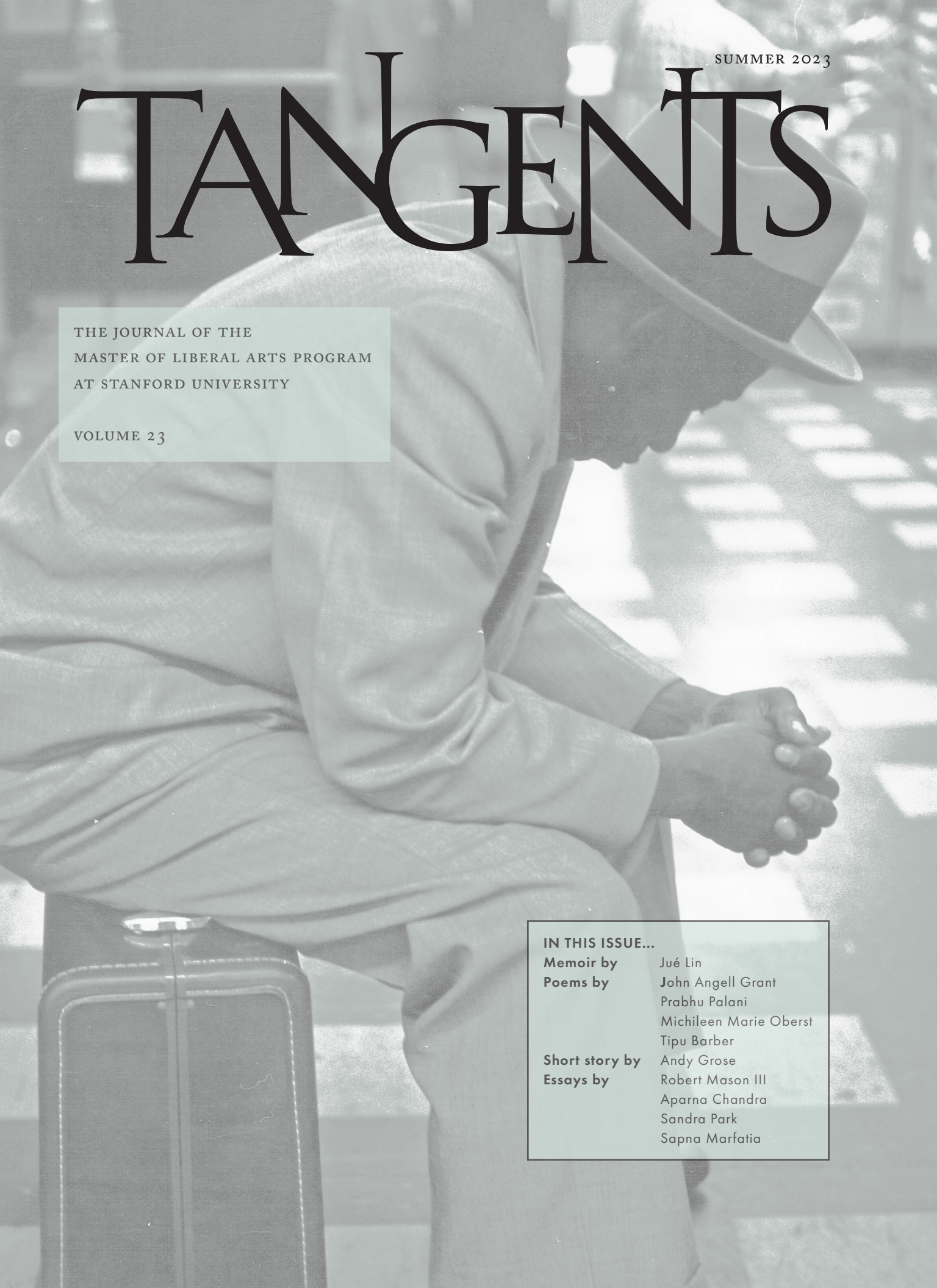
SUMMER 2023

TANGENTS

THE JOURNAL OF THE
MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS PROGRAM
AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

VOLUME 23



IN THIS ISSUE...

PUBLICATION NOTES
This publication features the works of students and alumni of the Master of Liberal Arts Program at Stanford University.

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In "Two poems" the photograph is courtesy of author Tipu Barber
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IN THIS ISSUE

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are pleased to present this issue of *Tangents*, the journal of the Stanford Master of Liberal Arts program. For this the 22nd volume, we have chosen a diverse group of works by students and alumni, including:

- five poems ("Sonnet: Free verse is like anarchy," "Depression and Anxiety," "I can see the tunnel," "Two poems," and "Crushed");
- a short story about a widower coping with loss in his garden;
- an essay exploring the loss of African-American life amidst the gentrification of San Francisco's Western Addition;
- a study of Frank Lloyd Wright's organic architecture as shown in the Robie House and the Guggenheim Museum;
- an essay investigating the darker colonial purpose of the early map of Chile, *Tabula Geographica Regni Chile*;
- a memoir about a recent retiree's struggles with her suddenly empty days;
- a comparison of how poets use archival material as found poetry;
- an original watercolor and photos.

Be sure to learn about this issue's contributors, highlighted on the last pages.

We hope that our choices will provide enjoyable reading and inspire future contributions!

This is our fifth year of service as editors for *Tangents*, and we welcome feedback. Despite ongoing pandemic disruptions to academic gatherings, the dedication and generosity of alumni and supporters of the MLA program continue to make our annual publication possible. Thank you!

Candy Carter, editor

Teri Hessel, associate editor

Michael Breger, associate editor, poetry

Unraveling *Tabula Geographica Regni Chile*: A Marketing and Misappropriation Story

by Aparna Chandra

Fig 1 Tabula geographica regni Chile, Alonso de Ovalle, 1646. https://jcb.lunaimaging.com/luna/servlet/detail/JCBMAPS~1~1~1314~115900932:Tabula-Geographica-Regni-Chile?qvq=mgid:5396&mi=7&trs=8#

Ordinarily, the word map conjures up an image of a spatial representation of a place or a navigational tool. However, new scholarly approaches in map studies go beyond mere geographic or topographic cartography; they subject maps to the same kind of interdisciplinary investigations that a scientific, literary, artistic or any other kind of archival artifact would be subjected to. Queries such as who produced the map, for whom and with what intent; how places and societies were imagined and represented; how ideas were construed and brought to fruition; what was included and what was excluded from it and why; and a variety of other questions helps understand maps as a complex cultural product of its historical time, and not a just a scaled and labeled piece of terrain. This article focuses its probing glance on *Tabula Geographica Regni Chile* (Fig. 1), one of the earliest and most comprehensive extant maps of Chile. It is an exquisitely detailed pictorial cartography of Chile's diverse natural resources, and vignettes of indigenous life that portray an Edenic paradise - a delightful map to look at, indeed. However, close investigation reveals that the pictures on the map are not just for amusement; instead, they are carefully selected to serve a deeper purpose.

The map was made by a Jesuit cartographer, a Chilean *Criollo* (a white person of pure Spanish descent born in Spanish America) named Alonso de Ovalle in 1646 to address the European ignorance about Chile, as well as to challenge the perception that Chile was Spain's *non plus ultra*—the poorest of Spain's possessions in the Americas. But the display of riches on the map also had a dark implication for Chile. They were a coded enticement for Spain to acquire new territory by subduing the bellicose

Fig 2 Chilean fauna: real and fantastical

Mapuche Indians, gain access to those riches, and exploit the Strait of Magellan as an alternate trade route to expropriate those resources. In addition, the map spelled doom for the native way of life as it signaled to the church in Rome to civilize and save the savages depicted on the map.

Ovalle's map was not a stand-alone document, but a complement to his massive book, *Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile* (Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Chile). Dedicated to Pope Innocent X, and published in Spanish and Italian, it is an account of Chile's history since the 1540 Spanish invasion under Pedro de Valdivia. About half a century before Valdivia's incursion, the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) had not only divided the New World between Portugal and Spain; it had also allowed them to grab any land without a Christian king. Consequently, by the mid-seventeenth century Spain controlled a vast chunk of Latin America called the Viceroyalty of Peru, and at its farthest edge was the vice-province of Chile. At this time, Ovalle was selected to be Chile's first procurator (a religious diplomat), and was sent to Rome in 1641 to request *encomiendas* (a grant from the Spanish crown to a conquistador, soldier, or others who could then require a

Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile...earned the honor of being the first history of Chile.

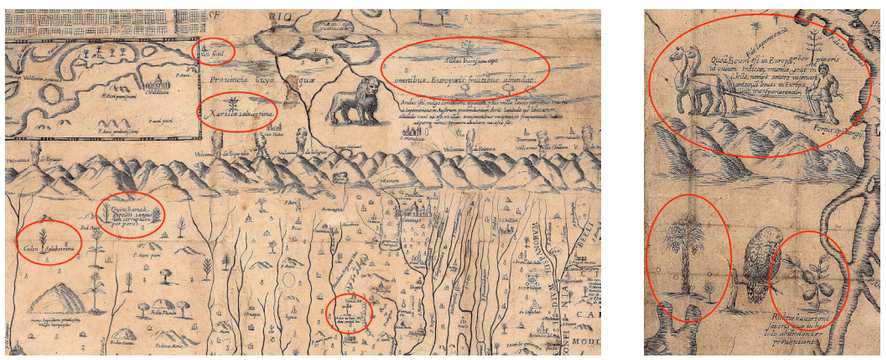

Fig 3 Farming, and medicinal botanicals

tribute from the indigenous population in exchange for protection and evangelization), and to procure economic resources for the territorial conquests of the new world lands, and missionaries for the religious conquest of the indigenous Mapuche. He was also to report on the conquests, and missionary and institutional development of the New World. The book emerged out of this responsibility and the dismay Ovalle felt on discovering European ignorance about Chile. It was published in Rome (the printing press did not arrive in Chile until 1811, a year after its independence from Spain), and since there was no written tradition among the indigenous people of Chile, it also earned the honor of being the first history of Chile.

This book includes a smaller map of Chile with the same name, but it is the larger (116.3 by 57.4 cms) engraved map printed on paper (henceforth referred to as the map) that is the focus of this essay. It is a rare map as only two originals are known to exist. The map is a pictorial summary of the book, with an incredible number of detailed illustrations, tableaux and Latin glosses, and while the descriptive visual vocabulary of map is not altogether empirical, it still tells us who lives there and how, and what their natural environment is like. The map is ostensibly a patriotic praise of the country, but the ingratiating coats of arms of King Philip IV of Spain and of Pope Innocent X (Fig. 1) that embellish the map, betray Ovalle's procuratorial objectives. The Society of Jesus, of which Ovalle was a member, considered the study of geography and map-making part of the missionary enterprise to colonize and convert people, as well as an exchange of ideas and cultural concepts between Europe and America. As such, the map was "a tool of visual persuasion … [and] the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into the Jesuit maps, effectively [made] them an expression of cross-cultural communication … even as they were tools of colonial expansion. This ambiguity, … reflects the complex relationship between missions, knowledge, and empire" (Altić, 1, 155-166). Ovalle's map can thus be understood as a product of the unique Jesuit intellectual and missionary zeal.

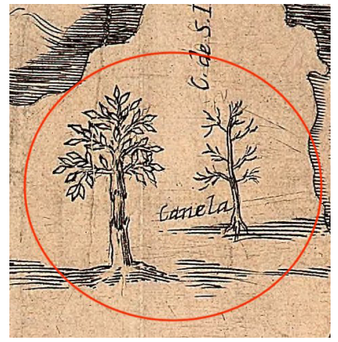

Fig 4 Asian spice trees: cinnamon and pepper, and the Pepper Port

Cartographically, a compass rose alerts the viewer to the map's east-up orientation, while the latitudes mark the lower neatline. Longitudes including the prime meridian, scales, keys, and legends are all absent since effective ways of measuring longitude, and the universal language of cartography inspired by the Enlightenment would not be established until the early 18th century. Not being a *portolan*, the map also sports no rhumb lines or soundings. Chile's northern border with Peru lies along Río Salado (The Salty River) in the Antofagasta region, and the contested boundary (Confinia Belli) with the indigenous Mapuche in the south lies along the Río Biobío. It was the Mapuche-controlled region—south of Biobío River all the way to Tierra del Fuego past the Strait of Magellan— that was targeted for Spanish expansion. While the geography and topography situate the map in real space, the pictures captivate the imaginary landscape of the mind. Colonial Chile is filled with towns, missions, mines, rivers and ports, but the blank space of the largely unknown Patagonia is filled with enchanting pictures. These images mesmerized general viewers, and simultaneously carried a coded message for the crown and church.

Ovalle's map can be understood as a product of the unique Jesuit intellectual and missionary zeal.

The fauna is charmingly portrayed and identified by indigenous names in a gloss that also often doles out a tactfully chosen nugget of information to stimulate the colonization project. Alongside actual animals (such as the quirquincho, the puma, herds of llama and deer, whales, shoals of flying fish, and birds like the penguin and the ñandu or rhea), mythical creatures and sea monsters also vie for their spot on the map (Fig. 2). Ironically, the fictitious creatures would have been real to a 17th century viewer, but the actual ones might have been construed as imaginary. Anticipating such suspicion, Ovalle validates that the quirquincho is a real likeness, showcasing Chile

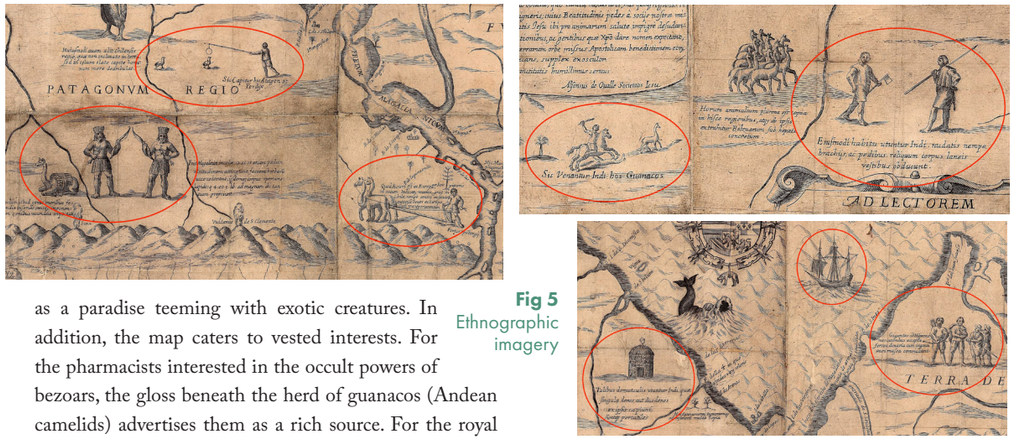

Fig 5 Ethnographic imagery

as a paradise teeming with exotic creatures. In addition, the map caters to vested interests. For the pharmacists interested in the occult powers of bezoars, the gloss beneath the herd of guanacos (Andean camelids) advertises them as a rich source. For the royal treasury seeking wealth, a picture of the seated llama with ingots fastened on its back indicates availability of transport to haul the mineral ores dug out from the Chilean mines. The vignettes of guanaco-hunting and bird-trapping are shrewdly placed to tempt "Philip IV of Spain, an avid huntsman", and also because "securing exotic game was a symbolic act of power and doubled as a thinly veiled metaphor for empire building" (Burdick "Cartographic" 46). The action-packed dioramas were purposefully scattered on the map: they encouraged colonization as well as shaped the European conception of Chile as a fantastical place.

The action-packed dioramas were purposefully scattered on the map: they encouraged colonization as well as shaped the European conception of Chile as a fantastical place.

Just like the fauna, the vegetation that gets to be on the map is guided by its utility. Ovalle must have realized the "profound relevance of curative botanies for European commerce" when he attended the Jesuit Congregation in Rome, where the "Peruvian General Procurator … introduced the anti-malarial remedy *cinchona* [Jesuit's Bark]" (Burdick "Remedies" 313). The Spanish crown was suffering from economic setbacks and looking for "green gold"—the *materia medica*—that could be exploited for profit. Accordingly, native medicinal botanicals represent Chilean flora: *Xarilla saluberrima* (healthful jarilla)—fights off typhus and pains; *Culén Saluberrima* (healthful culén)—used in "combat care" as a "topical treatment for battle wounds" and as tea for "indigestion, flatulence, piles and verminous dispositions;" *Quinchamali*—blood letter with the magical power to "expel corrupt blood through the pores," and the field treatment for contusions and internal wounds; and *Puya*—whose resin has emollient and astringent properties beneficial for the skin, and whose other use was in making boats, fishing nets and cordage (320-328) (Fig. 3). Ovalle's ethno-botanical knowledge came from indigenous *machis*, the Mapuche doctors, who were practitioners of *ampín lahuén* (herbal medicine) (329). He sought to transmit this knowledge to Jesuit pharmacies, and draw attention to their economic potential. In addition, the possibility of traditional agriculture is indicated by depicting fertile river valleys and a farming scene, and by informing that a variety of fruits grow in abundance around Cuyo.

Besides the medicinal plants and fruit trees, highly valuable Asian spices—cinnamon (*canela*) and pepper (Fig. 4)—are deliberately presented on New World soil along the Strait of Magellan as a coded enticement to botanical wealth, as well as a suggestion that the crown reroute the Spanish galleons travelling to Asia through the Strait of Magellan. While *canela* (true cinnamon) grows in Sri Lanka, there exists a native Chilean tree called *canelo* (cinnamon tree or Winter's bark).

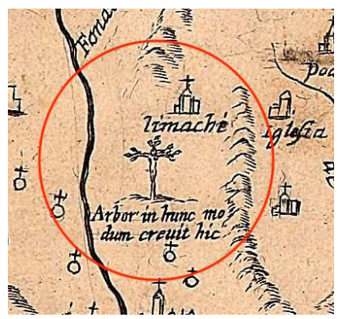

Fig 6 The cross-shaped tree in Limache

Its anti-scurvy medicinal property came to light when John Winter, captain of one of Francis Drake's expeditions, had his crew drink *canelo*-bark tea. Ovalle not only fudged the spelling, but also showed harvested bark, thus leaving no doubt that it is cinnamon. Similarly, pepper is actually a fruit of a vine that grows in South India and not on a tree as depicted on the map (*arbor piperis*). However, it is possible that these were errors of ignorance and not of intent. In his enthusiasm to market the alternate trade route through the strait, Ovalle even labels a conveniently located Pepper Port (*port de la pimienta*). After all, this route would avoid the 300 miles long overland section between the cities of Veracruz on the Atlantic, and Acapulco on the Pacific coast of Mexico, thus eliminating the need for the painful sea-land-sea transfer of goods. Also, along the coast there was ample cordage and wood for repairing ships, adequate food for the sailors, and most importantly, *canelo* tea to keep scurvy away. Using vegetation to his benefit, Ovalle zealously marketed the Strait of Magellan to the crown in every possible way.

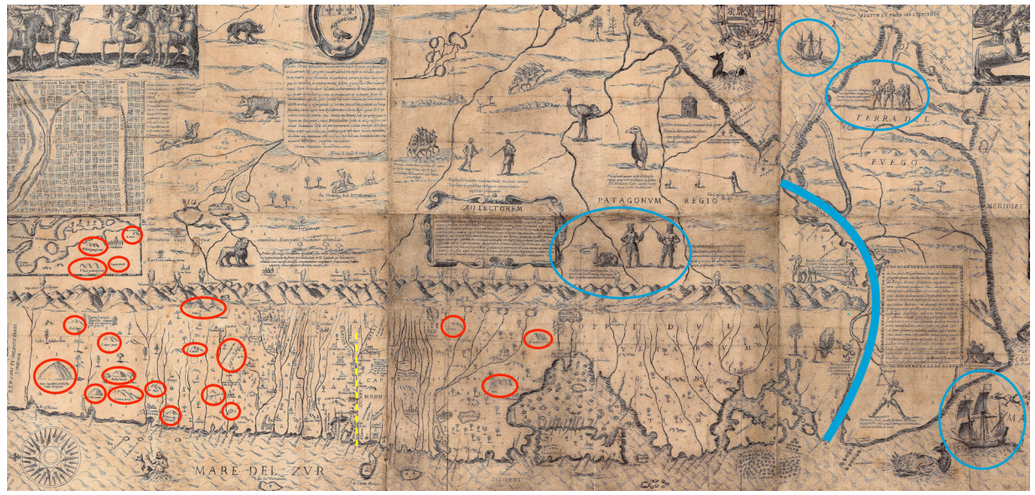

Fig 7 Locations of mines depicting mineral wealth that rivals Potosí

The map also has striking ethnographic images—an unexplained person with a tail confounds the viewers, as do giants (described by Antonio Pigafetta, the on-board chronicler for Magellan's expedition) who give gold in exchange for the colonists' iron (Fig. 5). Other portrayals are stereotypical—savage and uncouth—exactly the kind of stimulus that would actuate the proselytizing machinery of the church. Ovalle believed in the church's mission. He was a product of his faith and time, and like a true Jesuit he believed in divine signs and portents that foretold a successful evangelizing mission: A "tree in the shape of a crucifix [was] found in the forest near Limache," and was taken to be "a direct manifestation of divine will" (Prieto) (Fig. 6). It is present on the map as a testimony to Ovalle's faith in the church's mission.

The map is a window into a time when appropriating the land and resources of a people—and forcing them to give up their culture and religion—were seen as the triumph of civilization over barbarianism; secular and religious justifications were concocted to justify the wrongs.

While a variety of riches—real or fabricated—existed on the map, silver, the most desirable commodity for Spain, was conspicuously absent; it would not be discovered in Chile until the beginning of the 19th century. So how did Ovalle make his case even stronger? Besides the giants who trade gold for iron and the llamas

that carry the ingots, mountains of gold, tin, lead, copper, lapis lazuli, and precious stones litter the Chilean landscape waiting to cough up their treasures for the Spanish coffers (Fig. 7). The abundant mineral wealth of Chile, which rivaled Potosí, was sure to lure the crown.

Finally, the pictures on the top two corners tell the history of the Spanish-Mapuche conflict since Valdivia's invasion in 1540 (Fig. 1). Because of this war (depicted in the top right-hand corner), Chile never gained the status of a viceroyalty under a viceroy, but always remained a captaincy general under military control. By 1641, a hundred years of war had elapsed, but despite having guns and cannons the Spanish had failed to subdue the bow and arrow wielding Indians. Eventually, the Treaty of Quillín, which established a temporary peace, was drafted just before Ovalle's departure for Europe. The picture in the top left corner shows the treaty being made between the governor of Chile and the Mapuche *cacique*, who is holding a *canelo* branch—an indigenous symbol of peace. In the background, the Indians conduct a ritualistic llama slaughter in front of a cross to establish the treaty. Peace, Ovalle knew, was an important incentive for the crown to invest in any colonial expansion activities.

The map was interpreted differently by different audiences: the crown, the church, Ovalle himself, and the European populace. It was so mesmerizing that Ovalle even found his way into Oscar Wilde's famous novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. However, the vital question is how would a Mapuche read this map—depicted as hostile, and his way of life as savage, but himself having no say in how he was represented. The Mapuche are the original inhabitants of Patagonia and Chile. Their relentless fighting compelled the Spanish crown to install the only standing army in the New World, and they are also the only indigenous people to ever get their freedom from Spain. But tragically, after Chile declared independence in 1810, their land and rights were once again usurped; this time by the new government that sold their land to farmers and big corporations salivating for timber and other valuable resources. They were sent to live in small reservations. Towards the end of the 20th century, when Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship (1973–1990) drew up a constitution, Chile was the only country in the Americas to not recognize its indigenous people in its constitution. Democracy was subsequently restored in 1990 and promises were made to return the land, but they remained unfulfilled. Today, 12% of Chileans identify as Mapuche and Araucania is home to 2 million Mapuches. They are among the poorest, least educated and most malnourished people in Chile. They seek restitution, recognition, self-determination, and their land returned. In May 2022, the Constitutional Convention approved Mapuche's right to their territories and resources in a new draft of the constitution. However, the referendum to approve the new constitution was rejected by 62% of the population in September 2022. The Mapuche battle continues, and the map is a historic memory of that struggle.

In conclusion, Ovalle's map is deeply meaningful because it connects colonial history with its aftermath in the 21st century. Its authentic and manufactured exoticism, teeming with ethnographic and indigenous knowledge showcases Ovalle's patriotic pride, his Jesuit zeal, and his marketing of Chile to the church and crown. It didn't matter if the indigenous people wanted the European way of life or not, the presumptuous colonizers sought to impose "policía, good government, both spiritual and secular, … on a continent which they perceived as barbaric and uncivilized" (Dym and Offen, 47). The map is a window into a time when appropriating the land and resources of a people, and forcing them to give up their culture and religion, was seen as the triumph of civilization over barbarianism, and secular and religious justifications were concocted to justify the wrongs. It isn't merely a delightful piece of cartography.

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Sonnet: Free verse is like anarchy

by John Angell Grant

Free verse is like anarchy, blank verse is
Like democracy; sonnets are old class
Society, vertical, structured, "his"
Moderated, enforced timely hourglass
Turning, playing by rules. Tho this sonnet
Is more a dress-up party. Come as Ed-
Ith Wharton's boyfriend or girlfriend, bonnet
In hand, hopping off your brougham, beach-head
Party in long-dress awaiting, spittoons
On the sand; just rhyme your lines and count your
Feet, two here, two there, hit the dessert spoon's
Second beat; or its first, if your clangor's
Being bold (trouble-maker, you), have fun,
It's all a game, the game of rhyme beat spun.

Depression and Anxiety

by Michileen Marie Oberst

His eyes are down, Hers are up
He takes notes, She gives feelings
He curls his back, She fiddles her fingers
He says it's done, She says what's next
He refuses to stand, She won't lie down
He smells anger, She touches fear
He needs to drive, She needs to stay
He needs a moment, She needs it to be over
They both cry.
His embrace makes her calm, Her smile makes him hopeful
They are not opposites,
but now and then
Always and Forever.

The Last Black Man In San Francisco: Heart Is Where One's Original Home Is

by Robert M. Mason III

Gaius Plinius Secundus, also known as Pliny the Elder (who died in AD 79 following the eruption of Mount Vesuvius), was an author best known for his encyclopedic *Natural History*, a philosopher, and a military commander of the Roman Empire.[1] Amongst his writings is a proverb that is still recited today—"home is where the heart is." Pliny's adage has been understood to mean that regardless of where one resides, one's heart will have an emotional and psychological connection to that current physical location which will provide a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

But there can also be personal experiences where the belief that "home is where the heart is" does not hold true. If one is separated from a physical dwelling that has provided the foundation for strong family ties and a sense of community, then "heart is where one's original home is." That unshakable bond between one's heart and one's original home was illustrated in the 2019 film, *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*. A third generation African American native San Franciscan named Jimmie Fails, and his best friend, Montgomery Allen, try to possess and restore a Western Addition Victorian home on Golden

Gate Avenue near Fillmore Street that once had been in the Fails family for several generations.

But Jimmie's family members do not share his desire to recapture their past. Once Jimmie's father's drug use and financial chicanery caused the family to lose their ancestral home, which Jimmie believes was built by his great-grandfather, the family separated irrevocably. The father now lives in a single room occupancy in the Tenderloin section of San Francisco and makes a living packaging and selling pirated DVDs. When Jimmie pays his father a visit and informs him of his plan to move into the now vacant Fails home, the father coldly rebukes Jimmie's plans and says, "we don't talk about that house no more." Jimmie's aunt lives in a nondescript adobe or stucco home outside of San Francisco but somewhere in the Bay Area, and the mother moved to Los Angeles after divorcing Jimmie's father but has recently returned, yet has made no effort to contact her son. With the family dispersed and, at best, in sporadic contact with each other, in Jimmie's estimation he is "the last Black Man in San Francisco" with the incentive to reclaim and maintain his former family residence. Jimmie's conviction is so unwavering that when he tries to secure a mortgage loan based on his salary as a home health caregiver, he tells the loan officer that he'll pay any rate, even one that's usurious, because "this is the only house that I'll ever want."

This mission is vital for Jimmie's physical and psychological wellbeing, for without the connection to his former home, Jimmie has been essentially homeless and aimless. As Montgomery and his grandfather analyze old movies and brainstorm about ideas for the plays that Montgomery is writing, Jimmie sits on the side of the couch looking forlorn, refusing to partake in the family revelry as he has no connection to this substitute property. For Jimmie, the adage that "home is where the heart is" provides no comfort as it has no application to him.

Instead of trying to move on and settle in with his best friend, Jimmie continues to make connections with his prior home, but each overture is met with resistance and suspicion. He periodically goes by uninvited to repair the trim, paint, and garden the front hedge, much to the consternation of the current owners, who threaten to call the police on Jimmie and ask in exasperation "What do you want?" The realtor who finally secures the listing when the current owners decide to sell asks a similar question to Montgomery: "What's your deal, man?" Both the current owners and the listing agent cannot understand Jimmie's desire to maintain a connection with the home where he was reared. To them, real estate is a disposable commodity to be sold to the highest bidder and that one home is just as serviceable as another in providing stability.

For Jimmie, the adage that "home is where the heart is" provides no comfort as it has no application to him.

Jimmie's negative encounters with others who do not share his views about the importance of maintaining a connection to property only intensify when he travels throughout San Francisco. One day while riding public transportation, Jimmie overhears a conversation between two Generation Z women in which they denigrate San Francisco and only want to stay long enough to make their money and then depart. When Jimmie admonishes the women and tells them, "you don't get to hate San Francisco. You only get to hate it if you love it first," they look at Jimmie like he's speaking gibberish because they have no understanding of what it means to have an emotional and consistent connection to a physical location. In their assessment, Jimmie is an anachronism who has no place in contemporary San Francisco, which *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* shows has become home to legions of tech bros and other financial opportunists.

San Francisco leaders had other plans for the Western Addition that did not include the perpetuation of a robust African American presence.

After the family lost the home, Jimmie lived in a group home and, for a time, in a car with his cousin. When we first meet Jimmie, we see that he shares a room in Montgomery's grandfather's house in the Bayview-Hunters Point area of San Francisco. Even though Montgomery and his grandfather are welcoming to Jimmie and tell him to consider this place his home, it is clear from his facial expressions and body language that Jimmie cannot do so.

Despite his seemingly out-of-step attitude, *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* makes a brief historical reference that adds a historical nuance to explain Jimmie's desire to return to his family residence. An obnoxious Segway-driving tour guide leads other riders past the Fails family home and remarks that Western Addition was all Japanese before President Roosevelt interned Japanese residents, and the Western Addition went through "that Black thing" and became known as the "Harlem of the West." Jimmie angrily confronts the tour guide, accusing him of downplaying the role African Americans like his great-grandfather played in building and nurturing the Western Addition. While Jimmie later learns that his great-grandfather did not build the family home, his tirade nonetheless touches on and links *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*'s fictional story with the true story in which San Francisco public leaders shamefully removed African Americans from the Western Addition under the guise of benevolent urban renewal.

In the years following World War II and into the 1950s, African Americans took up residence in the Western Addition. Besides establishing a residential presence that included a young African American girl then known as "Bootsie" but later known as Dr. Maya Angelou, African Americans opened businesses including hotels, banks, and, perhaps most notably, jazz venues. Sometimes proudly referred to as the "Harlem of the West,"[2] the Western Addition became a thriving hub of African American activity. With the aid of *The Negro Motorist Green-Book*,[3] African Americans travelling to the Bay Area could locate the enclaves, such as the Western Addition, that would welcome African American customers and provide them with safe accommodations for extended vacation stays. Hotels in the Western Addition such as the Booker T. Washington and The Drake were popular with traveling entertainers who relished the opportunity to socialize within the Black community rather than risk being isolated or turned away by the larger and white owned hotels.[4]

But San Francisco leaders had other plans for the Western Addition that did not include the perpetuation of a robust African American presence. Enabled by the Federal Government's efforts to allocate $1.5 billion nationwide towards urban renewal,[5] and the California Redevelopment Act of 1945, San Francisco's City Planning Commission issued its report in 1947 to bulldoze and rebuild 36 square blocks of the Western Addition area. On December 4, 1947, the City Planning Commission submitted its $52 million proposal entitled *New City: San Francisco Redeveloped* and "called for 33 new 10-story buildings across nearly 2.25 square miles, including larger school and recreation facilities, a shopping center and housing for 10,000 people."[6]

Sixty square blocks in the Western Addition, which included roughly 2,500 Victorian homes and 883 businesses, were demolished under the auspices of urban renewal, devastating both African American and Japanese American communities.

In furtherance of the proposal, on June 3, 1948, the Board of Supervisors designated the Western Addition as blighted, and the first wave of the demolition process began in 1956.[7] The second demolition phase in 1964 was overseen by Justin Herman, director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.[8] While then Mayor George Christopher claimed that the purposes of the redevelopment project were to create a high-capacity Geary Expressway, replace the blighted housing with modern apartments, and modernize Japantown, the less altruistic and more pernicious goal was more race-based:

To stop the northward expansion of the Filmore's African American community and contain it south of Geary Street. The new eight-lane Geary Expressway was its de facto physical barrier—a symbolic moat, complete with Fillmore Street bridge.

To put in place a small Asian-American community buffer zone, the renewed Japantown, physically in between Black and White neighborhoods.[9]

At the end of this two-part urban renewal process, a once thriving African American community of homeowners and business establishments had been decimated. Sixty square blocks in the Western Addition, which included roughly 2,500 Victorian homes and 883 businesses, were demolished under the auspices of urban renewal, devastating both African American and Japanese American

communities.[10] It is no wonder that author James Baldwin, upon learning what was happening in San Francisco, famously remarked that "San Francisco is engaging—as most Northern cities now are engaged—in something called urban renewal, which means moving the Negroes out. It means Negro removal."[11]

The plan to redevelop Western Addition has always been controversial because of the amorphous standards that were used to devastate a neighborhood by labeling it blighted. The term "blighted" was not clearly defined by either federal or California law and instead, an ambiguous set of criteria were put into place.[12] Unfortunately, these criteria lacked objective standards for determining their applicability, making it wholly up to the discretion of the investigators to decide if an area was blighted, and that lack of objective verification was brought to bear on the Western Addition. Simultaneously with the release of the Planning Commission's proposal, inspectors dispatched by District Attorney Edmund G. Brown allegedly discovered "dozens of serious fire hazards' while inspecting Fillmore district buildings," … and [a] task force of health and fire inspectors was created following a report by Brown declaring there were "100,000 violations daily in San Francisco of the State housing act and fire, building, health and safety codes."[13] But without objective criteria against which to weigh the investigators' findings, any finding could be used to support the conclusion that an area was blighted. Even the city's own report claimed "that many buildings within the blight zone could be rehabilitated, but City Attorney John J. O'Toole determined that the CCRA did not cover improvements to existing structures[.]"[14] Ironically, the very report that was used to demolish Western Addition businesses and homes determined that these very homes and businesses could be rehabilitated.

When the facts are viewed collectively, it becomes apparent that the motive behind the redevelopment of the Western Addition was a race-based effort to remove African Americans permanently. A local planner named Mel Scott was hired to prepare a study regarding the Western Addition's potential redevelopment.[15] After investigating the area his report made the sweeping pronouncement that "[n]othing short of a clean sweep and a new start can make the district a genuinely good place

in which to live."[16] But in this imagined Western Addition, Scott opined there would be few opportunities for people of color to participate in the new utopia as they would be priced out of the housing market.[17] When the Western Addition Community Organization formed to oppose the destruction of the Western Addition, Justin Herman's response to the protestations was less than sympathetic: "No little popular group is going to put together a multi-million-dollar project. They aren't going to stop one, either."[18] Thus, redevelopment erected an economic impediment that was designed to prevent African Americans from returning to a part of San Francisco that they once thought of as home.

The psychological and social impact of the loss of a home and community can be devastating.[19] "Researchers have found that some displaced residents react to the loss of their neighborhood as to the death of a family member or dear friend; they experience depression and withdrawal."[20] For example, Marc Fried writes in "Grieving for a Lost Home: Psychological Costs of Relocation" of the reactions following the dislocation of residents from the West End of Boston, an area labeled an urban slum:

At their most extreme, these reactions of grief are intense, deeply felt, and, at times, overwhelming. In response to a series of questions concerning the feelings of sadness and depression which people experienced after moving, many replies were unambiguous: "I felt as though I had lost everything," "I felt like my heart was taken out of me," "I felt like taking the gaspipe."[21]

Fried summarizes these feelings as a special loss: "a disruption in one's relationship to the past, to the present, and to the future."[22] In essence, those subject to relocation feel adrift and alone.

In his actions and words, Jimmie also manifests this sense of dislocation resulting in isolation, which dictates how *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* must end. After his illusion about his great-grandfather's association with the family house is destroyed, and without any means to purchase the property, Jimmie decides to leave San Francisco. His aunt thinks it's the right decision, for in her view, "if you leave, it's not your loss. It's San Francisco's." She sees what Jimmie now acknowledges, that he no longer belongs in the city of his birth, and Jimmie leaves San Francisco in a rowboat on the San Francisco Bay.

That heartbreaking final image of Jimmie rowing against the tide is reminiscent of the last line from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*: "So we beat on; boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." In writing that line, Fitzgerald was commenting on the folly of Gatsby's desire for a woman who does not reciprocate his affection, yet Gatsby is nonetheless stuck in the past because he cannot or will not acknowledge that his desire is futile. In essence, both Gatsby and Jimmie struggle for things that they cannot obtain and must pay the consequence. Gatsby literally loses his life, and Jimmie figuratively loses his. He has tried and failed to reconnect with his past, and like the rest of his family, Jimmie recognizes that he, too, must move on. While Jimmie's loss of home and family was not completely due to outside forces such as San Francisco's efforts to decimate the African American community in the Western Addition, Jimmie's sense of feeling adrift when one is separated from one's home and community is just as acute as the loss felt by the African American residents who saw their homes and businesses destroyed. Thus, *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* shows us that once one's original home is lost, it can never be reclaimed.

The African American population in San Francisco has declined from 13.4% in 1970 to 5.7% in 2021 according to the U.S. Census, yet those remaining are fighting to restore their cultural presence and to obtain compensation for the damage done to the African American community.

But for the current African American residents of the Western Addition who successfully weathered the "Negro removal," their fates may not be as discouraging as Jimmie's. The African American population in San Francisco has declined from 13.4% in 1970 to 5.7% in 2021 according to the U.S. Census, yet those remaining are fighting to restore their cultural presence and to obtain compensation for the damage done to the African American community. Nonprofit organizations are working with elected officials

to restore The Fillmore Heritage Center, a 50,000 square foot community and cultural center that has been vacant since 2015. And in December of 2022, the African American Reparations Advisory Committee presented its *Draft San Francisco Reparations Plan* to the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, the Human Rights Commission. While these developments appear hopeful, time will tell if they will revitalize the Western Addition so that it will rival the vibrancy that once earned it the moniker "Harlem of the West."

Endnotes

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18 Id., 20.
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Crushed

by Prabhu Palani

Gossamer wings
And gently swaying bamboo shoots
Hissing volcanoes
And thundering typhoons.
The Universe conspires.
Worlds collide and hearts get crushed
Nothing left but fragments
Of a long ago beauty
Buried or floating in the new calm.
Imaginary headstones
That write and rewrite
Until the memory ink
Dries out.

Sonnet: I can see the tunnel

by John Angell Grant

I can see the tunnel that leads to my
Death. There it is, right in front of me, curv-
Ing into the exit's flow, where it spills, dies
And flies out the chute into a quick swerve,
Splash! Now become nothingness, vanished from
The sky. Bright points of light, dots here and there,
Silent and twinkling, black surrounding them.
How? When? Why ask those questions, sweet nowhere,
As here we go, down the chute into joy,
A roller coaster ride, flying deathward,
Where happiness and release soon deploy
Our spirits, which fade into beauty unmarred
By scars of the material world's need—
And gone: fear. Finally released and finally shed.

Delivery

by Andy Grose

The small tree was stuck in the clay pot. This first spring of his retirement, the old doctor was spending time in the garden, something he had never done before. He had always found gardening a waste of time. Or so he said. But that was only one part of the truth.

It had always been his wife's garden.

"Maybe later," he'd say. "After we get too old to dance."

"Well, we still have a little time . . ." she might tease with a blush as he rushed off, leaving her to her garden all day.

Nowadays he regretted not dancing more.

He regretted a lot.

His life, after her death last fall, was more like death than life.

The Big Alone, he called it.

She'd claimed she never felt alone when he was gone. That their love was always with her. But he knew that love alone was not enough. It needed something more. To him love now felt more like hunger. Hope might be okay alone. Not love.

"She lied," he thought. "For me."

Her true virtue was self-denial. Long-suffering. He saw that now. All those long nights at the hospital. Now it was his turn to lie in bed awake, wondering what was going on inside those quiet rooms, behind the drawn curtains, forever hushed and never spoken of.

He didn't want the tree, a volunteer from the winter—probably a seed dropped by a wandering bird. He wanted the clay pot to plant bright yellow marigolds. Her favorite color.

The garden had died back over the long winter, unthought of, abandoned. But with the warmer weather he had begun to feel as if the garden might still hold part of her.

Always a frugal man, he was trying to save the soil. He worked his fingers down along the trunk, carefully trying to find where the roots were caught, but the seedling held firm.

"Like delivering a baby," he thought.

The idea amused him. That was a problem he'd faced many times. But he'd never found that frustrating. Only a challenge. One that skill and patience would overcome. Delivering a baby had been one of the happier parts of his job, the kind of thing he could share with her.

He went to the old shed and found a pillow to sit on. One stained with green paint, another color she loved, from years ago when she had made him help her put in the trellis.

The old doctor rocked the slender tree trunk carefully from side to side to make room for his hand to slip between the pot and the plant, as if he were gently feeling around a baby for a twisted leg. One strong root was wedged between two stones which worked against each other like a trap door. The harder he pulled the tighter they closed.

"A breech birth without forceps," he mused as he sat back to catch his breath.

About him new life was sprouting, a mixture of weeds and plants he knew she could have named, and he remembered that she had several garden books in the kitchen.

Tulips were coming up in the back, those he recognized.

And what might be a crocus, peeking from the fallen leaves.

Finally, he turned the pot upside down to try again. And everything came out all in one piece, plant and soil bound together. A mat of lacy white roots had spread over the surface where they had found the porous clay, tiny threads intricately woven together like a placenta, as the roots sought out enough moisture to stay alive.

The old man rested as the first faint odor of the pelargoniums floated around him, deciding where to plant this new life. He settled on a sunny spot near the garden swing, where he could come sit to watch it grow. As he tested the swing, thinking he would find some oil for the springs, he noticed that the old trellis was peeling, that it ought to be repainted.

But they would have plenty of time for that.

Fig 1 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1959, New York), monolithic concrete drum. Described as a "jarring note in the city scene" or "an odd and unbecoming neighbor," Source: Photograph by author

Frank Lloyd Wright's Organic Architecture—An Integration of Container and Content

by Sapna Marfatia

One seminal work can sometimes change the entire trajectory of an artform. The dynamic and unconventional Gates of Hell (c.1900, Paris) synthesized Auguste Rodin's sculptural style and propagated a revolutionary shift for sculptors; similarly, Frederick C. Robie House (1910, Chicago) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (1959, New York) bracketed Frank Lloyd Wright's Modernist style and his 'organic' philosophy that initiated an aesthetic revolution in architecture. Comparing Robie house and the early "earthbound syntax of his Prairie Style"

Fig 1 Frederick C. Robie House (1910, Chicago)—conceived as an earthbound structure—seamlessly combines with the flat naturalistic Midwestern setting. Source: Photograph by author

(Frampton 2020, p.213) with the "science-fiction" Guggenheim Museum "regarded as the climax of Wright's later career," (Frampton 2020, p.217) demonstrates Wright's fanatical faith in organic architecture. His organic designs—where the whole was greater than the sum of individual parts—aspired to seamlessly integrate site, building, structure, materials, details, interior, and exterior spaces that resulted in controversial yet influential buildings. On the surface, the vertical drum-like mass of the Guggenheim Museum seemingly contrasts with the horizontal and rectilinear Robie House, but closer inspection reveals several similarities.

Despite differences in external form, both Robie House and the Guggenheim intrinsically embody Wright's organic architecture; their designs courageously break away from the shackles of past styles and nakedly display their means, methods, and materials of construction. While Wright's skeptical contemporaries continued to question the machine-ushered aesthetic, he outrightly rejected the "nervous artificiality of the 'classic'" and pioneered the "appropriate use of the machine as an artist's tool" (Wright 1963, p.29). Wright criticized those who were unable to "cut their umbilical cord to the Colonial or the French chateau, the English manor house or the grandomania of Beaux-Arts days" (Wright 1963, p.30). Wright's "brilliantly creative" trailblazing career commenced during the "horse-buggy age" and culminated in the "space age" (Huxtable 2004, podcast). Essentially, Wright defined organic as a building that grew "simply and logically out of the nature of its material, "like a tree"" (Huxtable 1959, p.SM16). During the seven decades of his professional life Wright tirelessly promoted organic architecture as a "Naissance [that] needed to replace moribund Renaissance" (Wright 1963, p.25).

With Robie House's earthbound horizontality and Guggenheim Museum's spiraling verticality, Wright introduced a new language for architecture that served as an "antidote" for the conventional (Wright 1963, p.38). Daring cantilevers achieved through concealed structural beams at the Robie House earned Wright the title of "great inventor … [and] brilliant visual psychologist" (Wright 2005, p.324-325). With Guggenheim's sweeping spiral ramp that rose with one edge "turned up … to form the exterior wall," while the opposite edge became a "parapet overlooking a large open well" lit by a domed skylight from above, (Wright 1986, p.74) Wright transformed an "ancient Mesopotamian ziggurat into a space of continuous movement" (Levine 2009, p.212). Despite obvious differences in mass, materials, scale, and context, both buildings fearlessly exhibit confidence in the future and

Fig 2 Frederick C. Robie House (1910, Chicago)—Wright strove to design the Robie House such that every element was an integral part required to complete the whole. Source: Photograph by author

refuse to pretentiously adopt "confections" of the past that could be "mistaken for architecture" (Wright 1963, p.33).

Guggenheim Museum, located at the intersection of naturalistic Central Park and urbanistic Fifth Avenue architecturally commands its context, whereas Robie House–conceived as an earthbound structure–seamlessly combines with the flat naturalistic Midwestern setting. While the Museum epitomizes organic integration of the architectural container with its programmatic content, Robie House exemplifies Wright's organic simplicity that associates the building directly "with the ground…natural to its prairie site" (Wright 1963, p. 43). Distinct from "plainness" and "elimination," Wright believed in elegant

Fig 3 Guggenheim Museum (1959, New York), located at the intersection of naturalistic Central Park and urbanistic Fifth Avenue architecturally commands its context. Source: Photograph by author

simplicity achieved through design clarity and intent (Wright 1963, p.47-48). "Simplicity [was] a spiritual ideal seldom organically reached," until "perfectly realized part[s]" were carefully united into the "harmonious whole" (Wright 1963, p.47, 49). "Dedicated to the ideal of organic simplicity," Wright strove to design the Robie House such that every element was an integral part required to complete the whole (Wright 1963, p.38). Similarly, with the Guggenheim Museum, Wright discarded the concept of the Museum as a "neutral container," and ensured that his architecture was actively engaged in a "dialogue with the paintings and sculptures it holds" (Kamin 2019).

Stiving for earthbound horizontality at Robie House, Wright deftly eliminated the conventional attic, dormer, and basement, thus dramatically reducing the overall height and simplifying the profile. A singular centrally located vertical chimney was permitted to punctuate the shallow roof and interrupt the emphatic horizontal mass. In traditionally built homes, walls are usually perched on raised rubble plinths of the basement. By contrast, the walls at Robie House emerge directly at-grade from a "low platform" and terminate at the second story windowsill (Wright 1963, p.42). "Light screens,"–windows located between the sill and the "broad eaves of a gently sloping, overhanging roof"–were grouped together to create a rhythmic composition of solids and voids (Wright 1963, p.42). Space flowed unencumbered between intersecting volumes further defined by varying ceiling heights, interior doors were eliminated, and rooms ceased to be subdivided into individual boxes. The boundaries between the interiors and exteriors were intentionally blurred.

With the Guggenheim, Wright masterfully integrated an unconventional architectural envelope with three basic elements of the Museum rotunda: circulation, light, and art. Traditionally, museums were organized into a "series of boxlike rooms…upsetting and unpleasant, because they're like labyrinths, confusing the visitor" (Huxtable 1959, p.SM16). At the Guggenheim, Wright purposefully invented a fluidly inverted circulation flow. Patrons were invited to start from the top floor and gradually descend a spiral ramp while viewing the museum's non-objective art collection, revealed in a continuous sequence during the descent. Though unconventional, "the net result of such construction [was] greater repose"; within the curvilinear form space flowed unencumbered in an "atmosphere

of the quiet unbroken wave: no meeting of the eye with abrupt changes of form" (Wright 1975). The rotunda walls subtly tilted outwards like an artist's easel and allowed the paintings to be illuminated by natural daylight introduced through concealed but continuous ribbon windows located directly above the paintings. The notion of organic simplicity achieved through free-flowing space faithfully extends from the Robie House to the Museum.

Born out of Wright's unfailing compulsion to ensure architecture organically emerged from the materials and technology of its times, Wright's designs uncompromisingly marry form and function. Although the private Robie House and the public Guggenheim Museum functionally serve different audience groups, they both represent a reimagined typology of their typical genre: the home and the museum. Though both buildings perpetuated a robust argument related to form, the broad massed Robie House with wall planes composed of modular brick courses layered to enhance horizontality was better received than Guggenheim's monolithic concrete drum. Described as a "jarring note in the city scene" or "an odd and unbecoming neighbor," Huxtable commented that the Guggenheim, "like all Wright buildings, is an artistic whole that demands undivided attention, a visual and sensual experience that fills the eye and the mind completely. It is inescapable, whether one likes it or not" (NY Times). Functionality received unsympathetic and harsh criticism as well. Although Wright's true intent was "not to subjugate the paintings to the building" but to foster an "uninterrupted, beautiful symphony" (Wright 1975) between art and architecture, Hilla Rebay, the Foundation's art curator and museum director, accused Wright of designing an architectural monument that overshadowed the art.

Undoubtedly, the Museum's exterior composition at first glance appears so audacious that it is difficult to appreciate the sophisticated and simplistic abstraction achieved through Wright's creativity. Wright describes the Museum as "an Organic building [that] knows no division between Concept, Execution and Purpose. Conceived for a purpose it definitely completes the service of that purpose or fails, ignominious. No details (not even the smallest) can be interjected or interfered with without marring the peace and quiet of the whole Concept" (Wright 1986, p.57). The museum design, though unconventional and contentious, achieved integration of concept, execution, and purpose. Wright labored for sixteen years to produce "six separate sets of plans and a total of 749 drawings" to conceive, convince, and implement his masterpiece (Wright 1986, p.x). His unique "symphonic" design was perfectly balanced such that the slightest "discord … at any one point [would send] echoes throughout the entire structure" (Wright 1986, p. 60). Wright obsessively refined the design over mounting costs and several project delays. Meanwhile the contractors grappled to erect a structure so ahead of its time that the technology and codes all posed as challenges.

> With Robie House's earthbound horizontality and Guggenheim Museum's spiraling verticality, Wright introduced a new language for architecture that served as an "antidote" for the conventional.

Like Rodin, Wright unfortunately never saw his swan song completed; six months after Wright's death the Museum was inaugurated on October 21, 1959. Nonetheless, Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House and Guggenheim Museum left a lasting legacy on Modernist architecture. Frank Lloyd Wright paved the way for future architects. Today, architectural language has evolved to accept what was once considered radical and this is reflected in the works of those architects who followed in Wright's footsteps.

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Two poems

by Tipu Barber

ONE

My dreams of England are full of dust.

Tied together with straw and hay

Counted on childrens hands and
yorkshire winds.

We would find cakes hidden in the pews at St Georges.

The ancient silver birches in Moorcross
No longer shelter winters wrens.

Broad canal marries the moors to the town.

Promises of youth made in Beaumont park
never had a chance to be kept.

TWO

Silent.

Lost children
Walk these moors.

Dark church with steps to the railroad graveyard.

Gravel night.

Huddersfields elms and moorland birches sway.
A wandering farmers laugh hangs in the moonlight.

Bitterest youth palls a shadow
The swings in the park
Where you can trace memories
In the grass at lands end

Grey whitby waves
Threaten rotted oars

A dog barks at the lighthouse ruins.

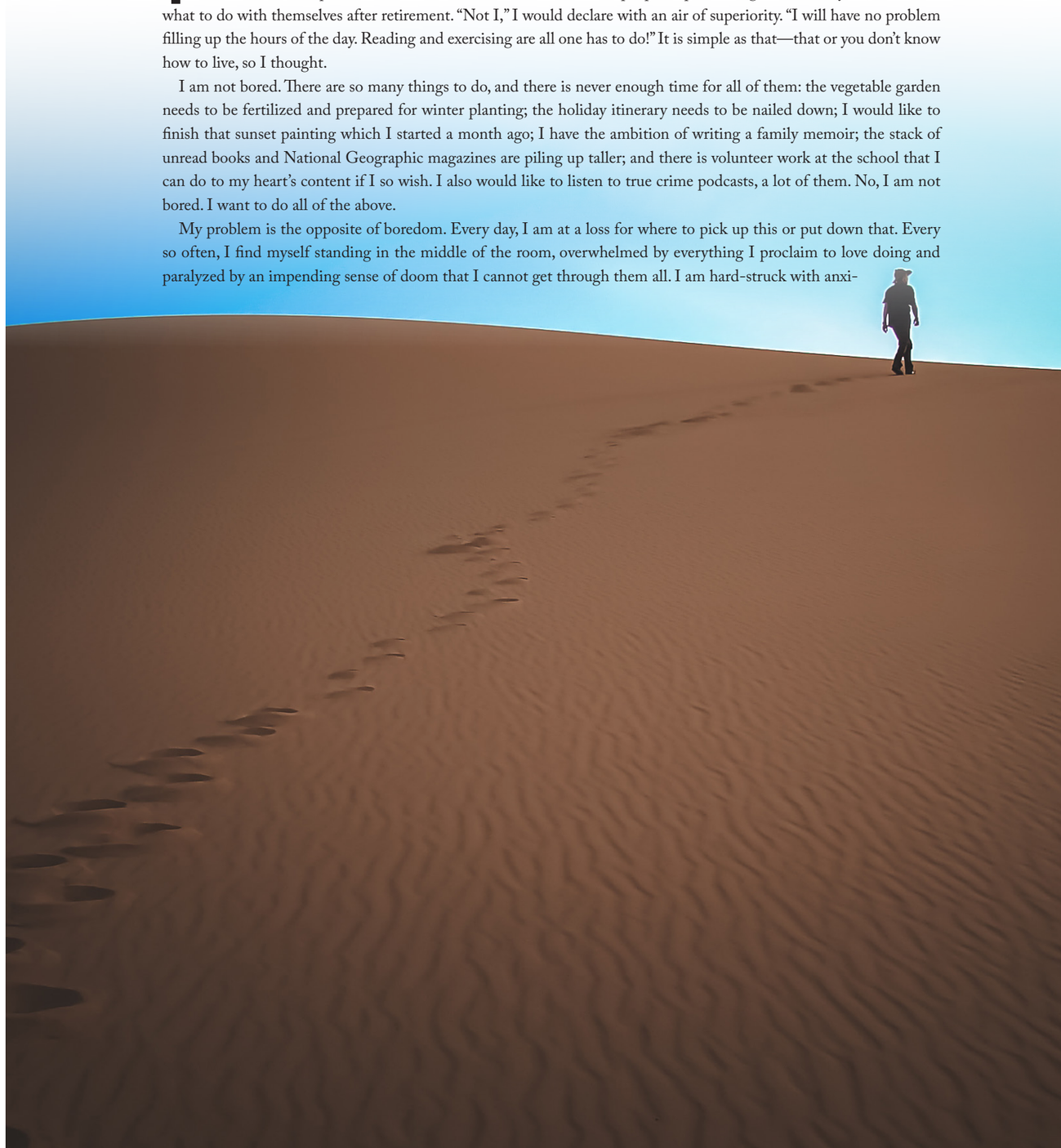
Stepping out of the Comfort Zone

by Jué Lin

THE YEAR I WALKED away from a career of a quarter of a century, I lost my mind. This was an unexpected result. I used to sneer at the idea that people kept working because they did not know what to do with themselves after retirement. "Not I," I would declare with an air of superiority. "I will have no problem filling up the hours of the day. Reading and exercising are all one has to do!" It is simple as that—that or you don't know how to live, so I thought.

I am not bored. There are so many things to do, and there is never enough time for all of them: the vegetable garden needs to be fertilized and prepared for winter planting; the holiday itinerary needs to be nailed down; I would like to finish that sunset painting which I started a month ago; I have the ambition of writing a family memoir; the stack of unread books and National Geographic magazines are piling up taller; and there is volunteer work at the school that I can do to my heart's content if I so wish. I also would like to listen to true crime podcasts, a lot of them. No, I am not bored. I want to do all of the above.

My problem is the opposite of boredom. Every day, I am at a loss for where to pick up this or put down that. Every so often, I find myself standing in the middle of the room, overwhelmed by everything I proclaim to love doing and paralyzed by an impending sense of doom that I cannot get through them all. I am hard-struck with anxi-



ety. Realizing that, I hate myself a little more for not having been more productive. I have become someone who cannot figure out how to live.

A Facebook "friend" posted that she had achieved her goal of visiting 100 countries. She looked radiant and jubilant in the photos with a bright smile riding a gorgeous golden-maned horse on a sunset Antigua beach. It touched me. As a travel enthusiast, I have always envisioned myself trekking the beaten paths and diving deep into foreign cultures, some places far and wide in the world. I am happy for her. I am envious of her.

Yet, as I cheer her on, I am troubled by a question that pesters in my head. What is the meaning of it all? What if one travels to 100 countries? I suppose it is a great sense of fulfillment, but I wondered how long that ecstasy lasts. And suppose it doesn't last forever, then would our next goal need to be harder and higher to bring the same level of pleasure? I told my husband that I thought my friend was an incredibly fortunate person. I don't begrudge her advantageous position in the world; I wish everyone were fortunate. But then, would anyone be fortunate if everyone was? Does this make me a small-minded bitter hater? I lost my mind right then from spinning on these questions. When one ponders existential questions in her early twenties, she can live with the complex contradiction of life because she might feel her horizon has just opened up a little wider. But when one falls into the same existential crisis pit in her early fifties, she loses her mind.

My problem is the opposite of boredom. Every day, I am at a loss for where to pick up this or put down that.

I had just returned from two trips to Trader Joe's for the cute flower planters and three visits to the CVS store for the gift cards, thank-you notes, and gift bags that would hold various present combinations. I lost my mind while standing at the kitchen table, realizing I was one Starbucks card short of the end-of-year gift bags. I had miscounted the number of schoolteachers and forgot the sweet piano instructor. Still, I planned for the contingencies of a different number of housekeepers who might show up for the year-end cleaning. I eventually did forget the gardener, and the morning he showed up for the last visit of the year, I had to dip into my son's secret cache for money the kid received on his recent birthday.

I lost my mind on how frivolous yet so complex such things are. But holidays come every year. I have been giving end-of-year presents every year. Why does this feel so much more stressful now, considering I don't even have a job that demands my full-time attention? Things always got done. I used to put in the regular twelve hours at work and dash around to get the gift packs ready between meetings, work calls, and putting a kid to bed. When I handed out the gifts, I would feel the year was well earned. And now this stuff is the source of great anxiety. I am not supposed to be stressed because I am not even working. The realization of the incongruence between reality and my sense of spinning out of control brings a new height of anxiety.

What is the meaning of it all? What if one travels to 100 countries? I suppose it is a great sense of fulfillment, but I wondered how long that ecstasy lasts.

I no longer know if the decision to quit my job was the right one. My twelve-year-old asks me, "Are you retired?"

I cringe at that categorization. "I went back to school," I said.

Friends remind me what an enviable position I am in. Almost everyone who hears that I have returned to school for a graduate degree exclaims, "How wonderful that you are studying something that sounds so fun!" Secretly, though, I think some of them chalk that up as my "retirement gig," as one said out loud.

Every other week, I bring up the idea that I should return to work. "That is entirely your decision, but what is the hurry?" my husband would say.

"I am not productive!" To that, he raises his eyebrows. He sees how much I study and toil for the term papers.

My best friend doesn't take long to tell me that I ought to be kinder to myself. "Doing something nice for yourself isn't selfish or unproductive," he told me. I know he is right. I know everyone is right. I know it is obnoxious to feel unsettled by the luxury that I have. I feel guilty about my self-indulgent misery.

But I am unsettled. Call that rich people problem, housewife boredom, or soccer-mom neurosis. The label doesn't matter; the problem is there. Please don't hate me.

We work hard to create an identity for ourselves and then work even harder to hold on to it. We start with this creation when we are young and never stop in our life-

time. Who are our friends? Do I like how I look? Do I want to be a popular kid in school, or am I a nerd? Later in life, we decide how hard we want to work and whom we keep in our social circles. Do we even want to be parents? As a child of two university medical professors, my early identity is about academic achievements. As an immigrant coming to a country just as I was about to turn 20, my adult identity is all about financial independence through education and hard work. As someone who perpetually suspects that she has gotten into a profession alien to her nature, I constantly doubt my ability. So, I work harder to make up for my self-perceived ineptitude, which is only so apparent to myself. I know that imposture syndrome is real, and I suffer from it greatly. But we don't seek therapy help. Where I come from, that's for people who are too soft. They need to toughen up. I toughen up and double down, fighting self-doubt by working harder and aiming higher to prove I can do it.

So, when I finally catch a glimpse of the American dream and decide that I can pursue a new identity as a retiree student, I am frozen and utterly lost. Disrupting something for which we worked so hard is downright upsetting. There is comfort in being programmed to know when to get up, where to go, what to do, and when to take breaks. I feel the urge to return to work to prove that I am not unproductive. What does "being productive" even mean? Americans are consistently ranked among the most productive people in the world. The 2015 OECD report shows that the US is the fifth most productive nation globally, despite its ranking sliding in recent years. Fifth is still high. Yet, Americans are also among the very self-important and stressed-out people. The 2019 Gallup Poll's Global Emotions Report shows that America is the seventh most stressed nation in the world, right after Iran and Sri Lanka and before Uganda and Rwanda. My feelings track the statistics; that is depressing.

I feel betrayed by my brain. I am not supposed to spin out of control like a teenager whose frontal cortex has not fully developed along with its neurologic control system to cope with the fear of the unknown. But I feel alone, like an adolescent often does, even though all of us are more connected than ever through our devices, which I suspect only leaves us more isolated in the virtual bubble each of us curates for ourselves. Leaving the workforce makes me feel isolated as an outsider and, more frighteningly, doubt what my value proposition to society has become. This is annoying. It turns out retirement is not just about books and treadmills. I might have to learn a few new tricks.

The beginning always feels slightly stomach-tightening. I am reminded of the younger self who stuffs a backpack with a few changes of clothes, a passport, cash, and a whole load of a curious and open mind, sets out to foreign places, saying to myself, "I will figure it all out when I get there." I remember calling my friend from Ulaanbaatar the night before I left on a month-long camping trip around Mongolia with six like-minded strangers, crying my eyes out and telling her that I pushed it too hard this time because, although I had packed my camping gear, I had no idea what I was doing. I wasn't sure I'd leave the Mongolian steppes alive. (Of course, I didn't know what I was doing: I had only assembled a loaner tent and a second-hand sleeping bag earlier that day in town. But of course, I survived the Mongolian steppes and gained the trip of a lifetime.) Or, when I landed in Amman at one o'clock in the morning and checked into a hotel room that clearly had not been cleaned since the last guests left. Big mistake, I said to myself, "What have I done?" But when the first prayer call woke me at the break of dawn, I felt humbled and content. There was something present which was bigger than me. I choose destinations that frighten me and return from each trip with a heart fuller, a mind surer of myself.

I lost my mind while standing at the kitchen table, realizing I was one Starbucks card short of the end-of-year gift bags. I had miscounted the number of schoolteachers and forgot the sweet piano instructor.

A clearer picture is emerging in front of me now, and I can almost see that anxiety may be the discomfort from which a new identity will emerge. I have been busy feeding the precious little vacuum of mental space with familiar tasks to keep the adrenaline pumping into my brain, which has run on it for so long. But being alive is being able to make changes—even run towards changes—no matter how unsettling the unknown future may seem.

With this newfound perspective, I am now off to iron some clothes. The great choreographer George Balanchine allegedly said that his best work came when ironing in the morning. I need to remember the wisdom of allowing myself to idle. So, stay tuned. New is more.

Lost and Found in the Archives: Jonathan Edwards, Jr's 1765 Prayer and Tracy Smith's "Declaration"

by Sandra Park

[Excerpted from a paper on how poets escape the tomb of archives, rescue the detritus of history, and create new documents.]

I. A prayer in Mahican

Among the Jonathan Edwards Papers in Yale's Beinecke Library, poet Susan Howe found a scrap of paper that at first glance looks like a fragment torn from a notebook. With the help of a translation, this turns out to be a compact, complete prayer in the hand of Jonathan Edwards, Jr., in an Algonquian language of the Mahican people. Figure 1 shows the translation and archival piece of paper. This 1765 artifact summons a world of the Great Awakening, colonies before confederation, one hundred years preceding the Civil War. Jonathan Edwards was known for long solitary rides on his horse and his children did the same, unafraid of crossing paths with Indians in the forest. Like his father, Jonathan Edwards, Jr., was a scribbler. Walking and riding in solitude cultivated the practice of contemplation and writing. At home in the archive, Susan Howe looks for words that have drifted and landed on reused paper or envelopes. Early Americans wrote with a beautiful disciplined hand, saving and reusing paper, often writing in margins or interlinearly. As Howe wrote:

> Poetry has no proof nor plan nor evidence by decree or in any other way. From somewhere in the twilight realm of sound a spirit of belief flares up at the point where meaning stops and the unreality of what seems most real floods over us. The inward ardor I feel while working in research libraries is intuitive. It's a sense of self-identification and trust, or the granting of grace in an ordinary room, in a secular time.

With a poet's eye and ear for memorable words, Howe assembled a collage of archival material into a slim volume of early Americana entitled *Spontaneous Particulars: The Telepathy of Archives.*

In the spirit of poetry with "no proof nor plan nor evidence by decree," I would like to consider a documentary poem, Tracy Smith's "Declaration" (see full text after this article). If Howe mediates found material in the archive, Smith makes

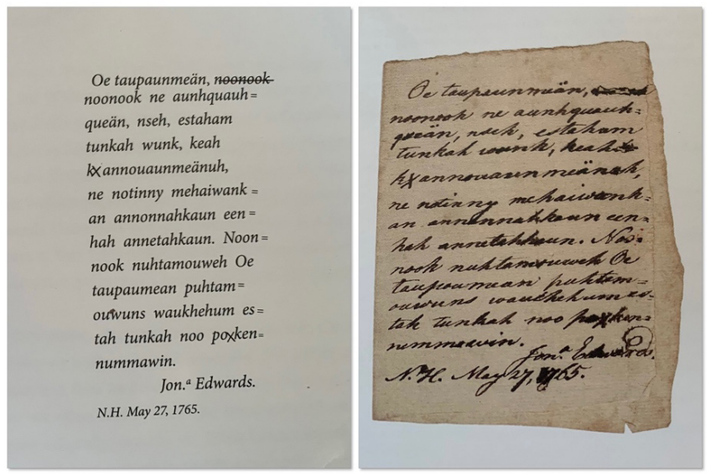


Fig 1 Prayer in Mahican by Jonathan Edwards, Jr, 1765, Beinecke Library.

Jonathan Edwards was known for long solitary rides on his horse and his children did the same, unafraid of crossing paths with Indians in the forest.

the space outside the archive, using the raw material of the archive to create a new document. Her poem raises questions of the document and the archive: what is included or excluded? when are words erased or overwritten? whose voices are heard or silenced?

II. A poem by erasure

In the back matter of *Wade in the Water*, Tracy Smith explains that "Declaration is an erasure poem drawn from the text of the Declaration of Independence." Joseph Harrington designates "docupoetry" as poetry that (1) contains quotations from sources not produced by the poet, and (2) relates historical narratives, whether macro or micro. He notes that romantic poetry seems to spring from the individual and that docupoetry springs from a collective source such as institutions of the state or academy. Readers, Harrington notes, often question whether borrowed language can be thought of as poetry, whereas poets, he continues, "go out of their way to call attention to what is included and what is excluded." As with Howe's discovery of the Mahican prayer, the space between what the poet discovers and her response to those discoveries commingle into a new document, the poem. The intervention of received knowledge by a poet effectively changes the conversation between the document and the world.

Quoting from actual historical documents, the poet borrows language and re-tells or re-shapes the narrative, often translating what is "official" into what is "true." Following is a direct and complete quote of a sentence from the Declaration of Independence, stating a grievance by the thirteen colony states addressed to King George III.

Our repeated
Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

In the context of Tracy Smith's poem, these same words serve an alternate narrative: this is a grievance by enslaved Blacks addressed to free Whites—its multiplied meaning refers to the historic crime of slavery and the present-day New Jim Crow. And the implication of this Declaration 2.0 is that overthrow of the government could happen again, if the powers exercised are unjust and lose ground, that is, no longer abide by the consent of the governed. In this way, the poet has used the language of the oppressor against itself—a counter-narrative to "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." The poet has intervened and subverted the promise of equality and freedom into performative, empty words. More than subversion, this is inversion—what is up is down, what is said with words is unsaid by inaction and indifference.

In terms of craft, the poet has borrowed a complete sentence, modifying it with a line break and italic font. The italic animates the words as voiced, by Whites in the revolutionary era and by Blacks before the civil war era, echoing slave petitions for manumission. By means of erasure, the poet reveals a shadow document, a petition for freedom on behalf of slaves and inheritors of slave narratives. For every official word of promise, there is a shadow word of reality: the words *free*, *liberty*, sacralized in the Declaration of Independence, casts shadows of *slave*, *property*. Smith's erasure creates silences and lacunae for the reader to wonder about. Most effectively, the last three lines leave us in the silence of a long em-dash, the sense of a cliff in view of the sea, the *horror vacui* of our *mappa mundi*, monsters of the unknown—

—taken Captive
on the high Seas
to bear—

Hauntingly, those last lines leave transported Black bodies still at sea. In high contrast, the concluding line of the official document strikes a final chord of harmony and unity:

> And for the support of this Declaration,
> with a firm reliance on the protection of
> divine Providence, we mutually pledge to
> each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and
> our sacred Honor.

Poems, known for economy of words and heightened feeling, differ from State writing by committee, with contributions from John Adams and Benjamin Franklin and drafted by Thomas Jefferson. As succinct as the Declaration's 1,320-word count stands, Smith's poem of 83 words does two things: silence outweighs voiced words, and its message is brief and urgent, a *cri de coeur*, the last three lines a lyric fragment.

Authority of the archive and authenticity of the poet, what is official versus what is true, is part of the intervention of documentary poetry: rewriting narratives, redefining what we deem important and worth remembering. Achille Mbembe's "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" questions traditional division and classification of knowledge, conferred status determining whether a document is protected by the archive or ends up as the detritus of history, lost or forgotten.

The intervention of received knowledge by a poet effectively changes the conversation between the document and the world.

When Achille Mbembe talks about documents, he links and entangles these documents with their housing in stately buildings resembling tombs and temples of ancient times.

> The status and power of the archive
> derive from this entanglement of building
> and documents. The archive has neither
> status nor power without an architec-
> tural dimension, which encompasses the
> physical space of the site of the building
> . . . that gives the place something of the
> nature of a temple and a cemetery . . .

"The National Archives Building: Temple to Our History," an online U. S. government exhibit, enshrines archival documents on a monumental scale. The National Archives Building in Washington, DC, is of Neo-Classical architecture with 72 Corinthian columns and massive Greco-Roman statuary. Inside, armed guards flank our founding documents—the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights—encased in bullet-proof glass vitrines. At night, these encased documents are mechanically lowered into a bomb-proof cement vault. Which raises the questions: If our founding documents are destroyed, would we cease to exist as a democratic republic? Why this obsession with material artifacts? What does it mean to protect these artifacts from bullets and bombs?

Figure 2, views A, B, C respectively, show the grand entrance of the archives building, the interior rotunda with founding documents, and the mechanical apparatus to lower the documents into an underground vault. Exterior and interior views demonstrate Mbembe's characterization of the archive as a temple and cemetery. To this model, the US version incorporates armed guards, bullet- and bomb-proof security of "original" documents (actually historic facsimiles): a militarized border surrounding the archive.

Crossing over as an outsider to insider of the archive, Tracy Smith occupied the Library of Congress's Poetry Office in the attic of the Thomas Jefferson Building as US Poet Laureate from 2017–2019. Part II of *Wade in the Water*, published in 2018, is the heart of the book, based on archival documents, opening with "Declaration" and continuing with direct quotations from letters "of African Americans enlisted in the Civil War, and those of their wives, widows, parents, and children." An old Negro spiritual, "Wade in the Water" is emblematic of songs from the slavery era, an ethnographic trace of inherited burden. "Wade in the water / Wade in the water / Wade in the water, children / God is a-going to trouble the water …" Encoded in the words is instruction for escaping slaves to break the scent trail detected by tracking dogs by cross-

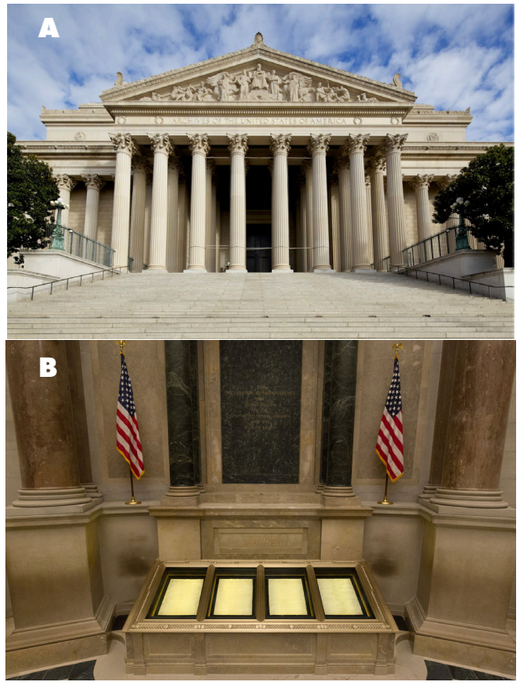


Fig 2, Views A, B, C National Archives Building, exterior, founding documents in bullet-proof glass, mechanism for underground bomb-proof storage after visiting hours. U. S. National Archives online.

Without modification, this prayer is a poem; its isolation and strangeness, a heretofore sleeping document in the archive, has been found and entered into print.

ing water. Encoded in her documentary erasure poems is a space for the reader to pay attention to the voiceless. Or, to "trouble the water" and make a crossing. The multiplier effect of silence is more silence or, possibly, an opening for understanding. Publicly reading this poem, Tracy Smith maintains equipoise between possibilities, an invitation for us to consider "Declaration" as its Latin origin, *declarare*, to make quite clear. In its swift economy, Smith's declaration reads as clear as water.

III. Between the document and archive

Poets lost in the stacks and archives—Jonathan Edwards, Jr, Susan Howe, Tracy Smith—find a third space with no shelf mark, a liminal space of becoming. Like Smith, Howe recognizes the failure of language to capture meaning: both employ artifice or invention to come as close as possible to "the twilight realm of sound," what evades fixity or the archive. Finding a scrap of paper in a strange language, Howe feels "inward ardor" even before translation from Mahican to English. This artifact, hidden from view in an archival box, is animated by Howe's touch and translation by Carl Masthay, reviving what is now an extinct dialect of the Mahican people:

> . . . Now help me, oh my Lord God, so
> that I will not ever be in darkness.
> Jona[than] Edwards, N[ew] H[aven],
> May 27, 1765

With ardor and persistence, the reader wonders why the son of Jonathan Edwards of the Great Awakening chose to write this in an indigenous language. This scrap of paper is an artifact that recalls a whole world of indigenous/settler relations. If the writer learned Mahican in order to evangelize, why then did he write this prayer in Mahican? Is this a secret, personal document of acknowledged sin and the need for intercession, a fear of darkness and longing for forgiveness? Without modification, this prayer is a poem; its isolation and strangeness, a heretofore sleeping document in the archive, has been found and entered into print. It is as much prayer as it is a soliloquy at the brink of an abyss:

> Oh my Lord, these things that you do for
> me are what you never again have to
> protect me from by taking away sin
> whether I am doing it or thinking about
> it.

We can take this translation as a second poem, in English, following the first poem in Mahican. Reading and research will no doubt yield further understanding of this prayer poem.

"With no proof nor plan nor evidence by decree," poetry is sometimes found in documents sealed in boxes or in fleeting moments not pinned to a page.

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Declaration

by Tracy K. Smith

He has

sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people

He has plundered our—

ravaged our—

destroyed the lives of our—

taking away our—

abolishing our most valuable—

and altering fundamentally the Forms of our—

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms:

Our repeated
Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here.

—taken Captive

on the high Seas

to bear—

Tracy Smith reads "Declaration" at the Indianapolis Public Library as part of her Quantum Leap Poetry Tour in November, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKTKlo1qDbU

Contributors

Tipu Barber is a poet living in Oakland, California. He grew up in Huddersfield, England and moved to Berkeley, California in 1989 and is married with two children. His love for poetry started in England where he first read John Keats and Lord Byron as a young teenager. He immediately was drawn to the prose and imagery. His home was next to the moors, where the Brontës had lived. The landscape and atmosphere of anguish, forlornness, and unrequited love didn't take too much imagination to imbue him with the spirit of that era. He continued to be involved in poetry and started a poetry club at his print shop in San Francisco where they have weekly gatherings to recite and read poems with many wonderful local poets. He is currently enrolled at Stanford, where he is eagerly learning to hone his craft.

Aparna Chandra is a third-year MLA student. Her previous training is as a physician. Her love of liberal arts was fanned by continuing education classes she took in Chicago, New York, and Bay Area institutions. The last series of lectures she attended, took her on a journey of history of art, and inspired her to take up watercolors. She lives in Palo Alto, and when she is not thinking about her MLA essays, she is scouting the neighborhood and the regional preserves for painting ideas, in fact, sometimes doing both at the same time. She is a self-taught artist and loves collecting all kinds of pigments and inks.

John Angell Grant's collection of poems *The Green Notebook* is forthcoming by EPE Press. His short films *Two Stoners* and *1958* won multiple awards over the past year. Grant is the author of 12 fully produced stage plays. He was playwright-in-residence at Berkeley's Bare Stage and a member of the OATCO Playwrights Unit in San Francisco. John's play *LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION* was produced in New York by the Manhattan Class Company, in Los Angeles at the Gardner Stage, and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His play *A Package for Max* was produced at the Pear Theater in Mountain View and in Chicago by New Branch Theater. John has worked in video production, where he produced a television series on the Holocaust and 100 two-minute films. He has written for A*merican Theater* and other publications, authoring 2,000 theater reviews, and 300 poems. His MLA thesis on T.S. Eliot's drawing room comedies was published by Academica Press. John has a BA in Comp Literature from Columbia and an MLA from Stanford. www.johnangellgrant.com

Andy Grose is a 2001 MLA graduate and a retired physician. His thesis explored the influence of the national and international language movements at the time of the Great Awakening of the early 1800s as they impacted the formation of the Mormon Deseret Alphabet.

Jué Lin is a third-year MLA student at Stanford. Originally from Shanghai, China, she immigrated to the US as an international student and has had an inspiring career in finance with several Bay Area tech companies. Aside from MLA coursework, her interest includes photography, drawing, travel, and the outdoors. She looks to creative writing as a new challenge and a creative outlet.

Sapna Marfatia's professional experience spans Architecture, Planning, Urban Design, Historic Preservation and Education. She has a bachelors in architecture, masters in urban design, and masters in liberal arts. As Stanford University's Preservation Architect and Director - Architecture, Planning and Design she has participated in the design of several prestigious projects that includes Bing Concert Hall, Anderson Collections Building, Windhover Contemplation Center, Traitel Building and Denning House. For 20 years at Stanford University, she has assisted in selection of architectural, and preservation consultant teams, monitored design guidelines from formulation through construction to convey architectural concepts, and collaborated with university partners to create a vision for preservation of iconic historic buildings including Memorial Church and Hanna House. Marfatia has regularly authored publications, presented at state and national conferences, and served on community and professional boards: Los Altos Historical Commission, AIA Silicon Valley Chapter, Filoli Board of Directors, and Stanford Historical Society.

Robert Mason graduated from the Stanford MLA Program in 2013. He currently works as an Administrative Law Judge at the California Public Utilities Commission where he has held that position since 2012. He has been the assigned judge to the Commission's rulemaking regarding transportation network companies such as Uber Technologies, Inc. and Lyft. Robert has drafted several decisions covering such diverse topics as pilot programs for permitting autonomous vehicles, renewable energy programs, and distributed resource programs for improving access to the electrical distribution grid for consumers. Prior to becoming an Administrative Law Judge, Robert worked at the Commission as a legal advisor to one of the commissioners, and as an attorney in the telecommunications enforcement division. Before joining the Commission in 2007, Robert worked as attorney in private practice, specializing in insurance recovery and civil appeals.

Michileen Marie Oberst is a current student of the MLA program. A Palo Alto local, she picked up her passion for writing at Santa Clara University, where she received a Bachelors in both Psychology and Theatre Arts. After travelling the world solo for some months, she began her career at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, which during her time received a Tony for Best Regional Theatre. Michileen continues to be a local poet and playwright while working at Stanford Graduate School of Education as their Event Manager. She also works as guest instructor over at Stanford School of Medicine for the course BIOS 231: public Speaking Bootcamp.

Prabhu Palani graduated from the MLA program in 2009. Besides poetry, his interests include colonial history, music, languages, travel, and sports.

Sandra Park is on the runway, working on her thesis about women readers in late medieval and early renaissance times. This piece is an excerpt from a poetry paper for Elaine Treharne's poetry class called "Living on the Edge."

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