had to be defined as a problem with political consequences. The corruption within the Harding administration, most notably the "Teapot dome" scandal, was a breach with Republicans' promise of a return to "normalcy" – but citizens kept voting for the party throughout the decade. Second, even if more and more Americans did become disenchanted with Prohibition, this by itself would not decide Prohibition's fate. Contemporaries on both sides of the issue – the "wets" and

[1] This paper draws on my master's thesis written at the University of Zurich in 2004. *Linards Udris*, Die steigende Flut der Prohibitionskritik: Die Abschaffung der Prohibition in der massenmedialen Öffentlichkeit in den USA, 1924 bis 1933 [The rising tide of Prohibition criticism: the repeal of Prohibition in the mass media public sphere of the United States, 1924–1933] (University of Zurich 2004).

[2] See, for instance, the cartoons: The optimists, *New York Times*, February 1, 1931 (cf. also Illustration 1 later in this chapter), or: He little knows what's coming, *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, October 3, 1930.

the "drys" – would have considered repeal of a constitutional amendment to be unthinkable. As Texas senator Morris Sheppard famously remarked, repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment was "as likely as it would be for a humming bird to fly to the Mars with the Washington Monument attached to its tail". Critics of Prohibition, then, first had to realize that repeal was a viable option, and they had to find ways to make this strategy work in the political process as well.

Prohibition not only had to become a dominant political issue, but it also had to be transformed from a "frozen", stalemate-like conflict between the wets and the drys. All arguments on both sides had already (and tirelessly) been exchanged throughout the decade, as contemporary compilations attest[3]. Scholars have available copious examples of every type of argument made at any given time during Prohibition[4]. The important challenge facing wets as well as drys by the end of the 1920s, in the words of journalist and social critic Charles F. Merz, was "a reconciliation of conflicting views and a bold effort to overcome inertia"[5]. That is, the stalemate needed to be broken, transforming the endless quarrel into a dynamic conflict where people would revise their opinions and come to believe that there was a better way of dealing with alcohol.

To examine the dynamics of this conflict and identify which of the (old) arguments actually gained ground at the expense of others, this chapter looks at a systematic sample of the press. Despite growing competition from radio broadcasting, in the 1920s the press still reached the most citizens and did the most to shape the public sphere. The press played a crucial role as an arena for the definition of political problems and the discussion of solutions. It was a platform for groups struggling over the salience and relevance of issues and the best way to deal with them. If one uses newspapers as a source, however, it is important to treat them not as mere "mirrors" that reflected the ideas and activities of interests within society over issues such as Prohibition. One should also take into account the logic by which the press worked and thus newspapers' more active role in political processes, for example the way newspaper editors and publishers decided which news to emphasize and how events should be interpreted and portrayed. In this sense, it becomes necessary to analyze the call for repeal of Prohibition not only *in* the press but also *by* the press.

To this end, I have taken a systematic sample of newspapers that represents not only certain regions and conflicting camps but also varying types of newspapers (which addressed different socio-economic groups within society). The sample ranges from papers oriented more toward "serious" reporting and papers that were more sensationalist in character. Using this sample, I will consider how the stances of different newspapers evolved over the Prohibition years, with an eye on

[3] See, for instance, the compilation of pro- and con-arguments in the foreword of *Lamar T. Beman*, Selected Articles on Prohibition: Modification of the Volstead Act (New York 1924).
[4] For this point, cf. *Joseph R. Gusfield*, Prohibition: The impact of political utopianism, in: *John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, David Brody*, Change and continuity in twentieth-century America: The 1920's (Columbus, Ohio 1968) 257–308.
[5] *Charles Merz*, The Dry Decade (Garden City, New York 1932 [1930]) 284.

which dimensions of the issue gained attention and which interests and individuals found forums for their views in which publications. My analysis, first concentrating on the importance of Prohibition in the coverage of presidential elections, suggests that not until the campaign of wet Democrat Al Smith in 1928 did Prohibition become a divisive and decisive issue in presidential campaigns, arguably contributing to the realignment of political parties[6]. To complement this analysis of high-intensity political campaigns, I also offer an analysis of more routine periods outside of presidential elections (e.g. January 1924, 1928, 1929, 1931) and review when Prohibition seemed to become a major issue and what triggered this. Finally, the essay also focuses on possible mechanisms that might explain a substantial shift in public acceptance of Prohibition: the about-face of the Hearst press in early 1929 and the ensuing rapid and intense polarization and radicalization of discourse that seriously undermined Prohibition's appeal and the reputation of those who were still supporting it. Within a short time in 1929, disenchantment with President Herbert Hoover's stance became evident, along with sinking trust in the administration on the issue. Wets also exhibited a new understanding that something could in fact be done against Prohibition. Even before the crash of the stock market and the advent of the Great Depression, therefore, Prohibition suffered a severe, eventually fatal blow. Even more than that, Prohibition appeared a major factor – alongside the Depression – in creating a social and political crisis at the end of the 1920s. The call for repeal of Prohibition in the press and by the press served, even if only symbolically, as an important way to overcome this crisis.

1. The press in the interwar years

During the interwar years, the press underwent structural transformations and developed new techniques for assessing and presenting political news. These trends help to explain why Prohibition received so much attention and why the dynamics in this debate shifted. During the 1920s and 1930s, the "new structural transformation of the public sphere" that had gained momentum in the Progressive Era continued to reshape the way newspapers operated[7]. For a variety of rea-

[6] For this argument, cf. *Thomas Welskopp*, Das Phantom der öffentlichen Meinung. Massenmedien und die Verschiebung des Parteiensystems in den USA der 1920er Jahre [The phantom of public opinion. Mass media and the realignment of the party system in the US in the 1920s], in: *Ute Daniel*, *et al.,* Politische Kultur und Medienwirklichkeiten in den 1920er Jahren [Political culture and media realities in the 1920s] (Bielefeld 2010). Cf. also *Michael Lerner*, Dry Manhattan. Prohibition in New York City (Cambridge, Mass. 2007).

[7] *Andreas Koller*, Der Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit in Westeuropa und den USA: Theoretische, metatheoretische und empirische Rekonstruktion und transatlantische Integration der Klassiker [The structural transformation of the public sphere in Western Europe and the United States. Theoretical, metatheoretical and empirical reconstruction and trans-

sons, some organizational and commercial and some ideological and political, newspapers began loosening their long-standing ties to political parties and organizations[8]. Publishers' increasing success at detaching their operations from party control resulted in an independent press that followed its own logic and notions of the public good, but also in a more commercialized press. The structural transformation of the press had many manifestations, including the rapid success of tabloids by the 1920s, press concentration through chains and conglomerates, and the growing importance of news agencies and press services (e.g. of the *New York Times*), on which more and more newspaper outlets came to rely in order to keep up with the faster flow of news[9]. Geographically, increasing newspaper circulation and the spread of news agencies and press services from the big cities brought small towns and rural areas into the metropolitan information network. By doubling their circulation alone between 1925 and 1930, city papers increasingly managed to set a national agenda and undermine the isolation of rural areas, as well as their conceptions of city life[10]. This also meant diffusion of those topics, problems, and ideas that papers from the East Coast and Chicago deemed important – the (non-)enforcement of Prohibition being a major example – to various regions of the country. Issues seemed increasingly to converge nationwide, as more and more Americans were reading intertwined print media[11].

In terms of the actual production of news, growing media autonomy from the political system developed in tandem with new professional standards and role models among journalists, who conceived of themselves as actively and independently trying to shape the political agenda. Beyond their detailed reporting and analysis of Prohibition, newspapers shaped public opinion through innovative polling techniques, such as initiating straw polls and commenting at length on the

atlantic integration of the classics] (Dissertation University of Zurich 2004); *Richard L. Kaplan,* Politics and the American press: the rise of objectivity, 1865–1920 (Cambridge 2002).

[8] Several studies date the structural transformation of the public sphere in the first half of the nineteenth century with the rise of the (commercial) penny press: e.g. *Gerald Baldasty*, The commercialization of news in the nineteenth century (Madison 1992) or *W. David Sloan*, Party press, in: *Margaret A. Blanchard*, History of the mass media in the United States: an encyclopedia (Chicago, London 1998) 496–498. But commercialization did not yet mean depoliticization. Crises and political factors still played a role. In the second half of the nineteenth century, an economic strategy of a newspaper in a lot of cases led to an even closer link to a political party, as it was also commercially attractive to distinguish itself politically from competitors (e.g. *Kaplan*, Politics and the American Press 4–16).

[9] The *United Press Associations*, known for its sensationalist reporting style, and the more staid *Associated Press* together provided articles to 2,400 members; Hearst's *International News Service* was growing as well. Cf. *Richard A. Schwarzlose*, Cooperative news gathering, in: *W. David Sloan*, *Lisa Mullikin Parcell*, American Journalism: History, Principles, Practices (Jefferson, N.C., London 2002) 153–162, here 159. Also *Walter Lippmann*, Public Opinion (New York 1997 [1922]) 205–206.

[10] *Sean Dennis Cashman*, Prohibition: the Lie of the Land (New York 1981) 165.

[11] *Sally F. Griffith*, Mass media come to the small town: the Emporia Gazette in the 1920s, in: *Catherine L. Covert*, *John D. Stevens*, Mass media between the wars: perceptions of cultural tension, 1918–1941 (Syracuse 1984) 141–155; *Schwarzlose*, Cooperative news gathering 157.

results[12]. Different types of newspapers followed different forms of logic in selecting and presenting news about politics and all other matters[13]. More respectable newspapers adhered to a "public logic"; they closely followed politics but presenting it in a nonpartisan and balanced way, according to new, professional "canons of journalism"[14]. When an issue was as contested as Prohibition, the nonpartisan stance of the press increased the chances that different interests and perspectives would receive attention, because journalists would look for a supporting and an opposing viewpoint to give a story an aura of objectivity. This would help critics of Prohibition once they started to organize themselves on a more intense basis in the second half of the 1920s.

With the disengagement of the press from political control and its growing commercialization, newspapers increasingly tried to attract their less stable readership with news that promised to be, above all, interesting. All newspapers, even the most genteel, did this, but the trend was especially manifest among tabloids and mass-marketed chain papers. Such papers unabashedly directed themselves to consumer audiences rather than citizen audiences. This media logic, which had roots in the mid-nineteenth century, favored scandals, crime, conflicts, and personalities over long and complex political processes. The most lurid or melodramatic aspects of Prohibition fit nicely into sensationalist press strategies. Stern Prohibition officers clashing with a festive crowd during their notorious raids, euphoric teenagers crashing cars while driving under the influence of illegal liquor, publicly dry politicians turning out to secretly drink at home, or dry evangelicals preaching decent behavior turning out to having broken norms themselves (e.g. adultery, speculation, etc.) – all this, and a lot more, made for excellent, exciting stories. As Charles F. Merz, an editor of the *World* and later the *New*

12 Participation rates soared in these newspaper-run straw polls, One run by *Literary Digest* in 1930 tallied 4.8 million participants, around 2 million more than in the most widely observed poll on the 1928 presidential elections. Cf. *Thomas Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Prohibition [America's great disillusionment: A Cultural History of Prohibition] (Paderborn 2010) 467–469.

13 *Michael Schudson*, The power of news (Cambridge, Mass., London 1995) 66.

14 *Michael Schudson*, The sociology of news (New York, London 2003) 83–84; *James E. Murphy*, Tabloids as an urban response, in: *Catherine L. Covert, John D. Stevens*, Mass media between the wars: perceptions of cultural tension, 1918–1941 (Syracuse 1984) 55–70, here 61–62; *David T. Z. Mindich*, Just the facts: how "objectivity" came to define American journalism (New York 1998); *Ford Risley*, Politics and partisanship, in: *W. David Sloan, Lisa Mullikin Parcell*, American Journalism: History, Principles, Practices (Jefferson, N.C., London 2002) 14–22, here 19. When covering the Democratic convention, the *New York Times*, for instance, advertised: For complete, *non-partisan* news of THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, read The New York Times (June 15, 1928, section III, 1, italics my emphasis). The *Times* continually sought to convey the new ideal of fair treatment and balance. For example: "What he [i.e. Tuttle, the Republicans' candidate for Governor of New York] has said has been fully reported even in the columns of Democratic newspapers. Under the *now established doctrine of journalistic fairness in printing both sides*, both he and Governor *Roosevelt* may be sure of a fair hearing", October 18, 1930 (italics my emphasis).

York Times, noted aptly in 1930, Prohibition was "the stuff of which news is made"[15].

Such long-term trends and underlying commercial and editorial strategies affected all newspapers in some measure. But the American press in the interwar years was also shaped by one of the most important news magnates of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: William Randolph Hearst, who had assembled a chain of newspapers, magazines, and news services to serve both his economic and political ambitions[16]. In sharp contrast to respectable dailies, Hearst's papers made no pretense of covering politics in a balanced, matter-of-fact way. Nor did they follow a clear party line, even though Hearst was elected twice to Congress as a Democrat. Instead, Hearst's (personal) failure to have the Democratic Party nominate him for New York governor or senator in 1922 and even for the Presidency in 1924 led to a (temporary) estrangement from the party. Hearst supported Republicans for much of the decade, only to become later disenchanted by Hoover's presidency and return to the Democratic camp[17]. The chain presented and interpreted politics in ways that suited Hearst's inclinations and interests. Addressing mass audiences, the Hearst papers were populist in character, with editorial strategies based upon a more moralistic type of discourse, intense news waves, and media campaigns[18]. Since the Hearst papers were eager to influence the public while vying for public support, they were probably more sensitive to possible shifts in public opinion. This makes the Hearst press a particularly interesting venue for analyzing the turn of the tide of the Prohibition issue.

Given the fundamental role of the press in American politics overall and with regard to Prohibition specifically, it is surprising that scholars have not invested much effort in the systematic analysis of press coverage of Prohibition. More often than not, studies focus disproportionately on the *New York Times*[19] only or

[15] *Merz*, The Dry Decade 218–219. Before publishing this book, Merz had already proved to be an expert in analyzing media coverage. In a 1920 study together with Walter Lippmann, Merz had conducted "A Test of the News" (published in *The New Republic*, August 1920), examining news coverage of the *New York Times* on the Russian revolution. This study is still regarded as one of the finest examples of sophisticated media content analysis, cf. *Robert McChesney*, That was now and this is then: Walter Lippmann and the crisis of journalism, in: *Robert McChesney*, *Victor Packard*, Will the last reporter please turn out the lights. The collapse of journalism and what can be done to fix it (New York, London 2011) 151–161.

[16] *W. A. Swanberg*, Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst (New York 1961); *Barbara Cloud*, "Hearst, William Randolph", in: *Margaret A. Blanchard*, History of the mass media in the United States: an encyclopedia (Chicago, London 1998) 250–251.

[17] *Ben Procter*, William Randolph Hearst: Final Edition, 1911–1951 (Oxford 2007) 101–122.

[18] *Procter*, Hearst 106.

[19] The *New York Times*, even with smaller circulation rates than tabloids, enjoyed a favorable reputation as a "reserved broadsheet", especially for political elites and opinion-leaders. Cf. *Kevin G. Barnhurst, John Nerone*, The form of news: a history (New York, London 2001) 252. Also, with a large network of correspondents, the *Times* on a daily basis provided the largest pool of articles that were used by newspapers in various regions of the United States. In this way, the *New York Times* became indispensable for "men of all shades of opinion", as Walter Lippmann observed in his classic *Public Opinion* in 1922.

they make use of an unsystematic sample, without tracing how different papers changed their coverage in the course of the 1920s[20]. The selection of newspapers in this study takes into account the conflict structures in political communication in the 1920s and 1930s, circulation as evidence of newspaper reach, respectable versus tabloid papers, ownership, especially affiliation with the Hearst chain, and observations made in the press about other newspapers. Additionally, the sample tries to reflect the geographical diversity of the United States and the salient conflict between urban and rural areas, especially between the big cities on the East Coast and the less urbanized Plains. This was manifest also in the stance on the Prohibition issue[21] – typically in the drys' attempt to discredit the "wet press" from the East Coast for being bribed by the liquor industry and using a wet stance to curry favor with their drinking readership in the larger cities[22].

The following analysis thus includes, apart from the *New York Times* (NYT), the *Daily News* (DN), a "wet" New York tabloid whose focus on sex and crime helped to account for its having the highest circulation rate in the United States[23].

[20] If dailies other than the *New York Times* are used as sources, it is mostly to illustrate the arguments of journalists and social critics Walter Lippmann or Henry L. Mencken. Thus, newspapers and magazines in this sense are seen mainly to reflect the positions of certain intellectuals or elite more generally, and they are understood mainly as "channels" for messages instead of being analyzed both as platforms with their own logic of selecting and portraying news *and* as political actors. More recently, authors such as *Kenneth D. Rose*, American women and the repeal of prohibition (New York, London 1996) and *Catherine Gilbert Murdock*, Domesticating drink: Women, men and alcohol in America, 1870–1940 (Baltimore, London 1998) have begun to expand understanding of the press by focusing on the "women's public sphere", analyzing the paper of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and magazines directed at women such as *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Vogue*. These analyses shed light on the role of women in promoting the repeal of Prohibition. However, they tend to underestimate the fact that strategies of women's groups (as with any interest group) depended on visibility and resonance in the established newspapers in order to be effective, as these were the papers to which political actors would most often turn, thus making up the most relevant political public sphere. More recent publications tend to give more weight to the role of the media, for instance *Daniel Okrent*, Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition (New York 2010), *Lerner*, Dry Manhattan, or *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 397–399.

[21] Most studies of Prohibition stress the dividing line between urban and rural regions. Cf., among others, *Richard Hofstadter*, The age of reform (New York 1955); *David A. Shannon*, Between the wars: America, 1919–1941 (Boston 1965); *Gusfield*, Prohibition; *Norman H. Clark*, The dry years: Prohibition and social change in Washington (Seattle, London 1988 [1965]); cf. also *David E. Kyvig*, Daily life in the United States, 1920–1939: decades of promise and pain (Westport, Connecticut, London 2002) 7–20.

[22] *Cashman*, Prohibition 165.

[23] By the 1920s, tabloids such as the *Daily News*, featuring sensational stories especially linking Prohibition and crime, had become popular in the cities (and detested in other areas) for portraying an "urban reality". Typically, respectable papers ignored the *News* in their regular press reviews (a fate shared by other tabloids), which probably reflected more their professional stance and self imagine and their skepticism of this highly successful press type. The *Daily News* had the highest circulation rate in the country at the end of the 1920s, just five years after it was founded (cf. *Erika J. Pribanic-Smith*, Sensationalism and tabloidism, in: *W. David Sloan, Lisa Mullikin Parcell*, American journalism: history, principles, practices (Jef-

In addition to these two New York papers, the sample includes one large, fairly prestigious paper from the relatively dry Midwest, the *Kansas City Star* (KCS)[24]. Out of the numerous *Hearst* publications, the sample includes the daily *Chicago Herald and Examiner* (CHE), a mixture of broadsheet and tabloid, which as a Chicago paper was furthermore confronted with the notorious bootlegging and gang violence in the city. I have examined – comprehensively if inductively – the general news and editorial sections of these newspapers to see how each paper framed political events with regard to the Prohibition issue and, in addition, which events and aspects of the issue the papers downplayed or ignored. From these four papers alone, around 2,200 articles, editorials, and political cartoons in specific time periods and selected months in 1924 (my "control" year) and then from 1928 to 1932 turned out to be relevant. In this way, I hope at least tentatively to assess the salience of the Prohibition issue, to reconstruct journalists' construction of events and processes, and to do justice to the discursive struggles and framing contests in which the media and politicians engaged.

2. Politicizing Prohibition – the Case of Presidential Elections

Presidential elections obviously structure political communication across the various regions of the United States. This makes their media coverage a good indicator for which political issues attract nationwide attention. In the 1920s, news coverage of presidential elections peaked around the nominating conventions in early summer and then in late October in the run-up to the elections. In Table 1, the growing politicization of the Prohibition issue across presidential campaigns is striking. In 1924, Prohibition was at best one of many issues in the campaign; in 1928, Prohibition probably was *the* crucial issue; and in 1932 it most definitely was that, at least as measured by press coverage. The number of articles explicitly

ferson, N.C., London 2002) 267–276, here 272). "The average circulations for the six months period ending September 1924 were: daily 786, 398; Sunday 807, 279." Numbers in: *Leo E. McGivena*, The News: The first fifty years of New York's Picture Newspaper (New York 1969) 112.

[24] "No other newspaper west of Chicago has as large a circulation as either the morning or evening issue of The Star. Half a million papers go to paid subscribers each week-day and more than 290,000 copies each Sunday. The Weekly Star's circulation exceeds 500,000 copies. Tuesdays, when The Weekly Star is printed in addition to the Daily issues, the presses of The Kansas City Star produce more than one million papers." *KCS*, January 4, 1933. Cf. also *William Howard Taft*, Missouri Newspapers (University of Missouri 1964) 247–248. Of course, the *Star's* situation regarding Prohibition was more complex than sketched out above. Located in a border city between both North and South and East and West, the *Star* was embedded in Missouri, a state with politically changing allegiances and with a strong beer-brewing tradition (St. Louis) that kept Missouri from becoming dry before the advent of the Volstead Act, and in Kansas, known by everybody as the "cradle" of Prohibition and infamous for rigid enforcement and wholehearted support of Prohibition.

linking Prohibition to the electoral contest rose in all newspapers[25]; it quadrupled from 1924 to 1928 and then almost doubled again from 1928 to 1932[26]. Readers of Hearst's *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, for instance, would likely find in 1932 more than three articles each day on Prohibition explicitly as an election topic, often on the front page. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated in 1932, the New York *Daily News* readily made clear the salience of the Prohibition issue in big headlines, stating, "Roosevelt accepts as dripping wet. 'I, too, want repeal', cry of Roosevelt"[27]. The importance ascribed by the press to Prohibition in 1928 and especially 1932 is manifest.

Table 1: News articles, editorials, and political cartoons linking Prohibition and presidential elections

	1924	1928	1932
Chicago Herald and Examiner	16 (0.2)	69 (1.0)	213 (3.2)
Kansas City Star	16 (0.2)	90 (1.3)	113 (1.7)
New York Times	40 (0.6)	127 (1.9)	212 (3.2)
Daily News	(not analyzed)	48 (0.7)	146 (2.2)
Total (without Daily News)	72 (0.4)	286 (1.4)	538 (2.7)

Example: In 1932, the *Kansas City Star* linked 113 news articles, editorials and political cartoons on the presidential elections clearly to Prohibition – 1.7 items per day on average (indicated in brackets). The following dates were analyzed for 1924, 1928, and 1932: June 1 – July 10 and October 20 – November 15 (67 days in each of the three years).

There are several reasons for these large differences over the three election periods, some of which are addressed in the remainder of this chapter. Given that the press reacts to what political actors and interests feed to it, one reason for this shift in attention is that the parties increasingly pushed Prohibition issue. In 1924, the Republicans completely sidestepped it. The Democrats did engage in a fight over the issue at their convention; that year, the *New York Times* paid considerable attention to how New York candidate Al Smith, an outspoken critic of Prohibition, was faring. But the Democrats, fractured that year by their intense fight over the

[25] One of the reasons for the higher intensity in the *New York Times* is the larger size of this paper compared to the other papers included in this analysis. It simply carried more articles than most papers.

[26] This growing number of articles covering Prohibition does not result from newspapers generally increasing their volume over this period, since the number of front-page articles on prohibition as an election topic rose to the same extent from 1924 to 1932. This is a strong indicator because, even if the overall volume of a newspaper might have increased in the course of the 1920s (thus increasing the chances for any topic to be covered), the number of articles on a front page would have been more likely to sink. The press generally began to print fewer and fewer articles on a front page in this period, which potentially made front-page coverage of Prohibition less likely than before. Cf. *Barnhurst, Nerone*, The form of news 194–200.

[27] *DN*, July 3, 1932.

Ku Klux Klan, managed only to produce a compromise candidate, John W. Davis, who satisfied none of the factions. With Davis silent on Prohibition as well, no party addressed the issue at all, and none of the newspapers analyzed Coolidge's election victory in November against the background of Prohibition[28].

Four years later, however, it was the Democrats and especially their candidate, Al Smith, who capitalized on the Prohibition issue. The New York governor suggested both the modification of the Volstead Act and the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Spearheading the critique of Prohibition and attacking the Republicans as the new "prohibition party"[29], the Democrats took the risk of alienating significant dry factions within the party, who as "Hoover Democrats"[30] came out in support of their party's rival. This split contributed to the realignment of political parties, with the northern and eastern cities becoming Democratic, while some Plains states moved toward the Republicans. Even the solid South experienced a drop in Democratic support, with North Carolina and Virginia breaking away from the Democratic fold[31].

Smith's move triggered strong reactions[32]. This prompted the *Daily News* to comment, "The fight this year, in short, is not between Republicans and Democrats, protectionists and free-trades, individualists and state socialists, high hats and lowbrows. It is between Wets and Drys"[33]. The reason that Prohibition seemed the main battleground was not because other conflicts were unimportant but because it could be linked to struggles over (regional) identity, religion, federalism, immigration, and crime. Walter Lippmann's observation in 1927 of a conflict between "a whole way of life and an ancient tradition", based on both Prohibition and the evangelical church, and the "emergence of the cities as the dominant force in America"[34] summed up a common intellectual assessment. All of the

[28] In fact, there were no articles on November 5 or 6, the days right after the elections, that emphasized a link between the election and Prohibition.

[29] Front page article: G.O.P. SIMPLY DRY PARTY – RASKOB, *San Antonio Express*, October 22, 1928 (report by *Associated Press*).

[30] See, for instance, the front page article: HEFLIN SCORES SMITH IN ALBANY SUBURB. Assails him as Catholic, 'soaking wet', Tammany man, unfit to be President. Klansmen cheer attack. Governor's son-in-law heading troopers guarding meeting, escorts Senator to platform, *NYT*, June 18, 1928, or the editorial: Hoover Democrats, Smith Republicans, *KCS*, July 11, 1928.

[31] *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 552–559.

[32] Cf. *Cashman*, Prohibition 183–202; *Gusfield*, Prohibition 257–308, here 258; *Günter Schmölders*, Die Prohibition in den Vereinigten Staaten: Triebkräfte und Auswirkungen des amerikanischen Alkoholverbots [Prohibition in the United States. Driving forces and consequences of the American ban on liquor] (Leipzig 1930) 239. Examples of editorials are: DODGING AN ISSUE. How the prohibition plank was framed and insincerely adopted at Kansas City, *NYT*, June 15, 1928; Smith – anti-dry, unafraid, *DN*, June 23, 1928; The democratic party's new leader, *KCS*, June 29, 1928; The new Democratic party, *KCS*, July 13, 1928.

[33] Editorial: Today – vote wet, *DN*, November 6, 1928.

[34] "The Eighteenth Amendment is the rock on which the evangelical church militant is founded, and with it are involved a whole way of life and an ancient tradition. The overcoming of the Eighteenth Amendment would mean the emergence of the cities as the dominant

four papers studied perceived in their news, analyses, editorials and cartoons a "battle between two civilizations"[35], whether they supported or criticized Prohibition[36].

With this convergence of issues and conflicts, the wet *Daily News* most explicitly but also the slightly more cautious *New York Times* on one side and the *Kansas City Star* on the other side saw themselves representing distinct groups. The papers' remarks and attacks upon one another in editorials and cartoons paralleled and recreated the country's divisions rather merely describing them. The *Daily News* and the *Times*, for instance, saw the large-scale raids in New York night clubs in July 1928, ordered by Republican assistant attorney general Mabel Walker Willebrandt[37], as an attempt by rural "dry" forces to attack both candidate Smith and the urban way of life. Meanwhile, the *Kansas City Star* offered a cartoon depicting urban Democrats who supported the wet ticket as desperately crawling in the Prohibition desert and dehydrating through the burning sun (labeled "rigid enforcement")[38].

All newspapers, whether wet or dry or neutral, described the presidential candidates in relation to the Prohibition issue. Many more political cartoons linked the parties and candidates to Prohibition than in 1924. Even the *New York Times*, which seldom used cartoons on the editorial page, offered a cartoon of the opposing politicians represented as friends and foes of Prohibition. Herbert Hoover was labeled "**H_2O**OVER", while Alfred E. Smith's name was written as "**AL.E.** SMITH"[39]. Smith himself pushed the issue and stood squarely against Prohibition. Hoover, who for a time sought to leave his options open, was increasingly associated with the dry camp and enjoyed its explicit support[40]. That the election was, or should be, a choice between pro and con positions about Prohibition was also clear to the *Daily News*, which during the fall of 1928 printed daily on its editorial page the slogan: "The presidential election is twenty-one [or twenty, etc.] days off. If you're for prohibition, vote for Hoover. If you're against it, vote for Smith."[41]

When it came to the candidates and their stance on Prohibition, even the broadsheets showed few signs of following their new ideal of objectivity. While the *New*

force in America, dominant politically and socially as they are already dominant economically", in: *Walter Lippmann*, Men of Destiny (New Brunswick 2003 [1927]), quoted in: *Cashman*, Prohibition 183.

35 *Cashman*, Prohibition 182.

36 See the following editorials: The South's Problem, *NYT*, October 21, 1928; Smith Back to His Real Issue, *KCS*, October 24, 1928; Smith Depends on Wet Cities, *KCS*, October 27, 1928; The Independent Voter, *KCS*, October 31, 1928; The Dead Hand, *DN*, November 3, 1928. See also: 'RELIGION NO TEST', CRIES ROBINSON; DELEGATES GO WILD. SHUN SPLIT ON LIQUOR, PARTY TOLD, *CHE*, June 28, 1928.

37 *Lerner*, Dry Decade 248.

38 Cartoon: Is the ol' swimmin' hole really going to dry up?, *KCS*, July 2, 1928.

39 What's in a name!, *NYT*, July 1, 1928, Section XX (emphasis in the original).

40 HOOVER TO GET W.C.T.U. VOTE, *CHE*, June 21, 1928.

41 Editorial: The Great Western of the Air?, *DN*, October 16, 1928.

York Times rallied behind Smith, in much of the Midwest, Smith was perceived as an imminent threat. Midwestern politicians and the region's dry press assailed Smith's wet stance. In linking the Democrat's views on Prohibition to his Catholicism and his urban upbringing, they turned the conflict over Prohibition into a conflict over the nation's identity[42]. There is no other way to explain the enormous focus on Smith in the *Kansas City Star*, for example. The *Star* printed editorials and cartoons against Smith, who "does not know America"[43]. In this sense, the *Star* fell in line with one of the region's "famous temperance advocate[s]"[44], journalist and editor William Allen White, whose *Emporia Gazette* represented the "grassroots Republican Midwest"[45]. White's perception of a conspiracy of Catholics, financial, and liquor interests was also evident in the Hearst papers' campaign against Smith and his involvement with Tammany Hall, "a political mafia, an organization of graft and political blackmail"[46].

One highly publicized episode in the campaign nicely illustrates how Prohibition merged into a wider discourse over what it means to be American – and how the dry camp still had the upper hand in successfully playing the "un-American" card against Smith. When Smith proposed to let the states decide about Prohibition, including giving them the opportunity to sell liquor under state supervision, Hoover denounced this as a step towards "state socialism"[47]. An economic argument woven into identity politics, this "dread word socialism"[48] echoed loudly. The *Kansas City Star* applauded the "American policy of Hoover", criticizing Smith for having "the government go into the saloon business" and planning "European experiments with state Socialism … like the Mussolini regime". In his next campaign speech, Smith felt compelled to respond to this reproach, which to be sure gave it more weight[49]. It is telling that opponents could find it plausible to impute anti-American qualities to Smith's rhetoric, which depended on boilerplate Democratic Party references to "Jeffersonian democracy"[50] when calling for less federal intervention with personal drinking habits. Smith's opponents' focus on identity politics showed a blind spot in the debate: attacking "big government" on the economic dimension but completely failing to criticize the already pronounced rise of "big government" against individual sinners that had come with

[42] *Cashman*, Prohibition 191–192.
[43] Editorial: The Democratic Party's New Leader, *KCS*, June 29, 1928.
[44] See *KCS*, April 6, 1933.
[45] *Risley*, Politics and partisanship 19–20.
[46] Editorial: DON'T FORGET WHAT WE TOLD YOU. TAMMANY TIGER – A VITAL ISSUE IN THIS CAMPAIGN. The people do not want Tammany. They do want prosperity and happiness (Hearst), *CHE*, November 4, 1928.
[47] Front page article: THRONG OF 22,000 IN THE GARDEN HEARS HOOVER ASSAIL SMITH'S POLICIES AS 'STATE SOCIALISM'; OPPOSES PUTTING GOVERNMENT INTO BUSINESS. SPECIFIES THREE ISSUES, *NYT*, October 23, 1928.
[48] Editorial: Today! Dread Word, 'Socialism', *CHE*, October 24, 1928.
[49] SMITH SEIZES SOCIALIST CRY, *CHE*, October 25, 1928.
[50] Editorial: Mr. Hughes at Buffalo, *DN*, October 29, 1928.

the Volstead Act and all its consequences[51]. In such ways, opponents insinuated that Smith was one of *them*, while Hoover was one of *us*. East Coast papers in turn denounced such dry attacks on Smith[52]. But while the *New York Times* and the *Daily News* outlined a very different model of America than was presented in the dry press, they would not question Hoover's integrity and his status as a true American.

As politicians and the press had brought Prohibition to the fore during the 1928 campaign, the issue's politicization was evident once the election results were out. Charles Merz observed that "there was no hesitancy on the part of leaders on both sides of the prohibition question to rush into print with ultimate conclusions on the morning after the election"[53]. The wealth of headlines in all four newspapers just after the elections make it perfectly clear that Prohibition was seen as a crucial factor in explaining voters' behavior, mainly in the victory of "older America" over "newer, urban life"[54], Smith, who stood for cities and the wet cause, trailed behind Hoover, with his rural backing and more conservative Prohibition policy[55]. But the expectation that, in the words of the *Herald and Examiner*, "the wet question has been relegated to the background so far that it will prove only a minor factor in the next few years"[56] turned out to be completely wrong. The debate only intensified, with Prohibition becoming a major topic in the months and years to come.

As will be discussed below, this politicization of Prohibition did seem tied to a rapid erosion of Prohibition support starting in 1929. In this context and against the background of the Great Depression, Americans by 1932 had come to expect that something finally and definitely had to be done about Prohibition. That year's presidential elections seemed to some extent a referendum on the matter[57].

[51] *James A. Morone*, Hellfire nation: the politics of sin in American history (New Haven, London 2003) 343–345.

[52] See the front page articles: WHITE IN HOT REPLY. Governor Smith's attack on Kansas editor brings a prompt retort. Never heard of Miller. But the Emporian challenges governor to deny charge of interview. Warns dry democrats. 'Shall Smith tammanyize America or shall we americanize Tammany?', *KCS*, July 15, 1928, or: SMITH STRIKES BACK AT WHITE'S CHARGES. Governor defends his record in legislature, attacked by Kansas editor. Says reformer gave data. Tabulation on gambling, saloon and anti-vice bills is branded as nonsense, *NYT*, July 15, 1928.

[53] *Merz*, Dry Decade 231.

[54] In the *Kansas City Star*'s view, "the effort to impose a city control crashed on moral principles". See: The older America wins, *KCS*, November 7, 1928: "Smith represented the big city, its cosmopolitanism, its impatience with what an eminent New Yorker once called 'the moral yearnings of rural communities', its absorption in itself, its failure to think nationally. Hoover was the embodiment of the qualities and standards of the older rural and small city America, which still controls the country. In the election yesterday the newer, urban life clashed with the older tradition, and the older America swept to victory."

[55] *Murdock*, Domesticating drink 118. See, for instance, the editorial: Hoover wins, *DN*, November 7, 1928.

[56] Driest Congress Elected; Wet Issue Evaporates, *CHE* (report by *Universal Services*), November 8, 1928.

[57] *David E. Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition (Kent, Ohio, London [2]2000 [1979]) 159.

Accordingly, trials of bootleggers or raids on speakeasies gained less and less attention in the press, with more and more articles focusing on the political system and the anticipated showdown between the wets and the drys. Among the possible options how to finally solve the issue, repeal quickly turned out to be the simplest, most convincing answer. The word "repeal" seemed to be everywhere: it had popped up only in 2 percent of all headlines on the Prohibition issue in 1928 or 1929, suggesting that this strategy was not yet considered a real option. But in 1932, it was used in more than one quarter of all headlines on Prohibition.

Rather than two separate questions in the electoral contest, Prohibition and the Great Depression became "twin issues"[58]. The argument that the legalization of liquor, especially beer, would bring welcome tax revenue appeared frequently[59]. Beer became the alcoholic beverage referred to most often in the headlines in 1932. (In the 1920s, when Prohibition seemed more popular, headlines referred more often to "rum", with its negative connotations.) The focus on beer is striking, as throughout the decade, numerous proposals for modifying the Volstead Act called for legalization of beer *and* light wine. Given the cultural patterns of American working-class men, it makes sense that beer rather than wine came to occupy the center of pro-repeal rhetoric especially in view of the economic crisis[60]. But even more, the legal return of alcohol promised that the country in distress was able to solve problems in a humane way, a contrast to the seemingly cold social engineering solutions offered by the Hoover administration.

The media contributed to rising public hopes for repeal by claiming a shift in public opinion – based on ambiguous evidence of course – and suggesting that they would stand for what the public wanted. When John D. Rockefeller Jr., a long-time supporter of Prohibition and the Anti-Saloon League[61], wrote that he would give up Prohibition and support repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment[62], newspapers regarded this as "perhaps the most dramatic single event bearing on the liquor question since the adoption of Prohibition"[63]. Rockefeller's shift in stance filled front pages. The *Daily News* cheerfully stated, "Even Rockefeller is

58 *Lerner*, Dry Manhattan 290; cf. also *James E. Campbell*, Party Systems and Realignments in the United States, 1868–2004, in: Social Science History 30/3 (2006) 376.

59 Examples: STRAWN URGES DRY REPEAL AS SPUR TO TRADE. Warns presidential aspirants must be liberal; sure Hoover backs resubmission, *CHE*, June 8, 1932; LEADERS OF 2,500,000 WETS UNITE TO FIGHT FOR REPEAL; SPURRED BY ROCKEFELLER. PLAN POLITICAL PRESSURE, *NYT*, June 8, 1932; PROHIBITION HAS CHEATED U.S. OF 18 BILLIONS TAX! SAYS CRUSADERS' CHIEF. ACT 'CRUCIFYING YOUTH ON RAIL OF SPEAKEASY!', *CHE*, June 10, 1932; SLOAN IS FOR REPEAL. Abolishment of eighteenth amendment is urged. The General Motors head say he is convinced it is the way to bring greater temperance, *KCS*, June 12, 1932.

60 Cf. *Edward Behr*, Prohibition: thirteen years that changed America (New York 1996) 234; *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 134–136.

61 Editorial: Mr. Rockefeller for repeal, *NYT*, June 7, 1932, 13.

62 *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 152–153; *Rose*, American women and the repeal of prohibition 123–124; *Clark*, Deliver us from evil 201.

63 Rockefeller move is a dramatic one, *NYT*, June 7, 1932, 12.

convinced."[64] The *Times* saw both Prohibition and an era of "tyranny" coming to an end[65]. In this seemingly "historic" moment, Hearst himself did not want to stand apart and quickly intensified his wet campaign by printing his own political statement (including his signature) on the front page of all his newspapers and explaining his moral "crusade" against Prohibition, which he labeled a "disastrous and nationally demoralizing failure"[66]. In a textbook case of the "bandwagon effect", the faster that prominent Prohibitionists switched sides and joined the "repeal army"[67], the more media and public opinion seemed to create an irresistible momentum. It was as though the cork of a champagne bottle in which pressure had slowly built then suddenly exploded[68]. Even the *Kansas City Star* grudgingly admitted that the "wets now are the aggressors. They hold the advantage of a shift in public sentiment"[69].

Against the background of this "onrushing wet tide"[70] and rising expectations of a "showdown"[71], the 1932 party conventions were portrayed in a radically simple way: Which party would nominate a "dripping wet" who would speak unequivocally for repeal? Typical of a situation of insecurity where complexity has to be reduced to restore some sense of orientation, press coverage drowned out the variety of other issues at stake and focused on one problem only (Prohibition), on one solution only (repeal), and on one way of showing who was seemingly all for Prohibition (Republicans) or all against Prohibition (Democrats). Hearst's *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, for instance, for several days linked all articles on the first five pages about the Republican convention explicitly to the Prohibition issue. The demand for repeal had "risen to something of that urgency and irresistibility in the controversy over what to do about prohibition", in the words of the *New York Times*[72]. The repeal idea made all other, more complex suggestions for solving the Prohibition question seem contradictory or insufficient. When the Republicans rejected repeal but vowed to resubmit the question to Congress and the

64 Editorial: Even Rockefeller is convinced, *DN*, June 8, 1932.
65 Editorial: Ending a tyranny, *NYT*, June 9, 1932.
66 "But three years ago the Hearst papers decided that prohibition was a disastrous and nationally demoralizing failure and that it was not the part of patriotism longer to remain blind to its abuses and silent in the face of its fearful effects. For three years, therefore, the Hearst papers have crusaded against prohibition and for the substitution of some more successful temperance measure. We regard our crusade against prohibition a natural and logical and inevitable part of the crusade which for the whole existence of the Hearst newspaper institution we have waged against drunkenness, against concentrated alcoholic liquor and against the saloon." Extract from the front page article: MR. ROCKEFELLER'S CONSCIENTIOUS CONVICTION ON PROHIBITION, *CHE*, June 8, 1932.
67 Cartoon: The call to arms, *CHE*, June 10, 1932.
68 *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 160–161.
69 Editorial: The nation will not be stampeded, *KCS*, June 14, 1932.
70 Example: REPUBLICAN DRY LEADERS RALLY THEIR FORCES TO STEM THE ONRUSHING WET TIDE. CANNON SAYS DRYS ARE READY FOR VOTE, *NYT*, June 13, 1932.
71 Example: BUTLER PLANS SHOWDOWN ON REPEAL PLANK, *DN*, June 6, 1932.
72 Editorial: More than a catchword, *NYT*, June 14, 1932.

American people for a vote – a stance unthinkable even two years before and shared now even by the dry *Kansas City Star*[73] – this was not seen as a rational suggestion but simply as contradictory and insufficient. The *Star* claimed, "The liquor plank is clear" and "explicit enough to any intelligent person who cares to give it a moment of serious attention". But in the view of the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*'s journalist and social critic H. L. Mencken, and the vast majority of the papers, the "Hoover dry-wet plank"[74] was merely a "wet-dry straddle"[75] which "at least has the great virtue of being quite unintelligible to simple folk"[76]. In this time of uncertainty, only clear and unequivocal stances were considered acceptable.

This tendency toward simplification was also clear in the way that temporal terms were used. The political vocabulary of the wets consisted of metaphors reflecting urgency (e.g. "*immediate* modification") and determination (e.g. "*outright* repeal"). They suggested a determinate step in the near future. The drys on the other hand, clinging to the status quo, often countered that repeal was too "radical", too "fast", and did not provide a "safe haven" or a "guarantee" in this troubling time. Drys feared that repeal would throw the nation into chaos[77] and would represent a step backwards in American history[78]. Republicans came across as cautious and defensive, while the Democrats seemed determined and active. In political cartoons, the Republican elephant was ailing. It was forced to swallow the medicine of repeal, or it feared of jumping into the water of repeal while the energetic Democratic donkey would take the plunge[79]. The majority of newspapers made it impeccably clear that repealing Prohibition would lift a large burden from Americans and free them from an unwanted past. A bold move to get rid of Prohibition and to work out a new future was the call of the hour[80]. And strikingly, while the economic planks of the two parties seemed too complicated to understand, it was exactly the "repeal planks" of the parties that were used to illustrate where the two competing parties generally diverged in their ideas as to what road the country should take[81]. Given the extraordinary attention to Prohibition during the watershed election of 1932, it is probably difficult to find

[73] Editorial: Dr. Butler answers Mr. Borah, *KCS*, June 21, 1932.
[74] Front page article: CONVENTION ADOPTS HOOVER DRY-WET PLANK; REPEALISTS WAGE A FUTILE BATTLE ON FLOOR; UPROAR AMONG DELEGATES AND IN GALLERIES. MILLS RULES IN DRAFTING. REPEAL REJECTED, 681–472, *NYT*, June 16, 1932.
[75] WET PLANK WITH STRADDLE APPROVED BY HOOVER, *DN*, June 15, 1932.
[76] Quoted in: *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 155.
[77] Editorial: A Booze Test for Democracy, *KCS*, June 28, 1932; editorial: America will play safe on liquor, *KCS*, November 4, 1932. Editorial on the Democrats: Indicated Democratic Strategy, *KCS*, June 29, 1932.
[78] The Republicans' liquor plank included the statement: "The American nation never in its history has gone backward." See editorial: Tests of the plank, *NYT*, June 18, 1932.
[79] Cartoon: The Donkey Takes the Plunge, *CHE*, July 6, 1932.
[80] Cf. *Clark*, Deliver us from evil 168–180; *Morone*, Hellfire nation 343–344.
[81] *Lerner*, Dry Manhattan 299; *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 168.

another moment in modern American history when drinking had a similarly profound impact on politics and society.

3. Prohibition outside Presidential Politics

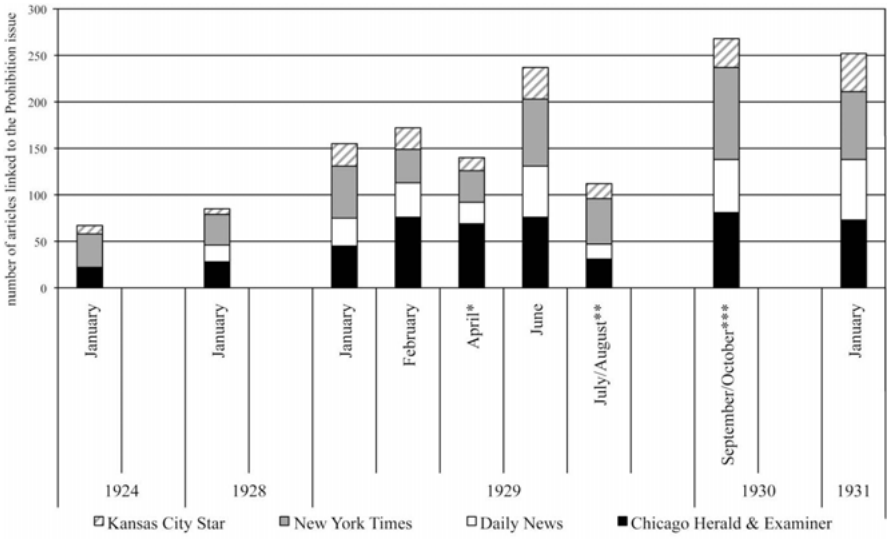
The politicization of Prohibition – its movement to the center of electoral campaigns – forms a large part of the explanation of the growing salience and intensity of the Prohibition issue. Of course, political campaigns only make sense within a specific opinion climate, which itself has been shaped by all sorts of events, processes and actors. To investigate more deeply the changing climate surrounding Prohibition and the increasing call for repeal in the press and by the press, this section looks at periods that were, for the most part, not shaped by the presence of these campaigns. I also investigated non-campaign months such as January 1924, 1928, 1929, and 1931, as well as the first half year of 1929 to see how the Prohibition issue, politicized in 1928, gained intensity rather than being buried in the wake of Hoovers' landslide victory.

Figure 1 illustrates the number of articles per month on the Prohibition issue. It shows that in January 1924, a control month in this analysis, the media did report on Prohibition, the "stuff of which news is made". Readers of the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, for instance, would find one article about Prohibition almost every day in their paper in January 1924 (see figure 1). However, the papers displayed comparatively little attention to Prohibition compared to the period between 1928 and 1932. In the first years following the implementation of the Volstead Act, the American press was mostly favorable to Prohibition, apart from newspapers carrying outspoken critics such as Mencken[82]. Although many journalists in private voiced opposition to Prohibition, most newspapers, even the *New York Times*, were reluctant to openly criticize the policy[83]. As noted by the *Times* journalist Charles Merz in 1930, a newspaper would print a number of articles friendly to Prohibition simply because not only bad news but also good news about Prohibition would be interesting news and thus attractive to the readership[84]. Apart from that, the ideal of objectivity and fair treatment helped Prohibition. Especially the broadsheets, in a move that underlined their 'seriousness' in relying on relevant, official sources, would print official reports and statements from politicians and officials supporting the congressional and government line on Prohibition.

But overall, given the fact that bad news still attracts more attention than good news, it comes as no surprise that the relatively favorable view of Prohibition in the early 1920s coincided with a relatively low number of articles, as compared to the late 1920s. Prohibition was not yet considered a real problem, and so the press

[82] *Murdock*, Domesticating drink 93.
[83] *Rose*, American women and the repeal of prohibition 53–54.
[84] *Merz*, Dry decade 218–219.

Figure 1: Growing Attention to Prohibition



Note: Newspapers were analyzed for entire months. Exceptions: the *Daily News* was not analyzed for January 1924. * = April 1 – April 15, 1929; ** = July 15 – August 10, 1929; *** = September 20 – October 20, 1930.

was not yet preoccupied with it. Neither the New York papers sampled nor the *Kansas City Star* or *Chicago Herald and Examiner* devoted as much attention to Prohibition as they would later in the decade. Although conflicts between gangs and racketeers in Chicago were widely covered in the Hearst press, his newspapers hardly ever connected this sort of crime to Prohibition itself. And although the powerful Pendergast machine in Kansas City was believed to violate Prohibition by protecting organized bootleggers, the openly dry *Kansas City Star* did not dwell on the connection either[85]. For the most part during the first half of the 1920s, newspapers had not yet espoused the notion that Prohibition created crime, an image that became widespread later and contributed greatly to the erosion of public support. Based on press treatment in 1924, one can conclude, in line with Kenneth D. Rose, that the American press was maybe writing about Prohibition but certainly not against it[86]. And even in January 1928, both attention to and wet criticism of Prohibition were far less intense than what ensued after Al Smith's nomination that summer.

[85] *John S. Matlin*, Political Party Machines of the 1920s and 1930s: Tom Pendergast and The Kansas City Democratic Machine (Thesis University of Birmingham 2009) 94–95, 234–236.
[86] *Rose*, American women and the repeal of prohibition 53–54, paraphrasing *Merz*, Dry decade 218–219; *Murdock*, Domesticating drink 93.

As seen above, the politicization of Prohibition in the course of presidential elections had durable consequences, changing both the level of attention to Prohibition and the way it was criticized (see figure 1). By the end of the 1920s, Prohibition had made "the whole nation booze-conscious"[87], producing a political discourse where persons, parties, and social groups were lumped under the all-explaining labels of "wet" or "dry". The "dry law" constantly appeared in headlines. Several types of events and processes increased attention to Prohibition even after the presidential elections of 1928. The media focused more and more on deliberations in Congress, for example during debate over the controversial Jones Act of 1929, which increased penalties for bootlegging. The press intensified its linkage of crime to Prohibition, devoting much attention to spectacular events raids and shootings, especially after the Valentine's Day Massacre in February 1929. Newspapers also interpreted the congressional elections of 1930, which saw massive Republican losses, as a vote on Prohibition even more than on the Depression.

The attention to Prohibition also strikingly peaked in January 1931, when newspapers devoted their front pages to the report of the Wickersham Commission, which President Hoover had established in 1929 in the vain hope of devising practical improvements to Prohibition enforcement while calming public misgivings. Long and complicated government studies do not under ordinary circumstances make so many headlines. However, the expert report named for former attorney general George Wickersham, the commission's chair, had been eagerly anticipated in a climate of growing hostility toward Prohibition. The *New York Times* even announced the report above its "flag"[88], a method it hardly ever used, and Hearst's paper, which just recently had added to its own political platform the "modification of the Volstead act to permit light wines and beers under federal regulations"[89], published, with remarkable intensity, ten articles on the report on January 21 alone. Contrary to Hoover's intention, the report proved another serious blow to Prohibition. It showed, as newspapers emphasized, that Prohibition as it existed could not be enforced. But the wealth of results was confusing and did not provide what everybody expected – a clear answer what to do now about Prohibition. Worse still for Prohibition, and fueling further media attention, the press did not accept either the study's results or the Hoover administration's gloss upon them as balanced and objective. Hoover as a "dry leader"[90] was believed to have misinterpreted the report in his own favor and even to have influenced the commission's presentation. While the majority of the committee had offered cautious support for moderate modifications to the Volstead Act, Hoover claimed that the committee had in fact recommended further enforcement of the law[91].

87 *Henry L. Mencken*, The American language. An inquiry into the development of English in the United States (New York 1963).
88 Above "New York Times", the paper wrote "In this issue: full text of prohibition report".
89 On January 14, 1931, this was listed as point 12 on the editorial page under: THE HEARST PAPERS ADVOCATE.
90 Editorial: Today, *CHE*, January 23, 1931.
91 *Cashman*, Prohibition 208–210.

This seriously undermined Hoover's credibility[92]. The *Daily News*, with its attack on the "wickerSHAM report"[93], the *Times*, and the *Herald and Examiner* all denounced Hoover for not even following his own "government by commission". Hoover thus transformed his reputation from an above-the-fray "engineer" to a manipulative "politician"[94], "denying his own"[95]. Firmly sticking the dry label on Hoover and already anticipating that Prohibition would dominate the 1932 elections[96], anti-Prohibition newspapers depicted the president as a hopelessly optimistic captain of a ship that was sinking in the waves of the "anti-dry sentiment" (see illustration 1). In the aftermath of the Wickersham report, the newspapers heightened their pressure. The *Daily News*, for instance, changed its "platform" a few days after the report's publication, no longer demanding "modification of the Eighteenth Amendment" but rather its outright repeal[97]. Even the dry *Star* sensed Prohibition's failure. In calling for reform of the Jones Law and not editorializing against critics of the Wickersham report, the *Star*, while still officially supporting Prohibition, already seemed to have given up the fight.

The newspapers surveyed for this chapter, therefore, responded to the Wickersham report in ways that continued and accelerated trends present for over two years. Even before publication of the Wickersham report, and thus long before the presidential elections in 1932, both public opinion and media reporting had decisively shifted on Prohibition. A poll by the National Economic League in 1930 showed that not the economy but "Prohibition" and two problems related to it, "lawlessness / disrespect for law" and the "administration of justice", were listed as the top three problems facing the country. The repeat poll in 1931 found similar results[98]. As the next section shows, these were exactly the problems that constantly made the headlines from early 1929 on. A feedback loop seemed to emerge, with citizens reacting to problems on which the media dwelled, while newspapers attributed their intensified coverage to shifting public opinion. Starting in summer 1929, the number of articles skyrocketed that explicitly talked about or illustrated a "shift" in public opinion, with editors perceiving a "wet groundswell", "wet tide" or "wet storm". In 1930, the *Daily News* already printed a "History of Volsteadism", with the Pisa-like tower of Prohibition beginning to fall[99]. The *New York Times* saw the sword of Damocles dangling over the drys[100], while Hearst's Chicago paper perceived an avalanche of the wet sentiment[101]. An analysis of

92 *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 564–566.
93 Editorial: The wickerSHAM report, *DN*, January 21, 1931.
94 Editorial: Facts, figures and Hoover, *DN*, January 22, 1931.
95 Editorial: Denying his own, *NYT*, January 22, 1931.
96 WICKERSHAM REPORT HOOVER'S 1932 STAND. DRY SURVEY TODAY GOES TO CONGRESS, *DN*, January 20, 1931.
97 GEE WHIZ! HERE'S MORE ON THE EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT!, *DN*, January 24, 1931.
98 *Lerner*, Dry Decade 277.
99 Cartoon: Prohibition, *DN*, October 26, 1930.
100 Cartoon: Our modern Damocles, *NYT*, September 28, 1930, Section XX.
101 Cartoon: He little knows what's coming, *CHE*, October 3, 1930.

Illustration 1: Cartoon "The optimists", New York Times, February 1, 1931, Section IX.

media reports by Hoover's staff reinforces the perception that the press understood the outcome of the 1930 congressional elections more as a vote for the repeal of Prohibition than as a vote expressing concern for the ailing economy[102]. "Nullification", i.e. ignoring of Prohibition without officially repealing the relevant laws, or a "middle ground"[103] increasingly appeared as an unviable options. Thus, by 1930, the wets indicated that they would no longer be satisfied with modifications of the Volstead Act[104]. Repeal was now their "fighting word"[105].

The growing resonance of calls for outright repeal was manifest in numerous newspapers. A survey of 110 daily papers initiated by the *New York Herald-Tribune* in early 1930 showed that the circulation of the self-declared "wet

102 For President Hoover's newspaper collection, his staff made a "Summary of Editorial Comments on Elections, November 8, 1930". For this summary, editorials from 140 newspapers reaching around 9 million overall were classified with "Wet-dry issue most important factor", while 136 newspapers reaching around 7 million received the label "Chief factor to be believed depression". Thus, Prohibition rather than the depression was held responsible for the election outcome. Cf. Herbert C. Hoover Archives, "Confidential", Presidential Papers-Press Relations, Box 1165, quoted in: *Robert M. Eisinger*, Gauging public opinion in the Hoover White House: understanding the roots of presidential polling, in: Presidential Studies Quarterly 30/4 (2000) 643–661, here: 656–657.

103 Editorial: No middle ground, *NYT*, September 24, 1930.

104 AFTER REPEAL – WHAT? ANSWERS BY SIX 'WETS'. The programs laid down by three Republican and three Democratic leaders for the annulment of the prohibition amendment and the restoration of the control of the liquor traffic to the states, *NYT*, September 21, 1930, Section XX.

105 Candidate and platform, *NYT*, September 27, 1930.

papers" was four times as high as that of the "dry papers", while a lot of smaller, rural newspapers had started to shift their positions on the issue[106]. An analysis by the President's Research Committee on Social Trends published in 1934 revealed that in 1931, there were more than twice as many articles in newspapers and magazines against Prohibition as for its enforcement – a complete reversal of the situation in 1919[107].

The structure of the newspaper business seemed to play a part in this trend toward more negative Prohibition coverage. A regional dry paper such as the *San Antonio Express* still was pledging strict enforcement in its editorials[108]. However, about three quarters of Prohibition coverage in news articles in that paper relied on news agencies, mainly the Associated Press from New York[109]. In this way, the national problem of enforcement became a topic even in generally dry Texas. Overall, smaller newspapers' extensive use of press services served to undermine Prohibition's support in formerly dry areas[110]. So even before the crash of 1929 and the advent of the Great Depression, Prohibition supporters increasingly had a difficult time legitimizing it in the midst of growing negative news.

4. Media Campaigns and the Radicalization of Discourse

Both attention and opposition to Prohibition suddenly increased in 1928 with Al Smith's electoral campaign – and also later intensified even more. Hoover's landslide victory did not bring the debate to a close, even if the drys tried to argue that the American people had overwhelmingly spoken in favor of Prohibition. Instead, the debate escalated during the first half of 1929. Since Prohibition was one of the main issues of the campaign in 1928, it came as no surprise that various interests interpreted the electoral outcome from this perspective, a fact that had policy implications right away[111]. Americans expected that Hoover would actually do something about Prohibition. Both before and after the election, the ambiguous signals sent by Hoover were closely watched and hotly debated[112]. For a time,

106 *New York Herald Tribune*, April 7, 1930, quoted in: *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 117.

107 *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, Report of the President's Research Committee on Social Trends (New York, London 1934).

108 See, for instance, the editorial: … For the Jones Amendment to the Volstead Act, *San Antonio Express*, February 21, 1929, 12.

109 Applying the same criteria used for the analysis of the other newspapers, one can build a subsample with the *San Antonio Express*. The numbers for February 1–28, 1929 and June 1–30, 1929 include 95 articles on Prohibition, 71 of which came from news agencies.

110 *John C. Burnham*, Bad habits: drinking, smoking, taking drugs, gambling, sexual misbehavior, and swearing in American history (New York, London 1993) 34–38; *Cashman*, Prohibition 165.

111 *Merz*, Dry decade 231–232. Cf. for instance: DRYS AND WETS SEE VICTORY IN ELECTION, *NYT*, November 8, 1928.

112 Cf. for instance: 'HOOVER DODGER' – SMITH AL RAKES FOE AS DODGER.

compromise between the wets and the drys did not seem out of reach. When Hoover announced in early 1929 that he would implement a committee that would examine the problem of Prohibition and crime, this type of "social engineering", the finding of problem-solutions through fact-seeking deliberation of committees, appealed to serious newspapers such as the *New York Times.*

But after Hoover had raised expectations for a systematic, well-reasoned compromise, the wets were ever more disappointed to find that as president, Hoover took clearly dry positions[113], becoming the first president since Woodrow Wilson to become really involved in the Prohibition issue[114]. Hoover in effect ceded the issue to dry factions within the Republican Party, who in turn radicalized their rhetoric, in part by labeling Hoover's victory a mandate for the stricter enforcement of Prohibition[115]. Tellingly, papers such as the *Kansas City Star*, whose stance was definitely but not uncompromisingly dry, warned against forming the Wickersham Commission, which the *Star* feared might stir up the issue of Prohibition again to its disadvantage. The *Star* also tried to backpedal on tougher measures such as the Jones Act, calling it too drastic a measure which eventually might undermine Prohibition's appeal. But prominent drys ranging from Senator William Borah to the Methodist bishop James Cannon Jr. prevailed.

Meanwhile, even though Smith had lost the election, there still were enough signs that made the wets hopeful. Beyond Democratic gains among urban constituencies, the mere fact that Prohibition had become a major issue and started to break up the old electoral patterns showed the wets that political resistance was promising. And since the wets could point to their support in the country's dynamic cities[116], they had reasons to believe that time was on their side. Thus the wets realized that they might have lost one battle but not the fight. Even so, the Jones Act demonstrated that the drys retained the upper hand, at least for a time. The wets seemed to face a prolonged period of raised and then frustrated expectations.

But perhaps the most important reason for the speed and timing of the perceptible shift in Prohibition sentiment and discourse lies in the campaign of the Hearst press . On January 4, 1929, around two months before Hoover's inauguration, Hearst publicly switched sides. A formerly staunch supporter of Prohibition whose papers regularly preached its benefits[117], Hearst now advocated a "better plan" in view of the "criminal conditions created by [the] dry law". He invited

22,000 ROAR IN GARDEN AT FINAL RALLY, *DN*, November 4, 1928; HOOVER TO HOLD PUBLIC INQUIRY ON DRY ENFORCEMENT, *CHE*, January 11, 1929.

113 *Clark*, Deliver us from evil 189–192.

114 *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 30, 98–103.

115 PROHIBITION UPHELD DRY CHIEFS SAY. Three view election as proof that the voters repudiated Smith liquor plan. Religious issue decried. Dr. Wilson says result was not a 'referendum on faiths' – Cherrington pledges Hoover support, *NYT*, November 8, 1928; *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 103.

116 *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 553–557.

117 See, for instance, the editorial: Four perils, all imaginary, *CHE*, October 25, 1924 or the cartoon: The plank for him, *CHE*, June 28, 1924.

readers to participate in a "temperance contest", where they should send in essays outlining their solutions[118]. It is difficult to determine whether Hearst changed his point of view on grounds of principle or whether he sensed the shifting tide of public and tried to ride the wave as a successful newspaper editor[119]. But in any case, Hearst was willing and above all powerful enough to publicize his new commitment to revising if not abolishing Prohibition. Hearst's "temperance contest", which suggested genuine debate, disguised the mass media campaign against Prohibition he had decided to implement. Never mind the ideal of objectivity, Hearst now mainly gave voice to Prohibition critics along with his own comments on the deteriorating conditions he attributed to the dry law. Amid well-orchestrated publicity, including the hyperbolic claim that that the "whole world" was watching the outcome, Hearst effectively used the contest to draw attention to his chain's new role as champion of the wets. When the jury decided in June 1929 to award the prizes after reviewing 71,248 proposals, this gave the Hearst press another opportunity to fill its pages with large headlines along with details of the best plans.

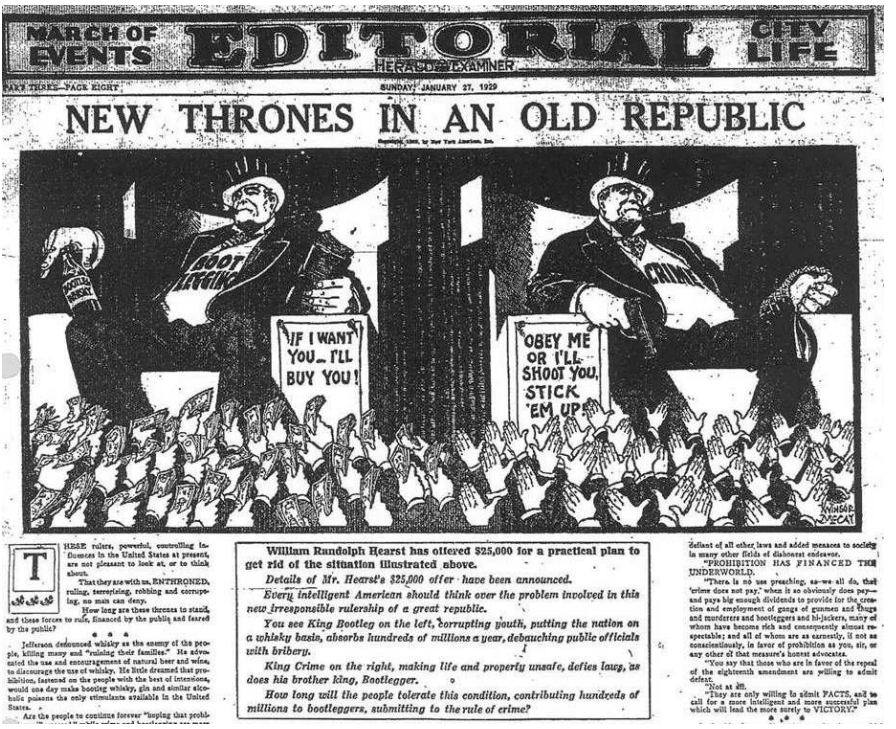
In marked contrast to 1924 or 1928, the Hearst papers from early 1929 on used numerous political cartoons to attack Prohibition. Hearst insinuated that many a politician who "votes dry" actually "drinks wet"[120].This moral outrage did not imply a positive view of drinking, since the Hearst press proclaimed its stance to be against Prohibition but for temperance. The chain papers gave space to anti-alcohol pastors and teachers and still depicted alcohol, together with parties and permissive parents, as evils that threatened American children and teenagers, a theme not used by the other newspapers analyzed for this chapter[121]. Significantly, Hearst now blamed Prohibition for creating the very climate of "whoopee" that seduced America's young into partying, speeding – and drinking. Stressing the negative impact of alcohol on the archetypal American family, Hearst thus used the same arguments the Prohibition supporters had used for a long time. He selected people to criticize Prohibition who still represented those parts of society most associated with the policy. In trespassing in this way on the

118 "The purpose of this plan is patriotic. It is not to set in motion merely a competition but to secure for the public good a practicable plan that will prove of value in the development of better moral, social and political life in this country. There must be, in the natural evolution of the human race and society, a better plan to advance temperance than that of prohibition with its speakeasies, its poisons, its un-American espionage and its law defiance even by those entrusted with the enforcement of the law." In: Here are the details of the W.R. Hearst $25,000 PRIZE OFFER for the best plan to achieve temperance, *CHE*, January 20, 1929 (original emphasis).

119 The reading of Hearst's latest biography suggests the latter reason, as Hearst regularly used "crusades" as a means to keep his fingers on the pulse of the public and entertain the readership of his newspapers. *Procter*, Hearst 244–246. Stunningly, however, this lengthy biography devotes less than a paragraph on Hearst's stance on Prohibition and does not even problematize Hearst's about-face (cf. 149–150).

120 Cartoon: HE VOTES DRY; HE DRINKS WET, *CHE*, April 27, 1929.

121 See, for instance, the cartoon: 'Step into my parlor', *CHE*, April 18, 1929.


MARCH OF EVENTS

EDITORIAL

HERALD-EXAMINER

CITY LIFE

PART THREE—PAGE EIGHT

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 1929

NEW THRONES IN AN OLD REPUBLIC

BOOT LEGGING

CRIME

IF I WANT YOU... I'LL BUY YOU!

OBEY ME OR I'LL SHOOT YOU. STICK 'EM UP

WINSOR McCAY

THESE rulers, powerful, controlling influences in the United States at present, are not pleasant to look at, or to think about.

That they are with us, ENTHRONED, ruling, terrorizing, robbing and corrupting, no man can deny.

How long are these thrones to stand, and these forces to rule, financed by the public and feared by the public?

* * *

Jefferson denounced whisky as the enemy of the people, killing many and "ruining their families." He advocated the use and encouragement of natural beer and wine, to discourage the use of whisky. His little dreamed that prohibition, fastened on the people with the best of intentions, would one day make bootleg whisky, gin and similar alcoholic poisons the only stimulants available in the United States.

Are the people to continue forever "hoping that prohi-

William Randolph Hearst has offered $25,000 for a practical plan to get rid of the situation illustrated above.

Details of Mr. Hearst's $25,000 offer have been announced.

Every intelligent American should think over the problem involved in this new irresponsible rulership of a great republic.

You see King Bootleg on the left, corrupting youth, putting the nation on a whisky basis, absorbs hundreds of millions a year, debauching public officials with bribery.

King Crime on the right, making life and property unsafe, defies laws, as does his brother king, Bootlegger.

How long will the people tolerate this condition, contributing hundreds of millions to bootleggers, submitting to the rule of crime?

defiant of all other laws and added menaces to society in many other fields of dishonest endeavor.

"PROHIBITION HAS FINANCED THE UNDERWORLD.

"There is no use preaching, as we all do, that 'crime does not pay,' when it so obviously does pay—and pays big enough dividends to provide for the creation and employment of gangs of gunmen and thugs and murderers and bootleggers and hi-jackers, many of whom have become rich and consequently almost respectable; and all of whom are as earnestly, if not as conscientiously, in favor of prohibition as you, sir, or any other of that measure's honest advocates.

"You say that those who are in favor of the repeal of the eighteenth amendment are willing to admit defeat.

"Not at all.

"They are only willing to admit FACTS, and to call for a more intelligent and more successful plan which will lead the more surely to VICTORY."

* * *

Illustration 2: Cartoon "New thrones in an old republic", Chicago Herald and Examiner, *January 27, 1929, Part Three, p. 8.*

Prohibitionists' stock of arguments, the Hearst papers redirected the popular, moralistic discourse long associated with the drys[122]. Applying this strategy of depicting both drinking and Prohibition as evil, Hearst tried to strike a chord with his increasingly wet readership without alienating dry readers, whom he had so long courted.

Also, in contrast to a few years earlier, the Hearst papers explicitly linked the crime situation to Prohibition. The chain now argued that far from ending lawlessness, Prohibition created it. Even before the spectacular shootings on Valentine's Day in Chicago in February, the paper illustrated its "temperance contest" and depicted the nation as presided over by "new thrones in an old republic", with grim, stout, gargantuan twins, "King Bootleg" and "King Crime", sitting next to each other, while dozens of little hands either waved money at "King Bootleg" or went up in the air to show signs of surrender (see illustration 2). In another cartoon, a gigantic bottle of "hooch" was pouring "bootlegging", "speakeasys",

122 *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 459.

"corruption", and "lawlessness" on American cities, which it mired "in the foul slime of disrespect for law"[123].

Hearst's about-face was a slap in the face of the drys, for they knew what a campaign against Prohibition in the biggest media organization would mean. It must also have concerned President Hoover for good reasons. Typical of a media campaign, Hearst the newspaperman also tried to shape the political agenda by calling upon the president. More a warning than a statement, Hearst's papers held a "war against nation's criminal classes" to be the "paramount problem facing next President"[124]. Hearst, stylizing himself as the *vox populi*, wrote an open letter to Hoover urging him to stand up only for those laws Americans could actually respect[125]. Hoover understood Hearst's power and the damage he could inflict. In their attempts to measure public opinion, Hoover and his staff paid special attention to the Hearst papers. In the administration's confidential collection of newspaper editorials, the editorials of the Hearst press were given a separate letter code[126]. And while Hoover argued that crime was a distinct problem from Prohibition, with the latter not the cause of the former[127], he conceded that crime might be the country's most serious problem. Hearst was among the factors that quickly put the Hoover administration on the defensive.

Hearst's about-face meant that millions of American newspaper readers were confronted with more critical Prohibition coverage. In light of Hearst's new stance, other papers, up to that point more or less balanced, reluctant to offer sweeping criticisms of Prohibition, soon followed suit and increased their Prohibition coverage. Political debates such as those over the Jones Act, the budget for Prohibition enforcement, gang violence in Chicago and elsewhere, or the shootings of citizens by Prohibition agents in early summer – all these events made big headlines in the first half of 1929. In all five months analyzed for this section of the chapter and in all the newspapers analyzed, attention to Prohibition was perceptibly higher in 1929 than in 1924 or 1928 (see figure 1). At the same time, papers evaluated Prohibition more explicitly and more negatively[128]. As early as April

123 Cartoon: Hooch, *CHE*, February 23, 1929.

124 WAR AGAINST NATION'S CRIMINAL CLASSES IS PARAMOUNT PROBLEM FACING NEXT PRESIDENT, *CHE*, February 27, 1929.

125 'WE NEED LAWS WE CAN RESPECT', W.R. HEARST REPLIES TO PRESIDENT, *CHE*, April 26, 1929. See also the front page article: HOOVER 'FIRED A BLANK'. William Randolph Hearst criticizes speech on law. Congressmen who vote dry and drink wet in hip pockets are bombarded by the publisher in visit here, *KCS*, April 25, 1929.

126 Herbert C. Hoover Archives, "Confidential", Presidential Papers-Press Relations, Boxes 1165–77, quoted in: *Eisinger*, Gauging public opinion in the Hoover White House 656–657. For an analysis of Hoover's strategies to systematically monitor public opinion, cf. also *Brandon Rottinghaus*, Limited to follow: The early public opinion apparatus of the Herbert Hoover White House, in: American Politics Research 31/5 (2003) 540–556.

127 Front page article: HOOVER DEMANDS RESPECT FOR LAW; CALLS IT NATION'S 'DOMINANT ISSUE' IN SPEECH BEFORE PUBLISHERS HERE. President sees crime rife. Country is unsafest of any civilized land, he asserts. Denies dry law is cause, *NYT*, April 23, 1929.

128 *Cashman*, Prohibition 163; *Rose*, American women and the repeal of prohibition 54, 123.

1929, most editors gathering at the convention of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association in New York intervened in the political debate and demanded a reform of the dry law[129]. Typically, the *Daily News* and the *New York Times*, although skeptical towards Prohibition from the beginning, now increased their Prohibition coverage, especially on the front pages. The *Kansas City Star*, which still supported Prohibition and tried to play down the bad news, printed only one front-page article per three days. But the ongoing politicization and radicalization also led to a higher number of articles in that paper, more so than in 1924 or 1928. Drys as well saw the policy's acceptance eroding rapidly and sensed that the conflict was about to escalate[130].

In their different ways, both the Anti-Saloon League and the Hoover administration attempted to make the intensifying Prohibition debate synonymous with the question of enforcement. In Prohibitionist rhetoric, a criminal-punitive discourse prevailed, with terms like "law enforcement", "climate of lawlessness", and "dry law" prevalent. One in four articles covering Prohibition in 1929 included the words "law" or "enforce" in the headline. The more the federal government created the image that it tried everything possible to enforce Prohibition and the more Herbert Hoover put the blame on drinking Americans for the climate of lawlessness, the more "law enforcement" became morally and politically charged. This ensured that when more Americans turned against the policy, the link to lawlessness would backfire on Hoover[131]. Similarly, the media depicted a stylized conflict between law-abiding citizens and the government, with law enforcement officials becoming notorious in some press accounts. It did not help the dry cause that the media portrayed as turncoats Prohibition officials such as Mabel Walker Willebrandt, who left her post in the Justice Department to work as a lawyer for a company producing a grape substitute for alcohol. In popular and press stereotypes, Prohibition officials no longer appeared as public servants working for the public good but as cold-blooded officials attacking innocent citizens in the search for liquor. By the summer of 1929, millions of Americans seemed to believe that the government and its so-called "snoopers" cared nothing about privacy, sometimes not even about life, an interpretation seldom found in the media in 1924.

The press, eager to dramatize conflicts and to frame these events with catchy war and conflict metaphors, publicized and condemned cases such as the shooting of Mrs. Lillian DeKing in Aurora, Illinois[132], or of Minnesota father Henry Virkkula, mistakenly thought to have been carrying liquor in his car near the Canadian border. Papers depicted such cases as "prohibition slaying" or "dry killing". Apart from some dry papers such as the *Kansas City Star*, which tried to cover these events with smaller news agency reports only and which euphemistically spoke of

[129] CHANGES IN DRY LAW ADVOCATED BY PUBLISHERS. 'Either enforce prohibition or modify it!' delegates urge; call crime intolerable, *CHE*, April 29, 1929.
[130] See, for instance, the editorial: Neither repealed nor modified, *KCS*, July 23, 1929.
[131] *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 558–559.
[132] *Okrent*, Last call 318–319.

"border tensions"[133], most of the press left no doubt that these enforcement methods were excessive and unacceptable and that the federal government had become dangerous to innocent citizens[134]. The sudden attentiveness to these and other so-called "dry killings"[135], illustrates a pattern well-known in media research. The press now published accounts of seemingly similar scandals almost daily. This attention spiral reinforced the frame of "lawlessness caused by Prohibition". The greater attentiveness to such events itself created a sense that the underlying situation had changed, adding to the momentum of coverage. The *Chicago Herald and Examiner* introduced sections labeled "Latest Prohibition developments" or "245 civilians and U.S. dry agents killed since 1920"[136], while the *New York Times* started to summarize these events on a separate page. The *Daily News* printed a map that suggested, "The prohibition death front moves South"[137].

More and more Americans expressed disappointment and frustration with this and perceived a climate of lawlessness associated with Prohibition. In this type of situation, an atmosphere of insecurity encourages messages to take on more clear-cut forms and boundaries to be more rigid[138]. The drys, until now confident to the point of complacency, did not accept that that public opinion had begun to shift significantly only half a year after Hoover's victory and that "in so many ways, 1929 turned out to be a rotten year for the drys"[139]. Drys sensed a conspiracy among the wet press and held people who broke Prohibition laws responsible for organized crime. To set boundaries for the dry side while defending Prohibition, the *Kansas City Star* often exploited historical narratives. Urging the dry camp to stay strong[140] and portraying the dry cause in the light of America's founding

133 Front page article: BORDER SHOTS STIR. Two attacks by rum patrol officers are subjects of investigation, *KCS* (report by *Associated Press*), June 12, 1929.
134 END DRY KILLINGS, FOX URGES HOOVER. Letter says President alone can stop 'assassinations' by federal agents. Cites Minnesota fatality. Moderation League chairman asks whether it is anarchy or revolt when citizens arm, *NYT*, June 12, 1929; front page article: MURDER TRIAL ASKED FOR DRY. WHOLE STATE ENRAGED BY BULLET RULE; AGENT HIDES. Citizens protest manslaughter booking; petition congress; Lowman order inquiry. 'Shotgun reign' by government denounced in House; victim's funeral today, *CHE*, June 12, 1929. See also: DRYS TO CONTINUE IN 'MURDER POLICY'. Only action by Hoover can stop gun play, *DN*, June 13, 1929.
135 See, for instance, the cartoon: Hot suspicions – cold facts, *CHE*, June 15, 1929.
136 Front page article: DRY KILLINGS ALARM LOWMAN. SECRET EDICT TO AGENTS FORBIDS USE OF SHOTGUNS. Fire only in self-defense, U.S. orders; extreme caution urged; slaying 'accident'. State trial for Virkkula killer requested; Hoover confers with enforcement officials, *CHE*, June 18, 1929.
137 Front page article: DRY KILLERS DEFY STATE. KILLERS DEFY DRY PROBE. Hoover acts to sift rum death wave. Upstate County roused as U.S. men flout law, *DN*, June 18, 1929.
138 *Kurt Imhof*, Die Krise der Öffentlichkeit. Kommunikation und Medien als Faktoren sozialen Wandels [The crisis of the public sphere. Communication and media as factors of social change] (Frankfurt 2011).
139 *Okrent*, Last Call 322.
140 Editorial: Neither modified nor repealed, *KCS*, July 23, 1929.

myth, the paper compared the current struggle with the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion. Now the government was facing another whiskey rebellion[141], and a stern, rational insistence upon law and order would aid in controlling the excessive and emotional impulses of mankind[142].

On the other side of the issue, wets – including recent converts – had by the summer of 1929 radicalized their own rhetoric and boiled down their arguments into a condensed, standardized attack[143]. Wet critiques associated Prohibition with everything from crime and "disregard for law" to "contempt for law", "lawlessness", "corruption", and "hypocrisy". The policy became a symbol of evil and "danger" for society[144]. In terms that could border on conspiracy theories[145], Hoover was depicted as a puppet of the Anti-Saloon League[146]. Opponents asserted that the Eighteenth Amendment had been "bought" by the drys in the chaos of the war, while charging that the Anti-Saloon League had blackmailed newspapers to publish Prohibition propaganda[147]. The wet press increasingly associated its discourse with images of personal freedom. Drinking took its place alongside war as "normal masculine impulses" and "human necessities", which should not be oppressed by an "essentially feminine and pseudo-religious idea embodied in federal prohibition"[148]. Like the drys, the wets also justified their stance based upon history. In a statement directed at Hoover, Hearst even called for a "rebellion" similar to the fight for independence from the king of England[149]. In the Hearst papers as well as the *New York Times* or the *Daily News*, editorials as well as news analyses condemned Prohibitionists for fanatically waging a "medieval religious war"[150] against the American people. In the words of the Association against the Prohibition Amendment, the drys had tried to "ram an un-

141 Editorial: Just another whisky rebellion, *KCS*, June 19, 1929.
142 Editorial: War, liquor, and reason, *KCS*, February, 22, 1929.
143 Kyvig also mentions "standard wet or dry arguments" when describing the highly publicized hearings of the House Judiciary Committee in early 1930. *Kyvig*, Repealing national prohibition 112.
144 For instance: URGES BAR TO LEAD IN DRY ACT REPEAL. C.H. Davis of Virginia tells lawyers 18th amendment is menace to republic. Presents 13 'charges'. Arraigns it as 'piece of dynamite inserted in foundation of governmental structure', *NYT*, June 14, 1929.
145 *Clark*, Deliver us from evil 198.
146 Editorials: Hoover – above hysteria?, *DN*, April 16, 1929, or: Earthquake-maker Wickersham, *DN*, July 18, 1929.
147 For instance the editorial: Guardians of public morals, *NYT*, June 18, 1929.
148 Editorial: Government by weaklings?, *DN*, January 20, 1929.
149 "But if the American people had had respect for all laws, good or bad, there would have been no Boston Tea Party to protest against the invasion of rights and liberties of our people; no Declaration of independence to declare liberty and equally as the inalienable rights of man no United States of America to establish liberty and equality as the foundation stones of Republican government; and, in that sad case, no President Hoover, but only a certain Herbert Hoover eminent engineer and a loyal and law-respecting subject of His Majesty King George V." In: WE NEED LAWS WE CAN RESPECT, W.R. HEARST REPLIES TO PRESIDENT, *CHE*, April 26, 1929.
150 Editorial: Some most embarrassing moments, *DN*, July 22, 1929.

reasonable law down the throats of the majority", as was witnessed by "all this free-and-easy killing"[151].

While the debate about Prohibition had always been a struggle over normality and social control, by the summer of 1929, the salience and the intensity of discourse over the issue had dramatically changed. By that summer, the press focused intensely on Prohibition at the expense of other political issues. The dispute meanwhile became radicalized and ever more polarized. Trust in political institutions seemed to sink amid a climate of lawlessness and uncertainty over whether the wets or drys would win in the end. Using Albert O. Hirschman's insights into patterns of social conflict, one could argue that Prohibition emerged as *the* crucial conflict America would have to solve. A divisible conflict of "more or less" transformed into an indivisible, fundamental conflict of "either or"[152]. The politicization of the Prohibition issue by Al Smith, Hearst's newspaper campaign, and the perceived climate of lawlessness, further intensified by the press, had set a long-standing conflict off balance, with support for Prohibition dropping with noteworthy speed. The growing number of wets, whose political organization intensified in 1929 with, for example, the founding of the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform, had unfrozen the conflict. Wets realized that there were in fact opportunities to get rid of Prohibition in one way or other. The dwindling number of drys, on the other hand, countered with even more radical measures, adding to this polarization. The quarrel headed for a showdown.

Social theorists argue that these patterns appear when an ongoing but manageable conflict accelerates into a true social and political crisis, a crisis which marks the possible end of a cycle and the end of a model of what society should look like[153]. Likewise, historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. argued that "external" shocks such as the Great Depression and new business cycles may, of course, "heighten or complicate moods, but the cycle itself rolls on, self-contained, self-sufficient and autonomous"[154]. Thus, even before the onset of the Great Depression in late 1929, a political cycle in the United States seemed to roll to an end. If one accepts that economic progress depends, *ceteris paribus*, on clear expectations, predictability, and trust, it might even be worthwhile to analyze not only the effects of the Depression on this socio-political cycle but, conversely, the possible effects of the explosive socio-political climate, triggered by Prohibition, on the economy[155]. In this sense, the debate about Prohibition, which had come to dominate political

151 Front page article: REFUSES DEMANDS TO DISARM DRY MEN IN VIEW OF KILLINGS, *NYT*, June 13, 1929.
152 *Alfred O. Hirschman*, Social Conflicts as Pillars of Democratic Market Society, in: Political Theory 22/2 (1994) 203–218.
153 *Imhof*, Krise der Öffentlichkeit.
154 *Arthur M. Schlesinger*, The Cycles of American history (Boston 1999 [1986]) 27.
155 *Hansjörg Siegenthaler*, Regelvertrauen, Prosperität und Krisen. Die Ungleichmäßigkeit wirtschaftlicher und sozialer Entwicklung als Ergebnis individuellen Handelns und sozialen Lernens [Basic trust, prosperity and crises. The asymmetry of economic and social development as a result of individual action and social learning] (Tübingen 1993).

communication and invade so many facets of American life[156], looms even larger than historians have usually envisioned.

Summary

Obwohl die Presse die zentrale Arena für die Definition sozialer Probleme und für die Diskussion von Problemlösungen ist, wird ihre Rolle bei der Abschaffung der Prohibition („repeal") relativ selten und wenig systematisch untersucht. Die Presse ist zudem nicht einfach nur „Spiegel" für die Ideen und Handlungen (politischer) Akteure, vielmehr fungieren die Besitzer der Zeitungen und die Journalisten selbst als Akteure mit eigenen Interessen und eigenen Logiken der Nachrichtenauswahl und -darstellung. Vor diesem Hintergrund stellt dieser Beitrag eine systematische Analyse der Berichterstattung über die Prohibition in vier verschiedenen Pressetiteln im Zeitraum von 1924 bis 1933 vor.

Die Analyse fördert unter anderem entscheidende Konfliktdynamiken zutage: Die nach Al Smiths Wahlkampf von 1928 nun nicht mehr abreißende Politisierung, der resonanzstark postulierte und inszenierte Meinungsumschwung des Presse-Moguls William Randolph Hearst und die von den Medien verstärkte und dramatisierte Darstellung und Vermittlung eines Klimas der Polarisierung und der Gesetzlosigkeit – all dies transformierte den lange Zeit stabilen „Mehr-oder-weniger"-Konflikt über die Prohibition 1929 innerhalb weniger Monate in einen zentralen „Entweder-oder"-Konflikt, der die öffentliche Kommunikation der Vereinigten Staaten dominierte. Vor dem Hintergrund von Sozial- und Konflikttheorien lässt sich dies als Ausdruck einer ausgeprägten Orientierungskrise lesen, die bereits vor der *Great Depression* einsetzte.

156 *Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung 13–15.

Christopher McKnight Nichols

Modernity and Political Economy in the New Era and New Deal

In 1929 sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd published *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*. Begun in 1924, the study developed and applied new survey techniques to examine religious and home life, labor practices, and the community and institutional dynamics of the town of Muncie, Indiana, which they dubbed "Middletown". The fruits of modern industrial development had become widespread, the Lynds noted. An array of consumer goods pervaded residents' lives: new technologies such as furnaces, running water and flush toilets, toasters, vacuum cleaners, irons, washing machines, and refrigerators. Muncie's household cups ran over.

These findings painted a picture of what was initially praised – and later, in the wake of economic collapse, derided – as "Coolidge prosperity". The Lynds' sociological perspective helps in understanding the integral role of material goods and consumption in American social and political life during the 1920s, before the greatest heights of the stock market or the deepest troughs of the Depression. Flawed though portions of their analysis were, the Lynds' work provides a unique lens on the political culture, economic conditions, and social environment of the era. The telephone, the car, films, radio, the year-round availability of fresh fruit, and innumerable canned goods – all this had reshaped everyday life and altered expectations about the permanent and vital role of consumables and leisure "as enricher[s]" of an ideal American "life"[1].

In charting the rise of two especially transformative technologies – the car and the phone – the Lynds held up "Middletown living" as exemplary of the era. The Lynds noted that many of the town's adults had grown up on farms, where they lived and worked without much technology. But by the mid-1920s, they had adapted to city life, used machines in the workplace, and relied extensively on new technologies in everyday life. This altered their sense of self, as well as communal definitions of status and of society. The Lynds used these observations to mount a critique of the intensified consumerism inherent in so-called modern Americanism. They argued that technological change and enthusiasm in part drove this in-

[1] *Robert S. Lynd*, *Helen Merrell Lynd*, Middletown, A Study in American Culture (New York 1929) 259, 1–20, 225–314.

satiable and conspicuous consumption – what they termed the "inventions remaking leisure" – and spurred a modern "preoccupation" with consumer goods. What the Lynds did not fully take into account in their explanations, however, was that the roots of this trend went back at least a generation, to the period of intense industrialization during the 1880s and 1890s. Consumerist enthusiasm for technology expanded as urbanization and modernization reached new heights in the ensuing decades. These rising socio-economic expectations – which constituted a genuine shift in the society's economic value systems – were firmly entrenched by the beginning of the Lynds' study in 1924[2].

The sweeping cultural and economic changes observed by the Lynds formed an undercurrent in politics and economic thought throughout the interwar era. Most historians are familiar with the intensity of debate over modern consumerism during the 1920s. The popular and historiographical emphasis on the crash of 1929 and the onset of the Great Depression as transition points, however, obscures the extent to which themes related to consumerist political economy and disputes over consumerist versions of modernity endured throughout the period, with the arguments on all sides remaining remarkably stable. The political economic perspective generated by awareness of consumerism's central role in a modern, mass-production economy was sometimes explicit and in other instances implicit in the speeches, chatter, writings, products, advertising, and public policy actions of the interwar years. But it was always there, and it situated consumers as the central players in a flourishing American democracy. Even after 1933, as the New Deal remade the institutional structures of the U.S political economy and permanently altered the relationship of citizens to the state, the seemingly new statist visions of prosperity were founded on a consumerist model of American life. Integral to American liberalism as it had evolved by the late 1930s, this model endured and deepened over the ensuing decades.

This chapter argues that for U.S. political economy, the years from roughly 1920 through American entry into World War II in 1941 are best understood as a unified period. Portraying the interwar period as a continuous moment of political economy does not imply any simplified model of homogeny. Quite the opposite. But while stasis certainly did not characterize the period's intellectual, political, cultural, or economic life, there were powerfully consistent patterns in the developing thought and action of the period.

A focus on continuities, as well as discontinuities, in understandings of the role of the federal government in economic and social life reveals the underlying coherence to the stunning historical events witnessed during these two decades. Among policymakers and intellectuals as well as the public, perspectives certainly did shift on the private sector's role in the political economy; and mounting critiques of social, economic, and labor relations prompted major reforms. But despite major transitions in policy, there was a more significant consistency across different levels of the public sector, as well as in public-private relations. In par-

[2] Ibid. 1–20, 251–271, 496–504.

ticular, the associationalism (cooperative, voluntary partnerships between business and government) of the 1920s, often connected with Herbert Hoover's theories and actions, reveals aspects of the consumerist model that informed the policies as well as the social thought of the 1930s. The breaks in vision and substance between Hoover's New Era and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal were less stark than often imagined by the public or depicted by many historians. This chapter analyzes the roiling debates, social critiques, and controversial policy developments of the interwar era within the context of a continuing tendency toward associationalism and a consumer-as-citizen model.

In this chapter, I trace three crucial themes: first, how views of "modern" society were embodied theoretically, culturally, and materially in the new corporate-industrial structure; second, how modern society – often depicted as "modernity" – developed alongside mass production-mass consumption culture; and third, how modernity emerged as a vision of state management of the political economy, epitomized by the programs of the New Deal. These three themes were clearly interdependent, as observers at the time remarked with varying degrees of approval. A fourth theme in this chapter explores how modernism – as a set of intellectual and artistic ideas and practices related to the "modern" – appeared to contemporary critics of these trends to exist in contradistinction to both "tradition" and to the "pre-modern". Political-economic notions of modernity and modernism and culture-criticism perspectives on the modern actually were complementary and served to enhance public and intellectual attention to the so-called "crisis of modernity". The cultural criticism vein within modernism appears in the works of writers such as Sinclair Lewis and John Dos Passos, the literary and cultural analysis of Van Wyck Brooks and Lewis Mumford, and the sociology of the Lynds. These diverse visions helped to frame intellectual and, to a certain degree, popular understandings of the socio-economic and political developments of the period. In debates over how to grapple with economic, political, and cultural change though the two decades under review, these perspectives animated intellectual discourse.

This brief chapter illustrates but does not exhaust the comprehensive array of scholarship on the subject of political economy and modernity during the interwar years. It builds on a body of scholarship that has emphasized this era as formative for the development of a dominant consumer culture. Relevant historians range from Jackson Lears and Warren Susman to Lizabeth Cohen, Kathleen Donohue, and Roland Marchand. The cultural and social history approaches of such historians blend with the central insights of the so-called organizational synthesis and the analysis of business-government associationalism advanced by Louis Galambos and Ellis Hawley and in revised form by Brian Balogh. The essay also takes into account perspectives drawn from more conventional political history, such as appear in the writings of Alan Brinkley, who has sought to link the changing relationship between citizens and the state to the changing politics of liberalism during the New Deal era. The current consumerist-liberalism interpretation is the latest of many historical accounts that have depicted the New Deal as

not nearly as new or as radical as it seemed at the time; such arguments also have tended to assert that the political liberalism associated with Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal made fatal compromises in limiting the scale and scope of government reorganization. My approach embraces aspects of these arguments. I focus here on the multifaceted ways in which the manifest consequences and subtle influences of consumer culture – such as those observed in *Middletown* by the Lynds in the 1920s and again in the 1930s – were always central despite the sharply changed economic situation between the two decades[3].

By looking at the era through the lens of the political economics of consumer culture, we are better able to account for the ways in which economic changes impacted individuals' understandings of their roles and rights as citizens, competing conceptions of the good life, and contested definitions of modernity. Perspectives on prosperity, new visions of a consumer future, and new collaborations between labor, capital, and the state emanated from all levels of society and political persuasions – all these mirrored and paralleled the profound transformations of the period. Mass culture, modernity's critics charged, took hold as small communities and individuals lost many of their traditional abilities to control their lives and livelihoods amid urbanization, industrial expansion, and the related reshaping of American civic, commercial, political, and social relations. The disastrous condi-

[3] Among the mass of scholarship relevant to these matters see: *Warren Susman*, Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century (New York 1984); *Jackson Lears*, Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America (New York 1994); *Kathleen Donohue*, Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer (Baltimore 2003); *Roland Marchand*, Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940 (Berkeley 1985); *Lizabeth Cohen*, A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America (New York 2003); *Louis Galambos*, The Emerging Organizational Synthesis in Modern American History, in: Business History Review 44 (1970) 279–90; *Louis Galambos*, *Joseph Pratt*, The Rise of the Corporate Commonwealth: United States Business and Public Policy in the Twentieth Century (New York 1988); *Ellis Hawley*, Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an 'Associative State', 1921–1928, in: Journal of American History 61/1 (1974) 116–140; *Ellis Hawley*, The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917–1933 (New York 1979); *Brian Balogh*, Reorganizing the Organizational Synthesis, in: Studies in American Political Development 5 (1991) 119–172; *Alan Brinkley*, The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War (New York 1995). I would be remiss not to note that the current liberalism-consumerist perspective as it has developed and now largely holds historiographic sway differs more in degree than in type from earlier iterations that emphasized the lack of "newness" in the New Deal. Such previous interpretations include arguments premised on corporate-capitalist or broker-state models for understanding what FDR's reorganization programs entailed, exemplified by such works as William E. Leuchtenburg's magisterial Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal (New York 1963). The battle continues. Some scholars continue to insist that the New Deal was indeed "new", or that at least it was as new and as sweeping in its scope as one could expect given the politics of the moment; others, in contrast, take a more classically conservative perspective to reproach the radicalism of the New Deal, casting it not only as a dangerous departure from tradition but also from common sense, laissez-faire economic principles.

tions caused by the greatest economic collapse in U.S. history led to the New Deal, a statist response that functioned to shore up consumerist modernity.

Within the Coolidge Prosperity

"The first real automobile appeared in Middletown in 1900", the Lynds observed. "About 1906 it was estimated that 'there are probably 200 in the city and county'. At the close of 1923 there were 6,221 passenger cars in the city, one for every 6.1 persons, or roughly two for every three families." According to the Lynds, cars epitomized a broader transition in "group-sanctioned values". Automobiles were iconic – one of many technological-consumer symbols of the era – particularly for those who could barely (or not at all) afford them. These vehicles connoted success and happiness; they were essential to many of the new leisure activities available in Muncie and around the country. In turn, the demographics of car ownership and usage mapped on to what became the central social observation of their study: class differences[4].

The Lynds' notable omissions of African Americans and most ethnic groups, along with their systematic focus on American-born residents and especially the upper strata of their socio-economic hierarchy, illustrate some of the ways in which the study reinforced prevailing views of Middle America[5]. In their assumptions of which groups comprised the city we find not just how the Lynds perceived and studied the scene but also, apparently, how Muncie-ites perceived matters, too. In a period of intense racism and nativism (the most stringent immigration restriction act in U.S. history passed in 1924), the prevailing cultural discourse envisioned Middle Americans as white, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, consumer-citizens. The working definition of modernity was delimited along similarly exclusive lines. Though it was barely articulated in the Lynds' work, modernity in Middletown was best understood in sociological, technological, and economic terms. It was aligned with "having" and "owning", and to a lesser extent with "doing". That is, the Lynds and their subjects viewed the challenges of the

[4] *Robert S. Lynd, Helen Merrell Lynd*, Middletown, A Study in American Culture 253–254.

[5] Regarding racial views in Middletown itself, a poll reveals that two-thirds of boys and three-fourths of girls whom the Lynds interviewed agreed that "the white race is the best race on earth", Middletown 200. While the Lynds were right that there were relatively few foreign-born inhabitants of Muncie, the 1920 Census revealed one demographic anomaly: the city's population was 5.6 percent African-American. Such a percentage was sizeable, amounting to several thousand residents and the third highest percentage among the eleven Indiana cities in its size category. This made the omission of black Muncie all the more conspicuous in Middletown. For more: *Jack S. Blocker Jr.*, Black Migration to Muncie, 1860–1930, in: Indiana Magazine of History 92/4 (1996) 297–320, esp. 298; and *Luke Lassiter* et al., The Other Side of Middletown: Exploring Muncie's African American Community (Walnut Creek, Cal. 2004). The Lynds dismissed other groups as well, such as the small but high-profile Jewish population (roughly 200 in the 1920s). See *Dan Rottenberg* (ed.), Middletown Jews: The Tenuous Survival of an American Jewish Community (Bloomington 1997).

"modern" in terms of processes such as social stratification, urbanization, the movement of people, ideas, and goods, and the reorganization of production and division of labor, which is to say, the combination of forces that had seemingly created contemporary Middle American society.

Class differences were at the heart of their study. Questions leading the initial section of the book included: "Who Earn Middletown's Living?" and "Why Do They Work So Hard?" Labor and class conflict presented the core conundrum not just for the Lynds but also for reformist visions of progress in the 1920s and were a focus for sociological and economic inquiry. Across all the groups in the town, the Lynds identified the "outstanding cleavage" as between the working and business classes. This division between what they called "tribes" resulted in considerable vocational, political, and family differences. Class represented the single most important distinction in Muncie society. And their study reinforced a social-psychological understanding of these social and economic relations that was confirmed by later historians.

By the mid-1920s the booming economy generated a remarkably widespread belief in the inevitable, almost painless ascent to prosperity. Such a position seemed to undercut or at least minimize the tensions inherent in the class divide in fascinating ways. The rising standard of living for almost everyone played a key role in what many citizens saw as a deep wellspring of American pride that Middletowners reported to the Lynds. Townspeople's responses often equated economic prosperity with modernity. Middletown residents tended toward homogenizing views about the modern Anglo-American democratic citizen, expressing parochial perspectives on Americanism[6].

These factors also seemed to mute class conflicts through the tacit agreement to put consumer goods and, thus, businesses first. President Calvin Coolidge famously summarized this ethic with his remark: "The chief business of the American people is business."[7] The belief that to be American was to be a consumer, and perhaps a player in business and investment, was part and parcel of the late 1920s speculative boom and the aggressive purchasing of everything from stocks to cars on credit. Indeed historian Julia Ott has shown how the federal government's impetus for the investing craze (known as "investorism") built upon such an ideology[8]. The world economy depended on U.S. loans and export goods, while the domestic economy, particularly industry and finance, boomed. Unemployment averaged only 3.3 percent from 1923 to 1929. Real earnings for non-farm workers rose 23 percent from 1919 to 1929 and a total of 33 percent from 1914 to 1929. Of course, there were bumps along this largely smooth road of progress. A significant downturn occurred from 1920 through 1922, as the heated wartime economy de-

[6] Ibid. 23, 25, 73, 229, 305, 413–434, 480n3.

[7] *Calvin Coolidge*, Speech to the American Association of Newspaper Editors (Jan. 17, 1925), in: *David Greenberg*, Calvin Coolidge (New York 2006) 4.

[8] *Julia Ott*, 'The Free and Open People's Market': Political Ideology and Retail Brokerage at the New York Stock Exchange, 1913–1933, in: Journal of American History 96/1 (2009) 44–71.

clined to peacetime industrial output. And the agricultural sector suffered chronically low prices, in part due to large increases in production during the 1920s both within the United States and internationally.

The gap between rich and poor widened precipitously after World War I, even while workers' wages increased to such an extent that in the public sphere concerns about inequality virtually disappeared as a mainstream political issue. Nonetheless, what was perceived as the excessive spending of the rich was a cause for popular scorn and notoriety in the tabloid press. Because of the increasing demand for industrial labor, salaries and benefits increased while union organizing dipped. Over the decade, union membership decreased from 12 percent to 8 percent of nonagricultural workers – often the result of vicious open shop campaigns, combined with welfare-capitalist inducements and shifts in employment patterns.

As the Lynds made clear, the period after the Great War witnessed a widely experienced economic ascent and with it new views of the attributes of affluence. Postwar prosperity also spurred new directions in progressive economic thought, with new notions evident with regard to matters of employment, the moral significance of work in an industrial economy, assertive methods of mass marketing and mass production, novel modes of mass consumption, and how people should treat the fruits of modern productivity. As evident in nearly all the period's newspaper and magazines, the advertising industry generated and fed the view that to be American was to be a consumer[9]. Leisure went hand-in-hand with products such as the latest clothes, cars, films, and drinks. It was advertising that clinched the meaning of prosperity during this period.

Advertising firms increased billings 400 percent from 1922 to 1929 alone. Their reach across American society mirrored the deepening social values of consumerism, the "cult of the salesman", and an emphasis on the enhanced lifestyle provided by non-essential consumer goods. Coca-Cola, for instance, began with advertisements in the 1880s that billed the drink as a product to "revive" and "sustain". By the mid-1920s, Coke's changing ads reflected the influence of the era's "ad men", along with changing leisure ethos. The company proclaimed its product to be "refreshment" and a "fun food". The idea was to market the product as making every day a "celebration". Kodak also traded on such themes in marketing its cameras: "If it isn't Eastman, it isn't Kodak … Indoors or out, on your travels or at home, Kodak is at your service." Another example of the era's consumer-advertising nexus appears in Bruce Barton's bestselling 1925 book, *The Man Nobody Knows*, in which he favorably compared religion and business, proclaiming Jesus's parables as "the most powerful advertisements of all time". Barton blithely remarked, "[Jesus] would be a national advertiser today"[10].

[9] On changing standards of living and contemporary thought surrounding this, *Stanley Lebergott*, The American Economy: Income, Wealth and Want (Princeton 1962) 248–299; *Meg Jacobs*, Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America (Princeton 2005).

[10] *Inger Sole*, Advertising on Trial: Consumer Activism and Corporate Public Relations (Urbana, Chicago 2001) and *Marchand*, Advertising the American Dream. For examples of

In short, the complacent optimism about consumerist capitalism evident in the rhetoric of political and business leaders and the language of advertising reflected the apparent lessons of the period's rapid transformations in technology, production, marketing, and finance. All of these developments intersected to amplify a widespread sense that modernity in America hinged on a prosperous public's consumption. Consumer capitalism in turn had two controlling centers, both located in New York City: advertising on Madison Avenue and finance on Wall Street. Economic thinkers such as Simon Patten, director of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *The New Basis of Civilization* (1907) and *The Reconstruction of Economic Thought* (1912), argued for an "evolutionary" approach. With proper public policy and social action, he claimed, technological innovation could be the driving engine in shifting from civilization's previous "economics of scarcity" to a "new economics" characterized by abundance and thus "progress". According to Patten, whose ideas gathered momentum in the 1920s, the emphasis on progress via production was tightly linked to a priority for consumption in what he termed a "pleasure economy, in which the motive of action is the pleasure derived from the goods enjoyed". A mass-production, mass-consumption economy could make a high standard of living the new norm, at least in the United States and the industrial West[11].

Such perspectives were countered by robust critiques from contemporary political commentators and writers, as well as social analysts such as the Lynds. Literary and intellectual critics of middle-class culture and of the culture of affluence broadly assailed these values as shallow and suffocating. Such observers deplored the period's widespread "glorification of everything American", as Sinclair Lewis termed it[12]. Adding further complexity were works such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), which both reified and poignantly rejected facile assumptions about modernity, especially the hedonistic pursuit of affluence that seemed to have taken over American life.

This period, so often characterized by the glorification of affluence, is all the more misunderstood because such perspectives tend to imply widespread prosperity driven almost singularly by the engine of big business and finance without assistance from the government or from the average citizen. Such a view is patently false. Economists and historians have demonstrated that American political economy during the 1920s in reality comprised an innovative blend of economic coordination across the most sectors of industry, and in some areas of agriculture,

these ads see: Duke University Library digital archive of advertisements: http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/eaa/ and George Mason's course site on Understanding Advertising: http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/omalley/120/empire/ads/ads.html (Accessed Oct. 22, 2009). On Bruce Barton, see Daniel Siemens's essay in this volume.

11 *Simon Patten*, The New Basis of Civilization (New York 1907) 1–28, 183–200; and *idem*, The Reconstruction of Economic Thought (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1912) 92, 1–4, 83–95.

12 Sinclair Lewis argued instead for "a glorification of our faults as well as our virtues" in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech in 1930; http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1930/lewis-lecture.html (accessed Feb. 20, 2011).

in association with government, roughly in keeping with Hoover's associational model and animated by small-scale spending. Consumer connections influenced, and were fed by, the rise of so-called "pocketbook politics", which centered on domestic consumption, on fresh and expanded credit lines for consumers of all types, and particularly on the pivotal role of women as purchasers of family goods[13].

In addition to the writers and cultural critics who expressed ambivalence about many of these trends, economists and sociologists, including some working with the Social Science Research Council, voiced similar concerns. Critics of consumer capitalism from within the discipline of economics favored direct and sweeping government interventions in the economy, particularly in the regulation of financial markets in the 1920s. Yet by the 1930s, when such views were in vogue, many of the same figures had drawn back to support less statist and more associational solutions than they perceived to be at the heart of the New Deal[14].

In Depression, Voices for Change

By mid-1933, almost 25 percent of the population was unemployed. This bare statistic hardly does justice to the disastrous changes taking place in the lives of most Americans. In 1929, 1.5 million Americans were out of work. By 1933, the numbers soared to over 13 million. Part-time labor likely pushed the real number even higher, to more than 33 percent, or over 17 million workers, under- or unemployed. The gross national product sunk from $104.4 billion to $56 billion between 1929 and 1933. Astonishingly, total production of durable goods diminished 76 percent in just three years. As the familiar saying has it, "There was no place to hide." Foreclosures, bankruptcies, and evictions dominated American life; hunger and despair became commonplace[15].

The severe downturn prompted many Americans to reject or rethink familiar perspectives about their relationships to the government, to employers, and to each other. It also shattered assumptions about the ease of progress in modern political economy. Struggling to survive, significant numbers of Americans came to doubt deeply held values about whether the advantages of modern life were worth the costs; they also voiced far-reaching concerns about whether their nation

13 For domestic consumption patterns, *Meg Jacobs*, Pocketbook Politics; on some of the ways in which the "corporate commonwealth" as well as public policy came to rely on and target household consumers, *Galambos, Pratt,* Rise of the Corporate Commonwealth.

14 *Paul J. Milanti Jr.*, Associationalism, Statism, and Professional Regulation: Public Accountants and the Reform of the Financial Markets, 1896–1940, in: Business History Review 60/3 (1986) 438–468.

15 Unless otherwise cited, I draw statistics from *Gary M. Walton, Hugh Rockoff* (eds.), The History of the American Economy (Toronto ^{9}2002); and *U.S. Census Bureau,* Bicentennial Edition: Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970 (Washington, DC 1975) http://www.census.gov/statab/www/ (accessed July 10, 2011).

and its republican form of government was truly unique and thus whether and how much its foundations could or should be altered, particularly in a time of crisis and dire need. Many wondered in letters to the editor, on the radio, in conversations on street corners, and over the dinner table whether the nation and its current administration were up to the task of managing social, political, and economic relations on the scale necessary in a complex, modern society.

Hoover's associationalism proved inadequate. It could not ameliorate, much less resolve, the national economic catastrophe. Still, even before the stock market crash, Hoover's political economic initiatives were far more ambitious, state-oriented, and expert-driven than his later image would suggest. For example, early in his first year in office, Hoover orchestrated Congress into passing the Agricultural Marketing Act, which created the Federal Farm Board, with an initial fund of $500 million. The board set up a series of farm-government cooperatives to stabilize crop prices, order markets in a centralized way, and reinforce these markets with subsidies and assurances of aid, should cooperatives prove inefficient or prices drop precipitously. Initially, crop prices stabilized. Hoover's reputation for administrative genius appeared to be confirmed. For the first time in nearly a decade direct government intervention seemingly ended periodic recessions in farm prices and goods. Predictions of a permanent change, however, were premature. Stability lasted a scant few months, from summer to fall 1929. By the time the Federal Farm Board was fully operational in the winter of 1929–30, the global depression had so depreciated crop prices that the board could barely prop them up. Nevertheless, this effort invites historians to take a deeper view of the ideologies at work in Hoover's administration and of the key tenets of Hoover's political economic model, as well as the policy implications that Hoover wrestled with during the Depression. The main component of Hoover's response to the Depression became voluntary associations, which he envisioned as stimulated by the federal government. The backstop in his scheme was vigorous government intervention in the private economy only if and when such voluntary associations or markets failed[16]. Recent scholarship on the role of government during the decade between WWI and the Depression reinforces such conclusions and challenges assumptions about the singular focus of local, state, and even federal government on business. For example, as historian Daniel Amsterdam has shown, business leaders working with state and federal government officials pushed for large-scale new expenditures well before the New Deal[17].

In contrast to Hoover's associational model stood economists like Stuart Chase, who in a front-page story in the *New Republic* called for a "New Deal for America" just a week before Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave his Democratic presidential acceptance address on July 2, 1932. In that speech Roosevelt pledged

[16] He continued to maintain that this view was sound policy. Regarding the Farm Board see *Herbert Hoover*, Memoirs: The Great Depression, 1929–1941 (New York 1952) 51, 413–414.
[17] *Daniel Amsterdam*, Building a Civic Welfare State: Businessmen's Forgotten Campaign to Remake Industrial America, 1919–1929 (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania 2009).

himself "to a new deal for the American people". In his article and subsequent work, Chase insisted upon a new vision of reform and a thoroughgoing reorganization of American economic and political life. The government-led reorganizations of FDR's New Deal seemed to fulfill Chase's vision. Designed to rebuild and reconfigure public and private life, they affected nearly every level of society[18].

Liberal politicians and economists increasingly perceived under-consumption as the main cause of the Depression, while more conservative business interests stressed over-production or excess productive capacity and supply. Historians such as Meg Jacobs and Michael Bernstein argue that New Deal policymakers (at times problematically) vacillated between these poles; they attempted to enhance consumer buying power and yet also sought to raise prices. The National Recovery Administration (NRA), which aimed to achieve these goals simultaneously, illustrates the dilemma[19].

Yet the attacks on what FDR and his allies denounced as the profligate policies of the 1920s went deeper. Just as the dominant views of political economy remained strikingly consistent across the 1920s and into 1930s, so too 1920s critiques of American cultural and economic life established the contours of the criticism that emerged in the 1930s. Cultural critics assailed the assumption that modernity should be equated with progress. Creative writers such as John Dos Passos and cultural analysts such as Lewis Mumford deployed modernist techniques and critiques in their literary and polemical writings. They often expressed pessimism about the direction of American political, economic, and cultural life, while being optimistic about other attributes of modern life. For example, Mumford's early writings on "technics" heralded technological advancement yet aimed to direct people to embrace more humane technological modes as well as a more egalitarian distribution of technological progress. Modernity, it seemed to these thinkers, had an ominous underside. Individuals in mass society were rendered anonymous cogs in the techno-socio-economic system. The "machine" of modern society produced the goods and technologies that reinforced its "monolithic" structure, eviscerating free will, standardizing experiencing, and homogenizing people[20].

A number of public intellectuals, exemplified by the irascible H.L. Mencken, rejected such critiques even while deploring the ephemeral and shallow qualities of contemporary American society. Mencken lambasted the consumerist, emotion-driven, uncultivated middle-class "booboisie", a term he coined in 1922. However Mencken also rejected cultural critics who prized the "authentic". To

[18] *Franklin Delano Roosevelt*, Acceptance Speech, July 2. 1932, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=75174#axzz1JQfxDLGE (accessed Apr. 1, 2011); *Stuart Chase*, A New Deal for America, in: New Republic (June 29–July 13, 1932) 169–171, 199–201, 225–226, 282–285.

[19] *David Kennedy*, Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War (New York 1999) 131–189.

[20] See *Lewis Mumford*, Technics and Civilization (New York 1934).

him, the authentic experiences contrived by intellectuals seemed as bogus as the consumerist fantasies constructed by middle-class boobs. Mencken despised the New Deal, which he portrayed as a power grab analogous to those of the monopolists and corrupt politicians he also had loathed. Even as he argued against the extension of federal power, he caricatured the heights of prosperity and the lows of depression with compelling, ironic humor. His prescription? Community and personal solutions were superior to centralization and, he argued, would create more enduring sources of relief[21].

Yet another set of critics, the cultural and artistic activists of the era – for example, the Cultural Front side of the so-called Popular Front – favored a grassroots approach which sharply contrasted with Mencken's unabashed elitism or Mumford's idiosyncratic humanitarianism. These efforts, which drew on socialist and Marxist interpretations of the relationship between means and ends of production, were skeptical of modernist aesthetics. The Cultural Front, part of a broader left-wing attack on modern social values, exhibited particular concern with the supposedly pernicious effects of avant-garde art within a capitalist consumer ethos[22]. The failures of government to mitigate the economic crisis from late 1929 through the election of 1932 gave rise to ever more pointed critiques of the mass culture, mass production, and mass social relations. The economic collapse clearly illustrated the downsides of the system as it stood in 1929. Still, some of the most radical of these reform visions, such as calls for full-fledged communist revolution and the nationalization of virtually all utilities and entire industries, were never viable political-economic schemes in the American context.

Another vein of critique about political economy in the period was regionalist or localist in nature. The popularity of such perspectives hints at why more radical paths were never traveled. Localist-regionalist reform tapped into the deep undercurrent of American political thought that prized local autonomy. Such views received a much wider hearing and sympathy than socialist or communist views could hope for. To give only one example, figures who initially were part of FDR's "brain trust", such as Columbia Law professor Raymond Moley, ended up breaking with Roosevelt and criticizing the New Deal in ways that stressed the tensions between localist critiques and national solutions. More consistent New Dealers, such as Rexford Tugwell, also saw the merits of local-regional critiques and a regionalist approach to reform. Thus many smaller New Deal programs and plans, such as Tugwell's Resettlement Administration, aimed at instituting productive local transformations organized at the lowest levels regarding employment, public works, and other schemes for economic uplift. While Mumford's social criticism

21 Mencken characteristically expressed this view of the mismatch between the promises of reform programs and their reality: "The New Deal began, like the Salvation Army, by promising to save humanity. It ended, again like the Salvation Army, by running flop-houses and disturbing the peace." *Henry L. Mencken*, A Mencken Chrestomathy: His Own Selection of His Choicest Writing (orig. 1949; New York 1982) 620.

22 *Michael Denning*, The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century (New York 1998).

tended to be regionalist in the urban-planning sense, others such as scholars Howard Odum in North Carolina and Carey McWilliams in California brought their intellectual talents to bear upon diagnosing the relationship between the state and regional levels and federal failures in a mass-production, mass-consumption society.

A comparable set of criticisms began to take shape in the South during the 1920s. First known as the Fugitives and made up largely of writers and artists such as Robert Penn Warren and John Crowe Ransom, this group attacked the depersonalization of social relations in industrial society by evoking the rural traditions of their own region. This movement later changed its name to the Agrarians, and in 1930 they published a formidable piece of social criticism entitled *I'll Take My Stand*. In it they called for a repudiation of the soul-eviscerating aspects of modern life and modern capitalist economic relations, which relegated human interaction to mere "transactions". These agrarians issued a manifesto that defended segregation and local, small-scale relations based around the life of the "soil". Their assault on modern political economy was premised on "throwing off" the "evil dispensation" of "industrialism"[23]. The Agrarians argued against what they saw as a specious vision of modern life premised on limitless capitalist growth and impersonal affluence without "regard to individual wants" and argued that the purportedly backward South should serve as a model for the nation[24].

The Cultural Front and the Agrarians are but two examples of the wide array of critics and criticisms of American economics and social relations made all the more convincing by the conditions of the Depression. New efforts at reform and new plural perspectives on the nature of modernity flourished, as did fresh ways of envisioning modern economic, political, and social change for both individuals and groups. But many of these goals had been articulated long before. They can be traced back to the reform efforts of progressives at the turn of the century and in some ways to populist and socialist critics of industrial capitalism and its mass-production ethos since the late nineteenth century.

However by the late 1930s, critiques of industrial capitalism had expanded to encompass the complaint that modern society had become so massive and complicated that a new relationship was urgently needed between government, the economy, and citizens. How else to ensure access to the sacrosanct American ideal of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"? Such criticisms had appeared by the 1890s, but given the scale and scope of modern technological society more than a generation later, they had developed to become widespread and commonplace in educational materials, in literature and film, on radio, and in print during the 1920s and 1930s. Some skeptics of consumerist modernity demanded cultural tolerance and so-called "cultural gifts" education for children as well as adults to offset homogenizing, "melting pot-style" Americanism and xenophobia[25]. Together

[23] I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition (New York 1930), xlviii.
[24] Ibid. xxxvii–xlviii.
[25] *Diana Selig*, Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement (Cambridge, Mass. 2008).

critiques of American society presented a sweeping agenda. They addressed the problems as well as benefits of the continuing nationalization of culture; they pressed the need for the redistribution of wealth and promotion of social mobility; they called for a renewed emphasis on morality and community; and, with exceptions such as the Agrarians, they aimed to elevate pluralist understandings of fellow citizens, along with revitalized reform in education.

By the 1930s the diverse array of critiques of "modern life" shared several important themes. Older American versions of anti-modernist expression, as the Arts and Crafts design philosophy, began to be rejuvenated and reinterpreted, as is evident in some late Art Deco design. Further, many of those with reformist mindsets, from the New Dealers to the era's most strident cultural critics, shared what we might call a "reactionary" cause. Frequently, critics of the politico-economic status quo blamed the Depression on Thorstein Veblen's "conspicuous consumption" and singled out unregulated or under-regulated business practices and excesses born of market speculation as other causes of disaster. This set of critical perspectives had emerged by the 1930s and included positive prescriptions characterized by an effort to enhance individual access to services and education as well as an effort to re-inscribe personal and group accountability. These causes united many of the sharpest critics – ranging from socialists to libertarians to religious conservatives – who sought to reconstruct American government and society in the 1930s. These groups tended to emphasize the collective and the communal in opposition to the atomistic and overly individualistic elements that they saw as leading to the Depression and to the attenuation of political, economic, and civil life, a process which they saw as inherent in an unrestrained mass modern society.

As historian Alan Brinkley has shown, these values undergirded some of the most revolutionary elements of New Deal liberalism. Such radical alternatives did not endure, even when they were tried. But the innovations of the era's liberalism were transformative. That is to say, the political changes that became law under Roosevelt, while still sweeping, were "more coherent, less diverse, and on the whole less challenging than some of the ideas [they] supplanted"[26]. Both liberal and radical critics of American capitalism and society in the 1930s agreed on the basic assertion that systemic, largely global problems, along with issues of federal regulation and individual excess, were the central causes of the economic failures that give rise to the Depression.

To what did all this criticism lead? As historians Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser remarked in their edited volume, *Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, economic elites retained the reins of power, even during the Hundred Days, which despite its crosscurrents some historians still envision as the most radical phase of the New Deal. The Depression's "economic circumstances allowed these capitalists to tolerate prolabor legislation on the one hand and to demand an international policy of free trade on the other", Gerstle and Fraser claimed. They further asserted

[26] *Brinkley*, The End of Reform 4.

that a corporate capitalist bloc "occupied the 'backrooms' of Roosevelt's administration" and ultimately were able to "engineer the New Deal's sudden turn from economic nationalism to free trade", which, according to the authors of this volume is "why the political solutions embodied in those 1935 reforms [such as the NLRB and Social Security] – unlike those of 1933 – endured"[27]. Of course, some scholars are skeptical of such interpretations and of the suggestion that an expansion of state power into the private sector that businesses largely and explicitly resisted was, in effect, a result desired by most of those same commercial interests. However one assesses the ways in which pro-labor and pro-capital interests collided or collaborated in the 1930s, the underlying changes to American political economic structures and thought, in fact, were far less dramatic and far more line with developments of the 1920s than most historians have tended to assume.

The Modernist Political Economy Endures

In the mid-1930s Robert Lynd returned to Muncie to investigate how the city and community were faring in the midst of the Depression. In 1937 the Lynds published their follow-up study as *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*. Their central finding was that not much had changed. Though the town struggled through the Depression, it had not been as hard hit as some other urban, industrial areas. Beneath the modest social and structural changes they observed, the Lynds found an abiding absorption with consumerism, the ever-increasing role of technology in daily life, and an even more stark division between the working and business classes.

According to the Lynds, all of this remained fundamental to the political economic values of Muncie even at the height of the Depression. In assessing the cultural and economic effects of the long slump, *Middletown in Transition* noted that even some of the staunchest Republicans among the business class in Middletown accepted New Deal relief funds and Works Progress Administration programs, at least during the worst of the crisis. Generally, however, the Lynds found that reaction to Roosevelt and the New Deal was "uneven and sharply marked by class differences". Nevertheless, in this time of immense economic strain Middletowners naturally "yearned" to have the incomes required not just to feed and house themselves, but also to participate in the broader fruits of the industrial marketplace. The town, remarked the Lynds, "clearly operates on the assumption that the roots of living lie in the acquisition of money". Their book's subtitle, with its allusion to cultural conflicts, embodied these observations. It also evoked a central claim of the study and of the broader body of developing criticism of modernity as it influenced American views of political economy: A consumer ethos was the basis of both the shared values of Americanism and of the cultural conflicts evident

[27] *Steve Fraser*, *Gary Gerstle* (eds.), Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980 (Princeton 1989) xii.

throughout the catastrophic economic collapse. These enduring values and conflicts hampered any rethinking of the foundations of the modern American economy that the Depression might have inspired[28].

Instead of presenting reflective or even radicalized responses, the Middletowners as portrayed by the Lynds in the mid-1930s seemed perplexed and distraught by the Depression. They did not advocate revolution; they did not seek far-reaching revision of their political and economic lives. The Lynds' survey data indicated that what those polled desired most was a return to the exuberant high-wage, low-cost, consumer goods-fueled lifestyle that seemed to be coming to fruition in the 1920s and that advertisers continued to proclaim and exploit. In some ways this had always been a fantasy. The Depression years simply proved just how profound and enduring that fantasy was. Such observations by the Lynds, in turn, hint at the deeper importance of the interwar era's trends in the ideology and practice of political economy. For "twentieth-century consumerism", explains historian Meg Jacobs, "was not merely a distraction for the working class nor simply a by-product of national prosperity. It was the linchpin in an ongoing political debate about how to organize, reform, and regulate American capitalism"[29].

In the regulatory debates of the New Deal, consumerism as the sine qua non for citizenship was almost perpetually reaffirmed as essential for economic growth. Though they documented its effects, the Lynds did not fully appreciate the ways in which consumerist thinking was integral to the New Deal reorganization of the government and the reconstruction of the relationship between the state and its citizens. Nonetheless, as the Lynds observed, naïve optimism about progress, productivity, and prosperity – developed over the course of the 1920s – collapsed amid the Depression, even though the values and priorities these ideas implied endured. In place of optimism came widespread misery and mistrust. Paradoxically, although the economic calamity altered understandings of modernity across various social, political, cultural, and economic arenas, the promises of mass consumption, modern advertising, and a cultural belief in prosperity and material goods as central to a quasi-religious "American Way of Life" were reinforced in the 1930s[30].

In short, a sanguine perspective on consumer culture – coupling economic and "technological enthusiasm" (in Thomas P. Hughes's phrase) with a sense that

[28] *Robert S. Lynd*, *Helen Merrell Lynd*, Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts (orig. 1937; New York 1982) 22, 242, 402, conclusion.
[29] *Jacobs*, Pocketbook Politics 265.
[30] Margaret Bourke-White's photograph, "There's no way like the American Way", juxtaposed poor African Americans in a long bread line during the Depression with a large billboard of a prosperous white family in a car behind them; Will Herberg depicted the "American Way of Life" as a common religion of sorts, composed almost equally of "free enterprise and democracy". *Will Herberg*, Protestant, Catholic, Jew (New York 1955) 264; see also, *Wendy Wall*, Inventing the American Way: The Politics of Consensus from the New Deal to the Civil Rights Movement (New York 2007).

American citizenship and consumption were inextricably interconnected – survived the 1930s[31]. The deepening of these values depended in part on their incorporation into rhetorically laissez-faire yet conceptually associational policies of the Coolidge and Hoover years, as well as in the sweeping, pro-government measures of Roosevelt's New Deal[32]. Though scholars have exposed the limitations of conflating any singular idea of modernism with Americanism, in many ways Americans living in the 1920s and 1930s enacted such a conflation. Citizens, policymakers, advertisers, and even economists often alluded to this particular nationalist vision – which Republican politicians often placed under the rubric "Americanism" – when depicting modern life, politics, business, and social relations, all in terms of consumerism.

The cataclysm of the Depression set in stark relief the irrational exuberances of the 1920s, with its excessive faith in the market, in ever increasing industrial productivity, and in a continued culture of consumption supported by easy credit, high rates of debt, and speculation. The rising power of the advertising industry depended upon all three of these enthusiasms. In addition, the Depression exposed a serious lack of oversight inherent in economic policies pursued by the federal government, particularly those of the 1920s Republican administrations. The crisis also exposed the costs of unilateral power and unaccountability in the private sector, of which the so-called American Plan of labor relations, privatized social insurance, and welfare capitalism offered merely one example. Mass unemployment, too, showed that much-heralded innovations in banking and the workplace – not simply welfare capitalism but more flexible methods of mass production than the stereotyped "Fordist" mode of production – did not provide for stable growth but instead left the economy vulnerable. Ultimately the Depression years illuminated the depth and breadth of ongoing economic stratification, what contemporaries like the Lynds termed the "cleavage" between the "working class and business class" and what scholars would later classify as the white-blue collar divide[33].

FDR and New Dealers such as Louis Brandeis, Thurman Arnold, Hugh Johnson, and Lewis Williams Douglas aimed to construct policies to limit the dangers of "bigness" and unconstrained speculation in economic life and finance. They also sought to increase employment and spending at the individual level and, importantly, to generate a viable, large-scale political movement to support their reform cause. The effort linked Democratic reformers and liberal social scientists and economists with three broad coalitions: consumer interests (aiming for lower

[31] There were examples against the grain of technological optimism, for example among Keynesian stagnationists who sometimes argued that innovation had run its course. Franklin Roosevelt also occasionally flirted with this perspective.

[32] Hughes saw the entire period from the mid-nineteenth century to World War II as characterized by "technological enthusiasm". *Thomas P. Hughes*, American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm (New York 1989) introduction.

[33] *Robert S. Lynd*, *Helen Merrell Lynd*, Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture 23.

prices), basic citizen interests (looking for higher product standards and more regulation), and various labor groups (seeking jobs, higher wages, and stronger lobbying power through union organization).

The resulting two major thrusts of the early New Deal had wide-ranging aims and effects, as well as more transformative components that never came to fruition as certain advocates hoped. Starting from FDR's inauguration in March 1933, the New Deal fought to redistribute wealth and power while undermining the autonomy of business to determine wages, prices, and other vital elements of basic commerce and industry. The so-called Second New Deal of 1935–36 also focused on measures such as Social Security and the Wagner Act that affected citizens, consumption, and labor directly. Roosevelt's "Brain Trust", itself a group with divergent and often contradictory analyses and agendas, articulated a whirlwind of new ideas about how to design and implement reform.

The group included some experienced politicians, but social, economic, and legal scholars and activists such as Moley, Harry Hopkins, Henry Morgenthau, Louis Howe, Frances Perkins, Sam Rosenman, Adolf Berle, and Rexford Tugwell gave the New Deal its main ideas and impetus. Beyond their efforts to restructure the market and state-citizen relations, they adopted a pump-priming approach, though on a lesser scale and with less explicitness and consistency than advocated by John Maynard Keynes, whose views on macroeconomic policy were just then coming to be understood. To the extent that the Roosevelt administration was committed to large-scale public spending, this was based on a quasi-Keynesian assumption that as spending and consumption increased, businesses would expand to meet growing demand and employ new workers. FDR and his allies also argued that with more public spending, movement through a business cycle could be smoothed and expedited in order to spur additional spending and continued growth[34].

As numerous historians have explained, New Deal reform measures had different points of emphasis at different times, reflecting twists and turns in politics, policy, and in perceptions of economic circumstances. The first set of New Deal reforms, mostly passed during the Hundred Days, created a panoply of solutions for banking, industry, and farming, such as the Emergency Banking Act and the FDIC, AAA, and the NRA. The National Recovery Administration (NRA) can be seen as an apotheosis of Hooverism as well as a departure from it. The NRA entailed direct government intervention to create codes of fair competition and regulation; critics derided this as excessive federal regulation, but in line with the associationalist mindset, the NRA directed that different sectors of commerce and industry were to create this codes themselves. The organizational structure of the NRA, the criticisms leveled against it, and its practical, political, and legal prob-

[34] Keynes himself was often critical of the way FDR pursued deficit spending. John Maynard Keynes, with *Arthur Salter* et al., The World's Economic Crisis and the Way of Escape (London 1932); *John Maynard Keynes*, General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money (London 1936); *idem*, An Open Letter to President Roosevelt, in: New York Times (December 31, 1933).

lems illustrate the difficulties contemporaries had in articulating where the continuities and discontinuities between 1920s and 1930s political economy resided and where they wished them to reside.

A new consumer activism accompanied New Deal efforts to reorganize the producer side of the economy. The era's consumer initiatives, however, also adhered to the state-led and associational reform models. For instance, consumer protections centered on a lobby for better "truth in advertising" laws, which resulted in a series of measures to prevent deceptive advertising. The 1930s thus saw a shift in marketing, as one might expect, toward more honesty but also toward depicting products in ways that fit the mood of the era. One sort of market strategem aimed to depict products as energy-boosting, beauty-enhancing, and self-improving, as exemplified by Camel cigarette ads that claimed, "You Get a Lift with a Camel." Another set of techniques sought to make goods seem luxurious and youthful, and, even at the height of the depression, tried to add caché as something to make "you the envy of your neighbors". Even FDR's fireside chats often amounted to radio advertising for his administration's programs and the principles behind them. The Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration incorporated elements of consumerism and advertising into its public relations and programs. In an obvious turn, one final direction for marketing involved explaining the need for a product as an economic decision, a "great deal"[35].

Though international influences upon political economy have not been a major focus in this chapter, the series of international crises that began when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931 gradually exposed the fallacies of so-called "Republican internationalism", with its emphasis on the promotion of U.S. business interests. Competing nationalisms and economic ties continued to generate conflicts among Americans and complicated dealings with potential allies and foes alike. In the myriad ways that domestic politics hampered efforts to deal with the international dimensions of the crisis, the United States was hardly alone. In the scramble of the Depression, each country did what it could to achieve socioeconomic stability, often by protecting domestic markets against foreign competition. Protectionist isolationism took hold in various American policies designed to address the Depression, building on long-standing U.S. traditions of neutrality and restrictive tariffs. The most notable of such moves included the Smoot-Hawley Act (1930), which increased tariffs on more than 20,000 goods, escalating international tensions through retaliatory protectionist legislation, and the Neutrality Acts of 1935–39, which repudiated neutral rights as they had been previously understood. The neutrality legislation aimed to keep America out of war by ensuring that American businesses and citizens avoided virtually all commerce with belligerents

[35] *Sole*, Advertising on Trial: Consumer Activism and Corporate Public Relations and *Marchand*, Advertising the American Dream. For examples of these ads, Duke University Library digital archive of advertisements, http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/eaa/, and George Mason University, Understanding Advertising, http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/omalley/120/empire/ads/ads.html (accessed Oct. 22, 2009).

and did not travel in war zones except at their own risk[36]. Even as the country confronted the calamity of worldwide economic depression and attempted to prevent entry into a future war, most policymakers and citizens clung to modified laissez-faire capitalist values and an intuitive optimism about mythic American, rugged individualism.

Conclusion: Continuity, Critique, and Consumption

By 1941 America had developed a consumer-oriented society, with a political economy based on social stratification but premised on the free choices of citizens as consumers. Contrary to the principles of classical liberalism, Roosevelt's "freedom from want" became fundamental to political relations; it now appeared to be one of the "essential human freedoms"[37]. Many contemporary observers had come to insist that laissez-faire ideology was insufficient – particularly in times of crisis – to maintain basic standards of living across society and reinforce the consumerist potential of American capitalism. By the end of the period, the entrenchment of the consumer-consumption ethos combined with a gradual lessening of economic hardships along with increased attention to the U.S. role in world affairs to enable the consumerist view of modernity to seem natural and desirable. Critics from competing perspectives on modernism or from anti-modern points of view found themselves relegated to the fringes of public debate, to the intellectual arena sometimes disdained as "cultural critique".

Thus underlying assumptions about the American economy that had taken hold by the mid-1920s were not fundamentally challenged or altered by the end of the 1930s. Most people agreed that the free market, albeit more regulated than before, the unequal distribution of wealth and goods, and individual self-interest and incentives were fundamental to American progress. Even patently false views of the prospects for widespread access to social mobility were rarely challenged. The governmental structure and regulatory apparatus did change dramatically. But the entrenched political economic philosophy of interwar capitalism remained largely intact. New Deal liberalism adhered firmly to the notion of the citizen as a consumer; this vision was embedded in such sweeping measures the 1935 Social Security and National Labor Relations Act. Two powerful ideas intersected: mo-

[36] In the international economic system during the early years of the Depression only Great Britain held fast to the free trade that many preached. Even they abandoned free-trade principles in 1932 in favor of a so-called imperial preference system. See *Christopher McKnight Nichols*, Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age (Cambridge 2011) 273–344; *Jordan Schwarz*, The Interregnum of Despair (Urbana 1970) 87–88; also, *Patricia Clavin*, The Failure of Economic Diplomacy: Britain, Germany, France, and the United States, 1931–1936 (New York 1996); and *Emily Rosenberg*, Financial Missionaries: The Politics and Culture of the Dollar, 1900–1930 (Durham, N.C. 2003).

[37] *Franklin D. Roosevelt,* State of the Union Address to the Congress (January 6, 1941) Located at: http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/od4frees.html (accessed July 10, 2011).

dernity as a mass production-mass consumption culture and modernity as state management of political economy. Organizational reconfigurations of business, labor, and capital at local, state, and national levels did not dislodge consumerism as a fundamental value and indeed were never intended to do so.

The consumer-as-citizen model of American nationalism – and a more centralized association of public and private sector – were strengthened during World War II and rejuvenated along with renewed economic prosperity by the late 1940s. This political economy formed the core of the liberal political consensus of the early Cold War. Indeed, one might say that Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s "vital center" evoked not just the contest between democracy and totalitarianism, as was his goal, but also the fundamental ways in which socio-economic ideas persisted from the 1920s through the 1940s. Many Americans in the years before U.S. entry into WWII came to see modern society through the political economic prism of the consumer-citizen. In turn, this widely shared perspective contrasted sharply with the statist-oriented international models provided primarily by Soviet Russia. Consumerist modernity left relatively little room for alternative visions of American capitalism. Federal and state public policy solutions starting in 1933 brought about some of the most massive reorganization of governance in U.S. history. Nevertheless the underlying individualist and materialist bases of U.S. capitalism and the society's consumerist values, having reached their apex in the 1920s, remained largely intact even amidst economic distress. In the years between the wars, visions of political economy tended toward associational and consumerist policy outcomes. These two tendencies amounted to a continuous thread that wove together the era's political, economic, and social developments.

Summary

In einem kritischen Überblick über die amerikanische Wirtschaftsgeschichte von etwa 1920 bis zum Eintritt der USA in den Zweiten Weltkrieg 1941 plädiert Christopher Nichols dafür, die Zwischenkriegszeit als eine einheitliche Epoche zu interpretieren, obwohl sie durch den tiefen Einschnitt der Weltwirtschaftskrise eigentlich in zwei Teile zerfiel. Sein Argument stützt sich auf die zeitgenössischen Analysen und Diagnosen von Soziologen, Intellektuellen, Politikern, Ökonomen und politischen Aktivisten und gruppiert deren Debatten in vier Fragen- resp. Themenbereiche: erstens die Frage, wie Auffassungen der „modernen" Gesellschaft theoretisch, kulturell und materiell in die neo-korporatistische industrielle Struktur der *New Era* und des *New Deal* eingebettet wurden; zweitens die Frage, wie sich diese „Modernität" parallel zur Kultur der Massenproduktion und des Massenkonsums entfaltete; drittens die Frage, wie „Modernität" als eine Vision staatlicher Kontrolle der politischen Ökonomie entstand, die sich in den Programmen des New Deal verkörpert fand; und viertens schließlich das Problem, dass „Modernismus" – als ein Komplex intellektueller und künstlerischer Ideen

und Praktiken – für zeitgenössische Kritiker nur in Kontrast zu einer (nichtmodernen?) „Tradition" existieren zu können schien. Der Beitrag zeigt auf, in welcher Weise die individualistischen und materialistischen Grundlagen des amerikanischen Kapitalismus und der gesellschaftlichen „konsumistischen" Werte, die den Höhepunkt ihrer Ausprägung in den 1920er Jahren erfahren hatten, in ein tief empfundenes „Konsument-als-Citizen"-Modell des amerikanischen Nationalismus und der amerikanischen Demokratie Eingang fanden, das sogar in den elendesten Zeiten der Depression und unter grundsätzlicher Kritik Bestand hatte. Nichols schließt daraus, dass diese „konsumistische" Modernität alternativen Visionen des amerikanischen Kapitalismus wenig Raum ließ. In der Zwischenkriegszeit neigten ökonomisches Denken und ökonomische Politik zu neo-korporatistischen und „konsumistischen" Lösungen, und in diesen verschmolzen ein Verständnis von „Modernität" als einer Massenkonsum-Massenproduktions-Kultur mit einem solchen von „Modernität" als aktiver staatlicher Verantwortung für die politische Ökonomie.

4. Race and Claims to Modernity

Manfred Berg

Lynching and the Ambivalence of Modernity

In 1905, the sociologist James E. Cutler began his book, *Lynch-Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States*, with the following introduction: "It has been said that our country's national crime is lynching … The practice whereby mobs capture individuals suspected of crime … and execute them without any process of law … is to be found in no other country of a high degree of civilization." Cutler's proposition that lynching was a uniquely American phenomenon and signified a remnant of a barbaric past unworthy of a civilized nation enjoyed widespread support among the American public in the early twentieth century. For example, after a mob had lynched a black man for the alleged assault on a white girl in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in May 1919, white community leaders protested that the lawless act had made their town "the object of abuse and contempt of people in every section of the civilized world". Historical scholarship has frequently echoed the notion of lynching as a custom fundamentally at odds with civilization and progress. In her study of a notorious lynching in Waco, Texas, in 1916, when a mob of possibly more than 10,000 people tortured and burned alive a black man charged with the rape and murder of a white woman, historian Patricia Bernstein freely confesses her bewilderment: "How could such a medieval barbarity possibly have taken place in our own nation … in front of many educated, middle-class people who enjoyed all the comforts of the modern age, including automobiles, ready-made clothing, telephones, and public libraries?"[1]

[1] *James E. Cutler*, Lynch-Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States (repr. New York 1969) 1; *J. William Harris*, Etiquette, Lynching, and Racial Boundaries in Southern History: A Mississippi Example, in: American Historical Review 100 (1995) 387–410, 407–9; *Patricia Bernstein*, The First Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP (College Station, Tex. 2005) 5. In recent years the scholarship on lynching has grown rapidly. For important contemporary works, see *Ida B. Wells*, On Lynchings: Southern Horrors, A Red Record, Mob Rule in New Orleans (repr. New York 1969); *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*, Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889–1919 (New York 1919); *James H. Chadbourn*, Lynching and the Law (Chapel Hill 1933); *Arthur Raper*, The Tragedy of Lynching (Chapel Hill 1933). Since the 1990s, numerous books have been published by historians. For particularly influential studies, see *W. Fitzhugh Brundage*, Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930 (Urbana, Ill. 1993); *Stewart E. Tolnay* and *E.M. Beck*, A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930 (Urbana, Ill. 1995); *Christopher Wal-*

The following essay counts among those recent studies that challenge the notion of lynching as an archaic, premodern tradition strangely lingering until the mid-twentieth century. Lynching as practiced in the United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s was to some degree generated by modernity, and it incorporated many modern features. Here I will stress one dimension of this broad argument: lynching as a response to the rise of the modern state and its claim to a "monopoly of legitimate violence". While the term lynching is often used loosely to denote all kinds of violent outrages, its historical meaning has predominantly focused on extralegal punishment meted out by a group of people claiming to represent the will of the larger community and acting with an expectation of impunity[2]. This essay will not deal with the question of whether lynching represented a "negative" American exceptionalism, because any meaningful answer would require substantial comparative work. Suffice it to say that that mob violence can be found in all societies and ritualized mob murder in many. Recent studies of lynching in global perspective have emphasized weak legal and political institutions in combination with popular distrust of the state and the criminal justice system as the most significant common denominators of popular justice around the world[3].

Still, Cutler and other critics at the time and later had a point when they noted that the frequency and the brutality of lynchings singled out the United States among the so-called civilized nations in the early twentieth century. Thus, while the essay avoids any essentialist assertion of American exceptionalism, I am interested in lynching and mob violence as a distinctive American manifestation of the ambivalence of modernity.

To be sure, there are good reasons that both contemporary writers and historians have frequently employed the dichotomy between barbarism and modern

drep, The Many Faces of Judge Lynch. Extralegal Violence and Punishment in America (New York 2002); *Michael J. Pfeifer*, Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947 (Urbana, Ill. 2004); for recent trends, see *William D. Carrigan* (ed.), Lynching Reconsidered: New Perspectives in the Study of Mob Violence (London 2007); *Manfred Berg*, Popular Justice: A History of Lynching in America (Chicago 2011) offers a synthesis from the colonial era to the present.

2 On the struggle over definition, see *Christopher Waldrep*, War of Words: The Controversy over the Definition of Lynching, 1899–1940, in: Journal of Social History 66 (2000) 75–100; for a semantically expansive use of the term, *Joel Williamson*, Wounds Not Scars: Lynching, the National Conscience, and the American Historian, in: Journal of American History 83 (1997) 1221–1253.

3 There is some useful work on Latin America, see, e.g., *Angelina S. Godoy*, Popular Injustice: Violence, Community, and Law in Latin America (Stanford, Cal. 2006); *Timothy Clark*, Ordem e Progresso? A Structural Analysis of Brazilian Lynch Mob Violence (Ph. D. University of Minnesota 2006). For recent attempts to put American lynching into comparative and transnational perspectives, see *Robert W. Thurston*, Lynching: American Mob Murder in a Global Perspective (Burlington, Vt. 2011); *Manfred Berg* and *Simon Wendt* (eds.), Globalizing Lynching History: Vigilantism and Extralegal Punishment from an International Perspective (New York 2011); *William D. Carrigan* and *Christopher Waldrep* (eds.), The Worldwide Career of Judge Lynch: Mob Violence from Ancient Times to the Present in a Global Context (forthcoming).

civilization to make sense of lynching. For starters, the elaborate rituals of cruelty which the mass mobs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries staged to punish black men for alleged sexual crimes against white females inevitably conjured up images of bloodthirsty medieval crowds gaping at hapless men and women being burned at the stake or broken on the wheel. The revolting brutality of the 1916 lynching in Waco that Bernstein laments was by no means exceptional. Such "spectacle lynchings" in front of large crowds – usually involving torture, mutilation, burning alive, and dismemberment of the victim's body – occurred until well into the 1930s, especially in the Jim Crow South. In 1899, for example, a newspaper report described the death of Sam Hose, a black farm worker from rural Georgia charged with the murder and rape of his white employers, in graphic detail that is hard to fathom: "Before the torch was applied to the pyre the negro was deprived of his ears, fingers and other portions of his anatomy. The Negro pleaded pitifully for his life while the mutilation was going on, but stood the ordeal of fire with surprising fortitude. Before the body was cool it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits …. The Negro's heart was cut into several pieces, as was his liver. Those unable to obtain these ghastly relics directly paid fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them." Similar reports could be cited ad nauseam[4].

Understandably, many contemporary commentators sought to distance American civilization from the lynchers by rhetorically consigning them to a long-gone past. In 1937, for example, the *Atlanta Constitution*, a leading southern newspaper, stated its conviction "that the day is not far distant when the rope of the lyncher will be as strange in modern life as is the stake of the Salem witchburner"[5]. Anti-lynching activists, as Silvan Niedermeier's essay also explains, used the discourse of civilization to highlight mob violence as a national disgrace and did not shy away from putting their country on the spot before international audiences. When the black journalist and anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells toured Great Britain in 1893 and 1894, she publicly chastised lynching in the United States as a menace to human civilization all over the world. During the First World War, black newspapers routinely compared lynching to the war atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the German "Huns", who at that time symbolized the nadir of civilization. In a similar vein, black civil rights leaders exploited the comparison with

[4] Quoted from the *Charleston News and Courier*, April 24, 1899, in: *Christopher Waldrep* (ed.), Lynching in America. A History in Documents (New York 2006) 147–48; on lynching as a mass spectacle, see *Amy Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940 (Chapel Hill 2009). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People listed 11 victims burned at the stakes for 1919 (total lynchings 63), 2 for 1925 (total 18), 1 for 1930 (total 25); see NAACP press releases with lynching figures for the respective years, in: Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC, part I, series C, boxes 338, 339, 34 [hereafter NAACP I C box #].

[5] *Atlanta Constitution*, "The Better Way", May 12, 1937, clipping in: Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching Papers, 1930–1942, reel 3 (Microfilming Corporation of America 1983) [hereafter cited ASWPL Papers, reel #].

Nazi Germany as a discursive weapon to expose American hypocrisy. In 1938, Roy Wilkins, assistant secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), bitterly commented on the double standard many Americans evidently applied in condemning Nazi violence against German Jews: "Until we stamp out the rope and the faggot … we cannot make a good case against the cruelties of storm troopers."[6] The comparison with Nazism was not only a political embarrassment for the American government but carried deeper implications. If a modern civilized country like Germany could lapse back into barbarism, lynching might pose a similar threat to America.

Nevertheless, most anti-lynching campaigners and writers believed that modernization would ultimately eradicate lynching and that liberal elites had to support this process through economic reforms and tireless educational efforts. In his 1933 book *The Tragedy of Lynching*, the sociologist Arthur Raper voiced a widespread expectation when he wrote: "Mobs and lynchings eventually can be eliminated if the irresponsive and irresponsible population elements can be raised into a more abundant economic and cultural life."[7] At first glance, the proposition that urbanization, industrialization, the rise of the mass media, and improved public education would lead to the demise of lynching seems highly plausible. However, upon a closer look, the connection between lynching and modernity becomes more complicated. In light of the terrible history of the twentieth century, the notion that the advance of modernity would lead to a gradual decline of civil violence – not to mention international violence – has lost considerable credibility[8]. More

[6] *Ida B. Wells*, Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells (Chicago 1970) 98–100; *Gail Bederman*, Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917 (Chicago, London 1995) 45–76; *Baltimore Daily World*, "Georgia Huns Lynch Negro Woman and Three Men", May 20, 1918, in: NAACP I C 355; *Pittsburgh Courier*, "American Huns Meet Stiff Opposition in Midnight Attack on Home of Colored Men in Small Georgia Town", January 18, 1919, in: NAACP I C 353; *Roy Wilkins*, "Hypocrisy", Crisis 45 (September 1938) 301.

[7] *Arthur Raper*, The Tragedy of Lynching (New York reprint 1969, original 1933) 38. For other contemporary hopes in modernization, see *Walter White*, Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch (New York reprint 1969, original 1929) 171–95; *Wilbur Cash*, The Mind of the South (New York 1941) 303–308; *Gunnar Myrdal*, An American Dilemma. The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York ^{2}1962, original 1944) 565–66; *Jesse Daniel Ames*, The Changing Character of Lynching. Review of Lynching 1931–1941 (New York reprint 1973, original 1942).

[8] Arguably, the most comprehensive and sophisticated sociological theory of a long-term historical development leading to a reduction of interpersonal and international violence is Norbert Elias's idea of a process of civilization. To be sure, Elias focused on Western Europe since the Middle Ages, he said nothing about lynching in North America, and he denied the teleological implications of his theory. Still, he insisted that the direction of the historical process was unmistakeably aimed at the establishment of monopolies of violence both at the state and the international levels, see *Norbert Elias*, Über den Prozess der Zivilisation, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a. M. 1997, original 1939), esp. vol. 2, 449. For a comprehensive argument, based on Elias, that violence has continuously declined throughout history, see *Steven Pinker*, The Better Angels of Our Nature: The Decline of Violence in History and its Causes (London 2011).

important in relation to the topic of this essay, it does not square with the history of lynching in America. Rather, the historical record supports an alternative narrative of lynching as a response to the rise of a modern system of criminal justice and as a phenomenon that was thoroughly modern in many of its characteristics.

In American history, the idea that the extralegal violence that lynching represented would disappear with the advance of progress and civilization has been closely linked to the ideology of the frontier, with its famous claim that the process of continuous westward expansion shaped American character. The struggle for survival in an unforgiving wilderness supposedly transformed the settlers into sturdy and self-reliant pioneers who formed tightly knit communities based on the ideals of liberty, equality, and local self-government. Frederick Jackson Turner, the great historian of the American West, summed up a series of arguments that had developed since the 1850s when he suggested that vigilantism and punishment outside the law were examples of frontier culture in action. In dealing with crime, he wrote, "the frontiersman was impatient of restraints. He knew how to preserve order, even in the absence of legal authority. If there were cattle thieves, lynch-law was sudden and effective"[9]. Turner articulated what can be called the frontier theory of lynching. In short, it held that lynching in America had its roots in conditions on the frontier and sprang from necessity rather than from a spirit of mob violence. With settlement advancing quicker than an effective judicial system, the people had no choice but to take the law into their own hands. Vigilantism, far from epitomizing lawlessness, represented legitimate communal self-defense and wholesome popular justice. In the view of its apologists, the reign of lynch-law appeared as a first step toward building a civil society and a necessary transitional phase of American history that gradually ceased with the advance of civilization and government. In fact, frontier vigilantes emphatically insisted that they followed the spirit of the law, if not the letter. As a vigilance committee in Sonora, California, phrased it in 1851: "We are not opposing ourselves to the courts of justice already organized. We are simply aiding them or doing work which they should do but which under the imperfect laws of the state, they are unable to accomplish."[10] However, recent scholarship has demolished the image of frontier justice administered by virtuous pioneer communities and painted a much more sordid picture that emphasizes racial and ethnic hostility as well as class conflict as the prime motives of lynchers. In particular, the notion that frontier vigilantes only acted where efficient government was nonexistent does not

[9] *Frederick Jackson Turner*, The Frontier in American History (New York, 1958, original 1920) 212. On the cultural impact of the frontier myth, see *Manfred Berg*, Der Mythos der Frontier und die amerikanische Identität, in: Mythen in der Geschichte, *Helmut Altrichter* et al. (eds.) (Freiburg i.Br. 2004) 513–39.

[10] Quoted in *Ken Gonzales-Day*, Lynching in the West, 1850–1935 (Durham 2006) 41. The classic apology for frontier vigilantism is *Hubert H. Bancroft*, Popular Tribunals, 2 vols. (San Francisco 1887).

square with the historical record, which contains numerous lynchings of criminal suspects who were already in custody[11].

Moreover, the environmental determinism according to which the quasi state of nature prevailing on the frontier would inevitably lead to lynch-law cannot explain why many frontier communities such as German and Scandinavian farmers in the Dakotas did not lynch alleged criminals. Nor does the frontier theory account for the conspicuous fact that extralegal punishment was no major concern during the colonial era. After all, British North America was a frontier society with no effective system of law enforcement in the modern sense. In many areas, courts were few and far between, and there were hardly any jails available to lock up suspects. Still, studies of crime in colonial America have not uncovered evidence that the colonists reacted to the purported weakness of their criminal justice systems by taking the punishment of criminals into their own hands[12].

Of course North American colonists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had their own concept of efficient criminal justice that had little to do with modern ideas of a state monopoly exercised by trained professionals. Basically, the punishment of crime was a responsibility of the entire community. All able-bodied men had the duty to assist in apprehending criminals; members of the local community served as magistrates and jurors. Trials were relatively short and simple, and sentences were carried out soon after the verdict. Executions, in particular, were elaborate public rituals of retribution and repentance which attracted large crowds and usually lasted for many hours. It would be misleading, however, to conceive of them as base popular entertainment. "Hangings were not macabre spectacles staged for a bloodthirsty crowd", writes the historian Stuart Banner, but "a somber event, like a church service. Hanging day was a dramatic portrayal, in which everyone could participate, of the community's desire to suppress wrongdoing." Thus, the way the death penalty was administered satisfied the people's sense of swift and harsh punishment for serious crime as well as their claim to an active role of the community, often including ordinary citizens performing the duty of the hangman[13].

Under such circumstances, there was no cause for the kind of extralegal punishment that would later become known as lynching. However, as the process of

[11] See especially *Gonzales-Day*, Lynching in the West; *William D. Carrigan*, The Making of a Lynching Culture: Violence and Vigilantism in Central Texas, 1836–1916 (Urbana, Ill. 2004); *Stephen Leonard*, Lynching in Colorado, 1859–1919 (Boulder, Colo. 2002); *William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb,* The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928, in: Journal of Social History 37 (2003) 211–38.

[12] See *Lawrence M. Friedman*, Crime and Punishment in American History (New York, 1993) 19–55; *Douglas Greenberg,* Crime and Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York, 1691–1776 (Ithaca 1976); *Donna J. Spindel*, Crime and Society in North Carolina, 1663–1776 (Baton Rouge 1989); *Michael J. Pfeifer*, The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching (Urbana, Ill. 2011).

[13] *Stuart Banner*, The Death Penalty: An American History (Cambridge, Mass. 2002) 7–24. See also *Jürgen Martschukat*, Die Geschichte der Todesstrafe in Nordamerika. Von der Kolonialzeit bis zur Gegenwart (München 2002).

modernization during the nineteenth century transformed North America into an increasingly urban and industrial society, public executions ceased to be communal rituals but degenerated into rowdy affairs involving drunkenness and brawls. Some penal reformers even called for a wholesale abolition of the death penalty, while many more favored banning public executions and drastically reducing the number of capital crimes. Gradually, prison became the standard method of punishment for nearly all crimes short of murder. And although support for the death penalty remained high, and public executions continued in a few states into the twentieth century, the death penalty was increasingly monopolized by the state and deprived of its former character as popular justice[14]. Yet, the idea that the people have a right to participate in the administration of criminal justice persisted and became one of the most salient arguments in defense of lynching.

During the American Revolution, Colonel Charles Lynch of Bedford County, Virginia, presided over extralegal courts claiming to fight lawlessness in general and Loyalist conspiracies in particular. Although Lynch and his associates executed several of their prisoners, they mostly limited themselves to severe corporal castigation and indeed observed a minimum of procedural fairness[15]. It therefore seems somewhat unwarranted that Lynch's name eventually became associated with the murderous mobs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Still, the libertarian spirit of the revolutionary era made a momentous contribution to the American culture of legitimate popular violence. According to the historian Richard Maxwell Brown, "In the realm of ideas, the concept of popular sovereignty emerged as a powerful rationale for extralegal violence against those deemed to be enemies of the public good."[16]

Nevertheless, until about 1830, incidents of lynch-law were rare and mostly limited to non-lethal punishment such as whipping and banishment from the community. In the 1830s mob violence and lynching began to soar. In September 1835, *Niles' Weekly Register*, one of the most influential magazines in the United States lamented: "Society seems everywhere unhinged and the demon of 'blood and slaughter' has been let loose upon us … We have executions, and murders, and riots to the utmost limits of the union. The character of our countrymen seems suddenly changed, and thousands interpret the law in their own way." Indeed, historical research has confirmed this picture. David Grimsted, a leading scholar of antebellum mob violence, has counted a staggering total of 147 riots for 1835, with 109 incidents occurring between July and October alone, making that year "the crest of rioting in the United States". Contemporary observers also noted correctly that mob violence took a deadly turn during the 1830s. The 1835 riots

[14] *Banner*, Death Penalty 88–168; on the persistence of public executions, see *Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle 19–44.
[15] See *Cutler*, Lynch-Law 24–31; *Waldrep*, Many Faces 15–20.
[16] *Richard Maxwell Brown*, Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism (New York 1975) 39.

claimed at least seventy-one lives, and most victims died at the hands of mobs acting with intent to kill[17].

In the decades between the 1830s and the Civil War, mob violence and lynching became an integral part of American life. This development mirrored the enormous tensions created by rapid social change and political polarization. The advent of modern capitalism and mass democracy in the antebellum era, the historian Paul Gilje argues, created a "cutthroat egalitarian atmosphere" which pitted social classes as well as ethnic and religious groups against each other. In particular, mass immigration, coupled with urbanization, was a major wellspring of civil violence. Most of the roughly four million immigrants who entered the United States between 1840 and 1860 were Irish and Germans, two groups whom the dominant Anglo-Protestants viewed as significantly different in their language, culture, and religion and as unwelcome economic competitors. Not surprisingly, mass immigration triggered a strong nativist backlash. Violent clashes between immigrants and nativists as well as among the different immigrant populations became a hallmark of antebellum urban life[18].

The emergence of mass-circulation newspapers was another aspect of modernization fostering the rise of collective violence. Improvements in printing technology sharply reduced costs and sales prices and newspaper circulation skyrocketed. A drastic change in reporting styles boosted the allure of the penny press. Sex and crime stories featuring murder and rape whipped up emotions and could easily be read as encouraging mob action[19]. The upsurge of mass newspapers also furthered the rise of mass politics in the 1830s. The presidencies of Andrew Jackson and his successor Martin Van Buren, encompassing the years from 1829 to 1841, marked the transition from a fairly elitist political culture toward mass participation based on universal white manhood suffrage. The Jacksonian Democrats and the Whigs emerged as modern parties keenly competing for a mass following. Political rallies tended to be rowdy and drunken affairs, and fists and bludgeons were often more instrumental in settling political disputes than the power of the reasoned word.

The arrival of the "common man" in politics advanced a new understanding of popular sovereignty that included the power of ordinary people to take the law into their own hands. Indeed, antebellum apologists of lynching frequently cited public approval and mass participation as incontestable evidence that the act itself was justified. For example, in 1836, a judge in St. Louis, Missouri, incidentally but fittingly named Luke Lawless, instructed a grand jury which was considering indictments against lynchers who had burned a free black man before a large crowd. If the deed represented the "mysterious, metaphysical, and almost electric

17 *Niles' Register* quoted in: *Cutler*, Lynch-Law 104; *David Grimsted*, American Mobbing, 1828–1861: Toward Civil War (New York 1998) 4 and passim.

18 *Paul A. Gilje*, Rioting in America (Bloomington, Ind. ³2005) 10, 60–143 passim. See also *Michael Feldberg*, The Turbulent Era: Riot and Disorder in Jacksonian America (New York 1980); *Roger Lane* and *John J. Turner*, Riot, Rout, and Tumult: Readings in American Social and Political Violence (Lanham 1983).

19 *Waldrep*, Many Faces 33.

phrenzy" of an "infuriated multitude", the judge reasoned, "the case then transcends your jurisdiction – it is beyond the reach of human law". In the antebellum defense of lynching, ancient ideas of the voice of the people being the "voice of God" merged with the dynamics of a budding mass democracy. Interestingly, some historians have explained the extraordinary levels of private violence in American history, including homicide and lynching, by arguing that "democracy came to America too early", that is to say before the state was able to firmly establish a monopoly of force, as it had done in Europe, and before urban industrialism had advanced far enough to transform working-class culture in ways that marginalized the raucous artisan republicanism of the early 1800s. As a consequence, many Americans have remained sceptical toward the idea that the state should have a monopoly on the use of force, seeing it as a threat to their democratic rights[20].

Arguably, the institution of slavery was not only the most polarizing issue in American politics before the Civil War, but also the single most important source of mob violence and lynch-law. Both in the free states of the North and in the slaveholding South, opponents of slavery became the target of rioters who detested abolition as a threat to white supremacy and sectional peace. However, while northern anti-abolition riots rarely resulted in fatalities, southerners lynched scores of suspected abolitionists and slaves. Critics of slavery were regarded as mortal enemies of the South who had to be stopped by "terror and death", as South Carolina politician and planter John Henry Hammond warned in a letter to the *New York Times.* Although there were virtually no abolitionists in the South, rumors of abolitionist conspiracies to incite slave rebellions sparked numerous insurrection scares, with mobs making short work of alleged white abolitionists and supposedly plotting slaves, whose confessions were obtained under torture and were patently fictitious for the most part. Sober-minded southerners understood that the panics were little more than the products of hysteria and blood thirst. During an 1856 scare in Tennessee, which resulted in the extralegal execution of more than fifty slaves, a planter privately mused: "We are trying our best … to produce a Negro insurrection, without the slightest aid from the Negroes themselves."[21]

The violent defense of slavery reflected a peculiar southern culture of honor and vengeance in which the concept of a state monopoly of legitimate force had little meaning[22]. For two centuries slavery had contributed to the weakness of govern-

[20] Ibid. 27; quotations in: *Waldrep*, Lynching in America 55 (Judge Lawless) 79 "voice of God". See *Pieter Spierenburg*, Democracy Came Too Early: A Tentative Explanation for the Problem of American Homicide, in: American Historical Review 111 (2006) 104–114; *Sean Wilentz*, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850 (New York 1984).

[21] Quotations in *Grimsted*, American Mobbing 22 (Hammond) 172 (Tennessee scare). Grimsted's study is the most comprehensive account of mob violence and lynching related to slavery.

[22] See the classic works by *Bertram Wyatt-Brown*, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York 1982); id., Honor and Violence in the Old South (New York 1986);

mental institutions by establishing a system of personalized violence that gave masters almost unlimited power over their human property. Then again, the slaveholders' interest in their property provided some degree of protection for antebellum slaves against mob violence[23]. With the abolition of slavery at the end of the Civil War this barrier collapsed. In fact, mob violence against freedpeople and white Unionists in the South claimed tens of thousands of lives during the Reconstruction era, although no reliable statistics exist. After the surrender of the Confederacy, many white southerners resorted to rioting, night riding, and lynching to fight the dreaded "Negro rule" that vindictive northerners had allegedly foisted upon them and that they believed posed a mortal danger to white civilization. Before the war, one Georgian later recalled nostalgically, whites had looked upon the black slave as "a gentle animal that they would take care of", while after the war the feeling prevailed "that the negro is a sort of instinctive enemy of ours". White southerners tenaciously clung to the belief, deeply ingrained after two centuries of racial slavery, that cruel violence was indispensible to discipline "black brutes" and that all white men had the right and the duty to administer physical violence against blacks with impunity[24].

Still, the violence during Reconstruction did not simply continue traditions established under slavery but was a response to the sweeping changes in the status of blacks. Arguably, the fact that between 1863 and 1870 roughly four million slaves were emancipated and made into U.S. citizens entitled to the equal protection of the laws and equal manhood suffrage amounted to the most dramatic social and political transformation in American history. Historians have rightly dubbed this the "Second American Revolution", albeit one that remained tragically unfinished. Against this backdrop, race riots, lynching, and vigilante violence can be appropriately characterized as counterrevolutionary terrorism which played a key role in undermining northern resolve to protect black citizenship rights in the South[25].

Edward Ayers, Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century South (New York 1984).

[23] *Eugene Genovese*, Roll Jordan Roll. The World Slaves Made (New York 1974) 33. Recent research has uncovered an amazing degree of due process slaves received in southern courts even when accused of raping a white woman, often as a result of the interventions of their masters; see *Diane Summerville*, Rape and Race in the Nineteenth Century South (Chapel Hill 2004) 19–41.

[24] Quotation in *Allen W. Trelease*, White Terror. The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (Baton Rouge 1971) XVI. The standard account of racial violence during Reconstruction is *George W. Rable*, But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (Athens, Ga. 1984).

[25] For an excellent discussion of the Civil War as a revolutionary transformation, *James M. McPherson*, Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution (New York 1991) ch. 1–2, 7. *Eric Foner*, Reconstruction. America's Unfinished Revolution (New York 1988), the classic modern account of the period, emphasizes the momentousness of black emancipation and citizenship as well as the powerful political and economic forces that thwarted black aspirations. *Rable*, But There Was No Peace 187–91.

Political terror against black and white leaders of the Republican Party emerged as a major objective of mobs and vigilante groups and temporarily overshadowed the traditional idea of lynch-law as communal punishment for heinous crimes. The Ku Klux Klan, which was founded in 1866 and became the most notorious of the various white supremacist vigilante groups, for all practical purposes represented the militant branch of the southern Democratic Party in its struggle to "redeem" the South from "Negro" domination. According to one estimate, between 1868 and 1871 alone, the Klan may have killed as many as 20,000 freedpeople. The history of Klan violence during Reconstruction also demonstrates the key significance of coercive government action in suppressing lynching and mob violence. When in 1870 and 1871 the U.S. Congress passed the so-called Enforcement Acts and federal occupation troops cracked down on the Klan, the terror calmed down considerably, at least for a while[26]. Eventually, however, most northerners preferred sectional reconciliation over indefinite "bayonet rule" and agreed to leave the nagging "Negro question" to the white South. As a consequence, the Reconstruction experiment in interracial democracy, half-hearted as it was, was crushed and gradually replaced by a racist and repressive political and social order that lasted until the second half of the twentieth century. In the minds of many southern whites, the successful campaign for redemption reinforced the legitimacy of lynching and mob violence as legitimate communal self-defense.

Historians have often interpreted the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction as the birth of modern America. It is noteworthy that this process triggered unprecedented levels of mob violence and lynching. Even more remarkably, lynching continued for nearly three-quarters of a century after the end of Reconstruction, even though the United States emerged as the epitome of a modern industrial society during this period. According to the most conservative estimates, slightly fewer than 5,000 lynchings occurred in the United States between 1882, when critics started a systematic body count, and the end of the Second World War. Although recent scholarship has rightly paid attention to other regions and to nonblack victims, especially Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, roughly 80 percent of all lynchings happened in the South, and more than 80 percent of all southern victims were African Americans. Judge Lynch died hard, especially in the South with its vicious and obsessive racism. Still, after the turn of the century, lynching declined steadily despite brief rebounds in the aftermath of the First World War and during the Great Depression. Throughout the 1890s, lynching accounted for an average yearly death toll between 100 and 200 victims, a figure that after 1900 dropped into the double-digits. Between 1936 and 1940, a total of thirty incidents were recorded, all of them in the Deep South. By mid-century, lynching as a public ritual had virtually ceased in the United States, although other forms of racial violence persisted[27].

[26] *Trelease*, White Terror 3–27, 383–418 passim; *Philip Dray*, At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America (New York 2002) 49.

[27] For detailed lynching statistics, see *Jessie Carney Smith* and *Carrell Peterson Horton*

Echoing the discourse of contemporary anti-lynching campaigners, many historians have explained the decline of lynching by highlighting the efforts of civil rights activists and, more importantly, the social and economic modernization of American society overall and the South in particular. According to this perspective, industrialization and the migration of blacks to southern and northern cities weakened the semi-feudal plantation economy and the racial caste system of the Deep South. Rural electrification, better roads, the automobile, and the radio ended the isolation of southern communities and paved the way for reformers to be heard. In addition, the growing electoral clout of northern blacks put southern racial violence on the national agenda. The New Deal reforms of the 1930s not only accelerated the process of economic modernization but also demonstrated the new potential of federal power. As a consequence, southern elites became increasingly concerned that continued mob violence would damage the economic prospects of their region and provoke federal intervention. In his 1993 landmark study *Lynching in the New South,* Fitzhugh Brundage sums up the standard account: "During the decade [the 1930s], the combination of the continued efforts of antilynching activists and profound changes in the southern economy delivered the decisive blow to the tradition of mob violence."[28]

However, in recent years several scholars have emphasized that this modernization process did not entail incremental, progressive social change of the sort implied by the conventional model. Instead, the South, especially its small towns but its cities as well, experienced a fierce struggle "along that fault line where modernity and tradition collided", as Amy Wood puts it. Wood also demonstrates that at the turn of the twentieth century lynching took on distinctly modern features, especially its relationship to other types of spectacles, including photography and cinema. Graphic photographic images of lynchings, for example, first became coveted consumer items, although later anti-lynching activists used them to embarrass the white South and discredit its claims to civilization. Other historians have focused on the rise of the modern state and its exclusive claim to suppress crime and punish criminals. In his 2004 book *Rough Justice,* Michael Pfeifer argues that the struggle over lynching in was part of "a larger cultural war over the nature of criminal justice waged between rural and working-class supporters of

(eds.), Historical Statistics of Black America, 2 vols. (New York 1995) vol. I, 488–495; *Carrigan*, *Webb*, The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin; *Clive Webb*, The Lynching of Sicilian Immigrants in the American South, 1886–1910, in: American Nineteenth Century History 3 (2002) 45–76.

28 *Brundage*, Lynching in the New South 245. For a study that explains the rise and fall of lynching as a variable of economic factors, especially the price of cotton, see *Tolnay* and *Beck*, Festival of Violence. I have discussed the problems of the modernization model in more detail in my essay: *Manfred Berg*, Das Ende der Lynchjustiz im amerikanischen Süden, in: HZ 283 (2006) 583–616; for a shorter, English version, see *Manfred Berg*, Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement and the End of Lynching in the South, in: Criminal Justice in the United States and Germany: History, Modernization and Reform, *Manfred Berg* et al. (eds.) (Heidelberg 2006) 29–42. Obviously, the following account builds on the arguments I developed in these earlier publications.

'rough justice' and middle-class due-process advocates". In staking their claim to mete out popular justice, lynch mobs protested against an "abstract, rational, detached, and antiseptic legal process", seen as too cumbersome and lenient. According to Pfeifer this culture war lasted well into the mid-twentieth century, when the due-process reformers finally prevailed[29].

In my own argument on the decline of lynching in the South, I also focus on the role of law enforcement and criminal justice in order to answer the question of what prompted ordinary people who had been raised in a culture of mob violence to change their ways. In particular, I argue that two factors account for the end of lynching, namely improved law enforcement against lynch mobs and the death penalty as the substitute intended to satisfy popular demands for harsh retributive justice. The available data on mob violence for the period from 1915 to 1941 suggest a clear trend toward more efficient and determined action against mobs on the part of southern sheriffs. Around 1920 the numbers of prevented lynchings began to exceed those of completed ones. In 1914, almost three times as many lynchings were completed than were prevented, while in 1936 only one out of ten threatened lynchings was actually carried out. Because most lynchings did not happen spontaneously but were preceded by periods of mounting tensions, sometimes lasting for days, sheriffs had several options to prevent a lynching, depending on the circumstances. If there was enough time, they could remove prisoners to another county or town for safekeeping. If it was too late for removal, they could augment the guards and arm their deputies adequately. In case the local forces were insufficient, the sheriff had to call the governor to send reinforcements. When push came to shove, sheriffs had to threaten the use of force and make good on that threat if necessary[30].

It is difficult to assess why southern sheriffs, who had often tolerated or even supported mob violence, became more willing to prevent lynchings. Their own comments merely emphasized their oaths to uphold the law. It surely played a role that courageous officers were lauded by the national and regional press and received honorable citations and medals from anti-lynching activists or state governors. Some authors have also speculated that sheriffs responded to the pressures from local planters who were afraid that mob violence drove their cheap black labor force to the North. The decreasing size of mobs, itself a sign of the diminishing support for lynching, reduced the risk for law officers in confronting them. One aspect that is easily overlooked was the introduction of automobiles, which enabled the police to remove their prisoners much faster than in the age of horse

[29] *Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle 14 passim. For a gruesome documentation of lynching photography, see *James Allen* et al., Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America (Santa Fe 2000). *Pfeifer*, Rough Justice 2–3 passim.

[30] My data are based on the ASWPL records, especially reels 2, 3, 4, which contain numerous statistics on and accounts of prevented lynchings. For details, see *Berg*, Ende der Lynchjustiz 603–7.

carriages. However, the lynchers also took advantage of modernity's blessings, using their own cars to pursue the sheriffs[31].

The fact that police officers were no longer tolerating a free reign of the mob throughout the 1920s and 1930s must not be mistaken for a fundamental change in race relations. White southerners obviously had not given up their goal of racial control over the black population but had merely renounced the extreme and increasingly embarrassing instrument of lynching. Hence, the so-called substitute thesis holds that the death penalty successively replaced lynching in the early twentieth century. Admittedly, such an analysis creates controversy among historians, especially because until now, researchers have not established a statistically compelling correlation between the decline of lynching and the increase of legal executions in the regions where lynching had prevailed[32]. Then again, the proportion of blacks among all legally executed persons in the United States rose from 48 percent in the 1930s to a staggering 60 percent in the 1940s. The linkage looks even more conspicuous, if we look at executions of convicted rapists, the offense most closely linked to the lynching discourse. Ninety percent of all persons executed in the United States for rape between 1930 and 1970 were African Americans[33].

Moreover, there is an abundance of evidence that the administration of the death penalty in the early twentieth-century South frequently amounted to nothing short of "legal lynchings". In many cases, lynchings were averted because mobs surrendered their victims upon assurances of instant trials. The ensuing trials were dominated by the mob and bereft of even a modicum of fairness. Executions were sometimes carried out immediately upon the guilty verdict. In one Kentucky incident in 1906, it took less than an hour from the moment that the defendant entered the court room until he was cut off from the gallows. Also the South continued to hold public or semi-public executions well into the 1930s, although advocates of a "modern" system of criminal justice demanded that executions be carried out behind prison walls in a detached and scientific manner. Even the introduction of the electric chair did not immediately shut out popular voyeur-

31 *Cash*, The Mind of the South 305; *Stewart Tolnay*, *E.M. Beck*, Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930, in: American Sociological Review 57 (1992) 103–116. *Ames*, The Changing Character of Lynching 5. For stories of car chases, see "Police and Negro Escape Mob", August, 14, 1924, ASWPL Papers, Reel 2; "Lynch Mob Thwarted As Burke Sheriff Carries Negro to Savannah Jail", May 10, 1937; "Woman Sheriff Saves 3 From Lynch Mob", February, 16, 1939, in: ASWPL Papers, Reel 3.

32 For a strong argument that the death penalty was the compromise between the advocates of due process and popular justice, *Pfeifer*, Rough Justice 122–147. For the debates among cliometricians, *Charles David Phillips*, Exploring Relations among Forms of Social Control: The Lynching and Execution of Blacks in North Carolina, 1889–1918, in: Law & Society Review 21 (1987) 361–374; *E.M. Beck* et al., The Gallows, the Mob, and the Vote: Lethal Sanctioning of Blacks in North Carolina and Georgia, 1882–1930, in: Law & Society Review 23 (1989) 317–331; *Tolnay*, *Beck*, Festival of Violence 86–118. Also, *Margaret Vandiver*, Lethal Punishment: Lynchings and Legal Executions in the South (New Brunswick, NJ 2006).

33 See *Smith*, *Horton*, Historical Statistics of Black America, vol. I, 473.

ism. For example, after the electrocution of a black murderer in Mississippi in 1934, the body was placed on exhibition in the lobby of the jail[34].

The end of lynching, according to my research, was achieved by a combination of improved law enforcement and the expansion of the death penalty as a substitute for lynchings. To be sure, this development reflected modernization to the extent that the state asserted its claim to the monopoly of legitimate violence. But for African Americans, the main victims of lynching, this transition was highly ambivalent. Blacks were caught in a double bind: While weak legal institutions exposed them to lynchings, strict law enforcement and a system of criminal justice that aimed for greater efficiency hit them harder than any other social group – an instructive example of the ambivalence of "progress". Arguably, the legacy of lynching lingers on in the present-day practice of capital punishment in America. The southern states, which historically had the highest frequency of lynchings, account for 80 to 90 percent of all legal executions, while African Americans and other minorities, the favored targets of lynch mobs, represent a majority among death row inmates[35].

In conclusion, the history of lynching in America exemplifies a fundamental ambivalence in the relationship between modernity and violence[36]. While seemingly representing a vestige of a barbaric past, lynching must be understood as a phenomenon intertwined with modernity and infused with modern elements, one that developed in tension with the rise of the modern state. It reflected an unwillingness of many Americans to accept the idea that the authority to use force should be an exclusive prerogative of the government, because the people must have the right to defend their liberty against a tyrannical government. Notably, many apologists of lynching considered the American spirit of popular sovereignty and grass-roots democracy as their most compelling argument. To be sure, lynching appears to be a thing of the past, but the distrust of a state monopoly of legitimate violence – even if controlled by the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and the democratic process – remains deeply rooted in American culture. American laws give citizens virtually unrestricted access to firearms and support an extremely broad concept of legitimate self-defense[37]. However, few Americans

[34] *George C. Wright*, Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and "Legal Lynchings" (Baton Rouge 1990) 251–305, 307–331; *Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle, 19–41. For more details, *Berg*, Ende der Lynchjustiz 610–13.

[35] See *Charles J. Ogletree* and *Austin Sarat* (eds.), From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State: Race and the Death Penalty in America (New York 2006); *Franklin E. Zimring*, The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment (New York 2003).

[36] For a brief typology of the relationship between violence and modernity, see *Wilhelm Heitmeyer* and *Hans-Georg Soeffner* (eds.), Gewalt, Entwicklungen, Strukturen, Analyseprobleme (Frankfurt a. M. 2004) 12–13.

[37] On the defense of lynching in the name of democracy, see *Waldrep*, Lynching in America, 195; cf. also *Cutler*, Lynch-Law 269. On the American idea of self-defense, *Richard Maxwell Brown*, No Duty to Retreat: Violence and Values in American History and Society (New York 1991).

are aware of – let alone willing to concede – the uneasy ideological proximity between their cherished rights to self-defense and the squalid history of lynching.

Summary

Um die Wende zum 20. Jahrhundert attackierten schwarze und weiße Bürgerrechtler in den USA die Lynchjustiz als „nationale Schande", die Amerika von allen anderen zivilisierten Ländern unterscheide. Die These, das Lynchen sei das Relikt einer barbarischen Vergangenheit und einer modernen zivilisierten Nation unwürdig, war als Diskursstrategie legitim und erfolgreich, hat aber lange den Blick dafür verstellt, dass die Lynchjustiz als modernes Phänomen verstanden werden muss, nämlich als Reaktion breiter Bevölkerungsschichten auf die sukzessive Durchsetzung des staatlichen Monopols legitimer Gewalt und Bestrafung. Der Aufsatz interpretiert den Aufstieg und Niedergang der Lynchjustiz seit dem späten 18. Jahrhundert als einen Prozess, der die Spannungen und Ambivalenzen der amerikanischen Gesellschaft auf dem Weg in die Moderne widerspiegelt.

Silvan Niedermeier

Torture and "Modern Civilization": The NAACP's Fight against Forced Confessions in the American South (1935–1945)

In April 1935, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) published a report on the case of Henry Shields, Arthur Ellington, and Ed Brown. One year earlier, the three African American farm workers had been convicted and sentenced to death by a Mississippi court for the murder of a white tenant farmer. The article, published in the NAACP magazine *The Crisis*, featured a photograph on the front page. It showed Shields, Ellington, and Brown sitting next to each other on a bench in front of a white wall wearing prison suits while they had their eyes and faces turned towards the camera. Arthur Ellington, in the middle, was held upright by his two fellow inmates (see figure 1)[1].

In the accompanying report the editors provided background information on the scene:

> Note that Ellington, in the center, is being held up by his two companions. That is because he is nearly dead from the torture he received when a confession was forced out of him. He was beaten and hanged a little at a time to make him confess. As a result his neck is damaged and he is injured so severely otherwise that he cannot sit up alone[2].

By visualizing the results of the torture inflicted on Arthur Ellington during his interrogation, the editors apparently intended to highlight the dramatic implications of the case. As the readers were told, Ed Brown and Henry Shields too had been beaten "brutally" during the police interrogations in order to make them confess to the murder despite their claims of innocence. Closing the report, the editors appealed to NAACP members to give financial support to the organization in bringing the case to the U.S. Supreme Court:

> Funds are badly needed by the national office for this and other legal cases pending. Practically all funds for this case must be raised outside of Mississippi. Immediate action is needed if these three farm workers are to be given a chance for live[3].

[1] The author wishes to thank the Crisis Publishing Co., Inc., the publisher of the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for the use of images and material first published in the April 1935 and March 1941 issues of Crisis Magazine.

[2] Escapes Noose; Near Death From Torture (see Cover), in: The Crisis (April 1935) 119.

[3] Ibid.

The case of Brown, Ellington, and Shields was the first in which the NAACP decided to launch a legal attack against the practice of police torture within the southern criminal justice system. In the following decade, the NAACP would become active in dozens of cases dealing with African American defendants who claimed to have been tortured into confessions by southern police officers and convicted based on "forced confessions"[4]. While southern lynchings had received national and even international attention since the late nineteenth century, the widespread use of police torture against African Americans within southern criminal justice institutions remained largely unnoticed by the American public until the mid-1930s, when the NAACP started to make visible the practice and attack it as a form of racial discrimination. This chapter examines the NAACP's campaign against forced confessions that reached its high point from 1935 to 1945.

As I will show, the NAACP employed different rhetorical strategies to emphasize the inhumanity and brutality of southern criminal justice institutions and to call for public support for the NAACP's fight against southern torture practices. In pursuit of its campaign against southern torture, the NAACP insisted that all forms of racial violence – whether carried out by lynch mobs outside the law or police supposedly operating within it – threatened the country's self-perceptions as a modern society. In doing so, the NAACP campaign against forced confession increased national attention to southern racial violence and secured public and financial support for the movement's legal activities.

First, I will sketch the institutional and legal background of the NAACP's involvement in southern forced confession cases. The NAACP's activities in this field were part of a broader legal campaign that was supported by several U.S. Supreme Court decisions during the 1920s and 1930s. In response to these decisions and the growing demand for legal assistance in criminal cases, the NAACP's legal department intensified its efforts on behalf of African American defendants convicted on the basis of tainted or false evidence obtained through police abuse.

Next, I will analyze how the NAACP framed and interpreted cases of southern police torture. Before 1940, the notion of "civilization" was central to the NAACP's campaign against southern police torture. As NAACP activists claimed, southern torture incidents challenged the American self-image as a modern, progressive, and civilized nation. The NAACP thus argued that the legal fight against forced confessions had a reformative effect upon American criminal justice institutions. As I will point out in the concluding part of the paper, these notions were modified during the early 1940s. With the outbreak of the Second World War, the NAACP began to use southern torture cases to point to the contradictions between racial violence in the American South and the fight for democracy abroad[5].

[4] While the NAACP legal department invented the term "forced confession case" to label this type of case, criminal justice literature uses the term "coerced confession case". *Geneva Brown*, Coerced Confessions / Police Interrogations, in: Encyclopedia of American Civil Liberties 1, ed. by *Paul Finkelman* (New York 2006) 315–321 [hereafter *Brown*, Coerced Confessions].

[5] On the NAACP's forced confession campaign see also my dissertation on the history of

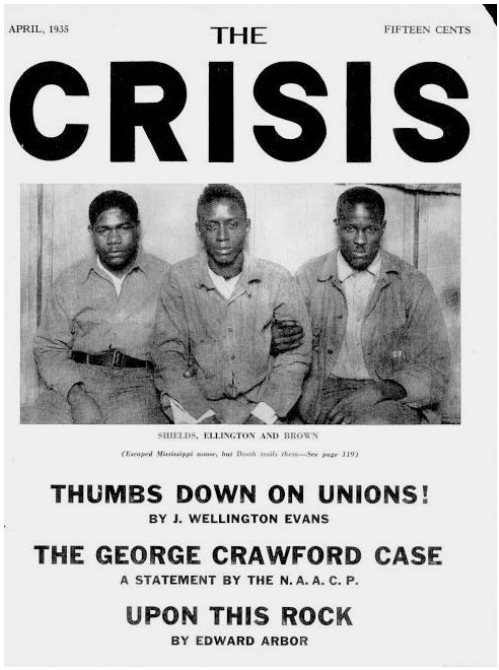


Figure 1: Cover of the NAACP's monthly magazine The Crisis, *April 1935.*

"To secure equal justice in the courts": The NAACP's Legal Fight against "Forced Confessions"

Starting in the mid-1930s, the NAACP's activities against forced confessions brought a certain form of violence into public view that was present throughout the United States during the first half of the 20th century. In 1931, a report of the Wickersham Commission claimed that the so-called "third-degree" – the practice of torture and harsh interrogation tactics to gain confessions – constituted a national problem[6]. According to the report, urban police forces especially resorted to the torture of prisoners. While the use of police torture methods in cities such as New York, Chicago, and Detroit was directed against prisoners from vari-

police torture in the American South: *Silvan Niedermeier*, Forced Confessions: Torture, Race and Civil Rights in the American South, 1930–1955 (Erfurt University 2011), [hereafter *Niedermeier*, Forced Confession].

6 The Report on Lawlessness in Law Enforcement was one of the fourteen reports published by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, known popularly as the Wickersham Commission, established in May 1929 by President Herbert Hoover to conduct a comprehensive study of crime and law enforcement in the United States. See *Zechariah Chafee*, *Walter H. Pollak, Carl S. Stern*, Report on Lawlessness in Law Enforcement (Washington 1931). See also Linards Udris's essay in this volume.

ous marginalized social and ethnic groups, the practice had a different connotation in the southern states. Police torture was there primarily directed against African Americans and took place within a deeply racist criminal justice system that served to uphold racial segregation and white supremacy[7].

The pervasiveness of police torture in the pre-World War II South may have had a complex connection to the decline in lynching. During the 1920s and 1930s, state governments in the region gradually extended their oversight of local criminal justice, in part to clamp down on such extra-judicial violence against African Americans. Lynching did decrease, but pressure for convictions of black defendants remained strong, as did racist assumptions concerning black criminality. This seems to have created an inducement for southern police officers to resort to illegal torture methods in order to force confessions out of African American prisoners and secure their convictions in court. The NAACP rightly perceived police torture as an issue intertwined with lynching. As a consequence, the NAACP's legal department increased its activities in southern forced confession cases in the late 1930s and early 1940s[8].

Founded in 1909 by black and white civil rights activists in the wake of the Springfield, Illinois, race riot of 1908, the NAACP quickly became the most influential civil rights organization in the United States. By 1919, NAACP membership had grown to 90,000. During the period covered by this essay, the NAACP would experience another massive rise in membership, which reached 500,000 by 1946. The organization's popularity stemmed in large measure from its central role in the legal fight against racial segregation, African American disfranchisement, and discrimination in the legal system. The NAACP was also highly visible in lobbying for federal anti-lynching legislation[9]. Although dedicated to a legal strategy from the start, the NAACP reorganized and strengthened this aspect of its work during the 1930s[10]. The vast archival records of the NAACP legal department document hundreds of actions involving issues such as police brutality, jury discrimination, and forced confessions, as well as the denial of fair trials and of the right to counsel[11]. As Patricia Sullivan has argued, by the second half of the 1930s,

[7] On racism and criminal justice in the twentieth-century American South see *Jürgen Martschukat*, "Little Short of Judicial Murder": Todesstrafe und Afro-Amerikaner, 1930–1972, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 30/3 (2004) 490–526.

[8] Concerning the decline of lynching in the American South, see Manfred Berg's chapter in this volume and *Manfred Berg*, Das Ende der Lynchjustiz im amerikanischen Süden, in: Historische Zeitschrift 283 (2006) 583–616; *W. Fitzhugh Brundage*, Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930 (Urbana 1993) 239–249.

[9] *Robert L. Zangrando*, The NAACP Crusade against Lynching, 1909–1950 (Philadelphia 1980).

[10] *Patricia Sullivan*, Prelude to Brown: Education and the Struggle for Racial Justice during the NAACP's Formative Years, 1909–1934, in: From the Grassroots to the Supreme Court: Brown v. Board of Education and American Democracy, ed. by *Peter F. Lau* (Durham 2004) 154–172.

[11] *John H. Bracey Jr.*, *August Meier*, Guide to the Papers of the NAACP, Part 8: Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System, Series B. Legal Department and Central Office Records (Bethesda 1991).

the NAACP's "legal campaign had eclipsed the national movement for anti-lynching legislation as a defining element in the NAACP's program" making the "courtroom … a primary arena in the battle for equal justice"[12].

This strategic development was pushed by civil rights attorney Charles Hamilton Houston, whom the NAACP hired in 1935 to serve as the first full-time salaried special counsel[13]. In 1936, Houston's student and Howard University graduate Thurgood Marshall joined the NAACP legal department as assistant special counsel. Two years later, Marshall succeeded Houston as NAACP special counsel. In 1940, Thurgood Marshall was appointed to head the Legal Defense and Education Fund, the newly established litigation arm of the NAACP. Marshall remained in charge of the NAACP's legal campaign through the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case and then beyond, until his appointment as a federal judge in 1961. After then serving as U.S. solicitor general, Marshall would become the U.S. Supreme Court's first African American justice in 1967[14].

In an article published in the July 1939 issue of *The Crisis*, Marshall set forth the strategy of the reorganized NAACP legal department under his leadership. Entitled "Equal Justice Under Law" – the motto engraved above the main entrance to the United States Supreme Court building in Washington, DC – the article referred to the NAACP's achievements in appealing cases of racial discrimination to the Supreme Court. As Marshall pointed out, in the thirty years since its founding, the NAACP had been successful in twelve of thirteen cases that reached the country's high court. According to the civil rights attorney, the court's judgments in cases pursued by the NAACP served as

> guide posts in a sustained fight for full citizenship rights for Negroes. They have broadened the scope of protection guaranteed by … the Constitution in the fields of the right to register and vote, equal justice before the law, Negroes on juries, segregation and equal educational opportunities[15].

As a result, Marshall argued, the NAACP's legal activities had contributed to securing justice for both black *and* white Americans:

> The campaign to secure equal justice in the courts has brought about several precedents which have been of value to all defendants in criminal cases both Negro and white. … The opinions in these cases define the civil rights of the Negro as a citizen. In addition, they

12 *Patricia Sullivan*, Lift Every Voice: the NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement (New York 2009) 249 [hereafter *Sullivan*, Lift every voice].

13 Houston's appointment was part of a gradual change from a white to black-dominated NAACP staff, as African Americans took over important leadership positions within NAACP departments. *Manfred Berg*, The Ticket to Freedom: die NAACP und das Wahlrecht der Afro-Amerikaner (Frankfurt a. M. 2000) 174 [hereafter *Berg*, The Ticket to Freedom].

14 *Mark V. Tushnet*, Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936–1961 (New York 1994) 6–41, 150–176. Also *Mark V. Tushnet*, Making Constitutional Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1961–1991 (New York 1997).

15 *Thurgood Marshall*, Equal Justice under Law, in: The Crisis (July 1939) 199–201 [hereafter *Marshall*, Equal Justice].

broaden the interpretation of civil rights for all citizens and extend civil liberties for whites as well as Negroes. The activity of lawyers acting for the N.A.A.C.P. has added to the body of civil rights for all Americans[16].

These statements shed light on the contemporary self-definition of NAACP activists. From their standpoint, the so-called "legal approach" constituted the only promising way to achieve the permanent abolition of racial discrimination and segregation in American society. The NAACP was of course aware of the fact that the legal fight in American courts would not result in an immediate end to racial discrimination. At the same time, they defended their legal approach as the only sure way to secure long-lasting changes in the fields of voting rights, education, segregation, and legal discrimination[17].

NAACP activities against "forced confessions" were supported by several U.S. Supreme Court decisions during the 1920s and 1930s that were intended to strengthen the constitutional rights of African American defendants in southern courts. As early as 1923, the NAACP had successfully argued in *Moore v. Dempsey* that the conviction of defendants in a "mob-dominated trial" violated the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The *Moore* decision thereby established a "federal constitutional law of state criminal procedure" that allowed the U.S. Supreme Court to intervene into state criminal cases when they involved a possible violation of due process. Consequently, it allowed NAACP legal activists to appeal southern court cases involving issues of legal discrimination to federal courts[18]. In the two decades following *Moore*, the Supreme Court handed down several more decisions that broadened the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause. Two of those decisions resulted from the *Scottsboro* case. This infamous case, which gained national and international attention during the 1930s, involved nine African American defendants who were convicted and sentenced to death by a court in Scottsboro, Alabama, based on the dubious rape allegations by two white women. After their conviction, both the NAACP and the International Labor Defense (ILD), the legal arm of the American Communist party, became involved and indeed struggled at times over the legal representation of the Scottsboro Boys[19]. In *Powell v. Alabama* (1932), the Supreme Court reversed the conviction of the Scottsboro Boys because their right to counsel had been denied. And then in *Norris v. Alabama* (1935), the court overturned the verdict on account of racial discrimi-

16 Ibid.

17 *Benjamin Kaplan*, The Legal Front: Some Highlights of the Past Year, in: The Crisis (July 1940) 206–207, 210; *Marshall*, Equal Justice. Also *Berg*, The Ticket to Freedom 151–182.

18 *Michael J. Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: the Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality (Oxford, New York 2004) 117–121, esp. 120 [hereafter *Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights].

19 On the Scottsboro case, *Dan T. Carter*, Scottsboro; a Tragedy of the American South (Baton Rouge 1969); *James A. Miller*, Remembering Scottsboro: the Legacy of an Infamous Trial (Princeton, N.J. 2009).

nation in jury selection. In both cases, the court ruled that the convictions violated the due process clause[20].

Bolstered by these decisions, the NAACP legal department intensified its efforts concerning the treatment of African Americans in courts throughout the United States but especially within the southern criminal justice system. In doing so, the NAACP paid special attention to forced confession cases. From 1930 to 1955, the NAACP legal department dealt with more than fifty cases in which southern African Americans claimed that they were convicted on the basis of confessions obtained from them by a variety of coercive methods, including physical torture[21].

Between 1936 and 1945, the Supreme Court accepted eight cases for review that involved the legal issue of forced confession, based upon appeals from southern African American convicts. The court reversed the sentences in all but one of these cases, basing its judgment on the Fourteenth Amendment. In seven of these eight cases, the NAACP legal department was directly involved in the appeal to the high court[22].

Prior to 1940, the NAACP legal department was highly selective in supporting appeals in southern forced confession cases. As a general strategy, the NAACP only took up cases that could establish legal precedents. According to a memo written by Charles Houston in 1937, the NAACP sought to restrict its legal activities to cases that were of "general interest to Negroes, affecting their civic, economic or political life". Also, the NAACP's involvement in forced confession cases was hampered by financial restrictions, as bringing a case to the Supreme Court easily involved costs over one thousand dollars, even during the Depression. In view of the difficult financial situation of the NAACP national office during the late 1930s, the legal department could only support appeals in cases which promised a reversal by the Supreme Court and provided fundraising opportunities[23].

[20] *Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights 117–135, 152–158.

[21] The number of cases is based upon the entries for "Forced Confessions" in the index of the Guide to the Papers of the NAACP. Part 8: Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System, 1910–1955; Series A: Legal Department and Central Office Records, 1910–1939; Series B: Legal Department and Central Office Records, 1940–1955, Library of Congress (LOC), Manuscript Division, Washington DC. The NAACP papers document 51 forced confession cases from Georgia (9 cases), Mississippi (8), Alabama (7), South Carolina (6), Texas (5), Florida (5), Louisiana (4), Tennessee (3) North Carolina (2), Oklahoma (1), Virginia (1).

[22] The cases were: Brown v. Mississippi (1936), Chambers v. Florida (1940), Canty v. Alabama (1940), White v. Texas (1940), Vernon v. Alabama (1941), Lomax v. Texas (1941), Ward v. Texas (1942), Lyons v. Oklahoma (1944). See *John F. Blevins*, Lyons v. Oklahoma, the NAACP, and coerced confessions under the Hughes, Stone, and Vinson Courts, 1936–1949, in: Virginia Law Review 90 (2004) 387–464, here: 418–419. The only case without NAACP participation was Lomax v. Texas (1941).

[23] Letter from Charles H. Houston to Hubert T. Faulk, Esq., New York City, September 29, 1937, in: NAACP Papers, Young, Roscoe and Henderson, 1937–1938, Group I, Box D-99, LOC. See also *Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights 109–110, 155.

Moreover, the legal department was reluctant to support appeals in forced confession cases when it remained unclear whether the defendant was innocent of the crime. As Mark V. Tushnet explains, the NAACP was hesitant to work on behalf of guilty defendants as it feared such cases might impair its public image[24]. In fact, NAACP officials often asked local activists to evaluate the innocence or guilt of defendants. However, NAACP records show that the final decision to interfere in criminal trials depended on various factors, ranging from legal considerations and financial restrictions to the individual circumstances of cases. The records contain many examples of NAACP legal activists carefully deciding which cases to support and which not. After all, the refusal to support appeals in southern capital cases could have dramatic consequences, as the NAACP was oftentimes the only institution that could provide legal support for African Americans sentenced to death.

These considerations were evident in the case of Brown, Ellington, and Shields. As the NAACP stated publicly in April 1935, the legal department only became involved in the case after a justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court had challenged the majority's decision upholding the conviction of the three defendants in *Brown v. Mississippi*. The dissent opened the door for a successful appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court[25]. According to the first report on the case published in *The Crisis* in April 1935, it was "only because of this strong dissent [by the Mississippi justice] that the N.A.A.C.P. took up this case"[26].

"Almost unbelievable in a civilized state": The NAACP and *Brown v. Mississippi* (1936)

In March 1936, the Supreme Court announced its unanimous decision in *Brown v. Mississippi.* It overturned the death sentences of the three African American defendants and ordered a new trial. The justices explicitly criticized the treatment that the three prisoners had received by Mississippi's legal institutions. As the court stated, "It would be difficult to conceive of methods more revolting to the sense of justice than those taken to procure the confessions of these petitioners."[27] The justices made clear that the use of forced confessions in state court procedure

[24] *Tushnet*, Making Civil Rights Law 28–29.

[25] Contrary to the public statements of the NAACP at the time, a former governor of Mississippi, Earl Brewer, took the initiative in appealing the *Brown* convictions to the U.S. Supreme Court. As Richard Cortner has shown, the NAACP only provided financial support once the appeal was underway. The Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) and a group of supportive southern whites also gave financial support to the appeal by Brown, Shields, and Ellington. *Richard C. Cortner*, A "Scottsboro" Case in Mississippi: the Supreme Court and Brown v. Mississippi (Jackson 1986) 64–108.

[26] Escapes Noose; Near Death From Torture, in: The Crisis (April 1935) 119.

[27] Brown. v. State of Mississippi, 297 U.S. 278 (1936), <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=297&invol=278> (accessed April 2, 2012).

constituted a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause[28]. Thus, the decision in *Brown v. Mississippi* established new constitutional interpretation regarding the admissibility of confessions in state court procedures. As a consequence, it provided the basis for future appeals to the Supreme Court to review state actions in criminal cases involving allegations of forced confessions[29]. Most remarkable was the court's choice of words to denounce the torture practices used by the Mississippi police to force confessions from the three defendants. As the justices pointed out:

> The transcript [of this trial] reads more like pages torn from some medieval account than a record made within the confines of a modern civilization which aspires to an enlightened constitutional government[30].

By calling the incidents in Mississippi a break with modern civilization, the U.S. Supreme Court echoed notions that were also taken up by contemporary newspaper accounts. For instance, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* commented on the *Brown v. Mississippi* decision:

> The opinion has to do with a murder trial in a backwoods region in Mississippi. It reveals a story of stark terror, torture, and brutality that eclipses even the horror tales of the middle ages. The rope and the lash are exposed as having taken the place of justice in a part of the land ordinarily believed to [be] inhabited by civilized people[31].

The NAACP also called upon the notion of "civilization" during its public campaign over the *Brown* case. In a report published a month before the Supreme Court decision, the NAACP summed up the circumstances in *Brown* with the following words: "The three farm hands were convicted solely upon a 'confession' which was secured from them by beatings and torture almost unbelievable in a civilized state."[32]

In re-invoking the theme of "civilization" to emphasize the backwardness of southern criminal justice procedures, the NAACP questioned Americans' self-image as a modern, "civilized" nation. In doing so, the NAACP drew upon rhetorical devices that it had been used extensively throughout its national campaign against lynching.

As historian Gail Bederman points out, the concept of civilization had been used in different contexts in American history to legitimize or challenge claims to power. Since the late nineteenth century, civilization constituted an explicitly racialized (and gendered) conception that blended notions of race differences with Darwinian concepts of human evolution. In social evolutionary discourse, the term "civilization" stood for a stage of human development in which the primitive stage of barbarism and wilderness had been overcome. According to the concept's

[28] Ibid.
[29] *Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights, 128–130.
[30] Brown v. State of Mississippi, 297 U.S. 278 (1936), <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/297/278.html> (accessed April 2, 2012).
[31] Trio Is Saved From Legal Lynching, in: Chicago Daily Tribune (March 15, 1940) D5.
[32] U.S. Supreme Court Hears Their Case, in: The Crisis (February 1936) 42.

contemporary proponents, the white Anglo-Saxon race had attained the highest stage of civilization, but many other races still remained in stages of backwardness[33]. By inverting this dominant discourse of civilization, civil rights activists such as Ida B. Wells used the concept to dramatize the implications of lynchings of African Americans in the American South. The power of Wells's anti-lynching writings was due in part to her ability to rework the discourse of civilization by reframing southern lynching as barbaric and uncivilized, calling into question America's self-image as a civilized nation[34]. The NAACP used a similar rhetorical strategy to great effect during its national campaign for federal anti-lynching legislation during the 1920s and 1930s. One important example was the way that anti-lynching activists used lynching photographs – many produced by white spectators and even participants – as visual evidence of southern barbarity and injustice. By defining lynching as a disgrace to American modernity and civilization, the NAACP appealed to white liberals and moderates in both the South and the North to oppose lynching and support the passage of federal anti-lynching legislation[35].

During its legal campaign against southern police torture, the NAACP employed notions and strategies it had developed during its anti-lynching campaign of the 1920s and 1930s. However, while the anti-lynching campaign had focused on the figure of the barbaric white mob, now the figure of the backward and violence-prone southern system of criminal justice stood at the center of the NAACP campaign against "forced confessions".

Unlike lynching cases, forced confession cases allowed NAACP activists to present themselves as untiring advocates of African American convicts who had become innocent victims of southern criminal justice. In doing so, NAACP activists projected themselves as defenders of American principles of justice. This became evident in another NAACP report on the *Brown v. Mississippi* case, published in April 1936 shortly after the successful appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court:

> Mississippi has been told by the U.S. Supreme Court that the rack and torture chamber may not substitute for the witness chair. Brown, Ellington, and Shields have a new lease of life and the N.A.A.C.P. has another victory to its credit before the high court[36].

Following *Brown v. Mississippi*, the NAACP increased its legal activities in forced confession cases. When the NAACP membership rose to an unprecedented height in the early 1940s and the organization's financial situation improved, the fight against forced confessions became one of its main arenas of legal activism. In July 1942, Thurgood Marshall declared in a letter sent to a Florida

33 *Gail Bederman*, Manliness and Civilization: a Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917 (Chicago 1995) 23–31.
34 Ibid. 45–76.
35 *Amy Louise Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890–1940 (Chapel Hill 2009) 179–221.
36 No Torture, in: The Crisis (April 1936) 113. See also: US Supreme Court Reverses Torture Case, in: The Crisis (April 1936) 118–119.

lawyer that the NAACP legal department was "vitally interested in the question of convictions obtained as a result of confessions extorted by force and violence" since it had "carried several of these cases to the United States Supreme Court"[37]. As in the 1936 *Brown* case, most of these appeals grew out of trials of southern black defendants accused of murder or rape of white persons. Such crimes frequently instigated radical racist sentiments within southern white communities and were the most likely to lead to quick trials based on dubious procedure resulting in death penalties against the accused. As the following section shows, the NAACP used these cases to mobilize public support for its campaign and to promote changes within the American criminal justice system.

Fighting Torture through Litigation: The NAACP's involvement in *Chambers v. Florida* and *Canty v. Alabama*

Most important in this regard was the case of the four African Americans from Florida, Isiah (Izell) Chambers, Jack Williamson, Charles Davis, and Walter Woodward. The case began with the murder of a white planter in Pompano, Florida in May 1933. Following the crime, local law enforcement officers carried out an indiscriminate sweep, arresting 30 to 40 African American suspects. Several of them were detained more than a week without charge in a local jail. They were interrogated day and night, without access to counsel, until four of them confessed to the murder. According to the testimony of the four defendants during the subsequent court trials, the prisoners were subjected to prolonged beating by police officers and white civilians until they confessed to the murder even though scant evidence pointed to their guilt[38]. During the ensuing trial, the four defendants were found guilty by the jury of the Circuit Court of Broward County, Florida, and sentenced to death in the electric chair. Due to the untiring efforts of a local African American lawyer, S.D. McGill, the case was appealed three times to the Florida Supreme Court during the following six years. The Florida Supreme Court twice reversed the conviction against the four defendants. However, after a local court convicted the four defendants for the third time, the Florida Supreme Court upheld the verdict against them. Following the decision, the NAACP legal department appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court[39].

After the Supreme Court heard the case in January 1940, Walter White, the long-time executive secretary of the NAACP, pointed to the symbolic value of appeals to the high court in cases like *Chambers*:

[37] Letter from Thurgood Marshall to E. Norman Lancey. New York City, July 2, 1942, in: Flowers v. Florida. Correspondence, 1942–43, NAACP Papers, Group II Box-123, LOC.

[38] Chambers v. State of Florida, 309 U.S. 227 (1940), <http://laws.findlaw.com/us/309/227.html> (accessed April 2, 2012).

[39] Chambers v. Florida, Correspondence 1940–42, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-28, LOC.

We cannot underestimate the tremendous importance of carrying these cases involving the protection of basic citizenship rights, to the U.S. Supreme Court. I wish we would have fifty such cases brought before the high court every year. I believe it would strengthen the arms of justice in all parts of the county[40].

On February 12, 1940, the U.S Supreme Court announced its decision in *Chambers v. Florida*. As in *Brown* four years earlier, the justices unanimously reversed the verdict against the four defendants and ordered a new trial to be held. Referring to its previous decision, the court ruled that the Florida police and courts had violated the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In contrast to the *Brown* decision, however, the justices declared that they were not able to decide whether the defendants had been subjected to physical torture. Instead they argued that the confessions were inadmissible because they had been obtained under "compulsion"[41].

Chambers v. Florida gained symbolic meaning due to the fact that the court announced the decision on the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, evoking Lincoln's legacy as the "great emancipator". Associate Justice Hugo L. Black departed from the usual Supreme Court procedure by reading the full text of the ruling to the audience in the courtroom. In the opinion, Justice Black pointed to the meaning of due process for criminal procedure and the safeguarding effects of the U.S. Constitution:

Due process of law, preserved for all by our Constitution, commands that no such practice as that disclosed by this record shall send any accused to his death. No higher duty, no more solemn responsibility, rests upon this Court, than that of translating into living law and maintaining this constitutional shield deliberately planned and inscribed for the benefit of every human being subject to our Constitution – of whatever race, creed, or persuasion[42].

The national press embraced the Supreme Court's decision. Various comments praised the Court's "historic" verdict and stressed its important role as guardian of civil rights and keeper of the constitution[43]. Black and white newspapers pointed out that none other than the former Ku Klux Klan member Hugo L. Black had announced the decision on behalf of the four African American defendants. As the black weekly newspaper *Chicago Defender* euphorically declared, the decision constituted "another step toward full emancipation for members of the Race in the deep South"[44]. One day after the decision, the NAACP published a press statement in which Arthur Spingarn, the group's president, emphasized that the *Chambers* decision had importance for black *and* white Americans:

40 Walter White is quoted in: Florida's "Scottsboro Case" Goes Before Supreme Court, in: Atlanta Daily World (January 11, 1940) 1.
41 Chambers v. State of Florida, 309 U.S. 227 (1940), (accessed April 2, 2012).
42 Ibid.
43 See: Justice Has No Politics, in: New York Times (February, 13 1940) 21; Shield of Liberty, in: The Washington Post (February, 13 1940) 12; Outlaw "Torture Confessions". Supreme Court Orders New Trial in Florida 'Scottsboro Case', in: The Pittsburgh Courier (February, 17 1940) 1.
44 See: High Court Denounces Fla. Justice, in: The Chicago Defender (February, 17 1940) 1, 2.

No poor man in America, whether white or colored, can lose hope so long as the United States Supreme Court remains a bulwark protecting the constitutional citizenship rights of the under-privileged and defenseless[45].

In an editorial published in March 1940, Roy Wilkins, the editor of the *Crisis*, called the decision a "rebuke to torture". The use of violent interrogation practices, Wilkins emphasized, was not only practiced throughout the United States but was a major feature of the overwhelming legal discrimination against African American defendants in the southern system of criminal justice:

This practice of holding prisoners without warrant, of torturing them and forcing damaging confessions from them is in vogue in many places in our country, but it is part of the routine police procedure in the southern states when Negroes are suspected of crime[46].

As in its comments on the *Brown v. Mississippi* case, the NAACP used the successful appeal to the Supreme Court to highlight the precarious situation of African American defendants within southern legal institutions:

The Florida case and the Mississippi case both illustrate the tremendous odds against Negroes arrested in a prejudice-ridden local community where they are at the mercy of local officials and local public opinion. They are terrorized and stripped of all their rights[47].

In such comments, the NAACP underscored the meaning of its legal fight against forced confessions. The legal campaign was essential to saving African American defendants from lethal punishments resulting from unlawful convictions.

NAACP activists believed that their legal fight was having a reforming effect on criminal justice institutions and police interrogation practices. This became evident in *Canty v. Alabama*, the NAACP's second successful appeal in a forced confession case in 1940. In March 1938, Dave Canty had been convicted and sentenced to death by a court in Montgomery, Alabama, for the murder of Lillian Ward, a white nurse, and for an attack on her sister, Eunice Ward. Despite the fact that the surviving victim was unable to identify Canty as the perpetrator of the crime, he was indicted and brought to trial in June 1938. During his trial, Canty insisted on his innocence and claimed that daylong beatings by police officers and deputy sheriffs had forced his confession. In court, he presented scars on his body to the jury in order to support his torture claims. Against the objections of Canty and his lawyers, the presiding judge ruled the alleged confession to be admissible as evidence. After a two-day trial, Canty was found guilty by the jury and sentenced to death in the electric chair[48].

[45] See *Arthur Spingarn*, NAACP Daily Letter, February 13, 1940, in: Chambers v. Florida, Correspondence 1940–42, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-28, LOC.
[46] Rebuke to Torture, in: The Crisis (March 1940) 81.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Draft of the Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court of the United States, Dave Canty v. State of Alabama, in: Canty v. Alabama, 1940–1942, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-27, LOC.

The NAACP legal department supported Canty's appeal to the Alabama Supreme Court and – when the state court confirmed the conviction – to the U.S. Supreme Court. Basing their case on the successful appeal in *Brown v. Mississippi*, the NAACP legal activists sought to use the Canty case to affirm the right under the federal constitution not to be convicted on the grounds of a confession obtained through torture and force. The NAACP lawyers argued that a favorable ruling would deter the use of police torture in the American South. As Thurgood Marshall emphasized in a letter to a local NAACP activist in Alabama: "This is a very important case which not only involves the rights of Dave Canty, but will be of benefit to Negroes in the South in general."[49]

Only one month after *Chambers*, the Supreme Court reversed Dave Canty's conviction without hearing arguments, referring solely to its decision on *Chambers v. Florida* as legal precedent[50]. In a letter to T.T. Allen, president of the NAACP Montgomery branch, Marshall underscored the importance of these cases. They "reemphasized the precedent that convictions based upon confessions extorted by force and violence amount to a denial of due process of law"[51]. Marshall also stressed that NAACP involvement in the Canty case had a salutary effect in exposing and stigmatizing police torture against both black *and* white Americans. As he concluded, "This decision will deter policemen and law-enforcement officials from beating prisoners in order to secure confessions and for this reason will protect not only Negroes but white citizens as well."[52] The NAACP campaign against "forced confessions", therefore, not only intended to establish legal precedents. The association was convinced that its fight would restrain the use of torture within both southern and northern criminal justice institutions and help to modernize the American legal system. At the same time, the NAACP used forced confession cases to document the ongoing relevance of its legal fight against racial discrimination.

"Tortured with Charred Bones!": The NAACP and the Scandal of Torture in the *W. D. Lyons* Case

During the early 1940s, the NAACP campaign against forced confessions reached its pinnacle in the case of W.D. Lyons. While the case highlights the NAACP's attempt to fight southern torture practices with both textual and visual means, it also demonstrates the organization's changing rhetoric over the course of U.S. participation in World War II.

[49] Letter from Thurgood Marshall to Dr. E.W. Taggart, New York City, June 16, 1938, in: Canty, Dave, 1938–1939, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box L-39, LOC.
[50] High Court Saves Another Negro, in: New York Times (March 12, 1940) 22.
[51] Letter from Thurgood Marshall to T.T. Allen, New York City, November 4, 1940, in: Canty v. Alabama, 1940–1942, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-27, LOC.
[52] Ibid.

The case resulted from a much-publicized murder in Fort Townson, Oklahoma, on New Year's Eve, 1939, when a white couple and their four-year-old son were killed by unknown persons before their house was set on fire. In January 1940, local police officers arrested the twenty-year-old African American W.D. Lyons as a suspect. On March 26, 1940, Roscoe Dunjee, editor of the African American weekly *Black Dispatch* and president of the NAACP's Oklahoma branch, sent a letter to the NAACP national office in which he pointed out that rumors regarding the torture of W.D. Lyons by the investigating police officers were circulating within the local black community[53].

When the trial against Lyons was postponed until January 1941, the NAACP legal department deviated from its usual litigation strategy in forced confession cases by entering the case before the appeal stage. In a letter dated January 13, 1941, Dunjee suggested to Thurgood Marshall that the NAACP national office participate from the start by sending Marshall in person to Oklahoma to defend Lyons in the local court. Dunjee suggested that the NAACP would profit from such a step since Marshall's involvement would bring national attention to the NAACP's legal activities: "I believe it would be doing a fine thing to step in right at this point so that the National Office can take the spot-light and therefore revive association activity all over the U.S."[54] Marshall agreed to travel to Hugo, Oklahoma, to defend Lyons in cooperation with Stanley Belden, a local white lawyer who had been retained by local NAACP activists. As Marshall pointed out in his answer to Dunjee, his decision was due to the specific importance of the case and the high probability of a successful reversal: "We all believe that this is a most important case and a sure winner under the recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions. It is a case which we should be in on with all of our resources."[55]

During the trial of Lyons in the circuit court at Hugo, Marshall sent letters to the NAACP national office that served as a basis for NAACP news releases[56]. In court, Lyons claimed to have been a victim to brutal mistreatment and prolonged beatings by various officers during his interrogation. NAACP press releases focused on Lyons's account of one scene during the interrogation when police officers had placed a pan containing the charred bones of the crime victims on his lap:

> Lyons … testified that on the night he was arrested he was struck with a board, had his eyes blacked and his head rammed against a brick wall several times, while officers took turns

[53] Letter from Roscoe Dunjee to Walter White, Oklahoma City, March 26, 1940, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.
[54] Letter from Roscoe Dunjee to Walter White, Oklahoma City, January 13, 1941, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.
[55] Letter from Thurgood Marshall to Roscoe Dunjee, New York City, January 18, 1941, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.
[56] For example, letter from Thurgood Marshall to Walter White, Oklahoma City, February 2, 1941, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.

beating him. But, he refused to admit anything, he said. Sometime later, he testified, he was taken up to the County Prosecutor's office, where more than ten officers took turns beating him with black jacks. Then they brought in some of the bones of the burned victims, placing them in his lap. They then continued to beat him until 2.30 in the morning, he said, when he finally "confessed".

In fact, during trial, the investigating police officers admitted that they had placed the pan in Lyons's lap. However, they denied that Lyons had been subjected to physical violence during the interrogation. When Lyons's confessions were introduced as evidence by the state's attorney, the local judge ruled out the first confession secured immediately after the incident with the pan. However, despite the objection of Marshall and Belden, the judge declared valid a second confession of Lyons, obtained two days after the incident[57]. On January 30, 1941, after a four-day trial, Lyons was found guilty by the all-white jury and sentenced to life imprisonment. The very fact that the jury members recommended life imprisonment – instead of a death sentence, the usual punishment of African Americans found guilty of murder in southern courts – indicated that the jurors were uncertain about Lyons's guilt[58].

In a letter to NAACP executive secretary Walter White shortly after the trial, Marshall suggested using the case to initiate a nationwide money drive that would allow the NAACP to fill up its exhausted financial resources. As Marshall pointed out, the specific circumstances of the Lyons case provided a promising starting point for this step:

> This case has enough angles to raise a real defence fund over the country if handled properly. … We could use another good defence fund and this case has more appeal than any up to this time. The beating plus the bones of dead people will raise money. … We have been needing a good criminal case and we have it. Let's raise some real money[59].

In March 1941, the NAACP published a full-page announcement of the Lyons case in the *Crisis*. The article entitled "Tortured with Charred Bones" featured a photograph of Lyons in a prison suit. As the shadow and the scenery in the back indicated, Lyons was standing outside in sunlight while the photograph was made. His eyes were fixed on a point to the right of the camera; he seemed to avert his view away from the photographer. Lyons's hands were held together by handcuffs (see figure 2)[60].

The article accompanying the photograph started with the following lines:

> This man, 20 years of age, was convicted on January 31, 1941, of murdering a white man, his wife and 4-year-old child, on the night of December 31, 1939, near Fort Townson, Oklahoma. Lyons is supposed to have "confessed" to the crime. The "confession" was secured by

57 Negro's Statement Ruled Out at Hugo, in: The Daily Oklahoman (February 1, 1941) 1.
58 *Klarman*, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights 171, 229–230.
59 Letter from Thurgood Marshall to Walter White, Oklahoma City, February 2, 1941, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.
60 Tortured with Charred Bones, in: The Crisis (March 1941) 85.

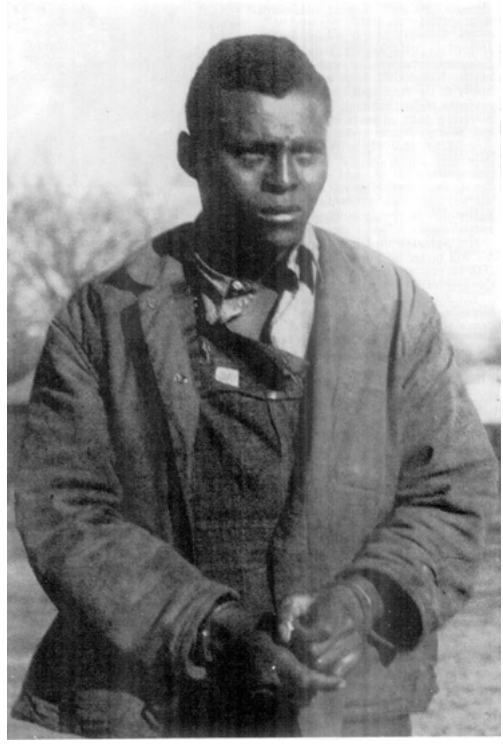


Figure 2: Photograph of W. D. Lyons, accompanying the article entitled "Tortured with Charred Bones" in The Crisis, *March 1941.*

placing the charred bones of the dead people in his lap, *and by rubbing Lyons's arm with the teeth and jaw-bone of the dead woman!*[61]

By pointing to the unusual circumstances of the case, the editors sought to highlight the inhumane treatment of W.D. Lyons by southern police officers. The photograph underscored this intention by showing Lyons *in person*, thus establishing a referential relation between the article's headline "Tortured with Charred Bones" and the actual victim of mistreatment. In the announcement, the *Crisis* editors employed a visual strategy that had been used before during the NAACP's anti-lynching campaign. As Amy Wood has shown, from the early 1910s on, activists fought southern lynching by reframing lynching photographs that had been made by white southerners to record, document, and spread lynching's message of white superiority and black depravity. By reproducing and re-contextualizing these photographs in magazines, leaflets, and public exhibitions, anti-lynching activists changed the meaning of those photographs, using them to serve

[61] Ibid. (italics original).

as "a graphic testimony of the terrible wrongs that white mobs were inflicting on black Americans"[62].

In the Lyons case, the NAACP again adopted this strategy. Lacking their own photograph, the NAACP reproduced a picture made by Oklahoma's law enforcement officials during their investigation. Instead of presenting Lyons as a murder suspect, the NAACP used the picture to depict him as a victim of southern legal injustice. Similar to lynching photographs used during the NAACP anti-lynching campaign, the re-contextualization of Lyons's photograph led to a reinterpretation of the picture's message. At the same time, the picture and its use in the *Crisis* differed in one important aspect from lynching photographs. Unlike lynching photographs, which documented the sweeping powerlessness of African Americans within the southern racial order, the picture of Lyons enabled readers to positively identify with a surviving victim of southern racial violence and discrimination[63].

Pointing to the unusual circumstances of the case, the article also asked readers to contribute to the NAACP's legal campaign. As the editors argued, a donation to the case would not only help Lyons but also strengthen American democracy:

> While we are talking about the beauties of democracy and the necessity of strengthening our American system by giving justice to all, why not make a contribution to this Lyons case a testimony to our faith in democracy and our determination that it shall work? Why not a defense fund for all the black men the N.A.A.C.P. is called upon to defend? Why not $10,000[64]?

As the passage shows, the Lyons case prompted the NAACP to place its fight against racial discrimination within the national debate about the need to defend America's democracy during World War II. While during the late 1930s, the NAACP had used the notion of civilization to attack southern torture, by the early 1940s, it added the call for democracy to its public campaign. This strategy also became clear in another statement by NAACP activists issued in June 1943, shortly after the Oklahoma Supreme Court sustained the verdict against Lyons. NAACP officials stated:

> The methods used in obtaining the confession in the case [of W.D. Lyons] have no parallel in American jurisprudence. Such treatment of an American citizen by officers of the State of Oklahoma strikes at the very foundation of the principles of democracy, now threatened from without as well as from within[65].

Here again, the NAACP linked America's fight for democracy in World War II to the ongoing use of torture within the American judicial system. In this way, the comment reflected the growing willingness of black American citizens to protest against their ongoing discrimination at home while black men and women de-

62 *Wood*, Lynching and Spectacle 179–221, quotation 185.
63 *James Allen* (ed.), Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America (Santa Fe 2000).
64 Tortured with Charred Bones, in: The Crisis (March 1941) 85 (italics in original).
65 Oklahoma Murder Case is Upheld, Appeal to U.S. Supreme Court, in: New York Amsterdam News (June, 26 1943) 5.

fended democracy abroad[66]. By insisting upon Lyons's status as an "American citizen" and denouncing his treatment as an attack on the "principles of democracy", the NAACP questioned the moral stance of the American nation fighting for freedom and democracy abroad while tolerating torture on the home front. As Mary L. Dudziak has shown, civil rights activists pursued this strategy well into the second half of the twentieth century, using cases of racial violence and discrimination within the United States to question America's self-image as a defender of freedom and democracy during the Cold War era[67].

In the case of W.D. Lyons, however, the NAACP's rhetorical strategy proved to be fruitless: On June 5, 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court sustained his sentence of life imprisonment. Much to the surprise of the NAACP legal team, the majority of the Supreme Court justices followed the reasoning of the lower court, arguing that the second confession of W.D. Lyons was made "voluntarily". On October, 9, 1944, the Supreme Court denied the NAACP's plea for a rehearing of the case[68].

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine the actual effects of the NAACP's legal fight against forced confession that started in the mid-1930s. NAACP archival records document dozens of forced confession cases that reached the legal department between the 1930s and the 1950s, despite the Supreme Court's decisions in *Brown* and *Chambers*. Possibly the only immediate consequence of the court's decisions was that southern law enforcement officers started to be more reluctant to admit to police torture practices in open court, which placed the burden of proving torture claims on the shoulders of African Americans defendants and their attorneys. As a consequence, southern African American defendants were still likely to be convicted on forced confessions despite the Supreme Court's rulings and the NAACP's involvement.

Moreover, it is highly doubtful that NAACP legal activism and U.S. Supreme Court decisions had a reforming impact on the everyday use of police brutality against African American prisoners in the South. Even liberal white southerners were reluctant to criticize southern police officers for mistreating African American citizens, as police forces were seen as the most important institution for upholding the southern system of segregation. As a result, southern police officers

66 *Berg*, The Ticket to Freedom 186–196; *Sullivan*, Lift every voice 237–252.

67 *Mary L. Dudziak*, Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (Princeton 2000).

68 U.S. Supreme Court, Lyons v. Oklahoma, 322 U.S. 596 (1944), <http://laws. findlaw.com/us/322/596.html>, last viewed October 5, 2010; Letter from Charles Elmore Cropley, Clerk of Supreme Court of the United States, to Thurgood Marshall, Washington D.C., October 9, 1944, in: Lyons v. Oklahoma, Correspondence, 1940–1941, NAACP Papers, Group II, Box B-39, LOC.

usually did not fear legal retribution for brutalizing African American suspects during criminal investigations. Only when the U.S. Department of Justice started federal civil rights investigations against southern police officers accused of police brutality against African American prisoners did this situation change gradually[69].

On the other hand, one can argue that the NAACP legal campaign against torture was successful since it had long-term legal and moral implications. The NAACP's fight against forced confessions established important legal precedents that rescued southern African Americans from unlawful convictions. These efforts helped to build a legal barrier against illegal police interrogation practices, paving the way to the Supreme Court decision in *Miranda v. Arizona* in 1966[70].

In using southern torture incidents to highlight contradictions within modern Americans' self-perception, NAACP legal activists portrayed themselves as true modernizers as they both combated barbarous police practices and expanded the constitutional rights of black *and* white American citizens. In this way, they aligned themselves with ideals of justice and progress and challenged notions of black inferiority and otherness. The NAACP fight against southern torture gave voice to countless African American victims of police brutality in the American South during the late 1930s and early 1940s and stimulated various forms of protests and resistance inside and outside of southern courtrooms.

At the same time, NAACP activities against forced confessions helped to set up a referential relation between southern racial violence and broader American values. When the NAACP legal department initiated its legal campaign against forced confession, it pointed to the inhumanity of southern torture practices and placed them in a larger framework of America's self-image as a "modern", "civilized", and "democratic" society. By employing these rhetorical strategies, the NAACP fight against forced confessions reinforced the perception that southern racial violence constituted a *national* problem that awaited a solution.

The NAACP campaign was, therefore, another example of how civil rights activists pushed the fight against racial discrimination by pointing to the inconsistencies between American self-perception as a modern society and the continuities of racial violence in the American South and beyond. After World War II, southern African American citizens took up these notions by reinforcing their call for fundamental changes in southern race relations.

[69] On the issue of federal Civil Rights investigations in southern police torture cases see *Niedermeier*, Forced Confession. Also *Michael J. Klarman*, Is the Supreme Court Sometimes Irrelevant? Race and the Southern Criminal Justice System in the 1940s, in: Journal of American History 89/1 (2002) 119–153, here 127–128.

[70] On the impact of Brown v. Mississippi (1936) and Chambers v. Florida (1940) upon the Supreme Court's decision in Miranda v. Arizona (1966), *Brown*, Coerced Confessions.

Summary

Der Beitrag untersucht den Rechtskampf der afroamerikanischen Bürgerrechtsorganisation *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* gegen die Praxis der Polizeifolter an afroamerikanischen Angeklagten im US-amerikanischen Süden zwischen 1935 und 1945. Dabei werden zum einen die institutionellen und rechtlichen Hintergründe der NAACP-Kampagne in den Fokus gerückt und nach ihrer Auswirkung auf das südstaatliche Justizsystem gefragt. Zum anderen untersucht der Aufsatz die diskursive Rahmung der südstaatlichen Polizeifolter in den öffentlichen Stellungnahmen der NAACP. Wie gezeigt wird, stand die Kampagne der NAACP in einem engen Bezug zu Diskursen über Modernität und Fortschrittlichkeit. So griff die NAACP wiederholt auf Begriffe wie Moderne, Zivilisation und Demokratie zurück, um die Inhumanität und Rückständigkeit der Strafjustiz des Südens herauszustellen.

In Anknüpfung an ihre Anti-Lynching-Kampagne argumentierte die NAACP, dass die südstaatliche Praxis der Polizeifolter das Selbstbild der USA als moderne und zivilisierte Nation in Frage stelle. Zugleich präsentierten sich die Rechtsanwälte der NAACP als Modernisierer des US-amerikanischen Justizsystems und forderten damit rassistisch codierte, schwarze Rollenvorstellungen heraus. Einer der maßgeblichen Effekte der NAACP-Kampagne bestand darin, dass es die weithin tolerierte Gewalt der Polizeifolter im Süden der USA öffentlich sichtbar machte. Damit verstärkte sie die Wahrnehmung, dass der Rassismus im US-amerikanischen Süden ein nationales Problem darstelle, das einer nachhaltigen Lösung bedürfe.

5. The Search for a Cultural Core of Modernity

Norbert Finzsch

The Harlem Renaissance, 1919–1935

American Modernism, Multiple Modernities or Postcolonial Diaspora?

The Harlem Renaissance, the New York-based artistic and literary manifestation of the New Negro movement of the 1920s, belongs without any doubt among the most influential cultural movements in the history of the United States[1]. The Harlem Renaissance, however, was not an autochthonous U.S. American phenomenon, since it was infused with influences that were perceived as deriving from African and African Caribbean origins. Trends and people in Harlem, furthermore, radiated considerable energy that helped to create the French-speaking Négritude movement, which criticized French colonialism after World War II. During the 1920s and 1930s, a small group of black students and scholars from France's colonies and territories assembled in Paris, where they were introduced to the writers of the Harlem Renaissance by Paulette Nardal and her sister Jane. Paulette Nardal and the Haitian Dr. Leo Sajou founded *La Revue du Monde Noir* (1931–32), a literary journal published in English and French, which attempted to be a mouthpiece for the growing movement of African and Caribbean intellectuals in Paris. This Harlem connection was also shared by closely parallel developments in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. It is likely that there were mutual influences as well as connections among these movements, which differed in language, but were in many ways united in purpose[2].

Centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, the ideas and artistic currents of the Harlem Renaissance drew upon as well as influenced similar intellectual and literary circles in urban centers throughout the United States, especially in the Northeast and the Midwest. Across the cultural spectrum (literature, drama, music, visual art, dance) and also in the realm of social thought (soci-

[1] The term "New Negro" was popularized by Alain Locke in the 1925 anthology The New Negro. *Alaine LeRoy Locke* (ed.), The New Negro: An Interpretation (New York 1925).

[2] At the same time, "Murderous Humanitarianism" (1932) was signed by prominent Surrealists including the Martiniquans Pierre Yoyotte and Jean-Michel Monnerot, who developed a relationship especially with *Aimé Césaire*, "Murderous Humanitarianism" by the Surrealist Group of France [1932], in: *Nancy Cunard*, *Hugh D. Ford*, Negro: An Anthology (New York 1996) 352.

ology, historiography, philosophy), artists and intellectuals found new ways to explore the historical experiences of African Americans and the contemporary experiences of black life in the urban North. Challenging white supremacy and racism, African American artists and intellectuals rejected imitating the styles of Europeans and white Americans and instead emphasized black dignity and creativity. Asserting their freedom to express themselves on their own terms, they explored their identities as black Americans, celebrating the black culture that had emerged out of slavery, as well as blacks' cultural ties to Africa. The Harlem Renaissance had a profound impact not just on African American culture, but also on all the cultures of the African Diaspora[3].

The Harlem Renaissance reflected social and intellectual transformations in the African American community. Most of the writers and artists associated with 1920s Harlem came from a generation that had lived through the reinvigoration of racism, the emergence of segregation, and other bitter disappointments that followed the collapse of Reconstruction. Sometimes their parents or grandparents had been slaves, but many also had white family members. They had sometimes benefited from their family connections in their efforts to gain a good education. Many artists in Harlem had been part of the Great Migration from the South into the cities of the North and Midwest. Others were people of African descent from very diverse communities in the Caribbean who came to the United States hoping for a better life.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the African American community had established a middle class, especially in the cities. In the nineteenth century, Harlem had been built as an exclusive living quarter for the white upper middle classes, with splendid houses, grand avenues and services such as a polo field and even an opera house. As Italians, Eastern European Jews, and some blacks moved into the neighborhood in the early 1900s, the once fashionable district was abandoned by New York's white middle class. In 1910, when blacks accounted for around 10 percent of Harlem residents, St. Philip's Episcopal Church, one of the oldest and wealthiest black churches, bought the block of homes on 135th Street, with the intention of renting them to parishioners. Such activities attracted more African Americans to the neighborhood during the first Great Migration. The black population increased rapidly after World War I, while white ethnics began moving elsewhere. By 1930, Harlem was around 70 percent black.

Historians disagree as to when the Harlem Renaissance began and ended. It is generally recognized to have spanned from around 1919 until 1935. The pinnacle of this "flowering of Negro literature" is placed between 1924 – the year that Charles S. Johnson, founder of the journal *Opportunity*, hosted a party for black writers in New York's Civic Club that many white publishers attended – and 1929, the year of the stock market crash and onset of the Great Depression[4].

[3] *Dorothea Löbbermann*, Memories of Harlem: Literarische (Re)Konstruktionen eines Mythos der zwanziger Jahre (Frankfurt a. M. 2002).
[4] *Cary D. Wintz*, Black Culture and the Harlem Renaissance (Houston 1988) 248. *Molefi K.*

In this essay, I will try to accomplish three things: First, I shall sketch out the problem of modernity within the Harlem Renaissance. Second, I will test the applicability of definitions of modernities by Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. Third, I will probe how far analysis of the Harlem Renaissance and of modernity more generally can profit from the application of post-colonial theory.

The Harlem Renaissance as a Problem of Modernity

The Harlem Renaissance is a likely candidate for a critical inquiry into the applicability of various conceptualizations of modernity. This movement incorporated aesthetical problems, for example the debate over highbrow versus mass versus folk culture and the impact of Western art on African American art and vice versa. In this sense, the Harlem movement is a problem of modernity, as it is defined in the realm of aesthetic development. At the same time, however, the movement appears to scholars as a problem of modernity in the broader social, cultural, and political senses. How were the aesthetic and the political variations of modernity intertwined within black art and thought during this period? With such matters in mind, Amiri Baraka called the Harlem Renaissance "vicious modernism", and indeed many observers have claimed it to be part of an aesthetical – as well as intellectual – modernism that reaches from the Occident to the Orient[5]. Others scholars, however, distinguish between American modernism on the one hand and the Harlem Renaissance on the other. This distinction can be useful, but it has the tendency to separate two cultural phenomena that had a lot in common: concerns with alienation, primitivism, and experimental forms[6]. Some observers will posit an almost total separation between predominantly white literary modernism and contemporary black cultural movements. One journal explained this reasoning this way: "Traditionally, black writers have not been considered to be modernist. Invariably, too, they were altogether excluded from the American literary canon.

Asante, Ama Mazama, Encyclopedia of Black Studies (Thousand Oaks 2005) 390–391. *Patrick J. Gilpin, Marybeth Gasman,* Charles S. Johnson, Leadership beyond the Veil in the Age of Jim Crow (Albany, N.Y. 2003) x.

[5] *Houston A. Baker Jr.*, Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance, in: American Quarterly 39/1 (1987) 84–97, 89. "Harlem is vicious modernism. Bangclash. Vicious the way its made. Can you stand such Beauty? So violent and transforming". *Amiri Baraka*, The Return of the Native, in: *Arnold Ampersad*, *Hilary Herbold*, Oxford Anthology of African-American Poetry (Oxford, New York 2006) 59.

[6] "On first impression, the categorical distinction between the Harlem Renaissance and American Modernism seems harmless and, for students of American literature, the separation is assumed. Yet when the distinction is more closely examined, questions arise about the 'intimate yet multifarious relationship' … between the Harlem Renaissance and American Modernism in terms of traditional theories and their relation to ethical literary interpretation." *Adrienne Johnson Gosselin*, Beyond the Harlem Renaissance: The Case for Black Modernist Writers, in: Modern Language Studies 26/4 (1996) 37–45, 37. *Gosselin* quotes *George Hutchinson*, Mediating "Race" and "Nation": The Cultural Politics of the Messenger, in: African American Review 28/4 (1994) 531–548, 531.

Most scholars of American literature saw the Harlem Renaissance as simply part of a continuing black literary movement that finally achieved literary recognition only after large numbers of African Americans fled Jim Crow, migrated to New York, and made better lives for themselves in Harlem."[7] On an aesthetic level, I argue, it makes a lot of sense to include 1920s–30s Harlem in the canon of American modernism. The sense of alienation that defines the modern pervades a lot of the texts written by black authors between 1919 and 1935. Among the Harlem Renaissance novels and stories that deal with alienation, I would count Nella Larsen's *Passing* and *Quicksand*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and *Jonah's Gourd Vine*[8], Rudolph Fisher's *The Conjure-Man Dies*, and Angelina Weld Grimké's play *Rachel*[9].

Another topic typical for modernism was primitivism. Fascination with primitivism was a major feature of European and American artistic modernities[10]. In their conceptions of painting, Paul Gauguin and Pablo Picasso were deeply impressed by the art that came to France from the colonial possessions of the European powers, and they integrated ethnographic artifacts and elements of so-called tribal art in their own creations. In literature, likewise, primitivism exerted a towering impact on writing. Authors like D.H. Lawrence or Joseph Conrad were influenced by a conscious aesthetic primitivism even when they were not writing about colonialism or Africa per se[11]. Composers and musicians like Béla Bartók and Igor Stravinsky expressed fascination with musical primitivism in the early decades of the twentieth century[12]. Primitivism was also a major topic of Harlem Renaissance writers and musicians[13]. It could be argued that primitivism as form and content also appealed to a white public that was looking for erotic exoticism. Carl van Vechten in particular was criticized for pandering to the expectations of white readers by deploying the "sexual tourism" in Harlem in his novel *Nigger Heaven*[14].

[7] [*Anonymous*], The New Modernists: African-American Writers of the Harlem Renaissance, in: Journal of Blacks in Higher Education 28 (2000) 27–28, 27.
[8] *Delores S. Williams*, Women's Oppression and Lifeline Politics in Black Women's Religious Narratives, in: Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 1/2 (1985) 59–71.
[9] *Adrienne Johnson Gosselin*, The World Would Do Better to Ask Why is Frimbo Sherlock Holmes? Investigating Liminality in Rudolph Fisher's The Conjure-Man Dies, in: African American Review 32/4 (1998) 607–619.
[10] *Frances S. Connelly*, The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European Art and Aesthetics, 1725–1907 (University Park, Pa. 1995). *Helen Gardner*, *Fred S. Kleiner*, Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History (Boston, Mass. 2009) 920. *James F. Knapp*, Primitivism and the Modern, in: Boundary 2, 15(1/2) (1986/1987) 365–379.
[11] *Michael Bell*, Primitivism (London 1972) 32–55.
[12] *Daniel Albright*, Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources (Chicago 2004) 235–237. *Julie Brown*, Bartók and the Grotesque: Studies in Modernity, the Body and Contradiction in Music (Burlington, Vt. 2007) 167.
[13] *Sidney H. Bremer*, Home in Harlem, New York: Lessons from the Harlem Renaissance Writers, in: PMLA 105/1 (1990) 47–56, 50. *Baker*, Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance.
[14] *Justin D. Edwards*, Exotic Journeys: Exploring the Erotics of U.S. Travel Literature, 1840–1930 (Hanover, N.H. 2001) 142–155, quotations 142, 179.

Among the writers who experimented with form and content, it is safe to mention Jean Toomer, whose novel *Cane* was published in 1923[15]. Toomer was fascinated by southern pre-industrial forms of labor and by the music that was produced as an accompaniment to work. Like other authors of the 1920s, he was attracted by the constant changes in this music effectuated by improvisation and interpretation. This preserved a world that was on the verge of disappearing amid a relentlessly modernist society characterized by increasing homogenization achieved through mass consumption, standardization, and industrial production. Ironically, critics praised *Cane* as a stylistically and formally progressive novel[16], representing in these critics' view the epitome of modernism, whereas Toomer himself conceived it as a swan song, because "the folk-spirit was walking in to die on the modern desert"[17]. Toomer was interested in these musical forms because they created sociability through their call-and-response dynamics, which stood in opposition to modern society[18]. Similar trends can be found in Claude McKay's last novel *Banana Bottom,* published in 1933. The book calls for a return to the roots of African American culture and upholds an antimodern project, despite the fact that McKay was an internationally experienced leftist writer who migrated from Jamaica in order to live in the United States[19]. While taking a clearly antimodernist stance, McKay in his novel provides a careful analysis of a modern globalized economy and of Jamaica's role in it. The rejection of Western values and of Christianity in conjunction with a return to the value system of African-Jamaican peasants constituted, according to McKay, the basis for a successful resistance against the encroachments of global capitalism[20]. David Nicholls has referred to *Banana Bottom* as an example of an alternative modernity[21]. As a caveat, however,

[15] *Jeff Webb*, Literature and Lynching: Identity in Jean Toomer's "Cane", in: ELH 67/1 (2000) 205–228. Webb discusses, among other things, the question, whether Toomer was actually "black".

[16] *Lawrence R. Rodgers*, Canaan Bound: The African-American Great Migration Novel (Urbana 1997) 85.

[17] *Jean Toomer*, The Wayward and the Seeking: A Collection of Writings by Jean Toomer (Washington, D.C. 1980) 123.

[18] *Mark Whalan*, Jean Toomer and the Avant-Garde, in: *George Hutchinson*, The Cambridge Companion to the Harlem Renaissance (New York 2007) 71–81, 73.

[19] "The facts of the novel's production suggest the international scope of McKay's career abroad: he wrote the book in Tangier and published it in New York for a predominantly American audience … In his 1937 autobiography, McKay describes himself as an 'internationalist', explaining (with some levity) that 'an internationalist was a bad nationalist'; he was also a self-described 'peasant become proletarian', a description which gave his 'internationalist' label a distinctly Marxian inflection." *David Nicholls*, The Folk as Alternative Modernity: Claude McKay's Banana Bottom and the Romance of Nature, in: Journal of Modern Literature 23/1 (1999) 79–94, 79. *David Nicholls*, Conjuring the Folk: Forms of Modernity in African America (Ann Arbor, Mich. 2000) 63. *Claude McKay*, A Long Way from Home (New York 1937) 186, 300.

[20] *Claude McKay*, Banana Bottom (New York, London 1933). For a critical analysis, *Heather Hathaway*, Caribbean Waves: Relocating Claude McKay and Paule Marshall (Bloomington, Ind. 1999) 74–83.

[21] *Nicholls*, The Folk as Alternative Modernity 83, 94.

it should be emphasized that in the above examples, artistic modernity, nonmodernity and antimodernity cannot be readily distinguished. It seems plausible to assume that the Harlem Renaissance, like other artistic movements, had the inherent tendency to make use of forms and contents of other movements[22].

Instead of putting the literature of post-World War I Harlem into the box of various modernities, it may be helpful to analyze it as minor literature, or, to describe the matter another way, a literary heterotopia. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argued that "minorities … often construct a minor literature within a major language. Minor literatures emerge as a source of identity within an immediate political and cultural context"[23]. The Harlem Renaissance was a minor literature as defined by Deleuze and Guattari: a minoritarian literary production flourishing within a majoritarian language[24]. This perspective is important because it undermines the notion of modernity as such, and it stresses the deterritorialized, non-local topos of the Harlem Renaissance and similar movements[25].

Despite the reference to locality in its denomination, the Harlem Renaissance can also be seen as a heterotopia in Michel Foucault's sense[26]. The term heterotopia has different meanings, not all of which emerged in the context of the spatial turn in the humanities. As Foucault argued:

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like countersites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and

[22] *Connelly*, The Sleep of Reason 116–117, notes 2, 13; 130, note 57. *Raphael Comprone*, Poetry, Desire, and Fantasy in the Harlem Renaissance (Lanham, Md. 2006) 52. *Samuel A. Floyd Jr.*, Toward a Theory of Diaspora Aesthetics, in: Lenox Avenue: A Journal of Interarts Inquiry (1998) 425–467.

[23] *James Martin Harding*, Adorno and "A Writing of the Ruins": Essays on Modern Aesthetics and Anglo-American Literature and Culture (Albany, N.Y. 1997) 101.

[24] *Guido A. Podesta*, An Ethnographic Reproach to the Theory of the Avant-Garde: Modernity and Modernism in Latin America and the Harlem Renaissance, in: MLN 106/2 (1991) 395–422, 395. "A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language. But the first characteristic of minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization." *Gilles Deleuze*; *Félix Guattari*, Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature (Minneapolis, Minn. 1986) 16.

[25] Without delving too deeply into the discourses of literary criticism, the notion of a minor literature destroys "concepts of identity and identification", rejects "representations of developing autonomy and authenticity", and therefore results in a "profound suspicion of narratives of reconciliation and unification" such as appear in some versions of modernity. *Amie Elizabeth Parry*, Interventions into Modernist Cultures: Poetry from Beyond the Empty Screen (Durham, N.C. 2007) 5. Regarding "minor literature" and Claude McKay see *Michael North*, The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language, and Twentieth-Century Literature (New York 1994) 103–104.

[26] Although Dorothea Löbbermann never explicitly uses the concept of heterotopia, I owe a lot of what I have to say about the Harlem Renaissance to her discussion of "lieux de mémoire". *Löbbermann*, Memories of Harlem 75–90.

speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy[27].

Heterotopia, in Foucault's view, may denote "sites that are constituted as incongruous, or paradoxical, through socially transgressive practices" or "sites that are ambivalent and uncertain because of the multiplicity of social meanings that are attached to them, often where the meaning of a site has changed or is openly contested". It may also mean sites that have "some aura of mystery, danger or transgression" or sites that are "defined by their absolute perfection, surrounded by spaces that are not so clearly defined as such". There are two other possible meanings that could also be applied to the Harlem Renaissance: "Sites that are marginalized within the dominant social spatialization" and incongruous "forms of writing and text that challenge and make impossible discursive statements"[28].

When one considers the Harlem Renaissance from Foucault's perspective, it appears on the same level as other "heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed"[29]. Foucault's concept of the heterotopia is readily adaptable to Harlem's cultural movement, because he insists on the multi-functionality of heterotopias and on their ability to unite contradictions in one place: "The same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another. … The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible."[30]

Foucault also considers the *heterochrony* of heterotopias: "Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time – which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time."[31] This seems an important observation: Alleged antimodernism or premodernism among Harlem's writers and artists can thus be explained by the different timelines coexisting in one space, the temporal rift which threatens to tear a place asunder. A final remark: Not everyone has access to a heterotopia in the same way. As Foucault explains, "Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or

[27] *Michel Foucault*, Of Other Spaces, in: Diacritics16/1 (1986) 22–27, 24.
[28] *Kevin Hetherington*, The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopia and Social Ordering (London, New York 1997) 41. For a discussion of the Foucauldian term see ibid. 41–43.
[29] *Foucault*, Of Other Spaces 25.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid. 26.

else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures."[32]

This certainly appertains to Harlem in the 1920s–30s. White patrons could frequent the bars and speakeasies and occasionally participate in a rent party, but the access of whites was limited to areas which were used for purposes of the consumption of the Harlem Renaissance as a display of the eroticized exotic. African American music drew whites uptown to Harlem clubs and ballrooms. The Cotton Club, Small's Paradise, the Roseland Ballroom, and other hot spots of Harlem became fashionable for slumming. "On any night", James and Lois Horton recount, "one might find millionaires and politicians rubbing shoulders with visiting European royalty and enjoying the music of Duke Ellington or dancing the Black Bottom and the Charleston in the Cotton Club."[33] Ironically, the popularity of black performances with whites could lead to restrictions on African American access, even in Harlem and on Chicago's South Side. Except on selected evenings and in after-hour jam sessions, extravagant clubs such as the Cotton Club on the corner of 142nd Street and Lenox Avenue or Connie's Inn on the corner of 131st Street and 7th Avenue admitted African Americans only as musicians and members of staff[34].

Even the composer of the "St. Louis Blues", W.C. Handy, was not admitted to a celebration of his music in the Cotton Club in 1926. As white comedian Jimmy Durante explained, "The chances of a war are less if there's no mixing"[35]. There were a few exceptions – the black-owned Small's Paradise and the black-managed Savoy Ballroom had an interracial clientele. The Savoy, one of the earliest and largest dance halls, featured two bandstands where large, integrated ensembles played for up to 4,000 patrons, who "danced nightly under the colored spotlights and the watchful eyes of tuxedo-clad bouncers to the music of bands led by such famous musicians as Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Louis Armstrong, Chick Webb, Count Basie and Cab Calloway"[36].

A Critique of Modernity? Multiple Modernities according to Eisenstadt

Leaving the field of aesthetics, we could employ the concepts of "oppositional modernity" or "counter-culture of modernity" in a critique of modernity overall[37]. Paul Gilroy criticized Marxist, economical, or philosophical narratives of

[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *James O. Horton*, *Lois E. Horton*, Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America (New Brunswick, N.J. 2001) 90.
[34] Connie's Inn was founded in 1923 by Connie Immerman, a recent German immigrant and bootlegger, which may explain the establishment's racial policies.
[35] *David Levering Lewis*, When Harlem Was in Vogue (New York 1989) 209.
[36] *Lois E. Horton*, The Harlem Renaissance, in: *James Oliver Horton*, *Lois E. Horton* (eds.), A History of the African American People (New York 1995) 126–127.
[37] "Counterculture of modernity" is the title of the first chapter of Gilroy's book, *The Black*

modernity as depicting a self-contained European process that rested on principles of rationality, equality, universalism and wage labor. Slavery – according to Gilroy – was necessary and fundamental for the emergence of modernity. Racist terror was the heart of modernity[38]. In contrast to some post-modern approaches that repudiate modernity altogether because of its alleged genocidal tendencies, Gilroy does not reject modernity completely, but he does insist that slavery represents the hidden shadow of modernity. The juxtaposition, however, of dichotomies such as freedom and coercion or reason and terror does not lead to a reformulation of modernity. "Racial slavery was integral to western civilisation." Gilroy argues. "The master/mistress/slave relationship [is] foundational to both black critiques and affirmations of modernity … the literary and philosophical modernisms of the Black Atlantic have their origins in a well-developed sense of the complicity of racialised reason and white supremacist terror."[39]

In a way Paul Gilroy and Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt share certain convictions. According to Eisenstadt:

> The notion of "multiple modernities" denotes a certain view of the contemporary world – indeed of the history and characteristics of the modern era – that goes against the views long prevalent in scholarly and general discourse. It goes against the view of the "classical" theories of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950s, and indeed against the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim, and (to a large extent) even of Weber, at least in one reading of his work. They all assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world[40].

Eisenstadt attacks this understanding of modernity with good reasons, since actual developments in Western and non-Western societies have rebutted the homogenizing and hegemonic postulations of the Western program of modernity. He writes, "While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies – in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations – the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly."[41] "Such patterns were distinctively modern", the sociologist continues, "though greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences. All developed distinctly modern dy-

Atlantic. He does not use the term "oppositional modernity" but instead speaks of "oppositional consciousnesses". *Paul Gilroy*, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (Cambridge, Mass. 1993) 1–40, 9. Potter refers to Gilroy in his support of his own formulation of the concept. *Russell A. Potter*, Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism (Albany, N.Y. 1995) 4. The expression, however, is much older and goes back to Harold Bloom. *Orrin Nan Chung Wang*, Fantastic Modernity: Dialectical Readings in Romanticism and Theory (Baltimore, Md. 1996) 147.

38 *Gilroy*, The Black Atlantic X, 9–12, 27, 39.

39 *Gilroy*, The Black Atlantic X.

40 *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities, in: Daedalus 129/1 (2000) 1–29, 1.

41 Ibid. 1–2.

namics and modes of interpretation, for which the original Western project constituted the crucial (and usually ambivalent) reference point."[42]

Eisenstadt contends that the idea of multiple modernities presumes an understanding of the world and an explanation of the history of modernity as a narrative of diverse cultural programs that are continually constituted and reconstituted. Among the cultural programs we find multiple institutional and ideological patterns which are implemented by specific social actors in close connection with activists and by social movements[43].

Numerous scholars have raised objections to Eisenstadt's conception of multiple modernities. Matthias Koenig criticizes Eisenstadt for his tendency to contemplate civilizations as hermetically closed units, neglecting cultural transfer between them and the entangled histories of their development – including dependence, colonial rule and war[44]. This is even more substantial since the old assumption of the "West and the Rest" seems to be preserved in Eisenstadt's definition of the axial civilization[45]. Eisenstadt is deeply indebted to Karl Jaspers for his concept of the axial time. For Jaspers axial time is a time "for which all that precedes seems to be nothing but a preparation, to which everything that follows related in fact and often in bright consciousness. Global history of humanity derives its structure from here."[46] Jaspers explicitly located this axial time between 800 and 200 B.C. and postulates that it occurred in China, India, and the West simultaneously. Jaspers insists on the synchronicity and independence of axial societies in several areas of the world. According to the philosopher, man distances himself from himself and the world, the result of which is the sovereignty of thought, which reflects upon itself. "There occurs a transcendence [*Übergang*] from the mythical into the reflected world, a kind of enlightenment: Man dares to think anything that seems to be possible, grasps every real empiricism, in order to confront the empirical and mental experiences critically."[47] "The step toward the rational is taken in these three locales of earth [i.e. India, China, Europe], by itself only here. A methodical way of philosophy begins for the first time, and with it a

[42] Ibid. 2.
[43] Ibid.
[44] *Matthias Koenig*, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, in: *Dirk Kaesler* (ed.), Aktuelle Theorien der Soziologie: von Shmuel N. Eisenstadt bis zur Postmoderne (München 2005) 41–63, 59.
[45] *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics, in: European Journal of Sociology 232 (1982) 294–314; *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations (Albany, N.Y. 1986). The expression "The West and the Rest" has been in use since the 1970s. *Chinweizu Ibekwe*, The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers, and the African Elite (New York 1975). *Angus Maddison*, The West and the Rest in the World Economy: Growth and the Interaction in the Past Millennium (Washington, D.C. 2004). *Roger Scruton*, The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat (Wilmington, Del. 2003).
[46] *Karl Jaspers*, Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte (Zürich 1949) 324. Quoted in *Gabriel Simon*, Die Achse der Weltgeschichte nach Karl Jaspers (Rom 1965) 18. Translation by Norbert Finzsch.
[47] *Simon*, Die Achse der Weltgeschichte 20. Translation by Norbert Finzsch.

leap occurs."[48] For Jaspers, axial time and axial societies occur independently of the West's alleged leading role. Eisenstadt fully acknowledged Jaspers's leading role in the formulation of axial time, but he modifies Jaspers's position by stretching the period under discussion from 800–200 B.C. to "the first millennium" and by limiting his concept to a tension between the transcendental and the mundane, thereby effectively killing the impact Jaspers might have had on an assessment of non-Western civilizations[49].

Eisenstadt is utterly vague in his definitions of axial societies. He mentions societies such as Japan in his categories of pre-axial and non-axial civilizations, despite the fact that Karl Jaspers had specifically included Buddhism and Confucianism in axial civilizations, and Japanese culture definitely has absorbed both elements in depth[50]. Scholars who adopted the concept of axial civilizations do not hesitate to postulate modernity as a new axial society, thereby making modernity pre-modern[51]. Summing up current research in 2006, one author remarked: "Scholars who belong to what might be called the 'multiple modernities' camp are … interested in transcending a reified East-West binary, though they typically do not call for a wholesale repudiation of the established narrative of Europe's developmental dynamism, nor do they discount the role of institutional and cultural differences in the shaping of the distinctive trajectories that collectively comprise world history."[52] Without further investigation of the strange things that happened to axial time on the way from Jaspers to Eisenstadt, it is fair to state that the

[48] *Simon*, Die Achse der Weltgeschichte 21. Translation by Norbert Finzsch.

[49] "The origins of ideological politics can be found, in different places on our globe, in that rather long-stretching period which the Swiss-German philosopher Karl Jaspers has termed as the Axial Age, i.e., the period of the first millennium B.C., when there emerged and became institutionalized in some of the major civilizations … a conception of a basic tension between the transcendental and the mundane orders." *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics: The Origins and Modes of Ideological Politics. Hobhouse Memorial Lecture, in: The British Journal of Sociology 32/2 (1981) 155–181, 156–157. Compare his summary of Jaspers's chronology with the one by *Lambert*, "La notion 'd'âge axial' stricto sensu a été appliquée a la période qui a vu l'émergence de l'universalisme, de la philosophie, des grandes religions et de la science antique … En sa phase-clé, il s'agit des Ve–VIe siècles av. J.-C., lesquels ont constitué un tournant décisif: second-Isaïe, siècle de Périclès, expansion du zoroastrisme, Upanishads, Jain, Bouddha, Confucius, Lao-Tseu, début de transformation du védisme en hindouisme." *Yves Lambert*, Religion, Modernité, Ultramodernité: Une Analyse en Terme de "Tournant Axial", in: Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions 45/109 (2000) 87–116, 90.

[50] *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Fundamentalism, Sectarianism, and Revolution: The Jacobin Dimension of Modernity (Cambridge, New York 1999) 12. *Tu Weiming*, Toward a Dialogical Civilization (http://www.iop.or.jp/0616/weiming.pdf, accessed April 2nd, 2009) 96–97. *Karl Jaspers*, Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte (Zürich 1949) 47.

[51] *Yves Lambert*, Religion in Modernity as a New Axial Age: Secularization or New Religious Forms? In: Sociology of Religion 60/3 (1999) 303–333. *Carlton H. Tucker*, From the Axial Age to the New Age: Religion as a Dynamic of World History, in: The History Teacher 27/4 (1994) 449–464.

[52] *Joseph M. Bryant*, The West and the Rest Revisited: Debating Capitalist Origins, European Colonialism, and the Advent of Modernity, in: Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers Canadiens De Sociologie 31/4 (2006) 403–444, 411, note 3.

concept of multiple modernities, which – according to Eisenstadt – result from different traditions of negotiation between the transcendental and the mundane, is useless for an analysis of the Harlem Renaissance, because Eisenstadt privileges a narrative that gives the West credit for the invention of modernity[53].

The Harlem Renaissance as Modernity according to Postcolonial Studies

Rather than conceiving of the Harlem Renaissance as a modern moment that is somehow influenced by Western concepts of modernity or antimodernity, one should emphasize the heterotopic quality of the Harlem's cultural movements in the 1920s–30s. Numerous scholars have interpreted the Harlem Renaissance as a form of artistic modernism, albeit one which at times took on a decidedly antimodern tone. Nevertheless, an interpretation of Harlem's writers and artists along the chiliastic lines of antimodern modernity or modern antimodernity falls short of explaining the entangled history of that place in those years. The apparent contradiction can only be resolved if we undertake to understand the Harlem Renaissance as a rhizomatic network of people that originated in different locales, but many of whom came together in one place. It does not take the obvious reference to the spatial turn in historiography to understand the meaning of Harlem as a place in the construction of the Harlem Renaissance. Whereas questions of home and belonging seem to be pervasive elements in the literature that emanated from Harlem, scholars differ, as Justin Edwards notes, "on what Harlem-as-home signifies. Alain Locke, for example, conceives of the 'mecca of the New Negro' as a space that would produce great African American art that would be both 'classical' and 'masculine' …. For Rudolph Fisher, Harlem-as-home means a refuge from the American racism that threatens African American life. And Nella Larsen's depiction of Harlem presents it more as a temporary abode in the never-

53 "As the civilization of modernity developed first in the West, it was from its beginnings beset by internal antinomies and contradictions, giving rise to continual critical discourse and political contestations. The basic antinomies of modernity constituted a radical transformation of those characteristics of the axial civilizations. Centered on questions unknown to that earlier time, they showed an awareness of a great range of transcendental visions and interpretations. In the modern program these were transformed into ideological conflicts between contending evaluations of the major dimensions of human experience (especially reason and emotions and their respective place in human life and society). There were new assertions about the necessity of actively constructing society; control and autonomy, discipline and freedom became burning issues." "Modernity first moved beyond the West into different Asian societies – Japan, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia – to the Middle Eastern countries, coming finally to Africa. By the end of the twentieth century, it encompassed nearly the entire world, the first true wave of globalization." *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities, in: Daedalus 129/1 (2000) 1–29, 7, 14. *Wolfgang Knöbel*, Die Kontingenz der Moderne: Wege in Europa, Asien und Amerika (Frankfurt a. M. 2007) 86.

ending search for identity and belonging."[54] Such a Harlem was both a physical and a mythical space, "a space that is simultaneously there and not there", hence a heterotopia[55].

Postcolonial studies turn the relationship of power and rationality in colonial societies upside down. This approach asks how colonies and post-colonial societies have influenced and permeated the West, which distorted forms western rationality had to assume in order to produce both racism and imperialism, and how, in the formulation of Dipesh Chakrabarty, the belief in development and progress as a result of the Enlightenment has defined certain locales and spaces as "not yet" and others as "now"[56]. Despite Eisenstadt's assertion of the extreme violence connected with the emergence of European modernity and Europe's ensuing expansion, this line of reasoning remains heuristically ineffective because it insists on the systemic closure of various modernities. In Eisenstadt's understanding, the violent and barbaric flipside of European modernity does not reflect the transcultural and hybrid processes of exchange between "The West and the Rest"[57].

Even before systematic research has been undertaken into the relationship between different axial societies, Eisenstadtians already know that there is nothing to be found: "Every world region has in one way or another struggled with modernity. So far, however, these regional debates have scarcely engaged with each other."[58] Interestingly enough, the only association that is evoked under the concept of hybridity is the refutation of an "optimistic account that describes the future as moving in the same direction"[59]. Out of the understandable tendency not to equate modernization with Westernization, scholars who apply the "multiple modernities" paradigm overlook that globalization processes of the last 500 years are as much about the provincializing of Europe as they are about the Westernization of the "rest". If, following Edward Said, "all history is basically a history of

[54] *Justin D. Edwards*, Exotic Journeys: Exploring the Erotics of U.S. Travel Literature, 1840–1930 (Hanover, N.H. 2001) 160.
[55] Ibid.
[56] *Dipesh Chakrabarty*, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (Princeton, N.J. 2000) 8–12.
[57] *Roger Scruton*, The West and the Rest: Globalization and the Terrorist Threat (Wilmington, Del. 2003). "The crystallization of European modernity and its later expansion was by no means peaceful. Contrary to the optimistic visions of modernity as inevitable progress, the crystallizations of modernities were continually interwoven with internal conflict and confrontation, rooted in the contradictions and tensions attendant on the development of the capitalist systems, and, in the political arena, on the growing demands for democratization. All these factors were compounded by international conflicts, exacerbated by the modern state and imperialist systems. War and genocide were scarcely new phenomena in history. But they became radically transformed, intensified, generating specifically modern modes of barbarism." *Eisenstadt*, Multiple Modernities 12.
[58] *Dominic Sachsenmaier*, Multiple Modernities – The Concept and Its Potential, in: *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, *Jens Riedel*, *Dominic Sachsenmaier* (eds.), Reflections on Multiple Modernities: European, Chinese, and Other Interpretations (Leiden, Boston 2002) 42–67, 59.
[59] Ibid. 63.

relations", one would assume that historians go out of their way to establish the history of mutual relations instead of claiming a unique role for the West[60]. Instead, at least in German historiography, historians endeavor to explore "how on-the-ground modifications of universalizing systems of organization shape the strategies of both the powerful and the less powerful"[61].

As an alternative to theories of multiple modernities or "negotiated universals", I propose an interpretation which assumes that forces of modernization under the conditions of colonialism create a network of postcolonial power relations, which have been shaped by expanding markets, mass media, technological innovations, hegemonic ideologies, different local cultures and strategies of resistance. The influence thus exerted did not flow in one direction – from the West to the rest. Rather, influence spread within the network while being adapted to the cultural specificities at hand.

Only if one provincializes the United States, only if one writes American history as the history of a space in which hybrid cultures have inscribed themselves in an imagined national hegemonic culture, can one hope to overcome the hierarchical and leveling concept of modernities. The United States is no crucible, no "glorious mosaic", and certainly no callaloo[62]. U.S. culture more precisely resembles the scarred skin of a slave that has been broken several times by the plantation overseer, only to heal again and again. The scars are still visible, disfiguring to some, but they are a living evidence of the violence and the healing at the same time. This "hegemonic suture", appropriating a concept from Antonio Gramsci, refers to the connection between the totalizing national narrative and postcolonial reality[63]. A postcolonial reading of American history therefore aims at pointing at the sutures and naming the wound that lies underneath it. By an analysis of its genealogy, the hegemonic national narrative can be understood as a retotalizing effect: Something constitutively heterogeneous has to be present in a social system in order for a hegemonic articulation to happen[64].

[60] *Wolf Lepenies*, Entangled Histories and Negotiated Universals: Centers and Peripheries in a Changing World (Frankfurt a. M., New York 2003) 11.
[61] Ibid. 128.
[62] *John R. Baldwin*, Redefining Culture: Perspectives across the Disciplines (Mahwah, N.J. 2006) 79. *Jahan Ramazani*, The Wound of History: Walcott's *Omeros* and the Postcolonial Poetics of Affliction, in: PMLA 112/3 (1997) 405–417, 410. American culture is sometimes compared to a tossed salad or a callaloo. A callaloo is "a popular dish in the Caribbean in which a number of distinct ingredients are boiled down to a homogeneous mush". *Viranjini Munasinghe*, Callaloo or Tossed Salad? East Indians and the Cultural Politics of Identity in Trinidad (Ithaca, N.Y. 2001) 22.
[63] Gramsci proposed this concept in order to demonstrate, how hegemony is possible without widespread violence and domination. "The old landowning aristocracy is joined to the industrialists by a kind of suture which is precisely that which in other countries unites the traditional intellectuals with the new dominant classes." *Quintin Hoare*, *Geoffrey Nowell-Smith* (eds.), Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci (London 1971) 18.
[64] *Ernesto Laclau*, The Politics of Rhetoric, in: *Tom Cohen* (ed.), Material Events: Paul de Man and the Afterlife of Theory (Minneapolis, Minn. 2002) 229–253, 230–231. *Nancy Arm-*

Talking about the Harlem Renaissance presupposes talking about the blatant racism, the culture of lynching in the South between 1877 and 1930, and "redemption" after Reconstruction, which among other things produced a caste system that left for African Americans the precarious existence of sharecroppers under a new system of unfree labor. As a result of this direct and structural violence, hundreds of thousands African Americans left the South and went to the urban centers in the North. Between 1870 and 1960, more than five million African Americans migrated to the cities in the North, 900,000 of whom went north between 1920 and 1930[65]. Of New York's population roughly 40 percent had been born outside the United States in 1880, but the proportion of African Americans was lower than 2 percent. Chicago had almost identical numbers[66]. Before 1900, 90 per cent of the African American population lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line. With the end of Reconstruction and the increasing political oppression of African Americans came individual and collective acts of violence that aimed to put blacks into their place in southern society, i.e. at the bottom of the social ladder. The Great Migration to the North was one result, though numerous rural migrants also sought better opportunities in southern cities. During the first decades of the twentieth century, more than two million blacks were driven from the southern countryside by violence, agricultural mechanization that reduced the value of their labor, and infestations of the cotton-destroying bowl weevil. Those who went north settled especially in Chicago, Philadelphia and New York City, which by 1920 was the home of more than one in every four black northerners. Though blacks were still only a tiny minority of the total northern population in 1920, their continued migration was encouraged by family and friends, as well as by segments of the black press, for example Robert S. Abbott's *Chicago Defender*, whose descriptions, at times overstated, of migrants' prospects for jobs and freedom contributed to the rapid enlargement of northern black communities. Between 1910 and 1920, Chicago's black population increased from just over 41,000 to over 230,000 and New York's from 90,000 to over 325,000[67].

Even if social relations between whites and blacks had been almost harmonious in the cities of the North before 1900, the influx of rural African Americans and their integration into a contested labor market was by no means easy. The Great Migration to the North significantly changed African American life and culture, as former agricultural laborers found employment in factories, warehouses, construction, and other urban, working-class occupations. Blacks filled over 500,000 factory jobs in 1910 and more than double that number by the end of the 1920s. A

strong, *Leonard Tennenhouse*, History, Poststructuralism, and the Question of Narrative, in: Narrative 1/1 (1993) 45–58.

65 *C. Horace Hamilton*, The Negro Leaves the South, in: Demography 1 (1964) 279. Quoted in *William J. Wilson*, The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions (Chicago 1980) 66.

66 *Wilson*, The Declining Significance of Race 63.

67 *Mary E. Pattillo-McCoy*, Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class (Chicago, Ill. 1999) 32.

widening war in Europe and U.S. entry into World War I in 1917 increased the demands on industry and hastened blacks' move into employment in manufacturing. As the need for soldiers drained away northern factory workers, and the war in Europe cut off the supply of European immigrant workers, the need for industrial labor drew additional tens of thousands of African Americans northward. Male African Americans found jobs in steel mills, the meat industry, railroads, and shipyards, while black women worked as domestic workers in white middle-class homes and service workers in hotels.

New York was also the site of heavy immigration by Afro-Caribbeans after 1920. Relations between African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans were at times tense. Wallace Thurman, Claude McKay, and Rudolph Fisher wrote about the problems between these two groups. Especially between 1922 and 1923, the tension was palpable in the conflict over Marcus Garvey, leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA)[68]. The UNIA had secured an international following of over one million people in more than thirty countries by 1920. Marcus Garvey had come to the United States from his native Jamaica and established his organization just before World War I. In 1920, Garvey led a parade of 50,000 African Americans in Harlem and convened a national convention with 25,000 delegates in Madison Square Garden. The UNIA was formed as a model of "Black capitalism": It was a black-owned corporation that operated a chain of businesses, groceries, hotels, restaurants, laundries, small factories, and a shipping company called *The Black Star Line*, and it became a multi-million-dollar corporation. It was both an impressive capitalistic venture and a cultural movement expressing African American pride and employing the rhetoric of social protest. The charismatic Garvey appealed to African Americans with denunciations of racial discrimination and arguments against the degradation brought about by white supremacy. He urged blacks to greater accomplishments and bigger dreams, and encouraged them to raise themselves to their rightful status as an incomparable people with a common past and homeland in Africa. He spoke with a power and resolve that few could ignore: "If Europe is for the Europeans, then Africa shall be for the black people of the world, we say it; we mean it … up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will."[69]

The success of Garvey's message was part of a long tradition among African Americans, a tradition carried on by generations of black people whose frustration and despair convinced them that they had no future in America. Like those in the early nineteenth century who signed on with Paul Cuffe for the voyage to Sierra Leone, those in the 1850s who migrated to the newly independent Liberia under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, or the followers of Bishop Henry McNeil Turner around the turn of the twentieth century, many

[68] *Paul Finkelman*, *Cary D. Wintz* (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance (New York 2004) 2 vol., vol. 1, p. 36.
[69] *Edmund David Cronon*, Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Madison 1969) 65, 70.

Garveyites looked to Africa as an ancestral homeland where they dreamed of finding the freedom that America would not grant to them[70].

In addition to the Great Migration and the impact of Afro-Caribbeans in New York, African American participation in World War I also helped give rise to the Harlem Renaissance. Of the black men in military service in the war, more than 200,000 fought in France and elsewhere in Europe. Four black regiments received the *Croix de Guerre* for heroism. Despite blacks' demonstrated military proficiency and bravery, white American soldiers constantly insulted and harassed black soldiers abroad, establishing an American Jim Crow system in France in so far as they could. As one black soldier put it, "There was extreme concern lest the Negro soldiers be on too friendly terms with the French people."[71] White Americans were especially incensed when French people did not seem to share their racial prejudices. Some white commanders prohibited black soldiers from walking or talking with French women, and the white military police enforced the order. In a special directive from General John Pershing's office, "Secret Information Concerning the Black American Troops", French military leaders were warned against allowing their soldiers to treat black troops as equals. They "must not eat with them, must not shake hands or seek to talk or meet with them outside the requirements of military service", the document requested[72]. The French were also cautioned against "commend[ing] too highly the [black] American troops, especially in the presence of [white] Americans" and were advised against "spoiling the Negroes"[73].

The war lasted fewer than eighteen months after the United States entered, but experience abroad changed the lives of thousands of black soldiers, despite the restrictions the army tried to place upon them. For many, their time in Europe and their association with Europeans was their first taste of racial equality. Having risked their lives for democracy abroad some returned willing to do the same at home. In an editorial for *The Crisis,* W. E. B. Du Bois called America a nation that lynched, disfranchised, stole, and encouraged ignorance among blacks and announced, "We return from fighting … fighting"[74]. There was a "New Negro" returning to America, activists insisted, a younger, more militant, more northern, more urban African American coming of age. Fearful of the precipitous rise in the number of African Americans in northern cities and alarmed by the determined

[70] *Norbert Finzsch*, Die Kolonisierungsbewegung von *African Americans* in Liberia bis zum amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg, 1816–1866, in: *Laurence Marfaing*, *Brigitte Reinwald* (eds.), Afrikanische Beziehungen, Netzwerke und Räume (Münster, Hamburg, Berlin 2001) 39–59.
[71] *William Loren Katz*, Eyewitness: A Living Documentary of the African American Contribution to American History (New York 1995) 366.
[72] *Timothy C. Dowling*, Personal Perspectives (Santa Barbara, Cal. 2006) 12.
[73] *James Oliver Horton*, *Lois E. Horton*, Hard Road to Freedom: The Story of African America (New Brunswick, N.J. 2001) 76.
[74] The Crisis 18/1 (1919) 13–14. Quoted in *Manning Marable*, *Leith Mullings*, Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal. An African American Anthology (Lanham 2000) 244–245.

attitude of blacks returning from the war, many white Americans resorted, once again, to racial violence during a wave of race riots in 1919[75].

A fourth factor had a deep impact on the Harlem Renaissance: Outside of the United States, pan-Africanism constituted a major intellectual force between the wars. Pan-Africanism developed over a long period as an amalgamation of various cultural influences[76]. Beginning in Liberia and Sierra Leone, both quasi-colonies settled by ex-slaves in the nineteenth century, Pan-Africanists rapidly integrated other influences from the United States and the Caribbean. The first Pan-African congress had taken place in London in 1900, organized by the Trinidadian Henry Sylvester Williams[77]. Another source of inspiration for early Pan-Africanism was Edward Wilmot Blyden, a black minister and politician, originally from the Virgin Islands, who was active in both Liberia and Sierra Leone[78]. Pan-African congresses met four times between 1919 and 1927, each time convening in the metropole of one of the colonial powers (Paris, London, Lisbon, and New York). Although the 1919 congress met in Paris, it was obvious that the driving force in its organization was Marcus Garvey's major opponent, Du Bois[79]. The editor and scholar acted as president of the 1921 congress, which had sessions in London as well as Brussels and Paris and authored a "Declaration to the World", which insisted on the absolute equality of the races. The document condemned the colonial policies of England, France, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal, as well as American racism. The declaration set forth eight demands on behalf of Africans and of people of African descent, among which were education, religious, political and cultural freedom and common ownership of the land[80].

A fifth and very important contributing factor for the emergence and durability of the Harlem Renaissance was the white public in cities like New York and Chicago, always eager to go to Harlem or the South Side to enjoy music and dance in black clubs, to buy books and records by black musicians and, for a few well-to-do patrons, to support black artists and writers through financial assistance. Many black authors like Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston had a network of white supporters[81]. Without Ernestine Rose, the white librarian of the New York

[75] *Nell I. Painter*, Creating Black Americans: African-American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present (New York 2006) 183.
[76] *J. D. Fage, Roland A. Oliver*, The Cambridge History of Africa (Cambridge, New York 1975) 8 vols., vol. 6, p. 222–223.
[77] *James R. Hooker*, Henry Sylvester Williams: Imperial Pan-Africanist (London 1975).
[78] *Hollis R. Lynch*, Edward W. Blyden: Pioneer West African Nationalist, in: The Journal of African History 6/3 (1965) 373–388.
[79] *H. F. Worley, Clarence G. Contee*, The Worley Report on the Pan-African Congress of 1919, in: The Journal of Negro History 55/2 (1970) 140–143. *Clarence G. Contee*, Du Bois, the NAACP, and the Pan-African Congress of 1919, in: The Journal of Negro History 57/1 (1972) 13–28.
[80] *Juguo Zhang*, W. E. B. Du Bois: The Quest for the Abolition of the Color Line (New York 2001) 99–100.
[81] *Cary D. Wintz*, The Harlem Renaissance, 1920–1940 (New York 1996) 7 vols., vol. 6: Analysis and Assessment, 1940–1979, p. 390–391. *Cary D. Wintz*, Black Culture and the Harlem Renaissance (Houston, Tex. 1988) 154, 177–179.

Public Library branch on 135th Street, the Harlem Renaissance might not have thrived so well[82]. Wondering why the Harlem Renaissance did not endure beyond the mid-1930s, Du Bois suggested, as Malcolm Cole explains, "The audience for the art and its producers were both different from and socially distant from each other. African American artists thus depended on white patrons rather than on 'a real Negro constituency'." Du Bois summed up the predicament of the Harlem Renaissance: "White patronage enabled African Americans to produce their work, but it guaranteed that they could not produce that work authentically"[83]. The Great Depression and World War II deflected interest from the Harlem movement and contributed to its demise. But it left traces even as far as the Weimar Republic and Austria[84].

Conclusion

Taken together, the experience of the Great Migration, the presence and influence of Afro-Caribbeans in Harlem, the participation of black soldiers in World War I, the pan-African movement and the patronage of a white public are among the factors that account for the multi-faceted image of the Harlem Renaissance. This movement defies classification as modern, anti-modern, or multiply modern. The many contributing influences on the cultural flowering in Harlem account for its intersectionality, its character as a cultural fold with temporal and spatial singularity. The Great Migration brought a sense of unity, based on the common experience of migrating from the Jim Crow South to escape racism and constrained opportunities. Afro-Caribbeans introduced the notion of self-reliance and difference. The experience of World War I, the quest for recognition for military service, and the post-war race riots amplified the necessity to overcome new forms of exclusion and racism encountered in the North. Pan-Africanism strengthened notions of a common, even if fetishized homeland. White patrons helped to underwrite Harlem's cultural explorations. Even if the Harlem Renaissance ended more or less abruptly in 1935, its influences were felt around the world: Négritude and the anti-colonial struggles of the 1940s and 1950s referred to Harlem as a heterotopic site of the black freedom struggle[85].

[82] *Sarah A. Anderson*, "The Place to Go": The 135th Street Branch Library and the Harlem Renaissance, in: The Library Quarterly 73/4 (2003) 383–421.

[83] *Tiffany Ruby Patterson*, Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life (Philadelphia 2005) 159–160. I would replace the word "authenticity" by "independence". Almost no artworks emerge as expressions of organic folk cultures in total separation from outside influences.

[84] *Malcolm S. Cole*, "Afrika singt": Austro-German Echoes of the Harlem Renaissance, in: Journal of the American Musicological Society 30/1 (1977) 72–95.

[85] "The Harlem Renaissance was known to black students in Paris, in part through the literary and artistic salon of the four Nardal sisters, Martinicans, and the Revue du Monde Noir (1931–1932), which Paulette Nardal organized in collaboration with a Haitian, Dr. Sajous."

Summary

Die Harlem Renaissance, eine kulturelle Bewegung der Afroamerikanerinnen und Afroamerikaner zwischen 1919 und 1935, die vor allem in den Großstädten des Nordostens und des Mittleren Westens florierte, wurde zu Unrecht lange als ein US-amerikanisches Phänomen wahrgenommen. Weite Teile der Strömung hatten ihren Ursprung in der Karibik, und der Einfluss der Harlem Renaissance reichte bis nach Europa, wo die Negritude-Bewegung Frankreichs die Diskussion um den französischen Kolonialismus beflügelte. Die Harlem Renaissance ist in der Forschung immer wieder als Beleg dafür gesehen worden, dass auch die kulturelle Produktion von African Americans sich den nivellierenden Kräften der Moderne nicht entziehen könne. Der Beitrag setzt sich mit diesem Zugang kritisch auseinander, indem er den Begriff der kulturellen Moderne auf westliche hegemoniale Entwicklungskonzepte zurückführt und damit post-kolonial hinterfragt. Auch die Versuche Shmuel Noah Eisenstadts, den Begriff der Moderne zu retten, indem man ihr unterschiedliche historische Entwicklungspfade zuweist, werden explizit zurückgewiesen. Stattdessen wird für eine stärkere Berücksichtigung post-kolonialer und poststruktureller Theorien zur Beurteilung von transnationalen und interkulturellen Bewegungen wie der Harlem Renaissance plädiert. Konkret schlägt der Autor hier das Konzept der „minor literature" in Anlehnung an Gilles Deleuze und Felix Guattari und der Heterotopie der Abweichung nach Michel Foucault vor.

A. James Arnold, Modernism and Negritude: The Poetry and Poetics of Aimé Césaire (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) 11.

Michael Hochgeschwender

The Scopes Trial in the Context of Competing Modernity Discourses

On July 21, 1925, one of the most famous criminal trials in American legal history came to an end. In contrast to the celebrated "trial of the century" one year earlier against Nathan F. Leopold Jr. and Richard A. Loeb, this time the case concerned not the perfect murder but the rather simple question, at least at first sight, whether or not a biology teacher in the state of Tennessee was entitled to present Darwin's theory of evolution to his students. Nevertheless, for many contemporaries these two trials, the Leopold and Loeb trial in Chicago and the "Monkey Trial" of John T. Scopes in Dayton, Tennessee, were connected to each other. This was not only because lawyer Clarence Darrow was a central actor in both courtrooms, but also because both trials enjoyed considerable echoes in the media[1]. Both cases were later adapted into hit films: Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* from 1948 and *Inherit the Wind*, starring Spencer Tracy, from 1955. In Dayton, more than 120 journalists were present, expecting the biggest trial since Jesus Christ's crucifixion, as one observer explained. Altogether, nearly 5,000 people over seven days filled the courtroom of a place with just 1,800 inhabitants[2].

Above all, these trials sent a message to conservative Americans who still identified with bourgeois, Victorian values inherited from the nineteenth century[3]. Obviously this world, which they already looked upon as the "good old times", was in decline during the stormy decade after the end of World War I[4]. Immorality and lawlessness, bound up with atheism and relativism, seemed to be out of control[5].

[1] *Donald McRae*, The Great Trials of Clarence Darrow: The Landmark Cases of Leopold and Loeb, John T. Scopes, and Ossian Sweet (New York 2010).

[2] Unless otherwise stated, this essay relies on three recent studies of the Scopes Trial: *Paul K. Conkin*, When All the Gods Trembled: Darwinism, Scopes, and American Intellectuals (Lanham 1998); *Edward J. Larson*, Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion (New York 1997); *Jeffrey P. Moran*, The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents (Boston 2002).

[3] Among many introductions to popular Victorian values: *Louise L. Stephenson*, The Victorian Homefront: American Thought and Culture, 1860–1880 (Ithaca 2001); *Thomas J. Schlereth*, Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876–1915 (New York 1992); *Joe Creech*, Righteous Indignation: Religion and the Populist Revolt (Urbana 2006).

[4] General studies of the period include: *Jackson Lears*, Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920 (New York 2009); *John Whiteclay Chambers II*, The Tyranny

On the other side, liberal Americans used the media publicity generated by these two episodes to articulate their positions regarding the death penalty and especially regarding the need to free science from religious and other dictates[6]. Over the long run, the Scopes Trial was more consequential than Chicago's version of the trial of the century; its influence continued into the twenty-first century. The court found the accused teacher, Scopes, guilty and sentenced him to the minimum fine of $100 under the Butler Act of March 1925. But in the country's metropolises, the trial was celebrated as a symbolic victory for liberal, progressive, intellectual, and tolerant urbanity over the bigoted and backward fanaticism of superstitious country folk and their obscurantist way of life, which was in any case doomed to defeat. All participants in the trial contributed their share to this assessment. As it seemed to many observers, Clarence Darrow, one of Scopes's defense attorneys, had defeated the most prominent member of the prosecution team, three-time Democratic presidential candidate and former U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan[7], in something like a legal Gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Under questioning from Darrow, Bryan, a well-known champion of the fundamentalist movement, had appeared to prove his ignorance both of science and the Bible. Darrow had seemingly made Bryan confess that God had not created the world in the course of six days – at least this was the impression of many observers. Fittingly, Bryan, the apparent archetype of fundamentalist narrow-mindedness, died five days after the trial, dramatizing the defeat of fundamentalism before the eyes of the world.

However, it was not Darrow, aging and highly controversial even within the ranks of the country's secular progressives, who set the tone of liberal remembrance of the Scopes Trial, but H. L. Mencken, columnist for the *Baltimore Sun*, spiritual leader of the journalists present at the trial, and doyen of a skeptical-ironic and elitist version of American liberalism[8]. More than anybody else,

of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1890–1920, (New Brunswick ²2000); *Ellis W. Hawley*, The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions (New York 1992); *David J. Goldberg*, Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s (Baltimore 1999). Social histories of the era include: *Harvey Green*, The Uncertainty of Everyday Life, 1915–1945 (repr. Fayetteville 2000); *David E. Kyvig*, Daily Life in the United States, 1920–1940: How Americans Lived through the "Roaring Twenties" and the Great Depression (repr. Chicago 2004).

5 *T. J. Jackson Lears*, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920 (repr. Chicago 1994).

6 Contemporary observers such as *Walter Lippman*, American Inquisitors: A Commentary on Dayton and Chicago (New York 1928), and in a more sweeping way, *H. L. Mencken*, Treatise on the Gods (New York 1930), portrayed the issue as a clash between modernity and fundamentalist religiosity. Older histories of the Scopes Trial, such as *Ray Ginger*, Six Days or Forever?: Tennessee v. John Scopes (Boston 1958), followed that original framework.

7 *Michael Kazin*, A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan (New York 2006); *Paolo E. Coletta*, William Jennings Bryan, vol. 3: Political Puritan, 1915–1925 (Lincoln 1969); *David D. Anderson*, William Jennings Bryan (Boston 1981).

8 On Mencken's place within post-World War I American thought, *Fred Hobson*, Mencken: A Life (Baltimore 1994).

Mencken portrayed the event as a struggle between urban modernity and rural hillbillies, a drama in which religion in general played the role of the villain. Repeatedly in his letters and reports, he mocked the sweating, stinking, uneducated farmers in the overcrowded courtroom. After having attended a service at a black Pentecostal congregation, his colleagues also expressed their dismay over the emotionality of the believers[9]. Mencken remarked to a friend that he had come to Dayton for a laugh but in the end left full of horror[10]. Baptists and Methodists, in his disparaging judgement, were representatives of the country's "vulgar democracy", which was exactly what Bryan defended so fiercely[11]. But not only Mencken adjudged Dayton as backward and its Christian inhabitants as mentally challenged. Even Mary Bryan, wife of the counsel to the prosecution, in her letters describing the trial, did not refrain from expressing numerous complaints about the inhabitants of Dayton, whom she also found backward in many ways[12].

Initially local businesspeople had believed that this trial – which in reality they had staged as a test case with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union, then a new organization – would support tourism in their town, but they were bitterly disappointed. Dayton became a symbolic place and not a real one, a synonym for the dangers fundamentalism posed for modernity. In the ensuing decades, this view was perpetuated and consolidated in popular culture and scholarship. Mencken's point of view guided the original play and movie versions of *Inherit the Wind*, along with its various revivals and remakes for the rest of the century. Within the so-called consensus history in the 1950s and 1960s, Richard Hofstadter above all took up and further developed Mencken's critical paradigm[13]. And then, the social historians of the following decades, who for a long time turned a blind eye to religion, saw no reason to abandon the long established interpretation of the Scopes Trial as embodying a religiously based conflict between city and country.

Only over the last two decades has the shift away from classic models of secularization and modernity allowed for a re-examination of what might, maliciously reduced to one person, be labeled the "Mencken paradigm". In the following essay, I will first detail a new interpretation of the Scopes Trial and then will situate this view within U.S. historiography since the 1980s. The trial of John Scopes provides insight into the complexity of any question concerning the meaning of the term "modernity". This term needs to be understood through reflective self-examination. It needs as well to be interpreted on two levels simultaneously: at the factual level of history, where it concerns the self-identification of several groups of actors, and at the level of the history of scientific interpretation, of epistemes in

9 *Conkin*, Gods 86.
10 *Kazin*, Godly Hero 298.
11 *Conkin*, Gods 102.
12 *Kazin*, Godly Hero 291–292.
13 *Richard Hofstadter*, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York 1963) 116–119. For an earlier, but similar perspective: *Merle Curti*, The Growth of American Thought (New York 1943) 704–706.

the sense of Michel Foucault[14]. Metaphorically speaking: in recent decades, an academic and societal frame of reference or the resonant space has opened for a revision of the historical image of religion's place in modernity.

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Notwithstanding the weight of prior historiography, a revised view of the Scopes Trial had become urgent, because much about the event did not really fit within the traditional scheme of interpretation. Dayton was no remote country town. It was a mining town closely connected to New York's industrial and capital interests, although mining in the region was already on the decline. The local audience did not show much inclination toward Bryan nor Darrow. They displayed more interest in the moderate ACLU counsel Dudley Malone, a Catholic whose specialties included divorce law and a Democratic politician who had served as Undersecretary of State under Bryan. The public at the trial responded positively to Malone's impassionate defense of scientific freedom, which he argued had an underlying compatibility with religion rightly understood. Minute-long ovations accompanied Malone's conciliatory plea. Also, those present, even Darrow's colleagues, had certainly not perceived the confrontation of Darrow and Bryan as a victory by Darrow but rather as a miserable draw between two aging stars moving at the scientific level of 1750. Furthermore, Bryan was by no means the dimwitted fool he was said to be. Rather, as asserted by his explicitly empathetic biographer, Michael Kazin, he was a populist Democrat and Christian liberal who struggled continuously for the rights of the common man against commercial and other elitist special interests. Nevertheless, Kazin felt it necessary to remark that it would have been better if after the seventh day of the trial Bryan – just like God after the act of creation – had taken a rest[15].

Finally, scholarly histories of religion and religious culture have drawn distinctions between evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and the Pentecostal Holiness movement much more precisely than Mencken did. The journalist completely confused these movements with one another, as did Hofstadter in his wake. All of a sudden, historians found that fundamentalism had indeed not been a Southern-rural, but a Northern-urban phenomenon. In Dayton, as Paul Conkin explained, there was not one fundamentalist to be found[16] – and I hope to be able to explain why that was the case. Even state representative John W. Butler, who was responsible for the notorious Butler Act, was in religious terms not so much a fundamentalist or an evangelical as he was a strict, orthodox Calvinist Primitive Baptist. He, along with his sometimes-hesitant colleagues from the Tennessee legislature, showed less interest in theological questions than in preserving traditional Victorian values which they believed to be threatened by Darwinian evolution. In a

[14] See *Achim Landwehr*, Geschichte des Sagbaren: Einführung in die Historische Diskursanalyse (Tübingen 2004).
[15] *Kazin*, Godly Hero 285–295.
[16] *Conkin*, Gods 85.

classical Calvinist way, Butler and his allies mixed ethical and theological lines of argument, however with ethics as their clear priority.

Above all, research has at least qualified the priority of religion in the events at Dayton, for example Conkin, following Larson[17], highlighted in his interpretation other issues that also mattered at the time: the reflections of American intellectuals on religion and science, the value of intellectuals and experts in a democratic society, and relations between moderns and apparently unmodern "others"[18]. In contrast, Moran, in line with his own research interests, stressed not just the Scopes Trial's connections to American racism but especially the implicit role of Victorian and modern discourses on gender patterns and sexuality[19]. These approaches presented and contextualized religious debates more clearly than the earlier, one-sided fixation on religion as the primary issue.

In this essay, I will rely on this reinterpretation of the Scopes Trial, which is in some ways partial and in others fundamental, and I will analyze the various groups of actors in terms of the extent to which they can be assigned primarily to the urban or rural segments of society and in terms of their relation to contemporary ideas of modernization. The empirical basis for answering this second question hinges on the respective attitudes of these actors toward mass democratic participation, toward the idea of market capitalism in its consumerist form, toward progress-oriented optimism, toward science, in particular Darwin's theory of evolution together with the eugenic implications of social Darwinism, toward the historical-critical interpretation of the Scriptures, and toward sacred ritual as well as internalized, subjective-personal forms of faith.

In the background, the theories of the British social anthropologist Mary Douglas have influenced my approach. According to Douglas, socio-cultural systems create their appropriate variants of religiosity, which do not follow a linear-evolutionary development from a primitive, outside-directed ritualism to a personal, inside-directed, ritual-critical religiosity; one needs to keep in mind religiosity's fluidity in relation to the coherence of a social system or social-moral milieu[20]. In this way, the inflexible dichotomies between city and country and modernity and anti-modernity will be qualified, at least with regard to the religious development of the United States in the 1920s, without the need to completely abandon these analytical categories. At the same time, it will become obvious that at no time did American society approach an apocalyptic final battle between the forces of modernity and those of anti-modernity. Instead, society experienced a struggle for discursive sovereignty over the definition of modernity between competing concepts, each outspoken and selective. The groups under analysis as relevant to the Scopes Trial include, roughly, evangelicals, fundamentalists, Pentecostals, and liberal Protestants (here somewhat anachronistically labeled cultural

17 *Larson*, Summer for the Gods 265.
18 *Conkin*, Gods 111–176.
19 *Moran*, Scopes Trial 66–73. *Jeffrey P. Moran*, Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge 2000).
20 *Mary Douglas*, Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology (New York ²1973).

Protestants or modernists, to distinguish them clearly from secular liberals), as well as secular liberals. Catholics, almost non-existent in the South, played only a very marginal role. My argument requires crossing back-and-forth among groups, as often the collective identity of the various groups was defined against the others and developed only in the course of struggle with one another.

Nonetheless, we will start with the fundamentalists. Long before the events of September 11, 2001, "fundamentalism" had become a programmatic keyword which, like the concept of totalitarianism in the 1950s, is used less as a scholarly term with a definite meaning and more as a term that stops argument. Fundamentalism becomes a counter-concept to an emphatic concept of Enlightenment. That is to say, a fundamentalist is a fanatical religious opponent of Enlightenment and modernity, the latter understood in no less of a normative way. However, this way of applying the concept is not useful for the United States in the early twentieth century. In that period, comparably well-defined groups of people existed who developed the concept of fundamentalism and who used it, starting about 1920, as a name for themselves[21]. This movement had emerged after the late 1870s amid theological opposition to liberal Protestantism, which had come from Germany via the Ritschl school and which starting in the 1890s was supported by the majority of the Chicago school of theology. Liberal Protestantism derived from the Enlightenment, historicism, and the nineteenth-century, bourgeois-liberal, anthropological-optimistic belief in progress. The liberals attempted to adjust Christian faith to the intellectual demands of the modern age, particularly through historical-critical interpretation of the Bible, which in their view should no longer be read as the Holy Book of revelation but mainly as an historical and philological relic of antiquity or as an ethical manifesto. This also meant that all miracle stories were either interpreted away or reinterpreted in a rationalistic way. No longer did God intervene with events in the world, a mindset that created space for inner-directed, openly anti-ritualist and anti-sacramental, ethically individualistic and autonomous processes of modernity. In the United States, this modernist Protestant culture was often connected to the social reform movement known as the Social Gospel, advocates of which sought fundamental reform of the American economy, workers' rights, and the improvement of the social situation of the working class[22].

For the fundamentalists, both modernist theology and the Social Gospel were unacceptable. According to their Calvinist tradition of exegesis – which in

21 *Michael Hochgeschwender*, Amerikanische Religion: Evangelikalismus, Pfingstlertum und Fundamentalismus (Frankfurt a. M. 2007) 117–165; on the situation in the U.S. South: New Encyclopaedia of Southern Culture, vol. I: Religion (2006); also *Allan J. Lichtman*, White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement (New York 2008).

22 On the Social Gospel: *Chambers*, Tyranny of Change 105–110; *Ronald C. White*, *C. Howard Hopkins*, The Social Gospel: Religion and Reform in Changing America (Philadelphia 1976); *Ronald C. White Jr.,* Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel, 1877–1925 (Louisville 1990); *Robert H. Craig*, Religion and Radical Politics: An Alternative Christian Tradition in the United States (Philadelphia 1992).

contrast to German Lutheranism did not acknowledge any adequate criteria for the internal qualification and hierarchical ranking of the Scripture (such as the *sola gratia* principle) – the historical-critical method looked meaningless. From a theological perspective, it seemed a trivialization of orthodox faith. In the view of these critics of modernist theology, Jesus of Nazareth was no ethicist, a position supported by present-day insights based upon the critical method. He was God's own son and the Savior of Mankind. God Himself remained an active god, immediately in touch with man's fate. But most of all God remained the Creator of the world and thus the guarantor of its order. For this, the fundamentalists reached back less to a purely word-by-word exegesis of the Book of Genesis, although they liked to claim this. Rather, they used physico-theological arguments which were standard among theologians from the Early Modern era through the Enlightenment and into the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Briton William Paley counted as an important physico-theologist throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. With his theory, Darwin had especially sought to delegitimize Paley[23].

Initially, therefore, the conflict was not at all about a literal interpretation of the Bible. For the early fundamentalists – as for Bryan during the Scopes Trial – the question of how many days it had taken God to create the world was mostly irrelevant. Like their liberal, modernist opponents, the early fundamentalists were educated theologians from the great East Coast universities that competed with the University of Chicago; both sides came from a similar, urban elite background. Only a few southerners, such as J. Frank Norris and Amzi C. Dixon[24], aligned with the early fundamentalists. From a theological perspective, they were systematics in a struggle for academic hegemony against the adherents of biblical exegesis. Early fundamentalism included such major intellectuals as J. Gresham Machen[25]. From a political perspective, they were conservatives with a pronounced skepticism concerning human nature. They thus opposed both the secular and religious claims of the liberals. In a sense, the high-minded theologicans recalled and indeed sought to revive the Whig consensus of the pre-Civil War era, they sought an American society that was democratic and yet deliberative and circumspect, founded on Victorian values and gender codes[26].

These fundamentalist intellectuals greatly lamented the break-up of the liberal-evangelical reform coalition of the 1820s–1870s. The issue of creation or evolution occupied a symbolic place in this split; it stood in the foreground of the era's con-

23 On such debates in the United States, *Louis Menand*, The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas (New York 2001) 364–365. Also "Physikotheologie", Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie (1989); *Alister McGrath*, Naturwissenschaft und Religion: Eine Einführung (Freiburg i. Br. 2001) 120–172.

24 Fundamentalism, in: New Encyclopaedia of Southern Culture, vol. I: Religion (2006).

25 *Conkin*, Gods 112–119.

26 On the Whig political mindset, *Daniel Walker Howe*, What Hath God Wrought? The Transformation of America, 1815–1848 (New York 2007) 436–448; *Sean Wilentz*, The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln (New York 2005) 482–490. Also *Alan Hunt*, Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation (Cambridge 1999).

flicts over the interpretation of religion[27]. At the same time, it was precisely their skepticism over human nature which caused them to take an ambivalent or even hostile attitude toward liberals and toward progressive programs of social reform[28]. They were not convinced by the liberal, progressive argument that social conditions could be identified, analyzed, and ameliorated. The funding that the fundamentalists received from segments of high finance and the oil industry for their public relations activities may have contributed to or intensified their reservations. The progressive theologian Walter Rauschenbusch, himself a former evangelical, was certainly right when he accused the fundamentalists and evangelicals of lacking the spirit of prophetic social criticism[29].

In contrast to numerous progressives and later liberals, the fundamentalists expressed an unreserved belief in the market, consumerism, and capitalism[30]. In that respect, as well as with regard to their understanding of democracy, they undoubtedly exhibited characteristics of modernity in that period. Moreover, many of them rejected any kind of intervention in politics, such as laws against the theory of evolution in some southern states, as contrary to the separation of state and church. Thus it was no coincidence that none of the leading fundamentalists showed up in Dayton. During World War I, the fundamentalists' anti-German and nationalist sentiments became almost as important as their theological and political stances. They arrayed themselves on the side of the 100-percent Americanists, thereby contributing their share to the Americanization of the country's discourse over national identity[31]. This, too, gave evidence of their modernity.

Only during the 1910s and 1920s, in the course of the era's struggle for sociocultural and discursive dominance, did fundamentalism develop into a broader movement. In this period, fundamentalism stuck to its market-oriented conservativism and Victorian ideals, but it also allied with the consumerist, evangelical revivalism that had taken shape around Dwight L. Moody in the big cities of the North. From this environment came the ideas that gradually spread in the South and also marked Bryan's religious mindset, so to speak a popularized variant of academic fundamentalism. It was this popularized fundamentalism upon which Bryan drew when attacking the biology textbook at the center of the Scopes controversy. Bryan focused his criticism on those parts of George William Hunter's *Civic Biology* (1914), an official textbook of the state of Tennessee, which re-

[27] This alliance broke up not only over Darwinism but over Prohibition and other issues. *Thomas Welskopp*, Amerikas große Ernüchterung: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Prohibition (Paderborn 2010) 11–50; *James A. Morone*, Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History (New Haven 2003) 123–349.

[28] *Maureen A. Flanagan*, America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s–1920s (New York 2007); *Michael McGerr*, A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America (New York 2003).

[29] *White, Hopkins*, The Social Gospel xvii, 249–252.

[30] *William Leach*, Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture (New York 1994) 154–224.

[31] *Noah Pickus*, True Faith and Allegiance: Immigration and American Civic Nationalism (Princeton 2005).

counted Darwin's theory of evolution. Bryan overlooked those passages that discussed social Darwinism and its eugenic and race-hygiene consequences, even though the book went so far as to suggest that euthanasia might be appropriate to prevent from having children those families that did not meet standards of eugenic optimization. On such matters, the fundamentalists as well as their popular spokesmen could be as racist and social-Darwinist as many of their liberal opponents[32]. It is nevertheless important that Bryan turned the fundamentalist argument into an entirely unconventional direction. Whether from political instinct or intent, he grasped onto an essential shortcoming of his liberal opponents: their sometimes ambivalent attitude toward popular sovereignty and democracy. For Mencken's sort of urbane modernists and in a different way for those progressives with an inclination toward social engineering, the state could seem to be a kind of enlightened-constitutional despot in the service of education and modernization, with academic experts and elites showing the way to the future. Bryan, on the other hand, openly declared that any reform not starting out from the people was necessarily doomed to failure. But that meant taking the interests and the faith of the common people seriously as their rights. In terms of the theory of democracy, this raised important questions concerning the value of experts and elites in a fundamentally democratic society.

And that was exactly the starting point for the reception of fundamentalist principles among southern evangelicals and Pentecostals. In Mary Douglas's sense, southern fundamentalism developed into an open, fluid social formation which had created – now in Weber's sense – a conglomerate of beliefs that was highly modern, inner-directed, anti-ritualist, individualistic, and subjective in ways that fit the social needs of its adherents (Here Douglas, however, would point to the parallel "modernity" of the anti-ritualist religious system of the Mbuti Pygmies, thereby calling into question Weber's linear-evolutionist understanding of modernization)[33]. Southern-style fundamentalism became deeply democratic (though deeply racist, apart from a few Pentecostal congregations) and gave a clear priority to the individual. The tendency proved compatible with the free market. The movement was definitely not hostile to capitalism; rather it exhibited a friendly or curious disinterest toward business. It was very emotional and independent-minded.

In this way, the southern mode of evangelical-Pentecostal piety provided a flexible frame of possibilities which, building on strong traditions, allowed for the

[32] *Christine Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement (New York 2004) 66–69, 124, points, however, to shared reservations among conservative Protestants and Catholics, for example in Louisiana, who resisted proposals for eugenic marriage legislation propagated by American race hygienists around 1910. Also, *Edwin Black*, War against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race (New York 2003); *Gregory Michael Dorr*, Segregation's Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia (Charlottesville 2008); *Mark A. Largent*, Breeding Contempt: The History of Coerced Sterilization in the United States (New Brunswick 2008).

[33] *Douglas*, Natural Symbols ch. 1–4.

stable integration of the "modern" ways of thinking about autonomy and subjectivity (though within the framework of theonomy), individualism, participatory mass democracy, capitalism, and consumerism. The fusion of fundamentalism and southern popular religion proved the starting point of a specific *agency*. However, on account of their more traditional way of life, southern evangelicals and Pentecostals took little interest in the theological quarrels of northerners. The social reform agenda of Protestant modernists simply did not meet the social realities of their everyday situation. These patterns reflected the loose institutional structure of their religions. The religious world of the South was also more homogenous than the pluralist environments of northern cities. Episcopalians were considered an upper-middle-class church; Catholics were hardly found; and Lutherans were identified with particular ethnic groups. Among southern Baptists, the largest denomination, the retention rate was much higher than among the liberal denominations in the North. Even so, detailed analyses of religious organization in the South have revealed that about 90 percent of evangelical parishes held services once a month at the most, while 80 percent did not have their own reverend[34]. This meant that well into the twentieth century, the "camp meeting", an irregularly occurring event characterized by the emotional and theatrically staged conversion of the believers, was the most important cornerstone of faith[35].

In much of the South, there was no structural basis for supra-individual dogmas, questions of orthodoxy, rituals, etc. The circumstances of the region gave priority to individual freedom, which was emphasized even more by the Pentecostals than by the evangelicals, with their older tradition of awakening. Starting in the 1940s, the organizational conditions of southern Christianity changed in ways that allowed for the establishment of more consolidated structures. Only then did southern Protestantism grow more dogmatic and orthodox in outlook – and then almost automatically more political. Southern Christianity was not primarily rural, though its town manifestations built upon its rural foundation. Overall, it shared the selective modernity of every grouping involved in the social conflicts of the 1920s, including the secular liberals and the liberal Protestants.

The social and cultural fronts in the conflict over modernization and social transformation in the 1920s, therefore, were much more varied and fragmented than suggested by the Mencken paradigm. The sides did not simply break down as pre-modern, irrationally pious country people confronting enlightened, cosmopolitan, secular urban people. Often the lines cut across these groups, which Mencken and others of his mind (as well as some opponents) postulated a priori. Each group struggled for its own understanding of market capitalism, modern technology, the growing plurality of life, democracy, Darwin's doctrine of evolution, and in many cases eugenics and racism. Often, modern, enlightened de-

[34] Churches, Country, in: New Encyclopaedia of Southern Culture, vol. I: Religion (2006).
[35] *Edward L. Ayers*, The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction (New York 1992) 399–408, *Randall J. Stephens*, Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South (Cambridge 2008). On urban manifestations of these trends, *Matthew Avery Sutton*, Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America (Cambridge 2007).

fenders of Darwin supported an aggressive, racist version of eugenics, an attitude they shared with some conservative, fundamentalist Protestants. The situation became even more paradoxical if one takes into account American Catholics, the majority of whom lived in cities in the country's industrial regions[36]. Like the fundamentalists, Catholics found it difficult to accept Darwin's theory of evolution, if for reasons less rooted directly in the Bible. Catholics shared the racism of their environment, although they tended to reject eugenics either explicitly or implicitly[37]. Catholic ethnic groups were skeptical concerning market capitalism, although they adjusted to it, and they gradually accepted a pluralist democracy, albeit with no intention of letting this pluralism compromise their own cultures and community structures. As was the case with evangelicals, Pentecostals, fundamentalists, and liberal Protestants, both liberal and ultramontane-conservative Catholics took a variety of stances toward various aspects of modernization, ranging from hostile and defensive to accepting and even triumphalist. Overall, urban Catholics appeared less modern than urban fundamentalists or rural evangelicals and Pentecostals, at least according to the standards of the age.

Yet even unconstrained supporters of anything new, of modernity in the strict and singular sense, were not free of fears, often unacknowledged. In the foreground stood issues of class, which furthermore were charged with dimensions of race and gender. After the dissolution of the nineteenth-century, liberal-evangelical reform coalition – a division symbolized and fueled by such issues as Darwinism and Prohibition – elements of the secular, liberal bourgeoisie at times expressed a fairly traditional ideology of elite rule. In my opinion, Mencken's sometimes sneering tirades, which exhibited many topoi of intellectual superiority, show deeply rooted insecurity, indeed an elitist fear of the obscurantism and indolence of the masses. Mencken's is a rhetoric of obsessive social discipline, ironic, expressed in brilliant compound sentences, and quite in accordance with the tradition of Enlightenment. Mencken's fear of fundamentalists was related to his fear of the troublesome working class, of Catholics and, often enough, of Jews. He reflected an insecurity among some secular modernists and liberals that was enhanced by their knowledge of what the unprecedented catastrophe World War I had meant for civilization. The fight over Prohibition intensified the fight against the fundamentalists, who were denounced as anti-modern at a time when modernity became part of the self-identity of liberalism as well as part of its claim to cultural hegemony. Acceptance of Darwinism became a token of modernity at a time when the Darwinian version of evolution was still, in reality, not unequivocally accepted by scientists.

Nevertheless, Mencken hardly counts as an archetypal representative of the progressive and optimistic liberal tradition of the nineteenth century, a tradition

[36] On American Catholic attitudes toward American society, culture, and politics, *John T. McGreevy*, Catholicism and American Freedom: A History (New York 2003) 91–165; on social Catholicism, *Dorothy M. Brown*, *Elisabeth McKeown*, The Poor Belong to Us: Catholic Charities and American Welfare (Cambridge 1997).

[37] *Rosen*, Preaching Eugenics 139–164, explains Catholic ambivalence concerning eugenics.

which went into eclipse for several decades. Rather, Mencken represented a nearly aristocratic variant of Nietzschean skepticism concerning the desires of ordinary people, the masses driven by instincts and full of resentment, who seemed to him simply to go with the current[38]. Mencken thus symbolized the contradictions of the bourgeoisie in the period after *fin de siècle* and World War I. Later generations of historians, stamped by modernization and secularization theories, did not appreciate the subtle refinement of his relativism and perspectivism. As with Nietzsche, Mencken knew very well where the respective enemy was and had no use for any kind of contextualization.

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The public image of the Scopes Trial that for decades had been communicated in the media, popular culture, and historical writing underwent a radical change in the two decades after 1990. This revisionist understanding did not result from new sources or previously unknown facts; neither of these could be expected. Rather, it was an expression of a new way of understanding the available material, the result of a slow and gradual paradigm shift – in the sociology of knowledge sense – rather than a revolution of thought. So far, it is not possible to describe this process in detail, since no account yet exists for the years since 1990 similar to Peter Novick's pioneering history of American historiography in the twentieth century to the 1980s[39]. That is why the following discussion can only be cursory and speculative. I will proceed in two stages, first by asking about the new value of religious history in the wider context of American history, and then by discussing the broader outlook and ideals on which the suggested paradigm shift was founded. The starting point of my discussion is the thesis that religion was neglected by the New Social History of the 1960s and 1970s[40], which in this respect had taken up the inheritance of the liberal consensus history of the 1950s.

In a noteworthy essay on the situation of religious history within American historiography, Jon Butler in 2004 diagnosed a strange imbalance[41]. Whereas for the period before 1870 religion has remained an integral, indispensible part of historic accounts of the United States, religion did not play a large role in historical writing for periods after the Civil War and particularly for the twentieth century. This has

[38] *Terry Teachout*, The Skeptic: A Life of H. L. Mencken (New York 2002), and esp. *William H. A. Williams*, H. L. Mencken Revisited (New York 1998) 12–17.

[39] *Peter Novick*, That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession (New York 1991) esp. 415–629; Also *David Harlan*, The Degradation of American History (Chicago 1997).

[40] For example, *Eric Foner* (ed.), The New American History (Philadelphia 1990), completely ignores religion as a distinct subject matter.

[41] *Jon Butler*, "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History", in: Journal of American History 90/4 (2004) 1357–1378; also *Harry S. Stout*, *Darryl G. Hart* (eds.), New Directions in American Religious History (New York 1997). For a more optimistic account, *Michael Hochgeschwender*, Religion, nationale Mythologie und nationale Identität: Zu den methodischen und inhaltlichen Debatten in der amerikanischen *New Religious History*, in: Historisches Jahrbuch 124 (2004) 435–520.

been especially true in histories published since the 1940s. For the period after 1870, the overwhelming majority of American textbooks did not present religion as an integral part of American history. It appeared as a kind of *deus ex machina* which occasionally appears and then disappears again. Examples include standard treatment of the Scopes Trial and the religious right movement in the 1980s. In contrast to conservative authors, Butler saw this trend toward overlooking religion, to which there were important exceptions[42], not predominantly as an effect of secular-humanist, anti-religious sympathies of liberal and radical historians. Rather, it was a result of culturally and socially influenced patterns of perception that were themselves molded by the expectations of modernization theory and its secularization hypothesis[43]. In all genres of history, from conventional narratives of politics to the history of ideas to analyses of social structure, authors had almost always treated religion as simply irrelevant. Drawing upon William Sewell, we might add that the abstract level at which such theoretical approaches operated led scholars to overlook the personal level and people's own perceptions and interpretations[44]. If modernity was accompanied by secularization, and if abstract structures, models, and class analyses were more important than the ways that personal actors shaped their respective socio-cultural realities, the conclusion was inevitable that religion as such did not offer an adequate subject area for modern historiography.

However, by the 1980s, this point of view became obsolete. Developments on several levels in American politics, society, and culture made reconsideration of the secularization paradigm essential. In contrast to predictions, religious phenomena did not leave the stage. Decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted as anti-religious prompted the ongoing evangelical revival movement, whose origins in the early Cold War years had been overlooked even by experts, to move away from the political and social mainstream and grow more and more radical[45].

[42] Throughout the period for which Butler perceived neglect, excellent histories of American religion continued to appear. For overviews, *Sidney E. Ahlstrom*, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven 1972); *Jon Butler*, Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People (Cambridge 1990); *Mark A. Noll*, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada (Grand Rapids 1992); *Peter W. Williams*, America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century (Urbana 2002), and especially *Martin E. Marty*, Modern American Religion, 3 vols. (Chicago 1986–1996).

[43] In Europe, the secularization paradigm developed more clearly from anti-clerical and especially anti-Catholic sentiments within the nineteenth-century, bourgeois-liberal milieu, with its notions of enlightenment and progress. *Manual Borutta*, Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie: Zur Historisierung einer großen Erzählung der Moderne, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 36 (2010) 347–376. On the American manifestion of these ideas, *Christian Smith* (ed.), The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life (Berkeley 2003).

[44] *William H. Sewell Jr.,* The Logic of History (Chicago 2005).

[45] *Rainer Prätorius*, In God We Trust: Religion und Politik in den USA (München 2003); on the political consequences of Supreme Court rulings such as *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) or *Roe v. Wade* (1973): *Manfred Broker*, Protest – Anpassung – Etablierung: Die Christliche Rechte im politischen System der USA (Frankfurt a. M. 2004) 325–344.

Meanwhile, the counterculture of the 1960s sparked a massive reaction among social, cultural, and religious conservatives. These various trends culminated in the New Religious Right[46]. Especially in the 1970s, the Democratic Party moved clearly to the left, with its liberal wing an open advocate of new cultural movements. Thus the Democrats no longer offered an alternative to the Republicans for religious conservative constituencies, whose social ideas seemed oriented toward the nineteenth century or the 1950s. Ronald Reagan and then George W. Bush succeeded in establishing close ties to evangelicals from the white middle class, who for a long time had been wavering between the Democrats and Republicans, who also appealed to a segment of conservative Catholics and even orthodox Jews. In this way, religious groups exerted increasing influence within Republican politics[47].

Since some of the quarrels of the late twentieth century arose over the same issues as during the 1920s, above all Darwin's theory of evolution, comparable interpretative reflexes appeared[48]. Widespread talk of "culture wars" by itself signaled how seriously this struggle for cultural hegemony was taken by all participants, not only among academics. Both sides, liberals and conservatives, saw themselves as on the defensive in the media and in institutions such as universities. At times, they even believed themselves to be surrounded by conspiracies from the other side. Nevertheless, there were efforts at detailed and unsentimental social-science analyses[49]. The concentration on the political dimensions of these contemporary religious revivals reveals one problem that American historians had in understanding this unexpected revival of religion. Differentiations and rivalries within religion, for example the politics of the African American churches or left-wing evangelicalism, were obscured by the focus on the social and cultural world of right-wing evangelicals, Pentecostals, and fundamentalists. Moreover, with a few exceptions, there was little attempt to connect these post-Baby Boom revivals with earlier waves of revivalism and to examine the structural and functional

[46] On the emergence of the religious conservative movement, *William C. Berman*, America's Right Turn: From Nixon to Clinton (Baltimore 1998); *Bruce J. Schulman*, The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics (repr. New York 2002); *Philip Jenkins*, Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America (New York 2006); *Daniel T. Rogers*, Age of Fracture (Cambridge 2011).

[47] *Randall Balmer*, God in the White House: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush (New York 2008); *D. Michael Lindsay*, Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite (New York 2007).

[48] *Jonathan Zimmermann*, Whose America? Culture Wars in Public Schools (Cambridge 2002) 1–8; *Michael Ruse*, The Evolution-Creation Struggle (Cambridge 2005).

[49] *John R. Pottenger*, Reaping the Whirlwind: Liberal Democracy and the Religious Axis (Washington 2007); *Damon Linker*, The Theocons: Secular America under Siege (New York 2007); *Paul Boyer*, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Cambridge 1992); *Lisa McGirr*, Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right (Princeton 2001); *Sara Diamond,* Not by Politics Alone: The Enduring Influence of the Christian Right (New York 1998); *idem*, Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right (Boston 1989); *idem*, Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States (New York 1995).

causes for the undeniable continuity of apocalyptic, revivalist Christianity in the United States[50]. Anyway, the obvious rebirth of religion in American public life forced historians to examine modernization theory and the secularization paradigm more critically than before. It was all too obvious that both the predictive and prescriptive value of this theory had not survived its encounter with empiricism. It became necessary again to include religious history in the overall discourse of history.

Such critical reassessment of the secularization thesis in the United States was a sufficient, but not a necessary precondition for a revised interpretation of events surrounding the Scopes Trial. On the contrary, the opposite might have been expected, given right-wing evangelical fundamentalism's vehement anti-intellectual criticism of the sciences in the context of the debate on creationism, "intelligent design", and Darwinism. This would seem to invite a move away from the predictive implications of the secularization thesis, but also intense criticism of the counter-Enlightenment and the seemingly anti-modern stance of the fundamentalists. But only natural scientists, the British writer Richard Dawkins prominent among them, adopted such a perspective. By contrast, historians turned more intensively to religious history and to cultural theories of science, rather than toward Dawkins's form of revisionism, an historiographic pattern that requires explanation[51]. Paradoxically, it was not historians suspected of being close to fundamentalism who now took a relativistic, science-critical and perspectivist position, but historians who moved within recent discourses on modernity. Fundamentalists tended instead toward universal claims of truth, of the sort typical of the Early Modern age and Enlightenment and that were compatible with premodern forms of cognition. Obviously, the wheel of Enlightenment, understood as permanent criticism and self-criticism, had made yet another turn.

This was by no means a new development. Since the nineteenth century, the original aims of the Enlightenment, including the modern, universalist ideologies that derived from the Enlightenment, especially bourgeois liberalism, had been in a double crisis. On the one hand, the class basis of this specific variant of modernity became shaky. From the beginning, diverse versions of Enlightenment, including its notions of modernity, had legitimized the claims to participation and then the rule of liberal middle classes. At the same time, Enlightenment liberalism

50 For the post-Baby-Boom context of recent revivalism: *Preston Shires*, Hippies of the Religious Right (Waco 2007); *Patrick Allitt*, Religion in America since 1945: A History (New York 2003); *Robert Wuthnow*, The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since 1945 (Princeton 1988). For efforts to connect this to the American revivalist tradition overall: *Robert Jewett*, *Ole Wangerin*, Mission und Verführung: Amerikas religiöser Weg in vier Jahrhunderten (Göttingen 2008); *Morone*, Hellfire Nation, overemphasizes the significance of Puritan traditions and thus misunderstands the genuinely modern nature of American revivalist religiosity; see *Hochgeschwender*, Amerikanische Religion.

51 *Doris Bachmann-Medick*, Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften (Reinbek bei Hamburg 2006); *Ute Daniel*, Kompendium Kulturgeschichte (Frankfurt a. M. 2001). For a balanced account of these historiographic debates: *Chris Lorenz*, Konstruktion der Vergangenheit: Eine Einführung in die Geschichtstheorie (Köln 1997).

opened the way to a far-reaching participation dynamic. In the nineteenth century, this started with the turn towards mass democracy in the United States above all, a trend that by the twentieth century had gathered new momentum among the societies of the North Atlantic[52]. Primarily during the period between 1947 and 1975 that Eric Hobsbawm called the "golden age of capitalism" and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael called the "boom period"[53], this mass participation dynamic was fully unleashed, though it changed character from political-social participation to market conformity. As a result of the social mobility among certain non-bourgeois segments of society, the comparably high degree of socio-economic homogeneity of the social levels identified with the enlightened-liberal modernity paradigm was lost. This group had previously been able to maintain its linear, progress-oriented, evolution-compatible cultural hegemony far into socialist circles[54].

Even before the collapse of liberalism's social basis, as a result of both internal and external criticism, the theoretical claims of a universal appeal to reason had gradually been declining for quite some time, though for a long period this had only marginal effects on claims to validity that depended upon the appeal to reason. The basic philosophical challenge of Enlightenment thought could not be maintained in the long run: between empiricist-nominalistic epistemology on one side and the interplay between a universally structured but autonomous subject and universal reason as the essential epistemological tool on the other side[55]. Already during the nineteenth century, philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche undermined the claim to universalism of liberal-bourgeois enlightened modernity with their turn to the priority of bodily existence, possibility, and voluntarism. At the start of the twentieth century, anti-evolutionist, historicist cultural anthropology picked up this criticism[56]. Then, in reaction to the structuralist and functionalist universalisms of the 1950s and 1960s, post-structuralist, post-modern, and post-colonial thinkers offered even more radical versions of such criticisms[57]. Not coincidentally, such attacks accompanied the final end of the predominance of liberal middle classes over society and knowledge.

52 *Michael Hochgeschwender*, Was ist der Westen? Zur Ideengeschichte eines politischen Konstrukts, in: Historisch-Politische Mitteilungen 11 (2004) 1–30.

53 *Eric Hobsbawm*, The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991 (New York 1996) 225–402. *Anselm Doering-Manteuffel*, *Lutz Raphael*, Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte (Göttingen 2010).

54 Not without reason, Karl Marx, in a letter to Ferdinand Lasalle, pointed to the narrative connection between Darwinist evolutionism and British capitalist, class society, expressing both respect and criticism: Karl Marx to Ferdinand Lasalle, 16 Jan. 1861, in: Marx Engels Werke 30 (Ostberlin 1974) 537.

55 *Gerhard Gamm*, Philosophie im Zeitalter der Extreme: Eine Geschichte philosophischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert (Darmstadt 2009).

56 *Roland Girtler*, Kulturanthropologie: Eine Einführung (Münster 2006); *Fredrick Barth* et al. (eds.), One Discipline, Four Ways: British, German, French, and American Anthropology (Chicago 2005).

57 *Lutz Raphael*, Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme: Theorien, Methoden, Tendenzen von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart (München 2003) 215–246.

The turn of these various new streams of thought to the "marginalized", the "others", and the "foreign"[58] as well as to their identity politics[59] was connected to social change at the national and global levels. This was even though the most radical supporters of the turn to the marginalized were often firmly rooted in middle-class educational institutions[60].

In this context, the post-structuralist turn[61] affected both the intellectual foundations of Enlightenment modernity and the epistemological foundations of the natural sciences and thus evolutionary theory. Due to the dissolution of universal logos as well as the subject, which had been instrumentally connected to this logos by reason, there appeared the decentralized quartet of culturality, historicity, virtual mediality, and reflection on the linguistic constitution of the human perception of the world. The turn to the essential historicity of human existence forced a critical analysis of the intellectual foundations of the Enlightenment progress and the modernity paradigm, which entailed a new analysis of the notion of secularization implied by these concepts. For example, it became possible to shed light on the power interests of Enlightenment, on its mythopoetic efforts at denunciation, scandalization, and criminalization of the "foreign other", especially with regard to one's own, premodern, European past[62]. This in turn invited critical examination of how such processes shaped traditional ways of understanding modernity[63].

In the absence of universal reason, absolute claims to validity became just one tradition among many[64]. Now the "other" or "foreign" was no longer considered good if, because, and in so far as it was reasonable, as it had been the case for the

[58] *Sewell*, Logics of History; *Oliver Marchart*, Cultural Studies (Konstanz 2008). For an overview, *Bernd Jürgen Warnecken*, Die Ethnographie populärer Kulturen: Eine Einführung (Wien 2006).

[59] *Homi Bhabha*, The Location of Culture (London 2009). For criticisms, *Thomas Meyer*, Identitätspolitik: Vom Missbrauch kultureller Unterschiede (Frankfurt a. M. 2002).

[60] *C. Richard King*, Introduction: Dislocating Postcoloniality, Relocating American Empire, in: *C. Richard King* (ed.), Postcolonial America (Urbana 2000) 1–20.

[61] Nevertheless one also recognizes that this "turn" cannot be imagined singularly, clearly and coherently. The concentration of historical studies of culture, informed by cultural anthropology, on actors alone cannot be harmonized with the text fixation of post-structuralist literary scholars or with ways that post-colonial thinkers rely on esoteric authorities. All of these approaches share in the criticism of certain postulates of classical Enlightenment modernity in its manifold, often neglected dimensions, but that is all. See my article, *Michael Hochgeschwender*, Kulturanthropologie und Zeitgeschichte in den USA und Deutschland, in: *Oliver Scheiding* et al. (eds.), Kulturtheorie im Dialog: Neuorientierung in der kulturwissenschaftlichen Text-Kontext-Debatte (Berlin 2011) 225–256.

[62] Consider, for instance, the way in which Enlightenment historiography dealt with the southern European Inquisition or with witch persecutions, which were connected to Enlightenment denunciations of the Middle Ages or to notions in religious scholarship of priestly deception.

[63] *Manuel Borutta*, Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe (Göttingen 2010); also *Manuel Borutta*, Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie.

[64] *Alasdair MacIntyre*, Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry (Notre Dame 1990).

thinkers of the eighteenth century. Rather, the foreign was considered good because it was foreign[65]. From such criticisms arose the necessity of further differentiation of the concepts of Enlightenment, modernity, progress, and secularization. This in turn led to talk of the contingency of modernity[66] or even of multiple modernities[67]. It nevertheless remained unclear what possible counter-concepts or falsification opportunities might look like, if the concept of modernity was extended to such a degree of multi-perspectivity. Or, to put the matter more precisely: Under conditions of "multiple modernities", what would in theory count as anti-modern or counter-modern? Certainly not religious fundamentalism, for this was predominantly a modern phenomenon, not least due to its high degree of individualism and its criticism of traditional, institutional authorities, typical of such religious movements around the world[68]. In H. L. Mencken's reception of Nietzsche, indeed in Nietzsche himself, one may find this indirect rehabilitation of religion in general[69] and fundamentalism in particular, an unintended, but logical result of perspectivism.

But critics of Enlightenment and modernity at the end of the twentieth century were not satisfied with this. Right from the beginning, one of the main pillars of enlightened thought about the modern age had been natural-scientific scientism[70]. At least since Dilthey, the distinction between natural science and the humanities had been one of the essential features of the modern philosophy of science. Given the epistemological crisis of the humanities, on which this basic distinction was grounded, natural sciences appeared as role models, since they represented forms of knowledge which seemed capable of and entitled to give an objective description of reality. Since the 1930s, however, this precise claim was undermined in the course of countless scientific debates. Philosophers from completely different perspectives, such as Ludwik Fleck, Karl Popper, Paul Feyerabend, or Dominick LaCapra, as well as leading feminist scholars of gender such as Judith Butler pointed to the connection between social and academic power structures and natural scientific insight or scientific narratives[71]. As Karl Marx had already recognized, this also applied to the formulation of evolution theory, which indeed did not reflect natural reality in an objective way, but was a socio-cultural construct.

Many historians neither could nor would avoid these conclusions drawn from post-structuralist criticism, although the intense debate over the possibility of ob-

[65] *Jürgen Osterhammel*, Die Entzauberung Asiens: Europa und die asiatischen Reiche im 18. Jahrhundert (München 1998).
[66] *Wolfgang Knöbl*, Die Kontingenz der Moderne: Wege in Europa, Asien und Amerika (Frankfurt a. M. 2007).
[67] *Shmuel N. Eisenstadt*, Die Vielfalt der Moderne (Weilwerswist 2000); *Christof Mauch*, *Kiran Klaus Patel* (eds.), Wettlauf um die Moderne: Die USA und Deutschland 1890 bis heute (München 2008).
[68] *Hochgeschwender*, Amerikanische Religion 11–31.
[69] *Charles Taylor*, A Secular Age (Cambridge 2007), examines the religious roots of modern secularism.
[70] *Wolf Lepenies*, Auguste Comte: Die Macht der Zeichen (München 2010).
[71] *Franziska Schößler*, Einführung in die Gender Studies (Berlin 2008) 14–20.

jectivity in science and the humanities is far from over[72]. All this led to considerable insecurity concerning what anyone could declare to be modern at all in the emphatic-normative sense. To a certain degree, this insecurity was present from the start, built into the historicist heritage of the modern discipline of history. Already in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians were discussing the a priori and universal claims of enlightened reason. The crisis of historicism (Ernst Troelsch and Karl Mannheim) after the end of World War I and the temporary turn toward prioritizing structuralist-synchronic, social-scientific analysis could not really work against this modern skepticism of modernity. With the cultural turn, which contained within itself a renewed historicism, the earlier reservations among historians surfaced again. The insecurity was then considerably increased by the pressure to find academic positions, and not only in the United States. Given the number of scholars, which had multiplied since the nineteenth century, who competed for a reputation and living on the academic market, periodic revisions of historical images and interpretations are inevitable, as this is the only way to guarantee attention and thus success within academia. Endless repetition of tradition, no matter how "correct" it may be, is clearly less promising in comparison. All of these factors accumulated to create the current historiographic view of the Scopes Trial. Even if individual accounts, especially Paul Conkin's well-documented, methodologically meticulous monograph, are only slightly or not at all saturated with post-structuralist topoi, still, the factors discussed above made the quick reception of the results of such revisionism possible.

Even the new narrative of the events of 1925 is not free of critical objections. I would like briefly to point out two aspects which are important for the acceptance and even for the construction of revisionist narratives. Regarding the "new religious history" in general, Darryl G. Hart[73] and Dennis Martin[74] have already addressed important points. Among others things, they oppose the methodologically problematic consequences of a consciously decentralized historiography that lacks criteria for assessing relevance and plausibility. Indeed, this results in preoccupation with those considered "marginal", "foreign", or "different". This raises the question of whether one is simply reproducing the attributions of alterity from past eras, only this time reversing the normative guidelines. Furthermore, perhaps too much weight ends up being ascribed to fringe problems such as "Dominion Theory" or "Christian Zionism" within the context of fundamentalism. But above all, particularly in the context of the debates of the 1920s, there is the danger of devaluing the fears expressed by contemporaries – predominantly liberal,

[72] *Bruno Latour*, Wir sind nie modern gewesen: Versuch einer symmetrischen Anthropologie (Frankfurt a. M. 2008); *Lorraine Daston*, *Peter Galison*, Objectivity (Brooklyn 2007); *Richard J. Evans*, In Defense of History (New York 1997); *Werner Paravicini*, Die Wahrheit der Historiker (München 2010).

[73] *Darryl G. Hart*, The Failure of American Religious History, in: Journal of the Historical Society 1 (2000) 1–31.

[74] *Dennis Martin*, The Stillborn Rebirth of American Religious History, in: Journal of the Historical Society 1 (2000) 57–65.

urban, and elite white males – over the forms and contents of both revivalist and fundamentalist religiosity, thereby of marginalizing this crisis in retrospect. It would be absurd to rewrite the end of the liberal-enlightened master narrative of modernity into a master narrative of a posthumous marginalization of socio-cultural elites.

At the same time, the loss of criteria for plausibility results in the danger of crossing methodological borders, on one side toward the natural sciences, on the other toward theology. The justifiable attempt to see that justice is done to the fundamentalist position and to avoid becoming prisoner of the ideological one-sidedness of liberal modernity discourses does not touch upon the question of scientific plausibility of fundamentalist arguments. In fact, this methodological humility will result in giving context to justified criticism of fundamentalist modes of argumentation when they enter the field of the natural sciences. Although it cannot be a task of history to determine the validity of statements concerning the theory of evolution, the controversial and many-sided objections from the natural sciences should be taken into account more strongly in the context of the new paradigm. This holds as well for theology. Conkin, for example, shows a tendency to sharpen the contradiction between evolution theory and revealed religion altogether, without taking into account the results of recent exegetic, apologetic, and dogmatic research[75]. This approach rules out any possibility of compromise from the start[76]. From an exegetic point of view, Conkin finds himself on a slippery slope, because he leaves the impression that fundamentalist exegesis is so-to-speak the royal road of theology. But that was never the case. It was precisely the fundamentalist attempt to interpret everything literally in the sense of pure, positive historicity that was the genuine product of classical modernity[77].

All in all, however, these objections do not affect the revision of our image of the Scopes Trial, at least against the background of current theoretical and historiographic discourses over modernity. A renewed inspection and understanding of the existing source material was urgently needed, in order not to fall again and again for old Enlightenment myths of the rationality of modernity. One could hardly avoid sometimes overshooting the target. Only in this way has it been possible to see fundamentalism as it is on the deepest level: a product of modernity, multi-faceted, continually unfolding, always reinventing itself.

[75] From the evangelical perspective, *Alister McGrath*, Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life (Malden 2000). From a Thomist position, *Martin Rhonheimer*, Neodarwinistische Evolutionslehre, *Intelligent Design* und die Frage nach dem Schöpfer: Aus einem Brief an Kardinal Christoph Schönborn, in: Imago Hominis 14 (2007) 47–81.

[76] *Conkin*, When All the Gods Trembled 1–21.

[77] For a multi-faceted history of Biblical exegesis, *Henning Graf Reventlow*, Epochen der Bibelauslegung, 4 Bde. (München 1990 et seqq.). *Brevard S. Childs*, Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments (Minneapolis 1993) ch. 2, offers a thoroughly pluralistic exegesis of the creation story from an evangelical perspective.

Summary

In „The Scopes Trial in the Context of Competing Modernity Discourses" geht es im ersten Teil um eine Revision der bis in die 1990er Jahre vorherrschenden Sicht des „Affenprozesses" von Dayton 1925. Hatte man lange daran festgehalten, dieser Prozess habe im unmittelbaren Kontext der Dichotomien von Stadt und Land, Moderne und Antimoderne, Aufklärung und Gegenaufklärung gestanden und sei gewissermaßen die finale Schlacht zwischen protestantischem Fundamentalismus und aufgeklärter Moderne gewesen, so hat die neuere Sicht ganz andere Schwerpunkte gesetzt. Insbesondere wurde auf den urban-intellektuellen Charakter des frühen Fundamentalismus ebenso hingewiesen wie auf wechselseitige Fehlwahrnehmungen sämtlicher Beteiligter vor Ort. In einem zweiten Schritt wird dieser allmähliche *paradigm shift* dann sowohl wissenschafts- wie gesellschaftsgeschichtlich näher verortet, wobei insbesondere auf das analytische Potential der neueren kulturanthropologischen und postmodernen Historiographie im weiteren Kontext des soziokulturellen Wandels der USA seit dem Ausgang der industriellen Hochmoderne hingewiesen wird.

Alan Lessoff

Conclusion

In most of the essays in this book, reflections by German authors on American modernity reflect back on German understandings – tacit and explicit – of modernity overall, its character, its contradictions, and its analytical and ethical dilemmas. The book, then, amounts to another chapter in the long story of German and European efforts to come to terms with the world's overall direction through the lens of America[1]. For over a century, German intellectuals have used analysis of the United States as a modern nation-state and society as a sounding board for ideas about the prospects and dreads of the contemporary world. As scholars of the United States, the writers in this volume engage American modernity for its own sake but also for the sake of more sweeping intellectual agendas. Readers or even an editor can only guess at the inner psyche of an author, but probably writers in this volume are also looking at their chosen themes about America for the sake of the personal reflection that thoughtful people engage in when solids melt into air. Or rather, when brittle solids fracture, as this book has suggested.

The solid breaking into pieces in retrospect is the notion that modernity anywhere was ever cohesive or even definable. Most models of modernity assumed, as the introduction explains, a definable set of characteristics. These qualities could apply to all places transformed by modernity, as in most standard versions of modernization theory, or they could vary from place to place, as in Shmuel Eisenstadt's multiple modernities model. But the social, economic, and political forces that sparked the process labelled modernization left behind a system or systems that social scientists could, in theory, classify and analyze. The concept of post-modernity – with its flood of contradictory signs and its gaggle of voices and imagines – hinged on the imputation of coherence to modernity. If modernity fractures, is post-modernity necessary anymore?

As hinted at this book's start, one can discern contemporary moods and perceptions behind the mindset of *fractured modernity* and this attitude's application to the United States. Even given the energy described in my own essay that some American scholars have put into transnationalizing U.S. history, I would suggest

[1] This tendency endlessly intrigues American historians who work with European colleagues. Cf. *C. Vann Woodward*, The Old World's New World (New York 1991). *Richard Pells*, Not Like Us. How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II (New York 1997).

that on average, European intellectuals exhibit deeper awareness, if not greater acceptance of trends likely to make western societies more provincial during the twenty-first century than in the twentieth, nineteenth, or eighteenth. The prospect of a future in which western countries less often occupy the center of political economy or of human attention invites a re-imagination of the recent past. Americans have often projected the United States as a model in the structural as well as moral sense; the didactic, formulaic Cold War-era version of modernization theory amounted to the most activist and pervasive episode in this long-standing inclination. While usually dubious about the United States as exemplary in the moral sense, Germans have been inclined to perceive the American republic as an archetype in the analytical sense. If the United States is no longer to be an archetype, then was it ever?

Minerva's owl, therefore, may – as is her tendency – have reappeared at the dusk of the American Century. It would rash to write off the United States as a great power, but numerous observers, along with at least some American leaders (including both defense secretaries between 2009 and 2012), have admonished that the conditions that made the world's economy and politics long revolve around the country have proved more ephemeral than most Americans would probably prefer. In sketching the confluence of factors that catalyzed the country's rise to wealth, power, and influence, historian Eric Rauchway explains that the modern United States resulted in large measure from fortuitous, fleeting geopolitics[2]. But Americans have usually attributed their country's rise to their own wisdom, character, or good standing with the almighty. Such explanations warm the heart when one's country is on the upswing but have depressing implications on the other side of the cycle of civilizations. For their psychic health, Americans may wish to learn how to credit or blame exogenous forces.

Nineteenth-century Europeans already had their own ways of ridiculing the American pretence that the United States represented divine will imprinted upon geography. Sadly for this book, Otto von Bismarck, a relentless observer of nation-states within geopolitical systems, probably did not utter a brilliant epigram often attributed to him: "There is a special providence that protects idiots, drunkards, children, and the United States of America." The earliest printed version of the remark dates to 1849, when it was plausibly attributed to José Correia da Serra, the acerbic Portuguese envoy to the United States in the 1810s. This Enlightenment-style Catholic abbot, a renowned botanist and friend of the deist Thomas Jefferson, also contrived a familiar epithet for then-ramshackle Washington: City of Magnificent Distances. Wikiquotes even has an analysis of the misattribution to Bismarck that demonstrates that the adage was familiar throughout the late 1800s. American writers, skeptical of their compatriots' pretences to being the deserved beneficiaries of the divine plans, repeated in diverse forms and with

[2] *Eric Rauchway*, Blessed among Nations. How the World Made America (New York 2006).

varying levels of amusement the observation that God indeed watches over children, fools, drunkards, and the United States[3].

Despite this ridicule, millions of Americans persisted throughout the twentieth century in the belief that providence had assigned power, wealth, and a mission to the United States. As this book was being prepared for press, a notably nervous version of the interminable American exceptionalism debate broke out in the media. The anxiety of course stems from the gradual rising to consciousness of some unpleasant realities of which authors in this book are certainly aware: If the divine plan for the United States in the future is less exalted than in the past, the country's vast lower middle class and working class face economic struggles unto several generations. Political opportunism made this latest episode in the career of Manifest Destiny particularly distressing. Political operators of questionable scruples drummed up this new round of exceptionalist imagery as an unsubtle device for insinuating that the current president – the first from an immigrant background other than European – does not have the spiritual foundation needed to comprehend what is so special about the United States. Also, the drummers intended to pander to that segment of the American electorate inclined to believe that mortals can discern God's plan for nations.

The aggressively mindless tone of the ensuing discussion illustrates an unfortunate reality about the supposed reflective qualities of societies past their apogee: At dusk, when the owl of Minerva presumably flies about, the crows of belligerent ignorance take to the sky to mob her. The spectacle was too much for journalist Christopher Hitchens. A gloriously unrepentant infidel even though he was by then mortally ill, Hitchens mustered the strength to review evidence that an agency "more than ordinary *realpolitik*" might explain the country's remarkable transformation from a string of rickety colonial outposts to superpower. "So yes, I suppose you could say that the United States had some kind of luck, or force, or destiny, on its side", Hitchens conceded, but "I know of no European state that doesn't have some kind of national myth to the same effect"[4]. Thus did Hitchens arrive at the same acid dismissal of the providential version of American exceptionalism as Abbé Correia da Serra two centuries earlier.

God's probable reasons for embracing and abandoning nations are beyond the scope of a book of *Wissenschaft*. More relevant are those secular, social-scientific theories that posit an exceptional role for the United States in modern history. Of the standard versions of American exceptionalism that rely upon worldly and not divine causation, two of the best-known have only indirect relevance to the questions raised in this book. These are the geographic exceptionalism commonly identified with Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis; and the ideological ex-

[3] *John W. Reps*, Monumental Washington (Princeton 1967) 41. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Otto_von_Bismarck#Special_Providence (accessed December 4, 2011).

[4] *Christopher Hitchens*, In God They Trust. How the Conservative Belief in American Exceptionalism Has Become a Matter of Faith, in: Slate (Nov. 21, 2011) http://www.slate.com/authors.christopher_hitchens.html. Also, *Michael Kinsley*, U.S. Is Not the Greatest Country Ever, in: Politico.com (Nov. 2, 2010).

ceptionalism summarized in Louis Hartz's *Liberal Tradition in America*, among other places[5]. As Dorothy Ross observes, Hartz's ideological formulation, despite being rooted more in intellectual history than sociology or economics, dovetailed with the "First New Nation" expectionalism identified with Hartz's contemporaries such as Seymour Martin Lipset or W.W. Rostow. Throughout much of the twentieth century, American social scientists perceived the country as representing an "ideal, generic modernity", in Ross's words, because the American republic never needed to wrestle with the varied legacies of feudalism or Early Modern absolutism. This in turn implied that a powerful, internationalist, and suitably wise United States could spread "modernization-as-Americanization" around the world to everyone else's benefit. America would become less exceptional, because the world would catch up with America[6].

As explained in the introduction, Eisenstadt's multiple modernities model began as one avenue of attack upon this ethnocentric vision. But Eisenstadt's approach has proved unsatisfactory, for reasons discussed in several places in this book. The multiple modernities model seems inadequate on the intellectual ground that it posits modernized societies to be more self-contained and coherent than they were. And, it must be said, it dissatisfies a number of writers in this book on the political ground that like classic modernization theory, the multiple modernities model assumes that some segments within a society – in the American case the white business and professional classes – represent the mainstream, while minorities and dissenters embody peripheral or even retrograde elements. The surest way to escape the problem is to fracture modernity altogether. With modernity shattered into pieces, modernization-as-Americanization would have been a fantasy from the start, ever more chimerical as globalization leaves the American Century further behind.

This volume, then, provides a flavor of not just how Germans, but western intellectuals in general might deal with modernity's past career in an age when the West is no longer so inclined to proclaim itself an archetype for the future. Under the strong light of such contemporary moods and agendas, has this volume over-

[5] For a review of some of these geographic exceptionalist arguments: *Alan Lessoff*, Progress before Modernization: Foreign Interpretations of American Development in James Bryce's Generation, in: American Nineteenth Century History 1 (2000) 69–96. Also *Dorothy Ross*, The Origins of American Social Science (New York 1991); and *David Wrobel*, The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal (Lawrence 1993). *Louis Hartz*, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York 1955). Hartz's thesis that an ideological liberal consensus pervaded United States history generated decades of criticism. The best of this criticism recognized that Hartz did not intend his thesis as complacent celebration, but nearly all effective critics nonetheless pointed to the diversity of ideological traditions that ran through the country's history. *James T. Kloppenberg*, In Retrospect: Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*, in: Reviews in American History 29 (2001) 460–478. Also, *Mark Hulliung* (ed.), The American Liberal Tradition Reconsidered: The Contested Legacy of Louis Hartz (Lawrence 2010); and the fiftieth anniversary forum in Studies in American Political Development 19 (2005) 196–239.

[6] *Dorothy Ross*, American Modernities, Past and Present, in: American Historical Review 116 (2011) 703.

reached in its reassessment of the American past? Essays such as those by Silvan Niedermeier, Manfred Berg, and Michael Hochgeschwender do effectively refute the stereotyped schemes of modernity identified with Rostow-style development theory. In a different way, such essays contradict Eisenstadt's version of multiple modernities. If over time, different groups competed to shape the direction of a society by appropriating to themselves the label of modern and progressive, then a social scientist cannot in retrospect legitimately label some characteristics of a society as more inherent expressions of its modernity than those qualities that became tagged as peripheral or backward through a process of political competition. If not quite fractured, historical modernities were certainly more fluid and tentative than they have often been portrayed. Definitions of modernity ought in the future to be less schematic than the before-and-after charts one used to find in textbooks.

But still, even if Eisenstadt or Rostow cannot have the last word, the chastened iteration of Francis Fukuyama – and through him, the ghost perhaps of Seymour Martin Lipset and surely of Max Weber – might. As Brazil, India, China, Turkey, and South Africa emerge as new centers of modernized society, with Europe and even North America moving partially or wholly to the periphery, it is hard to envision that the technological, environmental, economic, and institutional manifestations of their modernity will vary as much from the western experience as their cultural, social, and political arrangements. In the volume, the writers who draw the most upon standard modernization approaches are those whose concerns include the environment, resources, institutions, cities, media and communications, and political economy. Such factors may in the end form the *stahlhartes Gehäuse* of modernity, within which only so much flow, fracture, competition, and interchange are possible. Fully modernized professional, industrial, and communications processes, after all, produced this book and distributed it to readers in whatever enclosure – steel, concrete, or wooden – they happen to find themselves now.

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