

Winter 2023-24

DIALOGOS

(Greek: To See Through to Meaning)

A Magazine of the Institute for the Study of Western Civilization



TIMES PAST IN RUSSIA
AND UKRAINE

PAGE 8

MISSION: To improve our understanding of how we came to be who we are, why we think the way we do, and what assumptions about the world and human nature trace back to earlier periods in the 5,000 years of Western civilization.



From the Director

The State of the Institute and Teaching Western Civ

By William Fredlund, PhD

As we approach the end of the year 2023, it is a good thing to look back on the condition of the Institute and the teaching of Western civilization in the United States. Founded in 2003, the Institute is now 20 years old. So where are we now, how far have we come, and what is the current situation for the teaching of Western Civ in universities in the USA?

I'm happy to report that our Institute is healthy. We continue to offer four classes a week plus special lectures on Saturday nights. Our attendance is steady and consistent month to month. And the biggest innovation has been the addition of livestreaming all our classes. Being able to offer livestreamed classes to our various students has increased our reach, our enrollment, and the overall availability of our courses. This innovation, and the investment of capital in technical equipment and various Internet applications, occurred during the crisis of COVID. To save the Institute in a time of no public gatherings of any kind, we had to find a new method to transmit our classes during the COVID

shutdown. Therefore in our case, the terrible crisis of COVID brought about a great innovation that moved us ahead exponentially. The state of the Institute during the last three years has improved and grown more secure.

On the other hand, the state of the teaching of Western Civ in American higher education has moved in a negative direction during the 20 years since the founding of the Institute. Back then, many universities were cutting Western Civ from their curriculums. Now 20 years later, that first-year course that teaches the great achievements of the Western tradition has all but disappeared from all the top universities. City colleges and junior colleges may still be offering these courses taught by faculty about to retire. But as those faculty retire, new staff will not be hired to teach those same general ed courses. Teaching Western Civ at the university level is on the verge of disappearing completely. Why? Because of a consistent well-financed campaign to eliminate it. Why would anyone want to do that? It was part of a larger agenda—an international multi-

dimensional attack on the entire complex of Western ideas that go back to ancient Greece and ancient Israel. This larger cultural war is now more than 50 years old. And it is rooted in the rejection of all the values of the European Enlightenment, of liberal

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western European democracies, of all the values about free speech, free thought, reason, and the value of democracy itself. As of now, this campaign has been successful. Much of the success is due to cowardly university presidents, any one of which had the power to resist the mob like the one led by Jesse Jackson at Stanford.

The only sign of resistance now among us is the idea of starting a whole new university, one that would include a basic education about the greatness of the Western tradition. A stellar group of faculty is creating such a university called the University of Austin, Texas. One key leader to watch is Niall Ferguson, the author of several great books, one of which pertains to this subject—*The West and the Rest*. Visit the university website here: uaustin.org

Maybe 20 years from now when we celebrate our 40th anniversary, the success of the University of Austin will have provoked a whole re-evaluation of the importance of Western civilization.



Who's Who at the Institute

Kathy Welch

KATHY WELCH

happily became part of the Institute staff in March 2022 as a video editor. In the past she was an enthusiastic student at the Institute's many fascinating classes and lectures. Now she assists with varied assignments which include editing Dr. Fredlund's "Making of the Western Mind" lectures



for posting to YouTube. This is her most fascinating assignment to date.

Kathy was born in Sacramento into a family that has lived for generations in California. She grew up in the Bay Area, and from childhood, loved school, reading, and animals—particularly horses. With emphases in English literature and art history, Kathy graduated from San Jose State University with a degree in liberal arts. After graduation, most of her career choices had a common theme—marketing and public relations. She established a number of businesses: Perfect Attendants, a corporate flight attendant service; Those Finishing Touches, an interior design company; Cambrian Group, a commercial real estate investment firm; and IVAS International, an import/export company based in London.

With the true entrepreneurial spirit Silicon Valley engenders, she eventually found her way into the world of technology. Kathy was public relations director for the Electronic Design Automation Consortium (EDAC) where she launched and managed a worldwide branding campaign to educate its target audience of the importance of this niche industry within the technology sector. Subsequently, she joined Cisco Systems where she started the Corporate Speakers' Bureau (CSB). Its mission was to place the company's most senior executives in global conferences that would highlight and expand Cisco's leadership in the technology sector. Her CSB group became a best-in-class model for other well-known technology companies. Kathy worked at Cisco for more than 17 years.

When not working, Kathy enjoys traveling with friends, reading, gardening, movies, and entertaining.

From the Editor

Don't Forget Ukraine!

By Michele McCarthy

W

hen I first started working on this issue, Ukraine dominated the news cycle. In the meantime, other world events have sometimes supplanted coverage of the war in Ukraine. So it is especially timely that Institute student Rob Gelpman writes about his heritage in Ukraine and his trip there and to Russia almost 30 years ago to track down his roots. Completely unimaginable today, one of his anecdotes is how he found himself sharing his cigarettes and smoking comradely with the Russian army in Red Square! Rob's article is the feature for this issue.

Now on a personal note:

In the last issue of *DIALOGOS*, I chronicled my life as a nomad in search of a place to call home. I am happy to report that three weeks after returning to the Asheville, NC area, I signed a purchase agreement on

a new home! It wasn't going to be ready for another four months; however, so several weeks later, I embarked on more extended stays with friends out of the state until I could close escrow and move in.

My new home is in Fletcher, about 25 minutes south of downtown Asheville and 15 minutes north of Hendersonville. I like the access to both. I have views of the surrounding mountains from the second floor. I'm enjoying exploring the area—hiking the trails, discovering waterfalls, driving the Blue Ridge Parkway. Plus Asheville has been named the [number one food destination](#) in the US. If I had to leave California to have a home, I think I landed in a good spot!



Sunset view of Mt. Pisgah from above my house.



Am I a chemist...or a hedonist? Who knew cider tasting was a thing? Apple orchards abound here.

Odysseys

A Sojourn in the Cotswolds

By Mary Beam and Peter Boulton

R

ather than taking just a day trip from London, we highly recommend spending several days in the Cotswolds where you will encounter picturesque villages, charming churches, historic sights, stunning skies and greenery, and of course, Shakespeare's hometown, Stratford-upon-Avon.

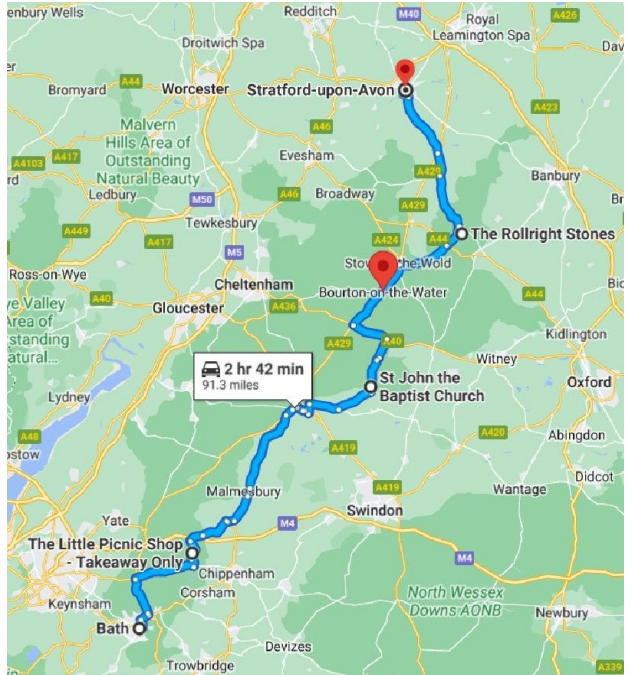
Day One

We started our journey from Bath, heading north along the east side of the Cotswolds, toward our hotel for the next few nights in Stratford-upon-Avon. That base allows for easy day trips into the Cotswolds.

In the tiny, quaint village of **Castle Combe**, we picked up pre-ordered picnics at **The Little Picnic Shop**. Our next stop was **Cirencester** with the highlights of **St. John the Baptist Church** with its attached Abbey Grounds and 12th-century Norman Arch. Our drive continued through lovely countryside. Just past Chipping Norton are the **Rollright Stones**, similar to Stonehenge but much smaller in scale.

Day Two

This busy day focused on William Shakespeare. First, we enjoyed a lovely walk to **Anne Hathaway's Cottage**, then a stop at **Holy Trinity Church** where Shakespeare was baptized and where he and many



of his family are buried. A few blocks away are the **Guild Hall, Schoolhouse, and Guild Chapel**. After dinner, we walked along the river, where college rowers practiced. Of course, we topped off our evening at the **Royal Shakespeare Theatre** for a production of *As You Like It*.

Day Three

Driving south from our hotel, we headed back into the Cotswolds with stops at **Bourton-on-the-Water**, **Stow-on-the-Wold**, and **Moreton-in-Marsh**. (Gotta love all those hyphenated place names.) We stocked up on provisions at **Bakery on the Water** in the first village. Notable highlights of Stow-on-the-Wold

include the **King's Arms Old Posting House**, the old stagecoach stop, the appealing **Stow Lodge Hotel**, and **St. Edward's Church**. **Martha's Coffee House** in Moreton-in-Marsh was our final stop of the day.

Day Four

Thirty minutes south of Stratford is **Chipping Campden**, a lovely little Cotswolds village and our favorite. The **Market Hall** was built in 1627 for the sale of local produce. The worn and uneven stone floor shows its age and heavy usage. It's also the official start of the **Cotswold Way**, a 100-mile trail that connects many villages and ends in Bath. The trailhead is indicated by a stone marker set into the pavement as well as a pillar. We picked up picnic supplies at the wonderful little market/deli **Fillet & Bone**, then drove 15 minutes north to **Hidcote Gardens**, a huge estate with gardens, wooded areas, and excellent countryside views.

Day Five

On Professor Fredlund's recommendation, we visited **Sudeley Castle**, one of the grand showpieces of the Cotswolds, set within 14 acres of gardens. It was the home and burial place of Catherine Parr (1512-1548), Henry VIII's sixth wife. She outlived him by only one year. In her later years, Catherine undertook the education of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey, as well as the future queen, Princess Elizabeth.

On the way back to our hotel, we paused at **Broadway Tower**, an iconic landmark on top of the beautiful Cotswolds escarpment and the brainchild of the great 18th-century landscape designer, "Capability Brown." Set within a 200-acre parkland estate and sitting atop a hill, the tower (completed in 1798) affords dramatic views, even from its base.



From top: St. John the Baptist Church in Cirencester, the village of Chipping Campden, Sudeley Castle



St. John the Baptist Church in Cirencester



Broadway Tower

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Got Opinions?

Have you read anything in *DIALOGOS* you'd like to comment on? Send your thoughts to Michele McCarthy: MicheleAnnMcCarthy@gmail.com
We will publish your submission in a subsequent issue, space available.

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Feature

Remembrances of Times Past in Russia and Ukraine

By Rob Gelphman

M

y father and my brothers had always talked about going to Ukraine to find the birthplace of my paternal grandfather. But the opportunity never truly presented itself as life always seemed to get in the way. But in September of 1995, my father, youngest brother, and I went to Ukraine in search of his birthplace and found it.

My grandfather (Sumner) was the youngest of five brothers. They were accused of owing \$40,000 in back taxes. This was 1910. They didn't have 40 kopecks. It was blackmail by the government and if you did not pay, you went into the army for 25 years. You were not likely to come back.

My grandfather and his brothers came to the US through HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), established in 1881 to assist Jews fleeing pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe. He was 15 and never went past the fifth grade. They arrived through Galveston, Texas. They started a junk yard in Iola, Kansas which was very successful. After a few years, his brothers sent my unmarried

grandfather back to Ukraine to get the rest of the family out. He effectively ran an underground railroad before, during, and after the Russian Revolution. If caught, it is likely he would have been executed. If so, I would not be telling this story.

My grandfather met my grandmother (Ita) in Bucharest where she had been sent out of the country by her father. She had no place to go but was introduced to my grandfather who shortly afterward proposed marriage.

Toward the end of her life, she told me a harrowing story from her childhood. One day while a little girl, the Cossacks came rampaging through town, grabbed a guy off the street, called him a thief, hung him, and made everyone watch. State-sponsored terrorism.

W

e arrived with no plan or guide. My father had a vague memory from childhood of a town called Ilainitze (pronunciation left to interpretation), about 125 miles southwest of Kyiv. We had no idea where this might be, so we flew into Kyiv on a hunch.

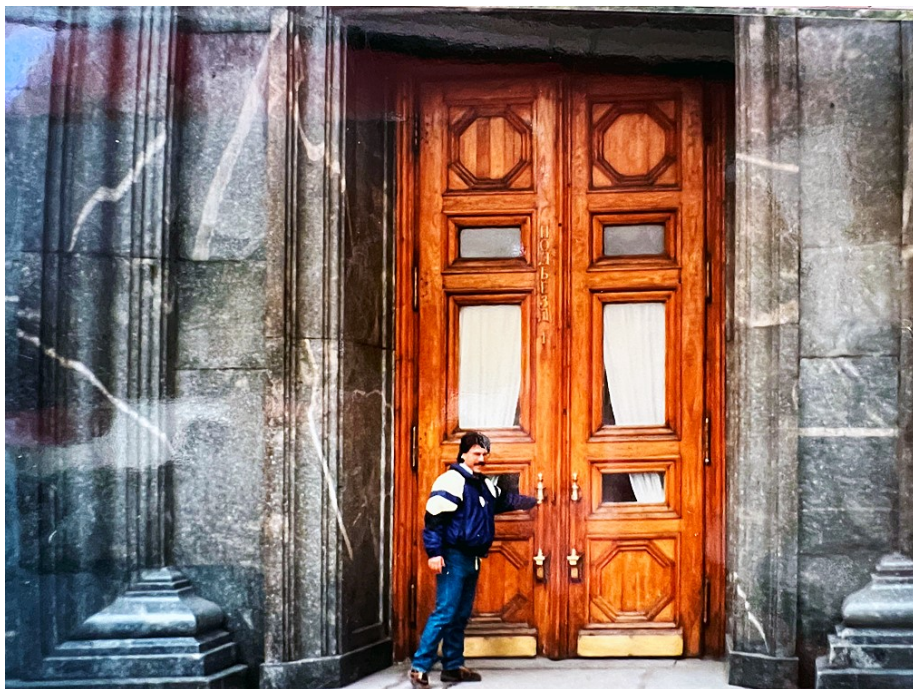
We hired a driver and an

**Before I knew it, I was
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Russian army.**

interpreter and found the village. The town itself had about three nondescript buildings. Through 1995, people were still coming into town from the fields on horse-drawn carriages after a day's work, wearing their gray and drab Bolshevik-style clothing including jacket and cap. After asking around, we met a family whose father remembered a story about five brothers who went to America. This served as our confirmation.

While in Kyiv, we were introduced to a family that had what was considered one of the nicer apartments (for Ukraine). Directly across the street was a former munitions factory. The light bulb was out in the stairwell, many of the steps had rotted and the elevator had not worked in years. Their apartment only had two rooms to accommodate a family of four. One room consisted of a kitchen and dining area. The other was both living room and bedroom where they rolled out their beds before sleep. The bathroom was separated into two rooms—one for the toilet and the other with a shower and sink. They also made their own vodka in their kitchen.

This family also had a car called a Lada. It had four doors with the equivalent of a lawn mower engine that would rattle, shake, and roll, and spew exhaust into the air. Many cars had torn fenders or faded paint, and people just drove them everywhere and anywhere including over curbs and islands and

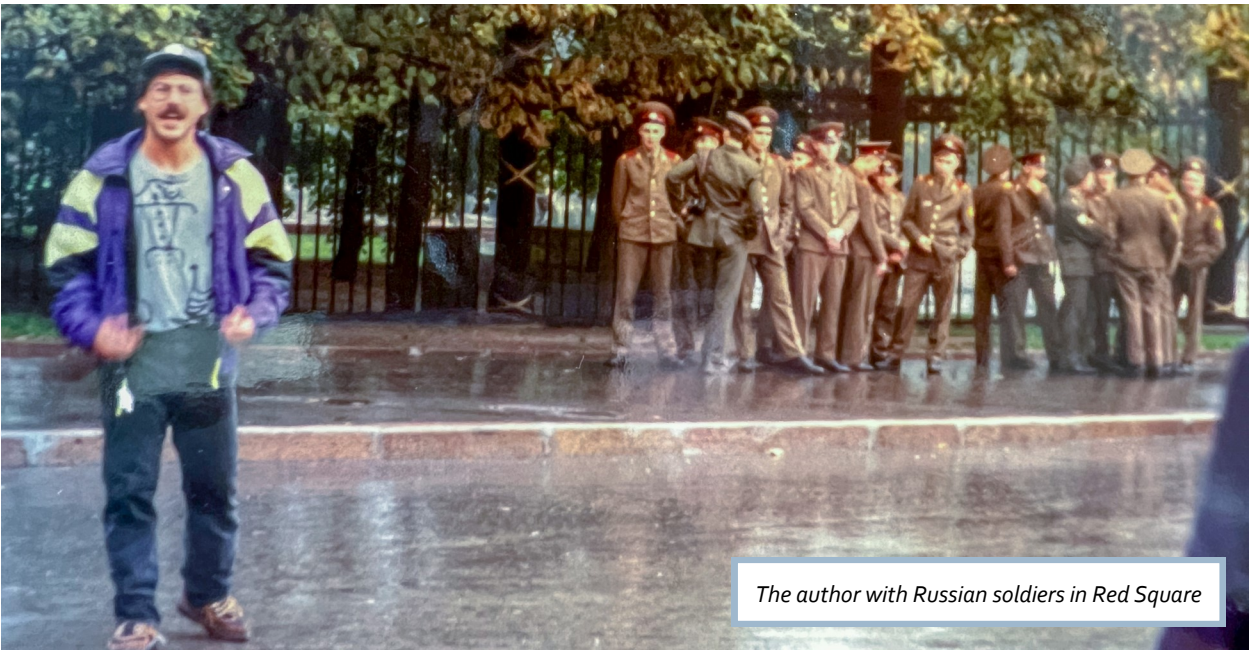


The author outside KGB headquarters in Moscow

through bushes. They were so poorly designed and barely functioning that maintenance and repair was not worth it.

On Sundays everyone gathered in Maidan or Independence Square. The apartments and buildings were all cinder block, Soviet-style chic. As there was no place to go and no one had any money, people would dress in their Sunday best and bring food and hang out in the square and visit with friends and family. McDonald's was popular as it was "Americana" and families would dress up and linger after dinner.

Privately-owned grocery stores were emerging and well-patronized. The state-owned stores were depleted of pretty much everything. One such store we visited looking for vodka had one entire wall stacked with packaged sardines. The other walls and shelves were empty.



The author with Russian soldiers in Red Square

It should be noted that a distant cousin arranged the trip for us. She had worked with Pacific Bell, who after the acquisition by AT&T, was hired by the Ukrainian government to help upgrade their national telephone system. After 10 years, she retired from AT&T and started a travel agency.

She introduced us to the family with the apartment and “car.” She also introduced us to another woman who had a PhD in biochemistry and worked at a Ukrainian science institute. She made the equivalent of \$10 per month with a rent-free apartment where she lived with her mother. We told her she would make hundreds of thousands of dollars, possibly millions, if she went to work in the US. But she was not interested and very skeptical.

Talking with this woman and many others, we realized a steep discrepancy in people’s attitudes toward the dissolution of the USSR. As this woman told us, “I understand the money would be much greater, but things have gotten better the last few

years. The KGB doesn’t knock on our door in the middle of the night, and I even have a dacha.” While I was figuratively drinking her Kool-Aid and thinking, “Isn’t this great? No more communism. You can start a business. You can think for yourself,” I also realized it was not so easy for many people. Those under 30 got it and liked their newfound freedoms. Those who were older had trouble making the adjustment. There was much fear and uncertainty.

It became clear to us that the rights and liberties we are accustomed to in the United States was at that time actually learned behavior in Ukraine and Russia. Independent thought was not ingrained as they were never trained to think for themselves.

We continued on our journey to Moscow via train. While in Ukraine, we were required to

relinquish our passports when checking into a hotel—done more to prevent people running out without paying their bill than state security reasons. As the train was leaving the station (literally), we remembered that we had forgotten our passports at the hotel desk. Making an executive decision, I decided we should just get on the train and worry about our passports later. We had our tickets. What were they going to do, throw us off the train?

After we settled in our compartment, I went looking for the bathroom. The “bathroom” was an empty car with a hole in the floor. Effectively you were depositing your waste products on the tracks as the train sped by.

Every few hours, the conductor with some soldiers would go to each compartment and ask for tickets and proof of identity. We explained our predicament and that as soon as we got to Moscow, we would have



The passing of the icon of Vladimir, who was the first Russian monarch to adopt Christianity in 988, had not occurred since before the Revolution.

**By this time, I had
had it with soldiers,
irrational rules,
obstinance, and nyet.**

our passports delivered to our hotel. The first two times they accepted our excuse.

The third time, the soldiers insisted that we show our passports. “I have told you previously. We left them at the hotel. I do not think you want to throw us off the train. You don’t want an international incident,

do you?” I bluffed. “Nyet. Nyet,” they said and agreed that would not be a good idea. We were not bothered after that.

It was a 15-hour trip. As soon as we got to the hotel, I threw my bag into the room and headed for Red Square, which was

only a few blocks away. As I tried to enter from a side street, there was a soldier who blocked my entrance. “Nyet. No access.”

I made my way to another entrance that was next to Gum’s, referred to as a department store but was really an indoor flea market. The streets and Red Square were packed with thousands of onlookers. We did not know what was happening, but we saw film crews from CNN, BBC, and some Russian broadcast media. It turns out we were witnessing the passing of the icon of Vladimir, the first Russian monarch to adopt Christianity in 988. The event or ritual had not occurred since before the Revolution. We were eyewitness to history. I did not realize its significance until Dr. Fredlund told us about Vladimir in our Russian history class last year.

After the procession passed and the crowds thinned out, I finally got into Red Square. I was wearing my Joseph’s-coat-of-many-colors ski jacket and an SF Giants hat, smoking a cigarette, when a Russian soldier came over and started motioning and pointing at me. By this time, I had had it with soldiers, irrational rules, obstinance, and nyet. I yelled at him, “What do you want?” He literally jumped back and pointed at my cigarette. He was just asking for a smoke. “Well, why didn’t you say so?” and I gave him one. It was generic, menthol (not good but cheap), but he liked it and motioned for his buddies to join us. Before I knew it, I was standing in Red Square, smoking cigarettes with the Russian army. Lenin must have been turning over in his grave.

While maybe not transformative, this was an eye-opening trip. I am proud of my family legacy and to be of Ukrainian descent. F**k Putin.

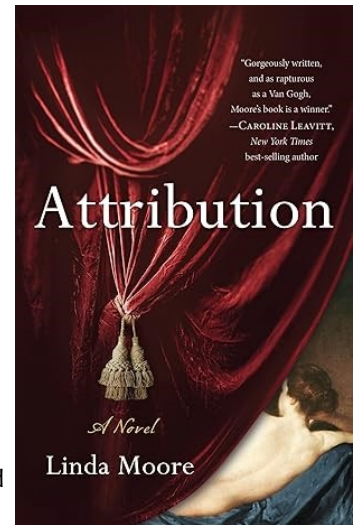
Is It or Isn’t It?

We introduced John Immerwahr (emeritus professor of philosophy at Villanova University and docent at the Philadelphia Museum of Art) and his videos in the winter 2021 issue of *DIALOGOS*. Here is another that explores the fascinating premise that one of the very few Vermeer paintings in the world may have been unrecognized yet hiding in plain sight.



For more art sleuthing that reads like an academic who-done-it (with some romance thrown in), check out the novel [Attribution](#) by Linda Moore. Set in Spain and specifically the Prado, a lowly art history graduate student risks it all to ascertain whether her discovery in a crowded basement may be a Velázquez.

—Michele McCarthy



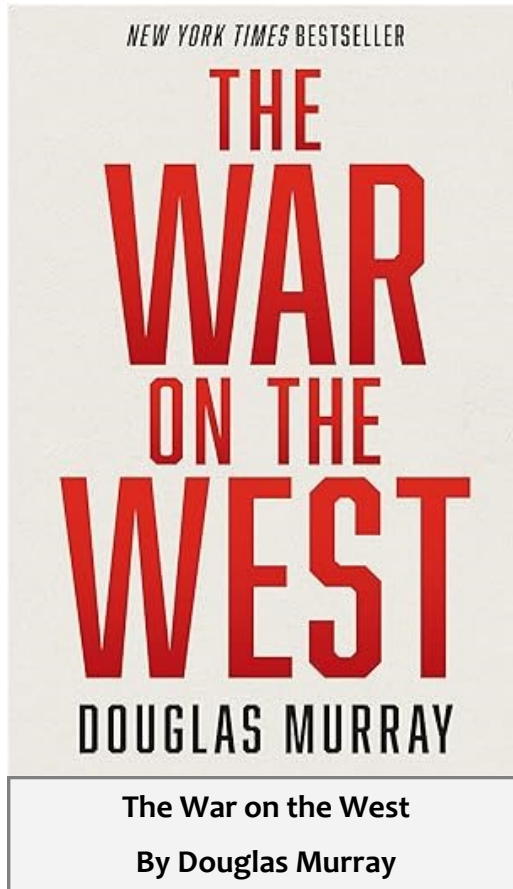
Book Review

Combatting with Gratitude

Review by Eno Schmidt

Douglas Murray has written a polemical account of the cultural war occurring exclusively in the West. His book proposes two overarching ideas that draw on a deep knowledge of world history. First, he argues that the attackers on the West venerate any non-Western culture as many now erroneously assume that key aspects of the Western tradition (like human rights) are common aspirations everywhere in the world. Second, Murray professes that the West is assaulted for everything it has done wrong while receiving no credit for having gotten anything right.

Throughout the book, Murray offers explanations of the motivations for these attacks. From revolutionists seeking completely different systems to people focused solely on one evil to the exclusion of all other considerations, from some ignoring (or ignorant of) the context, whether historically or as practiced in other societies, to yet others embittered by bad faith and resentment, these attackers aim to



stamp out what they see as the evil Western tradition. And this evil is seen to be deep-rooted across free-market capitalism and colonialism, racism, and slavery. Murray weaves together four major sections covering race, history, religion, and culture, under the unifying theme that “the side of democracy, reason, rights and universal principles” simply has prematurely surrendered in this cultural cold war.

How Key Figures in the Western Tradition Have Been Attacked and Pulled Down

To illustrate, Murray considers how claims of systemic racism have been employed in attacking the West and its historical figures. The attacks go like

this: First associate historic persons in some way with racism and then pull them down without considering the context or overall value of their contributions. A few examples:

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

In 2021, Shakespeare’s Globe Theater in London declared it would sponsor a series of “anti-racist Shakespeare seminars” and “decolonize” the famous plays. In the seminar on *A Midsummer Night’s*

Dream, these lines among others were discussed and scrutinized at length:

“Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour draws on apace.” [Theseus]

“Who would not trade a raven for a dove?” [Lysander]

Seminar participants asserted “problematic links between whiteness and beauty” and “in context with other plays and even the Sonnets, this language is all over the place, this language of dark and light...there are these racializing elements.”

Jane Austen (1775–1817)

Murray writes that Edward Said smeared “Jane Austen as embroiled in the great sin of slavery.” In *Mansfield Park*, two characters Fanny and Edmund discuss in just a few lines “such a dead silence” when Fanny’s uncle had been asked about the recently abolished slave trade. According to Murray, “Said believes that this single reference means that Austen is praising the slave trade.” Through even more extrapolation and generalization, Said suggests reading these few lines in the context of **later novels by other authors** [emphasis added], including for example Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, to arrive at even “more density” of meaning in the phrase. While this may not be the standard interpretation of *Mansfield Park* (other scholars argue that Austen sympathized with the abolitionists), it is an example of the kind of attacks that Murray analyzes.

David Hume (1711–1776)

Murray describes how Ibram X. Kendi, in his *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019), attacks David Hume by focusing on a single footnote in one work. This footnote is well known to Hume scholars, who do

not consider it representative of Hume’s overall thinking across his collected works. Nevertheless, extending from this one isolated footnote, Hume, previously one of the Enlightenment’s most important thinkers, becomes “a man who championed white supremacy,” as he was labeled in a successful 2020 petition provoking Edinburgh University to rename its David Hume Tower.

How Key Anti-Western Figures Might Fare

On the other hand, the attackers of the West treat very differently historical figures and thinkers whose work is “helpful in pulling apart the Western tradition, even to the point of demanding revolution to overturn it.” These people are, in Murray’s words, “never treated to this same ahistorical and retributive game.” Although Churchill, Kant, Hume, Jefferson, Locke, Mill, Voltaire, and many more have been smeared by focusing on various elements out of context or not approved by modern-day Western standards, Murray spotlights how Karl Marx and Michel Foucault have been treated very differently by the anti-West attackers.

Karl Marx (1818–1883)

Despite the 100 million people estimated to have been killed trying to change the world along Marx’s lines (*The Communist Manifesto*), the huge bust of Karl Marx in London’s Highgate Cemetery remains a place of pilgrimage. Another larger-than-life statue of Marx paid for by the authorities in China was

erected in Trier, Germany in 2018. In fact, association with Marx and Marxism often is a plus in today’s war on the West. Marx expressed his antisemitism in many private letters to Friedrich Engels and in his public pieces for the *New York Tribune*. And his racism

Murray ultimately makes a very strong case for gratitude in defending the West.

encompassed not only black people, but the peoples living in the Balkans (he wrote, “hard to say which is the least fit for progress and civilization”) and Indians (publicly proclaiming to an American audience that Indian society had no history at all). Marx also appears to have been in favor of colonialism, commenting that British rule in India laid “the material foundations of Western society in Asia.”

Murray goes into more detail, but his point is that Marx was far more racist than the examples of Hume, Austen, or Shakespeare (pulled down for a footnote or for a character’s line) even in the context of their historical times.

Michel Foucault (1926–1984)

Foucault is one of the world’s most influential scholars (“for black studies, queer studies, and others”) whose body of work focuses on power relations and, as Murray puts it, compresses everything in the Western system of order “through a quasi-Marxist lens...into a transactional, punitive, and meaningless dystopia.” To show the double standard here as well, Murray describes an allegation raised by Professor Guy Sorman in 2021 that Foucault had raped 8–10-year-old boys in Tunisia in the late 1960’s. Murray hedges his analysis by stating that “it is always unpleasant—as well as unwise—for thinkers to lambaste each other because of the habits of their personal lives.” Murray’s point, however, is that were such allegations raised in connection with an historical figure supporting the Western tradition, that figure likely would be “cancelled” regardless of the factual merits of the claims.

Resentment and Revenge

Building on what Athens has to do with Jerusalem, the Enlightenment, and other Western traditions, Murray in the final analysis sees the war in terms of good and evil. He identifies revenge and bad faith as

the primary motivations of many of the attackers on the West. He explains this insight by analogy with a balancing scale. To arrive at a balance, the scale needs to have both sides loaded. Simply placing everything on one side of course will result in the scale being weighted on that side. Similarly, if slavery or racism or any other evil is the only element placed in the balancing scale, of course an unbalanced judgment will result. However, Murray argues that the Western tradition can provide the tools to beat back the attackers in the war on the West. Because resentment and revenge aim to pull down everything without regard to justice or fairness, they need in turn to be opposed by gratitude. Murray ultimately makes a very strong case for gratitude in defending the West. His analysis of gratitude by Dostoevsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* combines with the exploration of the philosophical and psychological concept of *ressentiment** in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, Max Scheler, and Helmut Schoecks.

Looking Forward

The Western tradition has yielded many and varied benefits including relative economic prosperity, forms of government, systems of law and justice, beautiful cities and architecture, scientific and medical achievements, and artistic and cultural inheritance. We can ask, along with Murray, would not a reasonable and prudent approach be to build on this inheritance and develop a societal vision that can include the importance of inherited group identities without having those identities define us?

* A psychological state arising from suppressed feelings of envy and hatred that cannot be acted upon, frequently resulting in some form of self-abasement.

Saint Michael Cathedral golden domes - Kyiv



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