

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Oklahoma
HUMANITIES

SUMMER 2013

The **COMMON GOOD**

Perils of Partisanship | Markets | The American Spirit | Poetry | Civil Discourse

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Oklahoma HUMANITIES

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SUMMER 2013

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OHC is an independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide meaningful public engagement with the humanities—disciplines such as history, literature, film studies, ethics, and philosophy. The humanities offer a deeper understanding of ourselves and others by confronting us with the questions, values, and meanings of the human experience. As the state partner for the National Endowment for the Humanities, OHC brings people together to explore these ideas through programming and community grants that support book groups, exhibits, film festivals, teacher institutes, and more. OHC engages people in their own communities, providing forums for education, critical thinking, and productive civil discourse.

The opinions expressed in *Oklahoma* HUMANITIES are those of the authors. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in the magazine do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Oklahoma Humanities Council, its Board of Trustees, staff, or donors.

Reader letters are welcome and may be directed to the editor at: carla@okhumanities.org or by mailing to the above address. Letters are published subject to editorial discretion and may be edited for clarity or space.

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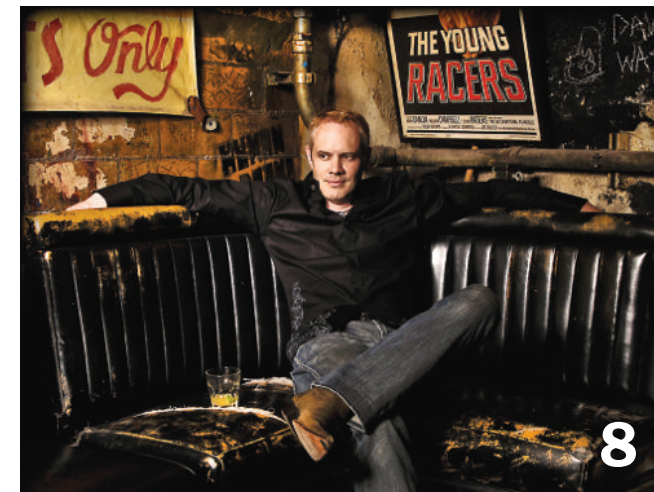
ON THE COVER

Those Who Seek Mercy by Dennis R. Scott. Tulsa artist Dennis Scott is a retired English teacher with time now for pursuits as a writer, lyricist, poet, craftsman, and artist. Whether you call it abstract, impressionistic, or surreal, his digital art depicts life as he sees it. Says Dennis, "It's all about taking chances." dennisrscott.com



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THE COMMON GOOD

If there's one thing we can agree to disagree on, it's "the common good." From healthcare to national defense, affirmative action to income tax rates, we're passionate about what we believe is in the best interests of all. The Preamble of the Constitution reminds us that we came together to "form a more perfect union" and to "promote the general welfare"; yet, neither Congress nor we as neighbors seem capable of compromise. As Americans we are discordantly divisive and stridently stubborn. How, then, have we sustained this great experiment in democracy so well for so long? What is it that drives us to our distinctly American individualism, yet compels us to cooperate for the benefit of our fellow man? These are the questions we contemplate in this issue. As equal partners in the national dialogue, let us now consider "The Common Good."

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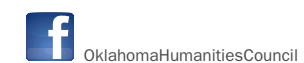
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BY SCOTT GELFAND





From the Executive Director
ANN THOMPSON

The theme for this issue reflects the current national discourse on what we as Americans understand as the “common good.” Undoubtedly, it is a survival mechanism—just human nature—to think of our own wellbeing before that of others.

My first memory of considering the common good came around 1970, when I was sixteen years old. At that time, Jesse Jackson headed up Operation Breadbasket, an organization dedicated to improving economic opportunities for black communities. I attended several rallies with my church group at the old Capitol Theater on the south side of Chicago to hear Jackson preach.

I lived in a homogenously white suburb and those Saturday mornings (when we were all exhorted to respond to Jackson’s “I Am—Somebody!”) brought me an awareness of another segment of American society, one not benefiting from the American Dream and certainly alien from the experience I knew.

At one such rally the audience was invited to participate in a motorcade to City Hall to protest the lack of voter registration sites in that part of town. Not a voter myself yet, I remember thinking that, for all this ardent expression and activity to take place, voting must really be important.

How we vote reflects our own interests, that’s certain, but it also reflects how we view the role of government. “Core government functions” is a popular phrase used by state and national legislators in debates over taxing and spending. They’re asking, *What are the essential or “core” functions of government? How do we determine what those functions are? And how do we execute them in a way that benefits “the many” rather than “the few”?*

It is good, from time to time, for us to think about the common good, what role our government plays in promoting it, and what we can all do to achieve it. If there are limited resources, how might we best use them to create a strong society? Our hope is that this issue of our magazine, with varied views on “The Common Good,” offers perspective for the difficult conversations ahead.

Letters

PERFECT TIMING

WOW! I was so excited when I opened my Winter 2013 “Popular Culture” issue of *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* magazine (not only dazzling and colorful, but perfectly timed)! Here at the Sayre campus of SWOSU, we host a workshop for English teachers in conjunction with a high school student writing contest. Our committee had just decided on the theme of “Hurray for Hollywood” and were searching for ways to incorporate visual literacy.

All of your magazine’s articles were perfect for our event. Considering the impact of images and visual media in contemporary culture today, teachers will love the ideas stimulating the critical thinking of sci-fi fans, reality-TV junkies, and every student in between. I also will introduce the EXTRA! online feature of your magazine at our workshop.

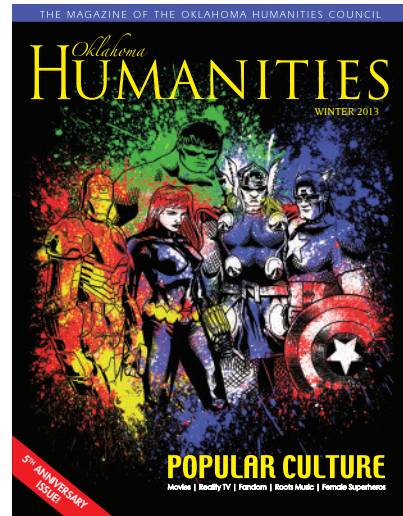
Filmmaker George Lucas said, “If students aren’t taught the language of sound and images, shouldn’t they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read or write?” Thanks for helping us help our students.

—Terry Ford, Language Arts Instructor
Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Sayre

LUNCHTIME EPIPHANY

Sitting at my desk of a Friday with a pile of stuff that has yet to be touched, I plucked out *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* (Winter 2013) and retreated to a corner with my hot cup of soup. Lucky me! What a terrific issue, and the article on Reality TV has (Oh, Lordy!) helped me understand reality TV shows at last! Thank you to my colleagues in Oklahoma.

—Jamil Zainaldin, President
Georgia Humanities Council



Send your comments, questions, and suggestions to Editor Carla Walker at: carla@okhumanities.org or mail correspondence to *Oklahoma HUMANITIES*, Attn.: Editor, 428 W. California Ave., Ste. 270, Oklahoma City, OK 73102.

TAKING ISSUE

[In response to Winter 2013, “Scarlett Johansson in a Catsuit—Superhero or Super Cliché?”] As a little girl I began reading Marvel Comics in the early 1960s, when titles such as “The Hulk” and “The Avengers” originated. “The Avengers” title is fifty years old this year, and The Hulk as a character originated even earlier.

If I had a nickel for every time a male superhero was struck by The Hulk, and for every time [the character] Loki insults a male hero, I would be rich. These simply are the things that The Hulk and Loki do. The Hulk is a savage and Loki is a villain. That they treat Black Widow the same way in the 2012 “Avengers” movie indicates nothing bad about the portrayal of female superheroes. It merely indicates that Black Widow gets the same treatment as everybody else.

Given these considerations, author Marc DiPaolo’s statement that “Neither of these portrayals commands the character respect” is illogical and unwarranted. He should have stuck to actual instances of filmmakers, comic book writers, and comic book artists treating female characters unjustly. Certainly over the last fifty-odd years there have been many real instances of this. In 1971, I myself wrote to Marvel Comics protesting against it. [My] observations—as a female reader of superhero comic books, who took an active part in 1960s and 1970s fandom—differs markedly from DiPaolo’s article. I was there; I remember.

—Dr. Randi Eldevik, Associate Professor of English
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater

A LITTLE LEVITY

I confess to having giggled my way through your “End Notes” [Winter 2013, page 31]—a piece in which you cleverly persuaded readers that scholars and practitioners in the humanities now and then poke their noses into popular culture as well as into tomes too heavy to lift. Well done!

—Sandra Soli, Edmond

LEAVE A LEGACY

Take advantage of the Charitable IRA Rollover Provision.

Deadline: December 31, 2013

By making a gift provision in your will or trust—often referred to as a planned gift—you can defer a contribution, relieve the tax burden on your estate and, in some cases, retain an income stream during your lifetime while still creating a lasting legacy to benefit the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Contact Traci Jinkens, OHC Marketing & Development Director: (405) 235-0280 or traci@okhumanities.org.



From the OHC Board of Trustees
DR. WILLIAM BRYANS, CHAIR

While the idea of the common good is widely accepted, exactly what it entails often proves elusive. In a literal sense, the common good applies to attributes and practices that benefit all members of society. Rarely do all agree on what constitutes the common good. Differences revolve around two fundamental questions. Who are those making up the “common?” What exactly is the “good” to be realized?

Allow me to use an example from American colonial history to illustrate this dynamic. The Puritans of Massachusetts Bay sought to create their version of the City Upon a Hill, a society based on their religious and social principles. In doing so, they sought to redeem the Church of England and demonstrate a superior alternative to English society and government. For their utopian experiment to succeed, the Puritans needed to intertwine religious belief and civil governance to promote what they believed was the common good. When individuals challenged Puritan orthodoxy, they equally challenged civil authority. Allowing them to remain in Massachusetts undermined the Puritan version of the common good. Consequently, Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams were banished. Quaker Mary Dryer was executed.

My aim is not to disparage the concept of the common good, but rather to argue it is often ambiguous and contested. Just examine the contemporary debates over health care, environmental pollution, support for public education, eradication of poverty, and numerous other issues. Advocates from all sides often evoke the common good in staking out their positions.

In a diverse society that also values individualism, differences over the common good will always remain. The humanities, however, provide the perspective for pursuing the common good in thoughtful and meaningful ways which can result in the greatest good to the greatest number of individuals. This is why the humanities are so important in our civic culture, perhaps now more than ever. Please consider joining me in supporting the work of the Oklahoma Humanities Council in promoting this perspective.

Datebook

Hear | Read | See | Experience

Find more OHC events at: okhumanities.org/calendar

FORUM

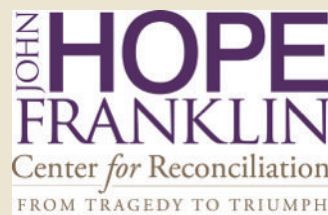
*The Value of Reconciliation:
Opportunity, Equality, and Race*

May 29 – 31

Hyatt Regency, Tulsa

100 E. 2nd St.

Info: 918/295-5009



This 4th National Symposium from the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation will explore academic research and community projects that address reconciliation in America, with a special focus on economic and social dimensions. The keynote address and Town Hall discussion on May 30th are free and open to the public. A registration fee applies for symposium participation.

OKLAHOMA CHAUTAUQUA

The Roaring Twenties

May 28 – June 1 • Altus
Southern Prairie Library Sys.

421 N. Hudson

Info: 580/477-2890

June 4 – 8 • Tulsa
OSU-Tulsa

700 N. Greenwood Ave.

Info: 918/549-7492

June 11 – 15 • Enid
507 S. 4th

Cherokee Strip Regional
Heritage Center

Humphrey Village

Info: 580/237-1907



June 18 – 22 • Lawton
Lawton Public Library

110 S.W. 4th

Info: 580/581-3450

The 1920s was a decade of American opulence and cultural change. It “roared” as tradition battled with modernism. Come and meet five of the era’s most illustrious characters: Bessie Coleman, Babe Ruth, Will Rogers, Henry Ford, and Zelda Fitzgerald. Evening performances and daytime workshops are free and open to the public.

EXHIBIT

*Bending, Weaving, Dancing:
The Art of Woody Crumbo*

Through May 19

Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa

1400 N. Gilcrease Museum Rd.

Info: 918/596-2706



Woody Crumbo, *Singers for the Dance*
Oil on canvas, Gilcrease Museum

Highlights the talents of artist Woody Crumbo and the “Golden Age” of Native American painting. Programming includes a seminar, dance, and interpretation. Admission fees apply; call for details.

Humanities Headlines



Palatka High School plays Menendez High School, Florida, 2010.
Photo by Lindsay Wiles Gramana

Call for Host Sites

OHC is accepting host site applications for *Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America*, a Smithsonian traveling exhibit that will tour six lucky Oklahoma communities from March 2015 to December 2015. [See info about our current exhibit, *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* opposite.] *Hometown Teams* examines how sports have shaped America’s national character. The project is designed to benefit rural communities and is made possible through Museum on Main Street (MoMS), a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution and the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Small towns organize community events and volunteers; in return, they receive guidance from OHC staff, consultations with a humanities scholar appointed to the project, and the expertise of MoMS professionals. Benefits include higher visibility, increased attendance, professional museum training, and capacity-building improvements. Interested communities may apply online at: www.okhumanities.org. Deadline for applications is October 1, 2013.

Seeking Nominations – OHC Board of Trustees

The Oklahoma Humanities Council invites nominations for candidates to serve on its Board of Trustees. Mail nominations to OHC by May 31, 2013, at: 428 W. California Avenue, Suite 270, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73102. Include a vitae and letter of nomination that emphasizes the candidate’s strengths in the following areas: dedication to promoting statewide programming in humanities disciplines; experience in fundraising; and willingness to attend three meetings per year and serve on various committees. Nominees from across the state are encouraged.



New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music

The Smithsonian exhibit *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* continues its tour of the state. You won’t want to miss this one! Exhibit themes examine the styles, instruments, and ideas at the heart of American music.

POTEAU • May 4 – June 15

Patrick Lynch Public Library • 208 S. McKenna • (918) 647-9330

HOBART • June 22 – August 3

The Stanley Building • 300 S. Washington • (580) 726-5900

FREDERICK • August 10 – September 21

Lois Long Ctr., Ramona Theatre • 114 S. 9th St. • (580) 305-5689

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress. Oklahoma programming is supported by BancFirst; Bank of Commerce; Beaver Express Service; The Boeing Company; Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; E. P. & Roberta L. Kirschner Foundation; University of Oklahoma Press; Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund; and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Photo: Musicians in Washington Square Park. Photo by Diana Davies, Smithsonian Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections.

Call for Award Nominations

OHC is accepting nominations for the 2014 Oklahoma Humanities Awards. These awards are presented annually to recognize individuals, projects, and organizations that have contributed significantly to the understanding of the humanities in Oklahoma. Forms and guidelines are posted on our website: www.okhumanities.org/oklahoma-humanities-awards. Deadline for nominations is September 1, 2013.



Britton Gildersleeve, Ph.D.
OHC Board of Trustees
Director Emerita
Oklahoma State University Writing Project

Why I Give

I never give anything—money, time, energy—unless my investment is returned at least five-fold.

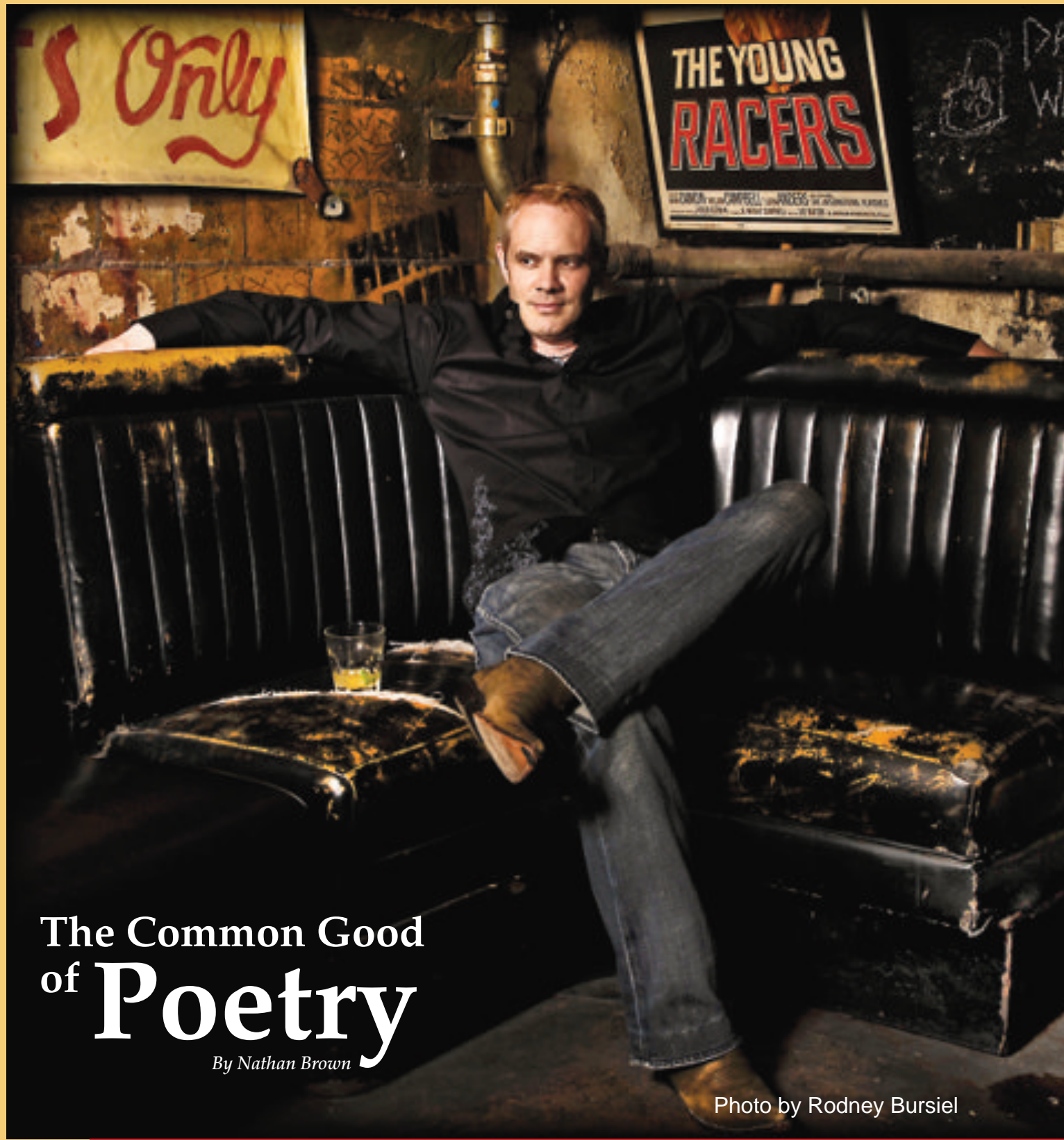
My contributions to the Oklahoma Humanities Council are selfish. When I teach a workshop on African American literature and history or lead a *Let’s Talk About It, Oklahoma!* reading and discussion group, I learn far more from the men and women who join me. Each participant shares his or her perspective, often very different from mine, and we talk about the humanities, which are—to paraphrase Alexander Pope—the proper study of human beings.

When donors from around the state match my financial contribution, I know that together we make an impact that provides benefits on a much larger scale. My contribution (indeed every donor’s gift) is important not due to its size, but because it shows commitment to this shared endeavour, this ship of many sails: history, literature, philosophy; book festivals, film screenings, community forums; scholar research, *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* magazine, and more.

Each person’s gift—whether it’s their time organizing an exhibit or their money to fund rural and urban seed grants or their expertise to enhance education through teacher institutes—is an investment in Oklahoma, in our towns and cities, and in each other. We are fortunate to have a strong Humanities Council deeply committed to bringing national exhibits and local programming to every Oklahoman in the state.

But for me? When I give to the OHC, what I see is a network of learning and sharing spreading through the state. Who wouldn’t want to be part of that?

Want to join Britton Gildersleeve in support of OHC? Use the donation envelope in this magazine or visit our website and click on “Donate.” www.okhumanities.org



The Common Good of Poetry

By Nathan Brown

Photo by Rodney Bursiel

Poetry has always had the “common good” in mind.

Even during darker eras, when the common good might have only been in the back of poetry’s mind, it’s always been there. Some might say that the common good is the reason poetry exists—the preservation of our stories, those first portraits of community and collective history. However we choose to see it, we have always had with us the poet, the “relentless observer” taking it all in, then gently knocking on our skulls when it’s time to deliver the message.

Though one could argue whether or not poetry is the oldest of all the art forms, there’s little doubt that for thousands of years it has been one of the most respected. It’s had its ups and downs, of course. Bad poets are sprinkled over every generation in order to keep us guessing. And we have to take into consideration the times when, for instance, poets had to keep their words about the king in “praise mode” or they were sure to lose their heads. While the joker got away with murder, the poet went straight to the gallows.

Then we have the difficult question of what in the world happened to American poetry in the twentieth century. Academics will crucify me for this gross oversimplification, but the bottom line is that, at some point, poetry wandered off into the halls and way up into the towers of the university, and—outside of a brief acid trip in the ‘60s—it never left. I’m not going to pick a fight with professors in a thousand-word article, but I am going to pop my knuckles and offer this problematic claim:

Poetry walked away from the *music*, its original tune, its purpose, which is—the common good. Not the good of the big prizes and awards. Not the good of the best Master of Fine Arts programs. Not the good of doing whatever it takes to get our work into the big reviews and journals. And though I’ll not mention any by name, they might have words like “New” and “Yorker” in them.

That’s not what I want to focus on, though. What I do want to say is that there is now a growing team of great American poets giving us work that does not buy into all of that. They have kept the common good in mind. They are accessible, yet masterful. We, as readers, can understand what they are saying and, at the same time, reel from their command of language. Names like Stephen Dunn, Sharon Olds, Mary Oliver, and Billy Collins come to mind. But that’s only scratching the surface.

My mission as Poet Laureate of Oklahoma is to spread the word of this “other” kind of poetry to every book club, writers’ group, school, and library in every corner and town of this fine state that will invite me out and let them know that poetry, at least some of it, is coming back to them, and that maybe they should give it one more chance. A Quixotic dream, I know. But I sometimes surprise people with just how much I mean it. Consider these words from Salman Rushdie:

A Poet’s work is to name the unnamable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world, and stop it from going to sleep.

continued on page 10

BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS

When God swings the fist of weather in Oklahoma, we pull up seats and lean into the performance—

here on the stage that gave us one of the great panoramic visions of the 20th Century when it comes to heaven’s fits of meteorological rage.

The Dust Bowl, stirred up by an army of angel wings, came in like a black tidal wave of interstellar grit and dirt.

It ground its stained teeth as it passed over and turned small homesteads and barns into dunes and shallow graves.

The few surviving souls were forced to punch holes through shingles in the roof to get a view of the damage.

Heard tell of one old man who said, *Ol’ Noah never had no troubles like this. Least he had time to build a boat.*

—Nathan Brown, *Karma Crisis*, 2012
Used by permission of the author

August 22, 6:30 p.m.
McAlester Public Library
401 N. 2nd, McAlester
Info: 918/426-0930
Poetry reading and Q&A
Free and open to the public

An Evening with
Nathan Brown
Oklahoma State Poet Laureate



HONESTLY,

I'm 38-and-a-half years old, and she still packs little ice chests and picnic baskets for my road trips, right down to the red and white checkered napkins and plastic-ware.

And I want to tell her, I have money now, mom. I've learned to shop, don't eat at McDonalds anymore. But, I don't because I love her food.

Here at the tail end of a PhD, she still follows me to the door of the house I grew up in, forcing Ziploc Baggies of frozen bread into my already stuffed hands while telling me how to know when things have gone bad in the fridge. Her face betrays a genuine fear that I'll eat the expired and die.

And I want to tell her, I've had 20 years of higher ed now, mom, and I've finally figured out the whole mold thing, the smell of bad meat ... and bad people. But, I don't, because I need the bread, and I'm pretty sure I ate something a little funky a few days ago.

I've already lived longer than Christ did and I've still gotta eat my veggies when I have dinner with her and dad.

And I want to tell her, longevity is not one of the hallmarks of my profession. But, I don't because I know I need the fiber.

And, besides, nothing in the universe can stand up to the sheer force and power of a mother's love.

—Nathan Brown, *Karma Crisis*, 2012
Used by permission of the author

THE COMMON GOOD OF POETRY
continued from page 9

I take this charge quite seriously. And though I'm known for leaning into humor quite a bit in my own work, it's only because I feel like we need to smile, take a few deep breaths in the wake of all the news we get these days. Things are serious enough already. Or, what I sometimes tell other poets in reading and performance workshops: People are depressed enough as it is. They don't need your help to have to increase their medication. But even through humor and what I call "occasional sideways cynicism," we can still have the common good passionately at heart.

We need good poetry more than some might think. Our times are crying out for it—for its brevity in a world full of mindless words and rants, its bravery in the face of what we do not want to hear, and its power—like a great song—to pull us over to the side of the road when it's time for a good cry and some inner change.

This is my challenge, as well as my invitation, to anyone who's listening. ■

WHITHER IT GOES

Chins slide off palms in the halls of higher learning, and the beautiful young grad student

squeaks and stammers her way through her paper on: *The Universality of Place in the Poetry of Walt Whitman.*

And the amber waves of her hair look as if they might drown in the sea of suggestions

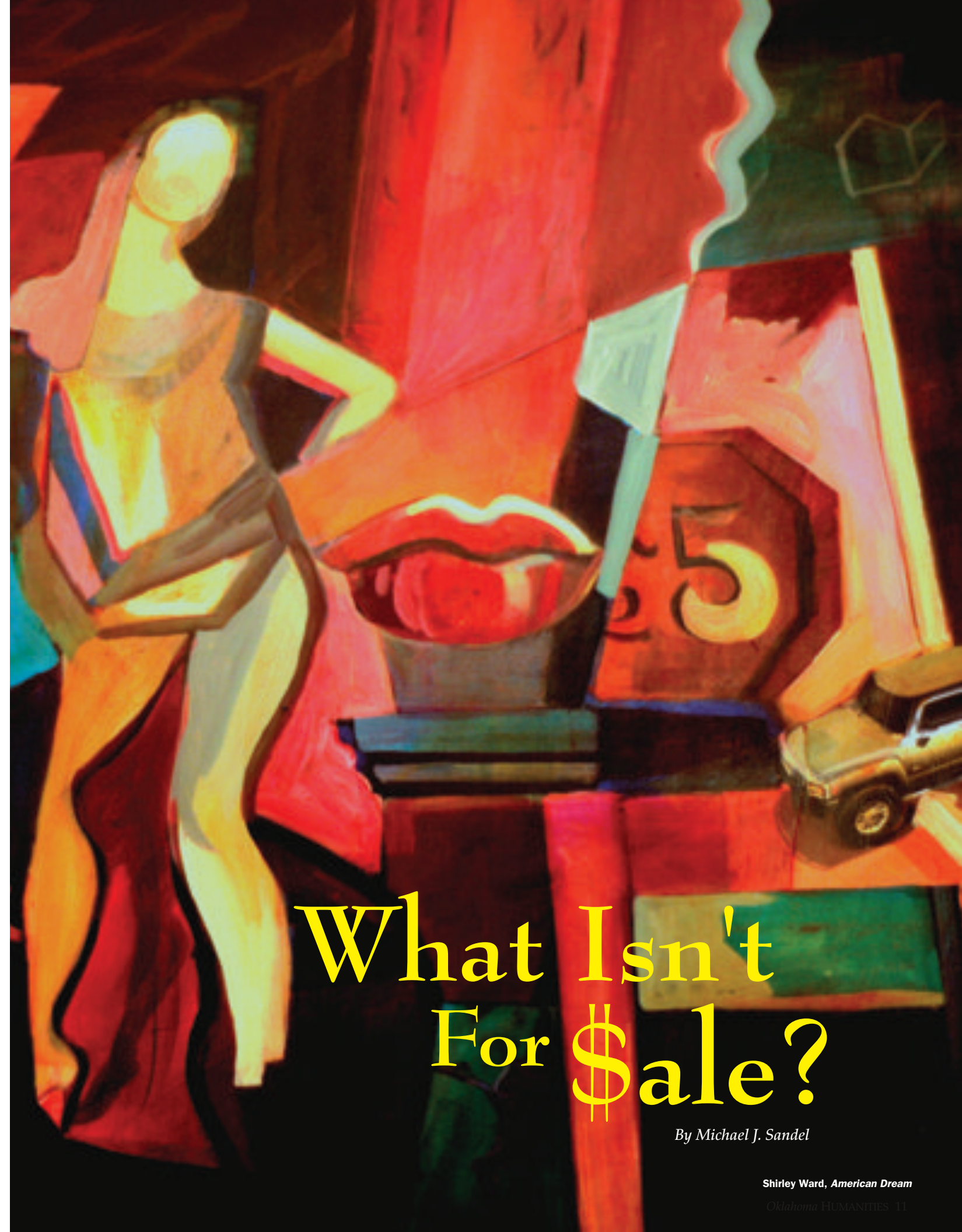
she received from some professor to put more words like "antinomian" and "binary" in her presentation.

Such is the hegemonious enterprise we carry on in the English Buildings of the post-postmodern world.

And in the hot flush of her cheeks, and the quivering confusion of her quaking voice,

the crowd can do little more than watch her love of poems begin to die.

—Nathan Brown, *Karma Crisis*, 2012
Used by permission of the author



What Isn't For \$ale?

By Michael J. Sandel

There are some things money can't buy— but these days, not many. Almost everything is up for sale.

For example:

- *A prison-cell upgrade: \$90 a night.* In Santa Ana, California, and some other cities, nonviolent offenders can pay for a clean, quiet jail cell, without any non-paying prisoners to disturb them.
- *Access to the carpool lane while driving solo: \$8.* Minneapolis, San Diego, Houston, Seattle, and other cities have sought to ease traffic congestion by letting solo drivers pay to drive in carpool lanes, at rates that vary according to traffic.
- *The services of an Indian surrogate mother: \$8,000.* Western couples seeking surrogates increasingly outsource the job to India, and the price is less than one-third the going rate in the United States.
- *The right to shoot an endangered black rhino: \$250,000.* South Africa has begun letting some ranchers sell hunters the right to kill a limited number of rhinos, to give the ranchers an incentive to raise and protect the endangered species.
- *Your doctor's cellphone number: \$1,500 and up per year.* A growing number of "concierge" doctors offer cellphone access and same-day appointments for patients willing to pay annual fees ranging from \$1,500 to \$25,000.
- *The right to emit a metric ton of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere: \$10.50.* The European Union runs a carbon-dioxide-emissions market that enables companies to buy and sell the right to pollute.
- *The right to immigrate to the United States: \$500,000.* Foreigners who invest \$500,000 and create at least 10 full-time jobs in an area of high unemployment are eligible for a green card that entitles them to permanent residency.

Not everyone can afford to buy these things. But today there are lots of new ways to make money. If you need to earn some extra cash, here are some novel possibilities:

- *Sell space on your forehead to display commercial advertising: \$10,000.* A single mother in Utah who needed money for her son's education was paid \$10,000 by an online casino to install a permanent tattoo of the casino's Web address on her forehead. Temporary tattoo ads earn less.
- *Serve as a human guinea pig in a drug-safety trial for a pharmaceutical company: \$7,500.* The pay can be higher or lower, depending on the invasiveness of the procedure used to test the drug's effect and the discomfort involved.
- *Fight in Somalia or Afghanistan for a private military contractor: up to \$1,000 a day.* The pay varies according to qualifications, experience, and nationality.
- *Stand in line overnight on Capitol Hill to hold a place for a lobbyist who wants to attend a congressional hearing: \$15–\$20 an hour.* Lobbyists pay line-standing companies, who hire homeless people and others to queue up.
- *If you are a second-grader in an underachieving Dallas school, read a book: \$2.* To encourage reading, schools pay kids for each book they read.

WE LIVE IN A TIME when almost everything can be bought and sold. Over the past three decades, markets—and market values—have come to govern our lives as never before. We did not arrive at this condition through any deliberate choice. It is almost as if it came upon us.

What Isn't For Sale?

By Michael J. Sandel



PHOTO: STEPHANIE MITCHELL



Shirley Ward, *American Dream*

As the Cold War ended, markets and market thinking enjoyed unrivaled prestige, and understandably so. No other mechanism for organizing the production and distribution of goods had proved as successful at generating affluence and prosperity. And yet even as growing numbers of countries around the world embraced market mechanisms in the operation of their economies, something else was happening. Market values were coming to play a greater and greater role in social life. Economics was becoming an imperial domain. Today, the logic of buying and selling no longer applies to material goods alone. It increasingly governs the whole of life.

The years leading up to the financial crisis of 2008 were a heady time of market faith and deregulation—an era of market triumphalism. The era began in the early 1980s, when Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher proclaimed their conviction that markets, not government, held the key to prosperity and freedom. And it continued into the 1990s with the market-friendly liberalism of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, who moderated but consolidated the faith that markets are the primary means for achieving the public good.

Today, that faith is in question. The financial crisis did more than cast doubt on the ability of markets to allocate risk efficiently.

It also prompted a widespread sense that markets have become detached from morals, and that we need to somehow reconnect the two. But it's not obvious what this would mean, or how we should go about it.

Some say the moral failing at the heart of market triumphalism was greed, which led to irresponsible risk-taking. The solution, according to this view, is to rein in greed, insist on greater integrity and responsibility among bankers and Wall Street executives, and enact sensible regulations to prevent a similar crisis from happening again.

This is, at best, a partial diagnosis. While it is certainly true that greed played a role in the financial crisis, something bigger was and is at stake. The most fateful change that unfolded during the past three decades was not an increase in greed. It was the reach of markets, and of market values, into spheres of life traditionally governed by nonmarket norms. To contend with this condition, we need to do more than inveigh against greed; we need to have a public debate about where markets belong—and where they don't.

Consider, for example, the proliferation of for-profit schools, hospitals, and prisons, and the outsourcing of war to private military contractors. (In Iraq and Afghanistan, private contractors

have actually outnumbered U.S. military troops.) Consider the eclipse of public police forces by private security firms—especially in the U.S. and the U.K., where the number of private guards is almost twice the number of public police officers.

Or consider the pharmaceutical companies' aggressive marketing of prescription drugs directly to consumers, a practice now prevalent in the U.S. but prohibited in most other countries.

(If you've ever seen the television commercials on the evening news, you could be forgiven for thinking that the greatest health crisis in the world is not malaria or river blindness or sleeping sickness but an epidemic of erectile dysfunction.)

Consider too the reach of commercial advertising into public schools, from buses to corridors to cafeterias; the sale of "naming rights" to parks and civic spaces; the blurred boundaries, within journalism, between news and advertising, likely to blur further as newspapers and magazines struggle to survive; the marketing of "designer" eggs and sperm for assisted reproduction; the buying and selling, by companies and countries, of the right to pollute; a system of campaign finance in the U.S. that comes close to permitting the buying and selling of elections.

These uses of markets to allocate health, education, public safety, national security, criminal justice, environmental protection, recreation, procreation, and other social goods were for the most part unheard-of 30 years ago. Today, we take them largely for granted.

WHY WORRY THAT WE are moving toward a society in which everything is up for sale?

For two reasons. One is about inequality, the other about corruption. First, consider inequality. In a society where everything is for sale, life is harder for those of modest means. The more money can buy, the more affluence—or the lack of it—matters. If the only advantage of affluence were the ability to afford yachts, sports cars, and fancy vacations, inequalities of income and wealth would matter less than they do today. But as money comes to buy more and more, the distribution of income and wealth looms larger.

The second reason we should hesitate to put everything up for sale is more difficult to describe. It is not about inequality and fairness but about the corrosive tendency of markets. Putting a price on the good things in life can corrupt them. That's because markets don't only allocate goods; they express and promote certain attitudes toward the goods being exchanged. Paying kids to read books might get them to read more, but might also teach

them to regard reading as a chore rather than a source of intrinsic satisfaction. Hiring foreign mercenaries to fight our wars might spare the lives of our citizens, but might also corrupt the meaning of citizenship.

Economists often assume that markets are inert, that they do not affect the goods being exchanged. But this is untrue. Markets leave their mark. Sometimes, market values crowd out nonmarket values worth caring about.

When we decide that certain goods may be bought and sold, we decide, at least implicitly, that it is appropriate to treat them as commodities, as instruments of profit and use. But not all goods are properly valued in this way. The most obvious example is human beings. Slavery was appalling because it treated human beings as a commodity, to be bought

and sold at auction. Such treatment fails to value human beings as persons, worthy of dignity and respect; it sees them as instruments of gain and objects of use.

Something similar can be said of other cherished goods and practices. We don't allow children to be bought and sold, no matter how difficult the process of adoption can be or how willing impatient prospective parents might be. Even if the prospective buyers would treat the child responsibly, we worry that a market in children would express and promote the wrong way of valuing them. Children are properly regarded not as consumer goods but as beings worthy of love and care. Or consider the rights and obligations of citizenship. If you are called to jury duty, you can't hire a substitute to take your place. Nor do we allow citizens to sell their votes, even though others might be eager to buy them. Why not? Because we believe that civic duties are not private property but public responsibilities. To outsource them is to demean them, to value them in the wrong way.



David Holland, *Space Memorial to Earth's Conceptual Curse*. David Holland's observations of modern life are presented through oil paintings and oil pastels. With wit and irony he portrays the perplexities of the human condition in a simple, illustrative style that shows how modern society affects our lives. davidhollandartist.com

These examples illustrate a broader point: some of the good things in life are degraded if turned into commodities. So to decide where the market belongs, and where it should be kept at a distance, we have to decide how to value the goods in question—health, education, family life, nature, art, civic duties, and so on. These are moral and political questions, not merely economic ones. To resolve them, we have to debate, case by case, the moral meaning of these goods, and the proper way of valuing them.

This is a debate we didn't have during the era of market triumphalism. As a result, without quite realizing it—without ever deciding to do so—we drifted from having a market economy to being a market society.

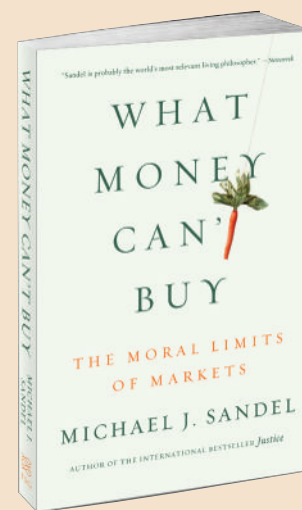
The difference is this: A market economy is a tool—a valuable and effective tool—for organizing productive activity. A market society is a way of life in which market values seep into every aspect of human endeavor. It's a place where social relations are made over in the image of the market.

THE GREAT MISSING DEBATE in contemporary politics is about the role and reach of markets. Do we want a market economy, or a market society? What role should markets play in public life and personal relations? How can we decide which goods should be bought and sold, and which should be governed by nonmarket values? Where should money's writ not run?

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Even if you agree that we need to grapple with big questions about the morality of markets, you might doubt that our public discourse is up to the task. It's a legitimate worry. At a time when political argument consists mainly of shouting matches on cable television, partisan vitriol on talk radio, and ideological food fights on the floor of Congress, it's hard to imagine a reasoned public debate about such controversial moral questions as the right way to value procreation, children, education, health, the environment, citizenship, and other goods. I believe such a debate is possible, but only if we are willing to broaden the terms of our public discourse and grapple more explicitly with competing notions of the good life.

In hopes of avoiding sectarian strife, we often insist that citizens leave their moral and spiritual convictions behind when they enter the public square. But the reluctance to admit arguments about the good life into politics has had an unanticipated consequence. It has helped prepare the way for market triumphalism, and for the continuing hold of market reasoning.

In its own way, market reasoning also empties public life of moral argument. Part of the appeal of markets is that they don't pass judgment on the preferences they satisfy. They don't ask whether some ways of valuing goods are higher, or worthier, than others. If someone is willing to pay for sex, or a kidney, and a consenting adult is willing to sell, the only question the economist asks is "How much?" Markets don't wag fingers. They don't discriminate between worthy preferences and unworthy ones. Each party to a deal decides for him- or herself what value to place on the things being exchanged.

This nonjudgmental stance toward values lies at the heart of market reasoning, and explains much of its appeal. But our reluctance to engage in moral and spiritual argument, together with our embrace of markets, has exacted a heavy price: it has drained public discourse of moral and civic energy, and contributed to the technocratic, managerial politics afflicting many societies today.

A debate about the moral limits of markets would enable us to decide, as a society, where markets serve the public good and where they do not belong. Thinking through the appropriate place of markets requires that we reason together, in public, about the right way to value the social goods we prize. It would be folly to expect that a more morally robust public discourse, even at its best, would lead to agreement on every contested question. But it would make for a healthier public life. And it would make us more aware of the price we pay for living in a society where everything is up for sale. ■

"What Isn't For Sale?" appeared in *The Atlantic* magazine, April 2012, and was adapted from the book *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* by Michael J. Sandel. Copyright © 2012 by Michael J. Sandel. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

EXTRA! Find questions and topics for discussion on Michael Sandel's *What Money Can't Buy*, listen to an audiobook excerpt, link to videos, and more at: okhumanities.org/extra



Kristal Tomshany, *Moment of Truth*

Kristal Tomshany is an adjunct art instructor at Tulsa Community College. Matter and space hold intimate conversations in her work as a studio artist as she explores the flux between static, three-dimensional form and the gestural expression of energy. sorghumsentinel.org

BEYOND Partisanship



BY MICKEY EDWARDS

Democracy requires an openness to diverse opinion and a fostering of vigorous debate. But it also requires that each participant in that debate use his or her knowledge, experience, and judgment to make decisions for the public—not the partisan—good.

A

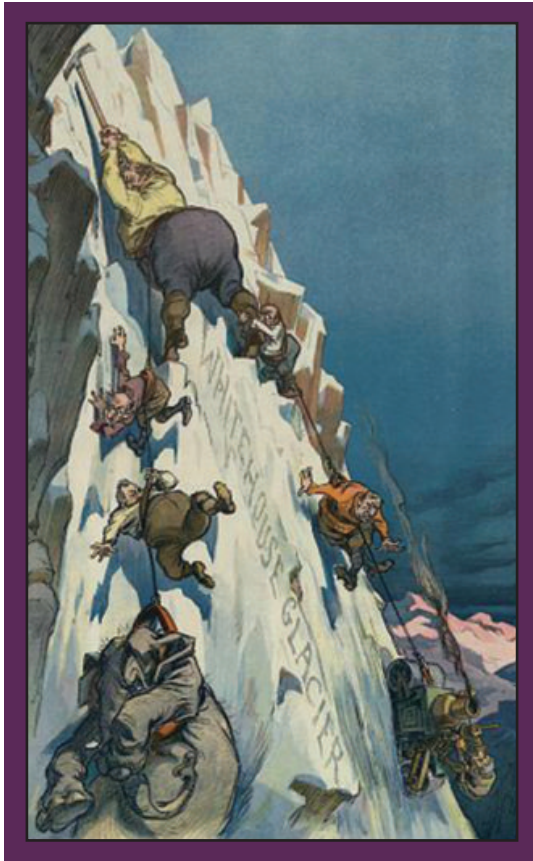
successful democracy is largely dependent on shared values and a commitment to civil discourse. A nation that is allergic to nuance and complexity can offer little guidance to its elected officials; a nation that cannot tolerate ambiguity or weigh evidence cannot easily be brought together in a common understanding of the community's problems, much less in a reasoned conversation about proposals to address those problems. (This is why the decline in educational standards and the disappearance of classroom instruction in civics and critical thinking are so devastating to our attempts at self-government.)

It has long been assumed that the conflicts within the House and Senate are so seemingly unbridgeable because they rest on the embrace of divergent values. But if Representative A and Representative B simply disagree on the "right" course of action—the one responsive to the highest values—compromise is still possible because there are often ways to accommodate those differences. If, for example, A places the highest premium on the protection of individual choice (the "liberty" imperative) and B values collective responsibility (the "social" obligation), solutions can be found that address communal problems using incentives rather than coercion, and creating minimal interference with freedom of choice. Another, less attractive, assumption has been at play as well. Liberals and Democrats sometimes tend to believe that conservatives and Republicans are either mean-spirited or—a shoulder shrug and an eye roll here—not very smart. Republicans and conservatives have the same view of Democrats and liberals: they just don't get it, and those who do get it don't seem to care very much about the rights of the housewife/shop owner/investor. But here, too, compromise seems attainable if the opposing sides are able to marshal enough voices in town meetings and visits

to congressional offices to force attention to the impacts of A's or B's proposals.

George Mason University economics professor Daniel B. Klein put his finger on one of the most difficult obstacles in the way of creating a Congress that is more amenable to cooperation and compromise. His observation came after he discovered a bias that prompted him to retract a study he had done a year earlier. Klein said that the study, which he conducted with Zeljka Buturovic, a public opinion researcher with a doctorate in psychology, found that respondents who had identified themselves as liberals or progressives "did much worse than conservatives and libertarians" when it came to "real-world understanding of basic economic principles." Klein (who describes himself as libertarian) subsequently published a summation of their findings in *The Wall Street Journal*, arguing that their research demonstrated that, as he later summarized it, "the American left was unenlightened, by and large, as to economic matters." That article was headlined "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader," thus suggesting that liberals are not. However, Klein and Buturovic subsequently did a follow-up study that showed that their original findings had been wrong; if the survey were done differently, they found, "under the right circumstances, conservatives and libertarians were as likely as anyone on the left to give wrong answers to economic questions."

Superficially, this would seem to be a reassuring discovery: rather than a case of dummies battling geniuses, it's simply a matter of conflicting views held by equally well-intentioned and intelligent competitors. But in fact the implications of what Klein and Buturovic found are quite disturbing, especially if one hopes for a Congress more inclined toward cooperation. "The proper inference from our work," Klein wrote in *The Atlantic*, "is not that



Cartoons of politicians falling off cliffs, financial or otherwise, aren't new. This one, entitled *Hanging On*, shows President Taft climbing a mountain labeled "White House Glacier." Members of his campaign committee hang from ropes attached to his waist. Illustration by Udo J. Keppler, c. 1912 by Keppler & Schwarzmann, for *Puck* magazine, October 2, 1912. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-27881.

the relative benefits of "tough love" and "comforting" love. We and our elected officials are operating from different ideas as to what the facts are. And while we may be willing to find common ground, we will do so within the facts we think we know. "Myside bias"—choosing the "fact" that validates your side's position—makes compromise almost inconceivable. If I "know" you are wrong, I can only try to stop you.

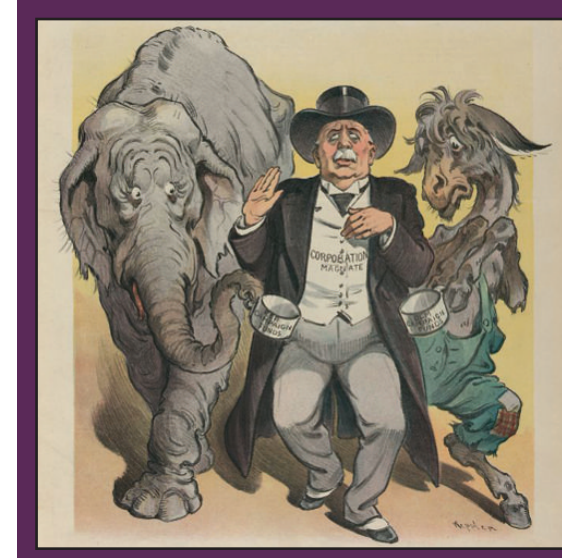
Nobody made the case for government as a cooperative enterprise more compellingly than Benjamin Franklin. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention were of many minds, and debate was robust. Franklin did not agree with all elements of the Constitution that finally emerged from the long debates and many compromises. But on the last day of the convention, September 17, 1787—the date we now celebrate as Constitution Day—Franklin, who was old and weak, wrote out an impassioned plea and gave it to his fellow Pennsylvania delegate, James Wilson, to read. Franklin readily admitted that there were parts of the Constitution "which I do not at present approve" but, he added, "I am not sure I shall never approve them. For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others." Franklin closed his remarks with an appeal to his fellow delegates to join him in approving the Constitution that guides us today. "On the whole, sir," he wrote, "I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it would, with me, on this occasion, doubt a little of his own infallibility, and to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to the instrument."

On October 2, 2011, retired Supreme Court Justice David Souter and I participated in a symposium, titled *American Institutions and a Civil*

one group is more enlightened or less. It's that 'myside bias'—the tendency to judge a statement according to how conveniently it fits with one's settled position—is pervasive among all of America's political groups." In other words, given a set of possible conclusions, politicians, like the rest of us, will choose not the one that comports with dispassionate analysis but the one that fits their own preconceptions. This was a common occurrence during the Cold War, with one group of Americans arguing that deploying space-based defensive missiles would increase our security, and others arguing that such a provocative deployment would increase the chances of war. Does government spending hurt or harm economic growth? Do relaxed college admissions requirements help or hurt disadvantaged students? Everybody reading these questions will "know" the right answers, but the answers each of us gives will likely be the ones that fit our preconceptions about the proper role of government, the roles of nature and nurture, and

Society, at the induction meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Calling compromise the "required practice" in our constitutional system, Souter noted that historian Jack Rakove had described compromise as the "necessary condition" that allowed the Founders to resolve the important differences that confronted them in Philadelphia. Constitutional lawyers, Souter said, "find it disquieting when the America polity seems to speak most loudly in terms of anti-compromise: that is, in terms of a rigid absolutism of principle on the part of one speaker or another, or indeed, on the part of one major political party or another." He issued a dire warning: "How long can we expect the American people to support a Constitution that is demonstrably inconsistent with the daily practice of politics in American life?"

This problem becomes even more intractable in the context of a Congress divided between rival teams, each operating from its own "facts" and each in a position to come down hard on any teammate who thinks for himself and begins to question the accepted orthodoxy. Eric Hoffer, in *The True Believer*, noted the penchant of individuals to seek to belong to something larger than themselves, something transcendent, a cause to which they can devote themselves and in which they can place their faith. Writing in *The New York Times Magazine* in 1971, Hoffer observed that both absolute power and absolute faith demand "absolute obedience ... simple solutions ... the viewing of compromise as surrender." When "true believers" are able to dominate a political party, for example through closed candidate selection processes, and can demand allegiance to their dogma, political rigidity



Henceforth. The Republican Elephant and the Democratic Donkey solicit contributions from the "Corporation Magnate" with cups labeled, respectively, "Rep. Campaign Funds" and "Dem. Campaign Funds." Illustration by Udo J. Keppler, c. 1905 by Keppler & Schwarzmann, for *Puck* magazine October 25, 1905. Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ppmsca-26001.

ensues. When party leaders are given the additional authority to punish unfaithfulness, the compromise necessary for a functioning democracy disappears.

Are there ways, then, even given the current party system, to reduce partisanship and encourage more independent thinking? Marcel Proust wrote that "the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." If members of Congress come to their tasks with

eyes fixed firmly on their responsibilities as part of a political machine, we can expect no more from them than what we have been getting. But if we open their eyes to the bigger entity to which they owe loyalty, we can change their behavior. Two of the nation's premier scholars, University of Pennsylvania President Amy Gutmann and Harvard professor Dennis Thompson, addressed the problem in a November 2011 op-ed in *The New York Times*. Noting that "there is no external escape from

an environment that rewards those who stand tenaciously on their principles and demonize their opponents," Gutmann and Thompson put it very bluntly: "Members of Congress need to change their minds about compromise, or voters will need to change the members of Congress."

There are also ways to encourage senators and representatives to think outside the confines of party identity. When new members of Congress are elected, they are offered several orientation sessions, none of which are required but each of which offers some beneficial instruction. The Library of Congress offers instruction in the nuances of legislative rules and behaviors as well as helpful tips about hiring and managing one's staff. I particularly remember

continued on page 30

One's-Self I Sing

Writing the American Spirit

How the literature of Emerson, Whitman, Twain, Hemingway, and Kerouac gave voice to the American experience



BY LORI LINDSEY

Much like the people of America, the American character is an amalgam of heritages that spans time and place. The American character did not simply or suddenly appear; it formed over the course of decades. The open frontier and a spirit of independence and optimism took part in its formation. One of the greatest and most visible aspects of this American character is the philosophy of self-reliance and individualism. This concept was, according to historian Henry Commager, “born of geography, nourished by history, confirmed by philosophy[.] self-reliance

was elevated to a philosophical creed, and in time individualism became synonymous with Americanism.” This singular strength of character is immediately evident in American literature. According to one school of historians, American literature did not truly exist until the middle part of the nineteenth century. That is not to say that Americans did not publish, but rather that their writing was not distinctly American, relying too heavily on British and other European styles. As a whole, nineteenth-century Americans were optimistic and energetic about the future and exhibited many of

the positive characteristics that twenty-first century people think of as “the American spirit.” They truly believed that the best was yet to come. Americans were courageous because they believed that strength of mind, integrity, hard work, and a bit of luck would ultimately lead to some greater reward and a better life. The self-made man became the symbol of what was best and possible in the United States. This was the era of the common man, when equality was valued highly and seemed to permeate all aspects of American life—thought, action, belief, and interpersonal relationships.



To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson
Self-Reliance

Ralph Waldo Emerson Prior to the 1820s, the United States had little to offer in terms of a unique American culture. The country’s reliance on European literature (and other markers of “true” civilization) changed with the publications and rising popularity of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson challenged Americans to look inward and to celebrate their strength and individuality. Industrialization, westward expansion, and the spread of democracy to include a greater segment of the population led many to embrace these concepts, placing Emerson as a central figure in the cultural history of American ideas.

Emerson’s definition of self-reliance calls for developing altruism: through self-reliance, one ultimately begins to think more about others and the universality of one’s actions. It is not merely the rugged individualism that later Americans would read into the concept. Emerson called for a close self-examination that leads people to see how their actions can impact others and increase the common good.

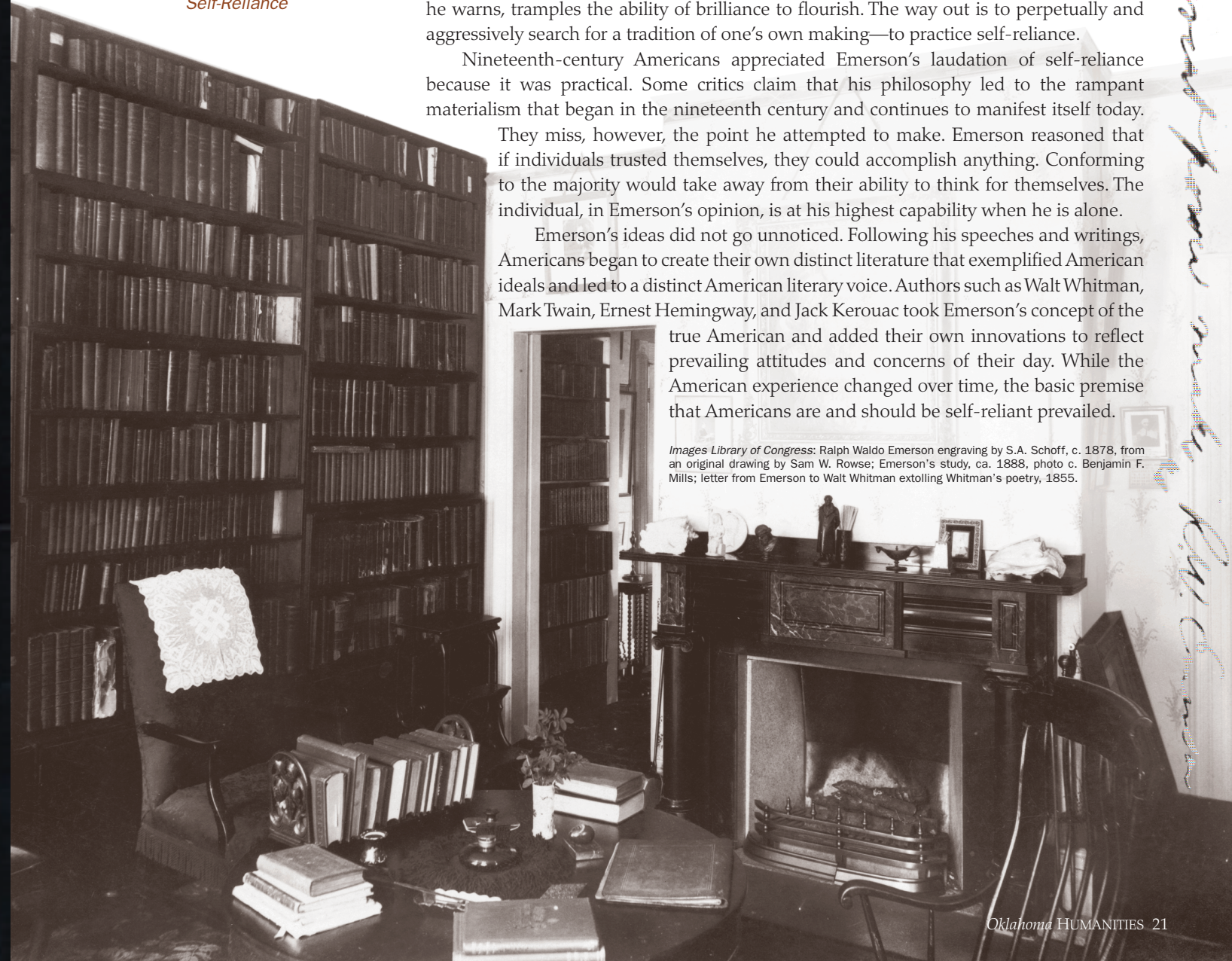
Emerson delivered one of his most influential lectures, “The American Scholar,” for the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1837. He observed that “meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views, which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were only young men in libraries, when they wrote these books.” Without downplaying the value of books, Emerson warns that Man the Thinker is better than the bookworm because the bookworm looks to the past. “But,” says Emerson, “genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead: not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates.” Blindly accepting tradition, he warns, tramples the ability of brilliance to flourish. The way out is to perpetually and aggressively search for a tradition of one’s own making—to practice self-reliance.

Nineteenth-century Americans appreciated Emerson’s laudation of self-reliance because it was practical. Some critics claim that his philosophy led to the rampant materialism that began in the nineteenth century and continues to manifest itself today.

They miss, however, the point he attempted to make. Emerson reasoned that if individuals trusted themselves, they could accomplish anything. Conforming to the majority would take away from their ability to think for themselves. The individual, in Emerson’s opinion, is at his highest capability when he is alone.

Emerson’s ideas did not go unnoticed. Following his speeches and writings, Americans began to create their own distinct literature that exemplified American ideals and led to a distinct American literary voice. Authors such as Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, and Jack Kerouac took Emerson’s concept of the true American and added their own innovations to reflect prevailing attitudes and concerns of their day. While the American experience changed over time, the basic premise that Americans are and should be self-reliant prevailed.

Images Library of Congress: Ralph Waldo Emerson engraving by S.A. Schoff, c. 1878, from an original drawing by Sam W. Rowse; Emerson’s study, ca. 1888, photo c. Benjamin F. Mills; letter from Emerson to Walt Whitman extolling Whitman’s poetry, 1855.



Walt Whitman was the first to capture Emerson's entreaties to celebrate individualism and the American experience. If Emerson can be viewed as the godfather of American literature, Whitman should be the poet laureate for his influence on subsequent writers and literary movements. For most of his career, Whitman edited and revised his collection of poems called *Leaves of Grass*. Karen Karbiener of New York University notes that, in this work, Whitman wrote a literary declaration of independence by creating a style radically different from his predecessors. Stultified by the more traditional methods of form, rhyme, and meter, he pioneered the use of free verse—what he called a more “cosmopolitan” expression of language. Whitman’s rally cry was that American poetry should personify Americans and inspire them; it should capture the movement and grandeur of the countryside and express the diversity of the American people.

Whitman’s work did many things for American literature, aside from celebrating American life. He used grass, a ubiquitous element across the country, as a symbol of democracy and equality; each “leaf” (a softer word than “blade”) is singular yet contributes to the whole. He also questioned the divisions of class, gender, and race, believing that such distinctions were irrelevant and actually ruinous to the American spirit. He challenged his readers to fulfill the great promise of the country by inspiring them to patriotism.



Walt Whitman

One's-Self I Sing

*One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.*

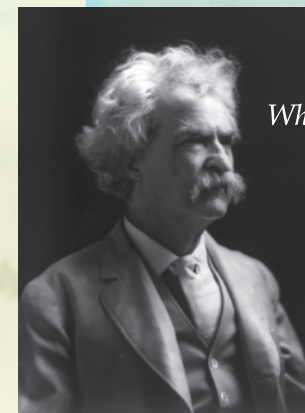
*Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I
say the Form complete is worthier far,
The Female equally with the Male I sing.*

*Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing. — Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass*

Images Library of Congress: Background, “Pine-Tree at Matsushma” illustration by Ella du Cane, 1908; portrait of Walt Whitman holding paper butterfly, by Phillips & Taylor, 1873; Whitman signature from an autographed portrait, c. George C. Cox, 1887.

Mark Twain took Emerson’s ideas on the individual and Americanism and parlayed them into prose. Twain’s travels introduced him to the nuances in cultures across the country—the South, the West, the Mississippi River, the Northeast—intimate knowledge that allowed him to write convincingly about all of them, to rise above others in his vivid portrayals of the American experience. Twain’s writing was the first to use dialect and local speech. His voice was uniquely American and uniquely his own. His writing was simple, playing on humor, sarcasm, and exaggeration, but at the same time conveying deeper themes about man versus civilization and the dangerous side of humanity, reflecting the evolutions taking place in American culture.

Twain also paid attention to what was popular in American media and incorporated that into his narratives. By tapping into the interests of the country he ensured that his writing was widely read. His characters question society and make the right decision based on their own experiences and feelings. Though *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Roughing It*, and *Life on the Mississippi* explore self-reliance and individuality, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is the fullest embodiment of this exploration and marks the apex of Twain’s career. The novel celebrates conscience and individuality while using the Mississippi River as a symbol of equality and freedom. When Huck is forced to decide whether Jim the slave should be treated like a human or like property, he chooses to follow his conscience because he cares less about the dictates of society than about being able to live with his decisions. Twain evokes Emerson’s ideal of self-reliance, in that Huck’s inner search leads to actions that benefit another human.



Whenever you find that you are on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect. — Mark Twain



Images Library of Congress: Background illustration, *Sunny South*, Calvert Lith. & Engr. Co., c. 1883; Mark Twain portrait, ca. 1907; *Mark Twain, America's Best Humorist*, illustration by Joseph F. Keppler, c. 1885 by Keppler & Schwarzman for Puck magazine.

Ernest Hemingway

In the twentieth century, Ernest Hemingway took Emerson's themes and modernized them by focusing on man in his natural state. Grating against the established omniscient narrative technique, Hemingway revolutionized storytelling by showing the emotions of his characters rather than telling the reader about them. Living apart brings out the best in his characters. Too, they live and move in the outdoors, free from the conformity of American culture that Hemingway so criticized. Using his own experiences, he cultivated a moral compass on which his characters rely in matters of life and death—a code of manhood where men stoically take what life gives them and make the most of it.

Hemingway's recurring themes speak of an abiding earth and the life well lived, a life that matters only if one does something brave or heroic in the end. His major novels—*The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*—all present an individual who is forced to decide between society and his own moral code. Though Hemingway's work typically depicts an environment that is completely chaotic and ruinous to normal life, he leaves open the opportunity for living with honor. His characters, particularly Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, internalize Emerson's definition of self-reliance: in meditating on their own conscience, they make the right decision, which positively impacts others.



Few men are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.
— Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*



Library of Congress: Background photo of Cuba by Arnold Genthe, ca. 1899-1926. U.S. National Archives and John F. Kennedy Library: Ernest Hemingway, 1923 passport photograph; Hemingway with Lauren Bacall in Spain, ca. 1956-1959; Hemingway and others with marlin fish, July 1934.

Jack Kerouac

Jack Kerouac's writing set him apart from Emerson's altruistic definition of self-reliance. Kerouac transcended the "American experience" and wrote of a "human experience," even as he expanded upon the themes of "America" and "Americans." Kerouac and his friends felt bored and confined by middle-class aspirations of the American Dream. They rebelled, leading a nomadic lifestyle as the ultimate expression of freedom and self-reliance: The journey, in and of itself, is what mattered.

Early on, Kerouac developed a habit of carrying around notebooks to record observations. He wrote his novels in very few sittings, with little planning or revision, asserting that it helped him capture life's movement—a method he called spontaneous prose. The style revolutionized American letters, making way for the journalistic writing popularized in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

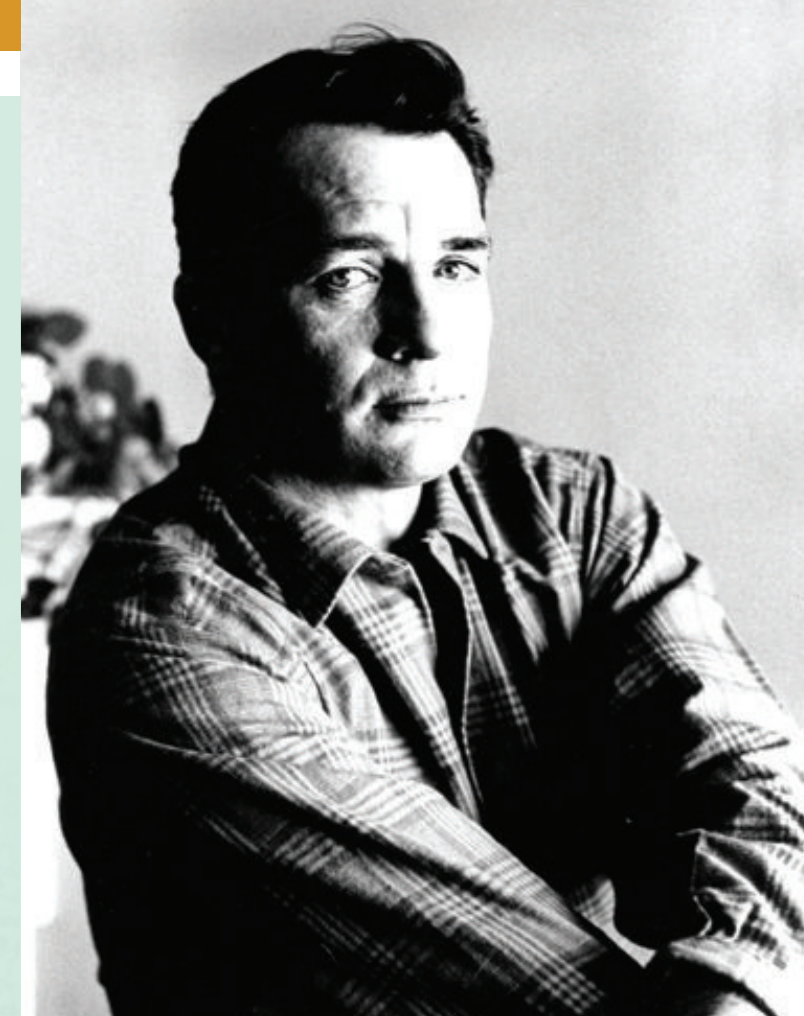
As the voice of a new "Beat" literary movement, Kerouac developed a single character, focusing on that individual's search for meaning. His road novels closely mirrored his personal search for enlightenment and freedom. The most famous of these novels is *On the Road*. Resistant to twentieth-century values of family and rootedness, Kerouac's themes yearn for the rugged, independent individual of an earlier age. In a strange way, the hobo, the vagrant, became the modern cowboy, free of ties to place or person. In a *New York Times Review*, Gilbert Millstein declared *On the Road* to be "beautifully executed" and predicted it would be the same kind of testament to its generation as Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* was to the "Lost Generation."

continued on page 29

Images courtesy The Estate of Stella Kerouac

But then they danced down the street like dingedodies, and I shambled after as I've been doing all my life after people who interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes "Awww!"

— Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*



No man should go through life without once experiencing healthy, even bored solitude in the wilderness, finding himself depending solely on himself and thereby learning his true and hidden strength. — Jack Kerouac





Civil Discourse in a Divided America

By Scott Gelfand

Maybe we aren't so far apart, after all.

POLITICIANS AND PUNDITS regularly remind us that America is a divided country—perhaps more divided than at any time in recent history. Americans disagree over many important issues: tax policy, gun control, capital punishment, and stem cell research, to name just a few. It is only natural to see our disagreement over these issues as evidence of a deeper, more profound disagreement; namely, a disagreement over our most basic moral codes.

This belief, that Americans on one side of the political divide embrace a moral code that is radically different from the moral code embraced by those on the other side, may explain why so many of us are ready to condemn and demonize those whose views are different from our own. And it may help explain the lack of civil discourse in contemporary America.

I'd like to suggest that Americans may not be as divided as we have been led to believe. Once we realize this, we might discover that civil discourse is possible. To demonstrate that we aren't so divided, let's examine a controversial social issue for which consensus continues to elude us: affirmative action—in particular, the form of affirmative action that allows institutions to tailor hiring or admissions policies to increase the representation of underrepresented groups. This issue is particularly relevant to Oklahomans, as Oklahoma voters passed State Question 759 in November 2012, the effect of which was to terminate state and local affirmative action programs in employment, education, and contracting.

American Expressionist Shirley Ward practices the use of color, distortion, shapes, and line with mixed media as elements of expression. From spiked heels, to lipstick, to objects in the home, Ward uses these objects to reflect her thoughts on the many roles of women, past and present. shirleywardart.com

By examining the arguments both for and against affirmative action, we will discover that even though Americans disagree over this issue, at a deeper, more fundamental level there is significant agreement. We will see that most Americans embrace the moral principles that underlie the arguments both for and against affirmative action. But first, it might be helpful to explain how moral and public policy “arguments” work.

CONSTRUCTING THE ARGUMENTS

In philosophy, issues are often examined with the use of arguments—specifically, a connected series of propositions or statements (called premises) meant to provide support or evidence for the validity of another proposition (the conclusion). This system is a useful tool when trying to justify or persuade others to accept a viewpoint or position. Most moral and public policy arguments contain two types of premises: moral and non-moral premises. If one wants to argue that a policy is moral (or immoral), one must include a central or primary moral claim which, when combined with non-moral claims (that make no statements about morality), leads to a moral conclusion. Let's apply this method to the issue of affirmative action.

THE ARGUMENT “FOR”

A standard argument in support of affirmative action, usually referred to as the compensatory argument, can be articulated as follows:

- 1) Morality and/or justice dictate that those who were wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated.
- 2) Women, blacks, and members of other groups were wrongfully harmed as a result of discrimination.
- 3) Therefore (from #1 and #2), morality and/or justice dictate that those women, blacks, and members of other groups who were wrongfully harmed as a result of discrimination deserve to be compensated.
- 4) Affirmative action is a fair form of compensation for those who were harmed as a result of discrimination.
- 5) Therefore (from #3 and #4), affirmative action is morally right and/or just.

Notice that premise #1 asserts the central moral claim: morality and/or justice dictate that those who were wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated. Premise #2 says nothing about morality; rather, it is a non-moral claim concerning historical events. The first and second premises lead to the conclusion (premise #3) that those who were harmed deserve compensation. Up to this point, the argument says nothing about affirmative action. One could agree with the first conclusion and still oppose affirmative action. Premise #4 contains a claim about what sort of compensation is fair. Since fairness is a moral idea, this, too, is a moral claim, though it's not the central or primary moral claim in the argument. If one embraces the first four premises, logic dictates that one ought to embrace the conclusion that affirmative action is morally right or just—or does it? Perhaps it is possible to believe affirmative action is right and just *and* at the same time oppose affirmative action.

THE ARGUMENT “AGAINST”

A standard argument in opposition to affirmative action is the meritocracy argument. The Principle of Meritocracy states that merit ought to be the only factor taken into account when making decisions. For example, the principle of meritocracy governs who wins an Olympic gold medal and who makes the school honor roll. Presumably, the gold medalist is the athlete with the fastest time or the best technical achievement, not the athlete who is nicer, more hard-working, or most improved. The meritocracy argument in opposition to affirmative action can be articulated as follows:

- 1) Morality and fairness dictate that the principle of meritocracy ought to govern hiring decisions and school admissions.
- 2) Affirmative action is a denial of the principle of meritocracy.
- 3) Hence (from #1 and #2), affirmative action is morally wrong or unfair.

Premise #1 contains the central moral claim that motivates this anti-affirmative action argument. According to premise #2 (the non-moral statement), affirmative action is inconsistent with hiring/admissions policies based on merit. After all, affirmative action allows factors unrelated to merit, like ethnicity or gender, to be taken into account when deciding whom to hire for a job or admit to a school or university. If one embraces the first two premises of this argument, one should oppose affirmative action, right? As we'll see, this isn't necessarily true.

SEEING BOTH SIDES

Like other moral or public policy arguments, both sides of the affirmative action issue contain a central moral premise.

Pro-affirmative action: Morality and/or justice dictate that those who were wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated.

Anti-affirmative action: The principle of meritocracy is right or just.

It is important to recognize that most of us embrace *both* of these central moral principles. If someone runs a red light and plows into our car, we claim that the driver who plowed into us should pay for damages. Why? Because we believe that people who were wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated. Most of us also embrace the principle of meritocracy. If we discovered that our boss determined raises by drawing names from a hat, we would say that process was unfair.

I am not claiming that we both embrace and oppose affirmative action, although this may be the case. Rather, I'm suggesting that we embrace the moral principles in both arguments. Even though we may disagree over the issue of affirmative action, at a more fundamental level we do not disagree.

WEIGHING THE CHOICES

So, if supporters and opponents of affirmative action embrace

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the same fundamental moral principles, what is the source of disagreement between them? It's likely that, even if we believe the conclusions of both arguments, we attach more weight to one conclusion or the other.

Let's look at another example. Imagine that two people disagree over whether they should feed their children fast food. Both parties may believe that fast food is unhealthy and that we shouldn't feed unhealthy food to our children. They may also believe that fast food makes life easier for busy families, and it's okay for parents to (sometimes) make use of this convenience. Even if the parties disagree over the issue of whether they should feed their children fast food, they may embrace the arguments in support of and in opposition to feeding children fast food. The source of their disagreement is in how much weight each puts on the premises or conclusions of each argument. One person may believe that making life easier is more important than eating a healthy diet, while the other might believe that a healthy diet trumps convenience.

Issues like this are interesting, because they reveal that opposing parties are not so far apart. Clearly, their moral codes are not very different from each other. Recognizing this increases the possibility for respectful moral discourse.

PRINCIPLES VS. PRACTICE

People can also disagree on premises other than the central moral claim. For example, those who oppose affirmative action might claim that it is not a fair way to compensate those who have been harmed. They may claim that affirmative action unjustly requires those who were not responsible to pay the price for past discrimination. Perhaps a white male believes that his family was not responsible for discrimination; in fact, his parents and grandparents were active in the movements for civil rights for blacks and women. Since he isn't responsible for past discrimination and the harms resulting from it, he believes that it would be unfair to thrust the cost of compensation on him: why should he have a lesser chance of being admitted to a competitive university just because he is white or male? Hence, he opposes affirmative action. This may be a legitimate objection to the compensatory (pro-affirmative action) argument, but it does not deny its central moral claim: that people who have been wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated. And it doesn't deny that blacks and women were discriminated against in the past. The disagreement between this opponent of affirmative action and the proponent concerns the issue of who is responsible for the compensation owed those who were harmed. In other words, they embrace the same moral principle—those who were wrongfully harmed deserve to be compensated—even though they disagree on the application of those principles.

Finally, let's look at an example where someone supports affirmative action *and* the meritocracy argument. How is this possible? First, she might assert that even though the principle of meritocracy ought, in the ideal world, to guide hiring and admissions practices, we do not live in an ideal world. She might believe that those who were harmed as a result of discrimination ought to be compensated *before* society implements solely meritocratic hiring and admissions. She may believe that once this debt is paid, affirmative action policies ought to be terminated. Or she might believe in meritocracy, but that affirmative action is not the only practice that violates the principle. (For instance, many people are admitted to top universities or get jobs because of the people they know. Surely, if my neighbor whose credentials are not as good as mine gets hired by a large company because he is a friend of the CEO, the principle of meritocracy is violated.) This person might believe that her support of affirmative



Jealous Sisters, Dennis R. Scott

action—which, in theory, is inconsistent with meritocracy—will cease when other violations of the principle of meritocracy are eliminated.

FROM CONTROVERSY TO CONSENSUS

And, so, we see that the foundational moral codes of those on either side of this issue are not very different. Die-hard opponents can actually embrace the moral principle of compensation, which underlies support for affirmative action. Similarly, those who uphold affirmative action may also value the principle of meritocracy that opposes the issue.

If we examine the divisive issues of our day—abortion, conservation, immigration, and a host of other concerns—we will discover that we likely embrace the moral principles underlying the arguments on both sides of these issues. If we recognize that those on the opposite side of the political divide embrace moral principles that are similar to our own, we are less likely to see them as moral monsters. It becomes difficult to demonize them. Furthermore, when we recognize that those with whom we disagree are not very different, morally speaking, from us, we become more willing to engage in civil discourse. And we may come to believe that consensus concerning controversial issues is a possibility.

One of the characteristics of a healthy democracy is that we talk with each other, argue about the tough issues that confront us, and strive for consensus. Wouldn't it be great if we could show politicians and pundits that it is possible to engage in these behaviors, even if we are more divided than ever? ■

Scott D. Gelfand is an associate professor of philosophy at Oklahoma State University and Founding Director of The Ethics Center at OSU. He is a Tulsa resident and is currently working on a book that teaches people how to engage in respectful civil discourse.

EXTRA! Link to discussion questions, podcasts, and more: okhumanities.org/extra

ONE'S SELF I SING *continued from page 25*



By this time, Emerson's definition of self-reliance had morphed into the selfish manifestation for which critics denounced him. Individuals did not live

to create a better society, they sought a better way of life for themselves. As materialism and conformity became more prevalent, Americans defined themselves by what they owned rather than who they were, leading to the loss of the individual. They had more leisure time, but rushed to accomplish more. Advances in medicine, industry, and technology increased the demands placed upon them. Rather than look to the future with hope and anticipation, they were uncertain, doubtful, and insecure. Americans turned to the idealism and literature of the past to escape their discontent.

This longing for simpler times continues to attract modern audiences and accounts for the enduring quality of authors such as Emerson, Whitman, Twain, Hemingway, and Kerouac. Their innovative techniques and styles—Whitman's use of free verse, Twain's use of dialect, Hemingway's simple prose, and Kerouac's spontaneous prose—created and continued an American literary tradition begun by Emerson, an American voice that celebrated the concepts and character upon which the country was founded: individualism, nonconformity, freedom, and equality. The content of their literature reflects the attitudes of their time, but it also transcends time and speaks to the human condition, inspiring individuals to live, be, and do better. The theme of individuality and self-reliance is universal, defying a sense of time or region of the country—and it is why readers in the twenty-first century still turn to these authors as they struggle to define their experiences as Americans. ■

Lori Lindsey is a freelance writer and blog contributor. She holds a master's degree in history from Oklahoma State University and is currently working on a master's in library science.

EXTRA! Five noted American authors spanning 150 years covers quite a bit of literary ground. Let's just say you'll find a wealth of information to explore! Visit: okhumanities.org/extra

BEYOND PARTISANSHIP

continued from page 19

one bit of advice that I never followed very well: your staff, we were told, is there to reduce your workload, not increase it. In other words, I was supposed to be giving them work to do; they weren't supposed to be giving me more work to do. That was fairly typical of the kinds of advice dispensed. After I left Congress and joined the faculty of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, I sometimes took part in orientation seminars conducted by the school's Institute of Politics for newly elected House members. The institute's seminars offered helpful tips about which committee positions to seek, means of increasing one's influence in the House, and balancing time between Washington (where votes were to be cast) and one's home district (where votes were to be won). These sessions also attempted to bring these new members of Congress up to speed on the state of the economy and on major legislation that would come before them in the coming session of Congress (technically, each new Congress starts from scratch but in reality new members are entering in the middle of the movie). Organizations like the Heritage Foundation put on their own seminars, geared toward members of a particular philosophical orientation (conservatives, in this case) and painting the upcoming legislative session as seen through an ideological lens.

In the Fellowship seminars I run for the Aspen Institute, we take a different approach. Our first class, eight years ago, brought together elected officials of all political stripes—moderate Democrats like Arizona State Representative (and later Congresswoman) Gabby Giffords and liberal Democrats like Tom Perez, a local county council president in Maryland and later assistant U.S. attorney general; and conservative Republicans like Minnesota House majority leader (and now Congressman) Erik Paulsen and Maryland Lieutenant Governor (and later Republican National Chairman) Michael Steele. For four days at a time, three times over two years, we gathered together to talk about questions larger than the issues of the day. What, we asked, were the great values, the underlying

principles, of a good society? What beliefs united us? What differences could be bridged? Our teachers were as varied as the Fellows themselves—Locke and Hobbes, Aristotle and Confucius. We focused not on the partisan battles but on the humanities:

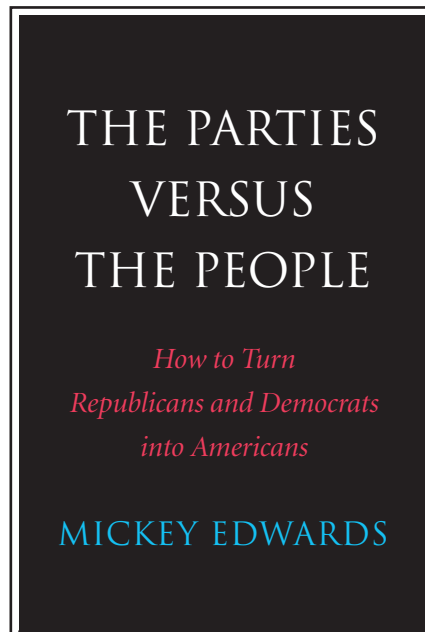
George Orwell, on duty in colonial India and wrestling with whether he was obligated to shoot a rogue elephant in order to demonstrate his leadership; Thucydides describing the governors of an island people weighing whether to submit or resist when threatened with the overwhelming force of Sparta—and whether to allow the people themselves a voice in the matter; Shelly reflecting on the fleeting nature of arrogance and power. These were matters to hone the questioning mind and attention to transcendent principles. Through it all, Gabby remained Gabby and Tom remained Tom; he's still a liberal and she's still a moderate. Mike and Erik are as Republican, and as conservative, as they were when they entered the program. But this disparate group of politicians with divergent and strongly held beliefs—of the kind that so often lead to animosity, distrust, and impermeable barriers to compromise or even civility—bonded together in a unique second family. When Gabby was shot years later as she was meeting with constituents, they came together to rally behind their wounded "sister." By bringing them together in a politics-free environment where they could mutually explore what unites them as Americans, we could make the walls crumble.

Undoubtedly, newly elected members of Congress will continue to seek out orientations that clue them in on how the constitutional system works and gives them an understanding of the issues they will confront. But it would be a good thing if House and Senate leaders would also schedule private, off-the-record opportunities for these newcomers to get to know each other over breakfast and Plato, with no position to defend, and no partisan pledge to keep, and no labels to divide them. ■

EXTRA: Link to videos, interviews, and articles by Mickey Edwards at: okhumanities.org/extra



This text is excerpted by permission of the author from *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans* (Yale University Press, 2012) by Mickey Edwards. Edwards, an Oklahoma U.S. Congressman for sixteen years and faculty member at Harvard and Princeton Universities for the subsequent sixteen years, is a vice president of the Aspen Institute. He has been a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and other newspapers, and he has broadcast a weekly commentary on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. He writes an online column for *The Atlantic*.



It's All in the Name (and maybe a few letters after it ...)

Our Executive Director, Ann Thompson, has a "thing" about using both our first and middle names. It's all in good fun, but for the longest time I wouldn't tell her what my middle name is. First, I've never been crazy about it and, second, it reminds me of childhood days at home, when the surest sign of being in trouble was hearing my middle name: "Carla Deeeean!" I come from a long line of -ean rhyming names: Melba Dean, Billie Jean, Geraldine, Carla Dean ... But I digress.

Ann also recently referred to me as an "amateur historian." It's closer to "reluctant historian," but we're both referring to the amount of time I spend fact-checking articles. Pay attention sometime to the number of authors and sources mentioned in any one magazine issue. Are the names spelled correctly? Are the years exact? Is every citation quoted precisely from the original work?

In the fact-checking process, a reference will inevitably bring up a question, which leads to searching through a textbook or studying a Supreme Court case or combing documents in the National Archives—hours and hours of reading and re-reading. Thank goodness we launched the magazine *after* the advent of the Internet.

We take pride in the integrity of scholarship in our pages, and we strive to bring you the most informed commentary we can find. Our goal is to earn your trust—and then keep it—issue after issue.

Lately I've been kvetching, "I should earn college credit for all these hours of independent study. Surely by now I have the equivalent of a master's degree in *something!*" Joking aside, I learn more every day about literature and history and philosophy and ethics and jurisprudence. And I'd be lying if I didn't say I love every minute of it.

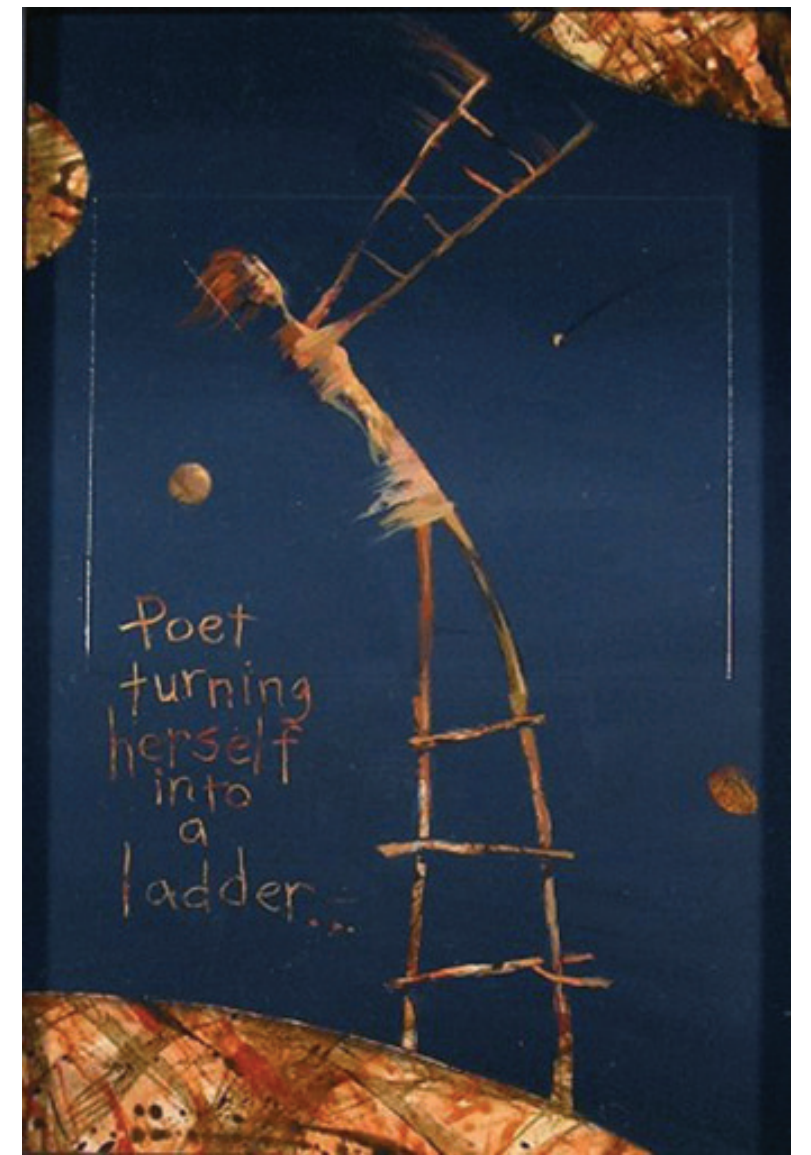
Heads-up, university administrators: Which discipline and degree will you confer upon me? It must be something very broad and very deep, as are the humanities. I know!—How about a "master's of the universe"?

So ... you can call me "Carla"; or you can call me "Carla Dean"; but whatever you call me, add the letters after, if you please.

Yours,

Carla Dean Walker, MTU

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carla".



Kristal Tomshary, *Poet Turning Herself into a Ladder*

End Notes from the Editor

Carla Walker, Editor
carla@okhumanities.org

We continue to be surprised—and grateful—for the kindness that brings together the sundry elements of our magazine. Some of these kind people are friends that we see often, and some become friends and contributors via the Internet. Three such people acted behind the scenes for this issue and really deserve our thanks: Jay Hannah for his virtual introduction to Mickey Edwards; Dr. Isaac Gewirtz of The New York Public Library for access to the Berg Collection; and John Sampas, executor of The Estate of Stella Kerouac, for allowing us to publish the striking, intimate images of Jack Kerouac.



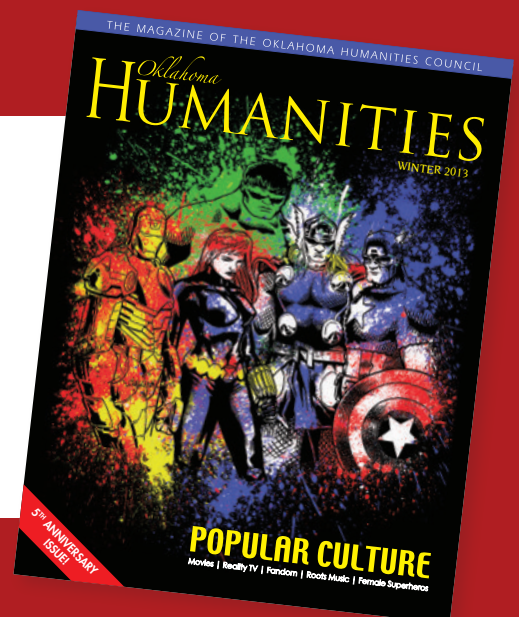
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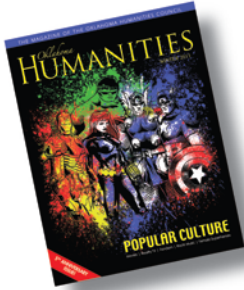
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EXTRA!

What Isn't For Sale?

By Michael J. Sandel | Summer 2013 | Vol. 6, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012). Read excerpts of the book, watch videos of Michael Sandel speaking, and download the discussion guide, from which the following questions are adapted. <http://us.macmillan.com/whatmoneycantbuy/MichaelSandel#top>

1. How did you react to the list of price tags in the article's opening paragraphs? How has this trend manifested itself in your workplace and your community?
2. Among the list of price tags, which ones made you uncomfortable? Which ones made you curious about trying to profit from them yourself?
3. Is there anything wrong with using your body as a billboard, as long as it's your choice to do so? If you're doing it because you are in deep poverty, does this mean you really didn't have a choice?
4. Where do you draw your own line in response to the question "What can't money buy?"

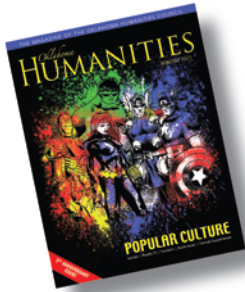
EXTRA! Reading

- Eliot Brown, "Help Fund a Project, and Get a Green Card," *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 2, 2011. (<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704124504576118500940803720.html>)
- Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010). Shows how a surer grasp of philosophy can help us make sense of politics, morality, and our own convictions.
- Jennifer Steinhauer, "For \$82 a Day, Booking a Cell in a 5-Star Jail," *The New York Times*, April 29, 2007. (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/us/29jail.html?pagewanted=1&ref=jennifersteinhauer>)

EXTRA! Links

- "Justice" with Michael Sandel (<http://www.justiceharvard.org/>). Videos of Harvard University's famed "Justice" course with Michael Sandel; subjects include justice, equality, democracy, and citizenship.
- BookTV (<http://www.booktv.org/search.aspx?For=michael%20sandel>): Watch videos and interviews with Michael Sandel discussing his books *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012) and *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010).
- *Digital History*, Univ. of Houston, S. Mintz and S. McNeil <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/index.cfm>). Find readings, handouts, and lesson plans on markets, advertising, and consumer persuasion throughout American history.
- EDSITEment, "The Industrial Age in America: Robber Barons and Captains of Industry." Readings, discussion questions, and classroom resources on the rise of wealth in America and the questions that still apply today: Where do we draw the line between unfair business practices and competition that leads to innovation, investment, and improvement in the standard of living for everyone? Can market forces exert sufficient influence to rein in potentially harmful practices or does government have to intervene? (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/industrial-age-america-robber-barons-and-captains-industry>)

Resources are compiled by author(s) and editorial staff. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in these materials do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the Oklahoma Humanities Council, its Board of Trustees, staff, or donors.



Oklahoma HUMANITIES

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EXTRA!

Beyond Partisanship

Mickey Edwards | Summer 2013 | Vol. 6, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

1. Read George Washington's "Rules of Civility" [find links to online text below]. Would these rules help legislators today? If you could design your own modern rules of civility for Congress, what would they entail?
2. Give an example from American history in which opposing views in the U.S. Congress made a compromise. How would history have been changed if no compromise had been met?
3. How do media, social interactions, and other personal choices contribute to "myside bias"? As individual citizens, what steps can we take to minimize "myside bias"?
4. Discuss your answers to the author's questions: *Does government spending hurt or harm economic growth? Do relaxed college admissions requirements help or hurt disadvantaged students?* After hearing opposing views, are you more or less likely to change your opinion?
5. To encourage cooperation, Benjamin Franklin told the Continental Congress that each member should "doubt a little of his own infallibility." Do you think your opinions are always right—or, like Franklin, do you accept that you may, at times, be wrong?
6. If you were an elected official, are there issues of public policy on which you would not compromise?

EXTRA! Reading

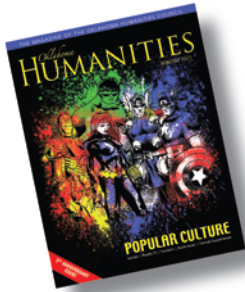
- Mickey Edwards, *The Parties Versus the People: How to Turn Republicans and Democrats into Americans* (Yale Univ. Press, 2012). Discusses how the U.S. political system has become dysfunctional and suggests solutions to the negative effects of partisan warfare.
- Daniel B. Klien, "I Was Wrong, and So Are You," *The Atlantic*, December 2011. Explains how our political leanings leave us more biased than we think.
(<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/12/i-was-wrong-and-so-are-you/308713/>)
- Jackson Turner Main, *Political Parties Before the Constitution* (Norton [published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA], 1974). Author analyzes national politics by studying the voting patterns of state legislatures in early America. Shows how issues of funding of debts, paper money, and land prices provided a battleground that divided legislators along two "parties" or factions.
- Robert V. Remini, *At the Edge of the Precipice: Henry Clay and the Compromise that Saved the Union* (Basic Books, 2010). Historian Robert Remini shows how Henry Clay's recognition of the need for bipartisanship in times of crisis saved the Union. Watch video of Remini discussing the book at a National Archives event:
(<http://www.booktv.org/Watch/11464/Robert+Remini+19212013+At+the+Edge+of+Precipice+Henry+Clay+and+the+Compromise+that+Saved+the+Union.aspx>)
- George Washington's "Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation." Read the text and view images of the original manuscript on the following sites:
Colonial Williamsburg: (<http://www.history.org/almanack/life/manners/rules2.cfm>)
The Papers of George Washington, Univ. of Virginia: (<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/civility/>)
Library of Congress: (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm077.html>)
Teacher's guide from the Smithsonian Institution: (<http://www.georgewashington.si.edu/kids/activity5.html>)

(continued)

EXTRA! Links

- Public Affairs Television, *Moyers & Company*, host Bill Moyers: Mickey Edwards discusses Congress, party politics, and reforms that could encourage cooperation and bipartisanship. (<http://billmoyers.com/segment/mickey-edwards-on-how-conservatives-have-lost-their-way/>)
- *Intelligence Squared U.S.*, Moderator John Donovan. This debate-style program shows civil discourse in action. It is filmed in New York and aired on NPR and PBS stations and as a live webcast. Among many topics, you can listen to a podcast or read a transcript from the April 2013 broadcast of “The GOP Must Seize the Center or Die,” in which Mickey Edwards and David Brooks argue *for* and Laura Ingraham and Ralph Reed argue *against* the following motion, as quoted from the show’s transcript [moderator John Donovan speaking]: *The rules say that political parties cannot have power unless they first have our votes, and when they fail to get them, as the Republican Party did in sufficient numbers in the race to the White House in 2012, it inevitably sets off soul searching within the party. How did we fail to connect to the American voter? Do we need to change to do better next time? That is the debate that’s taking place right now inside the Republican Party, and we are bringing it out now onto this stage. Yes or no to this statement, “The GOP must seize the center or die,” a debate from Intelligence Squared, U.S.* (<http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/upcoming-debates/item/801-the-gop-must-seize-the-center-or-die>)
- Wonderopolis (<http://wonderopolis.org/wonder/should-you-believe-everything-you-hear/>): “Should You Believe Everything You Hear?” Short essay discusses how to evaluate the content of political campaigns and advertisements.
- Museum of the Moving Image: (<http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>). *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2012* is an online exhibition presenting more than 300 television commercials from every election year since 1952, when the first campaign TV ads aired. Includes a searchable database, commentary, historical background, election results, and navigation organized by year, type of ad, and issue. Includes links to online resources and lesson plans.

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Oklahoma HUMANITIES

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES COUNCIL



EXTRA!

One's Self I Sing: Writing the American Spirit **By Lori Lindsey | Summer 2013 | Vol. 6, Issue No. 2**

For Discussion

1. Discuss other authors you have read (besides Emerson, Whitman, Twain, Hemingway, and Kerouac) that convey the themes of American individualism and self-reliance in their work. Compare and contrast the writing styles and philosophies with the five authors mentioned in Lori Lindsey's article.
2. Which author(s), if writing today, would be a smash hit in contemporary American? What elements of their ideas, writing, or persona translate to modern American society?
3. Are the themes of individualism and self-reliance uniquely American—or do other cultures also value these ideals? Discuss the similarities and differences in how cultures express these characteristics.
4. What are the outcomes (the strengths and weaknesses) of our nation's ideals regarding self-reliance and individualism? Do they contribute to the common good?
5. In the nineteenth century, the lack of instantaneous mass communication, geography, and poor transportation forced people to be self-reliant. What factors contribute to self-reliance and individualism today?

EXTRA! Reading

- Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's* (Yale Univ. Press, 1959). Selected by the Organization of American Historians as one of the ten most significant works published in American history during the decade of the 1950s.
- Emory Elliott, ed., *Columbia Literary History of the United States* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1988). A survey of American literature, from prehistoric cave narratives to the radical movements of the sixties and experimentation of the eighties; an interpretation of the rise of American civilization and culture.
- Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, eds., *The Reader's Companion to American History* (Houghton Mifflin, 1991). A portrait of the United States, from the origins of its native peoples to the nation's complex identity in the 1990s; covers social history, critical events, issues, and individuals that have shaped our past.

EXTRA! Links

- Library of Congress: Search the Digital Collections (<http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>) and Teachers pages (<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/index.html>) of this rich national treasure for access to photos, historical documents, readings, lesson plans, and other links. Just enter your selected topic, person, time period, etc. in the search box.
- National Archives: Archival Research Catalog (ARC) (<http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/>). View photos and historical documents that span our nation's history. Click the yellow "ARC Search" box on the left side of the page, which will take you to the search page; next, click the "Digital Copies" button at the top of the page, then enter your topic, person, place, etc. in the Search box.

(continued)

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- American Transcendentalism Web, Virginia Commonwealth University: Biography and annotated readings, online texts of Emerson's work, and commentary and criticism on those works. (<http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/authors/emerson/index.html>)

Walt Whitman

- The Walt Whitman Archive (<http://www.whitmanarchive.org/about/index.html>), University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Comprehensive collection of Whitman's manuscripts, published writing, and letters; draws from libraries and collections around the world.
- *Revising Himself: Walt Whitman and Leaves of Grass*. This Library of Congress exhibit examines Whitman's life and work with photos, manuscripts, diary pages, and artifacts. (<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/whitman-home.html>)
- Karen Karbiener, "Walt Whitman and the Birth of Modern American Poetry." Course guide with lecture notes, discussion questions, suggested reading, and bibliographies. (http://www.oneclickaudio.com/courses_pdf/UT054.pdf)

Mark Twain

- EDSITEment (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/>): Enter "Mark Twain" in the search box to find links to lesson plans, readings, and websites.
- Mark Twain in His Times (<http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/>): website directed by Stephen Railton, University of Virginia. An interpretive archive, drawn largely from the resources of the Barrett Collection; contains texts and manuscripts, contemporary reviews and articles, images, and interactive exhibits.

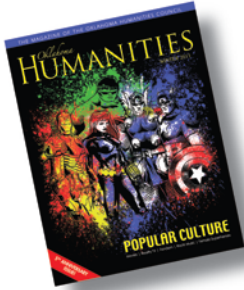
Ernest Hemingway

- PBS, "Michael Palin's Hemingway Adventure" (<http://www.pbs.org/hemingwayadventure/index.html>). Online exhibit drawn from the original broadcast series; features readings, lesson plans, bibliography, and links.
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library: *Hemingway's Letters: From Childhood to Paris* (<http://www.ifklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/11Yi-7yxkkCG8XWueOIBqA.aspx>). In this hour-long video, book editor Sandra Spanier; novelist Ward Just; and moderator Scott Simon, host of NPR's *Weekend Edition Saturday* discuss the book *The Letters of Ernest Hemingway: Volume 1, 1907-1922* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011), and the importance of Hemingway in American literature. Actor Corey Stoll, who played Hemingway in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris* reads selections from the letters.
- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (<http://www.ifklibrary.org/>): Enter "Ernest Hemingway" in the search box to view hundreds of digitized photos from the Ernest Hemingway Collection.

Jack Kerouac

- The Jack and Stella Kerouac Center for the Public Humanities, University of Massachusetts-Lowell. Includes a biography, photos, audio and video archives discussing Kerouac's work, and video links of Kerouac appearances and documentaries. <http://www.jackkerouac.com/home/bio/>
- Academy of American Poets website (<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/1016>): includes a Kerouac bio and several of his poems.
- The Jack Kerouac Archive at The New York Public Library: Three-minute video on Kerouac (<http://www.nypl.org/audiovideo/jack-kerouac-archive>)
- Five-minute video of Jack Kerouac on the *Steve Allen Plymouth Show*, 1959. Includes interview and Kerouac reading from his novel *On The Road*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzCF6hgEfto>
- NPR, *Present at the Creation* series, "Kerouac's *On the Road*." Correspondent Renee Montagne explores the story behind the novel's creation. Features audio and video clips and links to web resources. (<http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/patc/ontheroad/#tapes>)

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EXTRA!

Civil Discourse in a Divided America

By Scott Gelfand | Summer 2013 | Vol. 6, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

1. How would you define “civil discourse”? What atmosphere, ethics, ideals, etc. are necessary to achieve civil discourse?
2. What were your views on affirmative action before reading Scott Gelfand’s article? Did his presentation of arguments change your thinking? Did he convince you that people on both sides of an issue can embrace the same moral principles?
3. Discuss other actions in our country’s history that state and federal government have taken to serve “the common good.” What were the long-term results of those actions?

EXTRA! Reading

- Peter Gilbert, “Doubt and Conviction,” *I Was Thinking ... Travels in the World of Ideas* (Wind Ridge Publishing, 2012). The author has generously provided free access to this essay [[attached below](#)].
- J. Edward Kellough, *Understanding Affirmative Action: Politics, Discrimination, and the Search for Justice* (Georgetown Univ. Press, 2006). Covers the history, legal status, controversies, and impact of affirmative action in both the private and public sectors.
- Judith Rodin and Stephen P. Steinberg, Eds., *Public Discourse in America: Conversation and Community in the Twenty-First Century* (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). Contributors consider whether rationality is the best standard for public discussion and argument, and isolate features that characterize an exemplary, more productive public discourse. Examines why public conversations work when they work well, and why they often fail when we need them the most.
- Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience.” EDSITEment ([www.edsitement.neh.gov](http://edsitement.neh.gov)) has selected excerpts from “Civil Disobedience” and discussion questions to guide readers through Thoreau’s arguments. (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/launchpad-henry-david-thoreaus-essay-civil-disobedience>)

EXTRA! Links

- Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy (<http://icdd.k-state.edu/primarytexts>): Primary Texts page links to texts from political leaders, authors, and philosophers collected for the Institute’s class entitled *Dialogue on Democracy*.
- FREEDOM.OU.EDU: website of the Institute for the American Constitutional Heritage at the University of Oklahoma. Freedom 101 is an ongoing series of video explorations into American constitutional law and history. In *Episode 4: Equal Protection: Affirmative Action*, Dr. Lindsay Roberts explains the recent history of the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause as it applies to affirmative action. (<http://freedom.ou.edu/lindsay-robertson-equal-protection-affirmative-action/>)
- Teaching Tolerance: “Civil Discourse in the Classroom and Beyond.” Activities, worksheets, and readings explore dissent, discussion, and debate. Teaches students to turn unsubstantiated opinions into reasoned arguments and how to apply these skills in a variety of situations. Meets language arts, social studies, and life skills standards. PDF booklet may be downloaded. (<http://www.tolerance.org/publication/civil-discourse-classroom>)

- National Issues Forums (<http://www.nifi.org/educators/index.aspx>): Under the “Educators” tab you’ll find free readings, PowerPoint presentations, discussion questions, and lesson plans. Resources are equally relevant for community adult discussions and classroom use. Topics include: how to convene and moderate forums, and how to frame issues for productive civil discourse. Specific issues include: (1) “Working Through Difficult Decisions”; (2) “God and the Commons: Does Religion Matter,” which discusses the role of religion in public life; and (3) “Slavery or Freedom Forever: An Historical Issue Framing,” which illustrates the deliberative process using the frame of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, which determined the fate of slavery in U.S. territories.
- PLATO (Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization): Links to videos, radio podcasts, and readings on philosophy, ethics, and issues. (<http://plato-apa.org/>)

EXTRA! FOOD FOR THOUGHT

DOUBT AND CONVICTION

By Peter Gilbert

The critical balance between conviction and doubt in today’s volatile world

The intolerance of extremism is running rampant. It’s not just Al Qaeda. It’s murders of doctors at abortion clinics. It’s Timothy McVeigh, who saw himself as a modern-day John Brown and thought his attack on the Federal Building in Oklahoma City would inspire others to do likewise. It’s in the Middle East, and so many other places. You can see it in the total confidence that some people at both extremes of political or ideological spectrums have in the rightness of their views, confidence that can become self-righteousness. Perhaps it was ever thus.

Robert F. Kennedy observed that “[w]hat is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme but that they are intolerant.” That dangerous intolerance comes from their utter confidence in their means and ends.

In May of 1944, in the midst of World War II, New York City celebrated “I am an American Day” with speeches in Central Park. One speaker was Judge Learned Hand, a jurist so eminent that many called him the tenth Supreme Court Justice. He said, “The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the mind of other men and women ... which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias ...”

How do we teach our children to have the courage of their convictions on the one hand, and, at the same time, to keep open to the possibility that they may be wrong? That is a difficult, even metaphysical, challenge.

You see that mindset in Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was deeply, profoundly convinced that slavery was wrong and that the Union must be saved, and he gave his all for the cause. And yet he knew that the South, too, saw its cause as right. He does not judge the South. “It may seem strange,” Lincoln observed in his second inaugural address, “that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged.”

Despite this uncertainty, Lincoln concludes that the North should pursue the war to a successful conclusion: “[W]ith firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in...” Lincoln was a great president and great man because while wholly dedicated to his cause, he retained his humility.

The real world is not an ivory tower ethics seminar; it requires decisions—actions and reactions—often when there are no good choices. The challenge is to act out of one’s deeply held convictions but not to lose that speck of humility—of doubt—that checks our intolerance, keeps us open to others’ points of view, deters us from dehumanizing our enemies, and guards us against overstepping.

“Doubt and Conviction” was originally broadcast in a different form, September 16, 2003, on Vermont Public Radio, copyright VPR 2003. The essay was also published in Peter Gilbert’s book, *I Was Thinking ... Travels in the World of Ideas* (Wind Ridge Publishing, 2012). http://windridgebooksofvt.com/?page_id=502

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