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Bridgewater Review



BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE

Sculpture by David Englund

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

(1818–1895)

was a slave, ship caulker, free man, ordained minister, abolitionist, women's suffragist, author, orator, editor and friend of President Abraham Lincoln.

The sculpture is based on images of his appearance after he moved to New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1838.

—David Englund

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“Douglass was with Lincoln the preeminent self-made man in American history and one of the nation's greatest prose writers. He defined self-making as inseparable from social reform.”

—John Stauffer



“If there is a possibility of uniting spirit with matter, mind with body in artistic form, I feel challenged to create this connection between the eye spaces or openings of a bronze sculpture and the mind or soul of the discerning observer. The light and indentation of darkness may calm the viewer to an awakening, a primitive or meditative experience, a glance at uncertainty and the unknown. I want to reveal ways to expand the range and depth of vision by sharing open dark places with a subtle light. Perhaps, the spark in the eye space will serve as a faint whisper that unites the bronze with the creative imagination of human consciousness.”

—David Englund is Professor Emeritus of Education and member, New England Sculptors Association
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Bridgewater Review



ON THE COVER

Leon Kroll, *Girl with an Apple*, c.1916–1923. Oil on canvas. Gift of Dr. Gordon F Lupien, 1998. From the Bridgewater State College Permanent Art Collection. Additional works from the Permanent Collection are on pages 15–20.

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Editor's Notebook

The Millennials

During the Vietnam War the term “generation gap” gained prominence as older Americans collided with the youth of this country over the war and ancillary concerns such as sexual permissiveness, drug use, and non-conformist rebellion.

In most cases, father and son, mother and daughter fought over politics, morals, and lifestyle.

In far too many cases, this collision of generations caused long running family feuds and separations.

Today, there is another “generation gap” developing between the youth of the 1970s and their children and grandchildren. The Millennial Generation, those born between 1980 and 2001, have shown themselves to be quite different from their parents and grandparents on everything from hot button issues such as abortion, gay marriage and racial inter-marriage to health care reform, climate change and defense spending. Polling data from numerous sources point to the Millennials as a liberal’s dream as many of the responses to questions of public policy, morality and lifestyle are clearly on the left side of the political spectrum.

The Millennial Generation supports choice and gay marriage and wonders what all the fuss is about concerning race in America. On health care reform the Millennials are foursquare for major changes that guarantee health care including government involvement; on climate change there is solid support for dealing quickly with the sources of global warming; and in defense spending this generation of young people is concerned that spending on war diminishes resources for domestic needs.

But besides leaning to the left, the Millennial Generation is beginning to wake up from its long political apathetic nap that has lasted since the Watergate era in the Nixon years. There is now evidence of more political discussions among the young and more interest in matters in the public domain. As many electoral



experts are quick to point out, the Millennials were key players in putting Barack Obama in the White House as they not only agreed with his campaign platform, but also his connection to their generation.

What is perhaps most interesting about the Millennial Generation is that many of them feel it is vitally important to participate in their community either by volunteering for worthy causes or becoming involved in small groups or clubs that perform some sort of public service, including what is commonly called “paying it forward.” If there is a difference here from past generations, the Millennial’s service activity is not that closely tied to organized religious organizations, as this new generation is much more secular than their parents and grandparents. Staying away from

church on Sundays, but doing good in the community separates this generation from those that have come before them.

As a classroom instructor, I see the Millennials everyday. They may dress differently than students from ten or twenty years ago, and they certainly know how to communicate with the latest technology. But like past generations, the Millennials are a mix of apprehension about their immediate future yet decidedly hopeful that in the end all will work out whether it is a job, a relationship or economic security. Despite the meltdown and the Great Recession, there remains in the Millennials that old American optimism and confidence in the future that has defined this nation for generation after generation.

There is a natural competition among generations as one looks at the other and finds fault or disappointment. The World War II Generation was the “Greatest” and saved the world from fascism; the Baby Boomer/Vietnam War Generation brought this country civil rights, women’s rights and a healthy skepticism about the excesses of governmental power. The Millennial Generation may go down in history as the Americans who embraced diversity, privacy rights, community service and the use of government to fix the problems left unsolved by previous generations.

—Michael Kryzanek is Editor of the Bridgewater Review.

The Origin of Species

An Excerpt

Nino Ricci



*E*sther was on the top floor, in chronic

care. Up here the *ancien régime* still reigned, as if nothing had changed since the fifties, the same floors in checkerboard cream and brown asbestos tiles, the same pastel green walls, the trolleys stacked with chrome bedpans and with packets of gauze and surgical gloves. There were the bleachy linen closets, the funny hospital hush, the ever-present medicinal smell—what was it? antibiotics? some kind of cleanser?—that lay over everything and that immediately conjured up every hospital visit he'd ever made as a kid to their endless web of wounded or dying relations. It ought to have been off-putting, all of this, but it wasn't. Instead it had the feel of an old-style institutionalism, familiar and instinctively comforting, almost Soviet in its air of worn-but-serviceable paternalism. What Alex's visits most reminded him of were the hours of reverie he used to spend in church as a kid—things didn't necessarily get better in these sorts of places, but at least they seemed put off for a while.

Esther was alone. Her father had paid to have her moved to a private room, which was probably costing him a small fortune, though she didn't seem in much of a position to enjoy the luxury of it, asleep most of the day or lost in a kind of lethargy that might have been the effect of whatever drugs they were giving her or just her body's slow shutting down. It had been several weeks now since she'd been able to manage anything like a conversation. Initially this had been because of some medical complication that had reduced her to just a hoarse sort of aspirating, but now she didn't even make the effort much. Writing was out of the question—a lot of her muscles had seized, and her hands had frozen into a claw shape that made holding things nearly impossible. About the only way in or out now was through her eyes, though these so often had a trapped look that Alex didn't like to dwell on them.

Her bed was surrounded by appliances of various sorts. The main one, oddly, which her father had had to buy, since the hospital didn't stock it, was a device whose stubborn, phlegmatic purpose was to keep her body temperature constant. Its technology was of the most basic sort: there was a big monitor at the foot of the bed, and then a water-filled pad that stretched out over her mattresses and heated or cooled as her temperature fluctuated. Esther had complained of it: it was like lying in her pee, she'd said once, then her laugh.

Esther was asleep. The curtains over her window were drawn, and the room was dim with the crepuscular graininess of filtered daylight. For a long time Alex just sat there

Nino Ricci is Bridgewater State College's First Killam Professor of Canadian Studies. Nino is the author of five novels, including the critically acclaimed The Lives of the Saints. This excerpt, from Ricci's The Origin of Species, is forthcoming with Other Press in April 2010. Set in Montreal in the 1980s, The Origin of Species tells the story of thirty-something Alex Fratarcangeli and his relationship with Esther, a young woman dying of multiple sclerosis.

watching her, the heave of her chest as she breathed, the digital flicker of her monitor as her temperature rose a tenth, then fell again. Just a single sheet covered her, the hieroglyph of her body clearly outlined beneath it, legs splayed but relatively straightened, thanks to the cuts they'd made behind her knees after her muscles had started to lock. She was wasted almost to nothing now. Her cheeks had sunken, all the blush on them gone; her hair had thinned to the wispy sparse-ness of an old woman's. How many times he had thought of this body since that night she'd come on to him, how many shades of feeling it had brought up in him. So much strangeness seemed invested in it even now, that it should



house this person and be her and also turn on her like something alien. In Alex's mind Esther had become utterly inseparable from this body, so much did it define her and his relationship with her, and yet always he felt this as a betrayal, a failure to truly see past her surface and know her in some more essential, uncorrupted fullness.

No one had ever quite put it in these terms, but they were on a death watch now. The smallest infection, a virus, a cold, and she could turn. Each time he stepped into her room he felt a chill, not knowing what killer might cling to him.

"It's great that you come," Lenny said, his constant refrain. "Her mind's still working, I know that. I know the real Esther is still in there."

It had all happened so quickly. Alex knew that people lived with MS for years, into old age even, half of them probably total defeatists, with none of Esther's determination and spunk. And yet the illness had ridden roughshod over her as if her will had counted for nothing.

When she'd gone back into hospital after her terrible week home she had told him she wanted to die.

"It's like the old Esther's gone," she said, holding back tears, and he could almost see it before his eyes, the Esther who was bent on fighting, who would walk again, who would never give in, taking flight. "Is that awful, to want to die? Am I awful?"

"It's not awful." She had reached the moment he'd dreaded, when there was nothing before her but the truth. "It's hard right now, that's all. In a week you'll feel differently."

She didn't let on that she didn't believe him. It occurred to him that she might actually be asking something of him, to help her along when the moment came, to pull the plug, but he wouldn't get into that.

"Would you hold my hand?" she'd said. "Would that be all right?"

And he had sat there holding it in both of his until she passed into sleep. It had still been supple then, warm and soft and alive; he could feel it even now, sitting next to her while she slept again. Her life in his hands. It had felt like that.

They had reached the moment, surely, when plugs should be pulled, if one had a mind to. He watched the monitor flicker, down a tenth, up again, but couldn't believe that turning it off would make much of a difference, except in some long, drawn-out way. It remained to the Great Bastard in the sky to shut the machines down, if he had the heart to.

Back when she was still talking, she'd told him a dream she'd had.

"I dreamed I went to heaven," she'd said, "and everybody liked me."

Alex's copy of *Les Misérables* was still sitting on Esther's bedside table. He had taken to reading to her from it during his visits, choosing it because it was long and because he remembered the readings his Grade 8 teacher had done from it, Mrs. Jackson, making them lay their heads on their desks like Grade 1s and teasing out the last languid hour of the afternoon with it. "This is so great of you," Esther kept saying, in her hoarse whisper, "it's so great," though the opening chapters were so leisurely and long-winded Alex was afraid this would just turn into another of his failed enthusiasms. But then they came at last to Jean Valjean, and there was no turning back.

The story seemed to bring out the same wonder in Esther at the world's outrageousness as it had in Alex back in Grade 8.

"Was it really like that back then? Just for stealing a loaf of bread? We're so lucky to live when we do."

For a few weeks the readings became the highlight of Alex's day. He would sit there at Esther's bedside with the guilty afternoon light slanting in through the window, the light of sick days and special reprieves, and be back again with his head on his desk in Mrs. Jackson's classroom. The story drew him on like a drug. It was the worst sort of philistinism in his circles to care about something as barbarous as plot, yet for the first time in months or even years Alex felt himself taken over again by a book. The story was as pumped up as an opera—the penitent prostitute, the innocent child, the good-hearted criminal who couldn't escape his past—and yet it had such a scope to it, was so full of twists and new beginnings, that it seemed to carry a kind of Scheherezadian hopefulness.

He looked over once, and Esther was crying.

“What is it?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know.” Her voice was the barest rustling by then. “It’s just the story. It’s so beautiful. It’s sad, but it’s beautiful.”

Occasionally Esther’s sister would come, or her mother or Molly, and they would sit and listen with her until the window had grown dark and there was only the glow of the bedside lamp. Alex would have the feeling he had in airplanes sometimes, of not wanting to land. What was it, this power stories had, that moved Esther to tears, that he had forgotten? They might have been cave dwellers then, gathering around the fire. Come, I will tell you things, I will hold back the dark.

Then suddenly it was over. Esther got a cold, from him, maybe, and was put on a new round of drugs that drained the life from her. She never really recovered after that. He kept doing his readings for a while, but she’d fall asleep in a matter of minutes or would seem to grow irritable in a way that was completely unlike her, wincing at the light or shrugging away from him suddenly as if something unpleasant had touched her. For a couple of weeks now, he hadn’t read to her at all—they’d managed to get to the midpoint, as far as Little Gavroche, thanks to a few judicious excisions including the Battle of Waterloo, but Alex hadn’t the heart to go on again. Maybe it was the same with her as with people in comas, that you ought to keep speaking to them in some normal way, but all he could think of was this new wincing impatience in her, this twisting from him as if to say, Can’t you see that I’m dying? So he sat silent, mostly. If she was awake he would take her claw hand and mumble awkward niceties, trying to hold her eyes, to make a connection there, which happened sometimes, for seconds or minutes, longer than he could bear, really, and sometimes not. That was worse: she would look at him, and see him, and turn away. Not as if she hadn’t recognized him, but as if she couldn’t be bothered. Let me be. Let me sleep. It surprised him how much this cut him—he was her hero, her champion, her star. He could do no wrong. She was utterly mistaken in him, of course; God knew, he had tried to make her see that. Yet it seemed that if he lost her good opinion of him, if it was not something unshakeable and eternal in her, he would somehow lose the possibility of ever becoming that better person.

For more information or images:

Other Press: <http://www.otherpress.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9781590513491>

Nino Ricci: www.ninoricci.com

The Great Samuel Johnson and His Opposition to Literary Liars

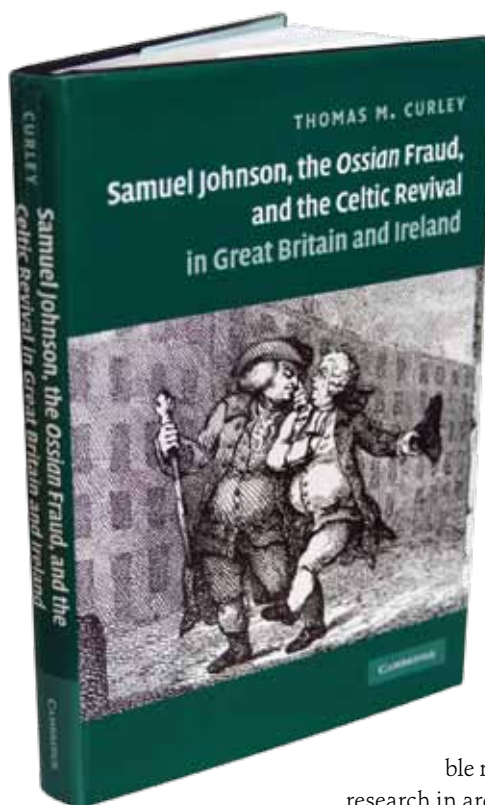
Thomas M. Curley



A close friend said of Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) that “no man had a more scrupulous regard for truth; from which, I verily believe, he would not have deviated to save his life.” No writer angered Johnson more than did James Macpherson (1736–1796) for perpetrating the most successful literary fraud in modern history. Macpherson’s notorious fraud, beginning in the 1760s, involved publishing his own made-up poems as translations of genuine Gaelic writings by an ancient Scots bard known as *Ossian*. This year marks the three-hundredth anniversary of Johnson’s birth, generating celebrations around the world and warranting here a close look at an episode of literary lying central to his career-long love of truth. My recent book from Cambridge University Press, entitled *Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland* (2009), offers the fullest investigation of the hoax to date and includes a rare pamphlet against the *Ossian* deception written with the assistance of Johnson himself.

Johnson was possibly the greatest writer and the greatest heart in English literature. He was certainly England’s greatest moralist, greatest literary critic, and greatest dictionary-maker, whose *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755 was the first professional compilation of our vocabulary crucial to establishing English as the global lingua franca of modern times. An essential part of his massive achievement was his passion for truth-telling in literature and life. However difficult, however disturbing, the search for truth was the prime human necessity for a civilized society and became the principal theme of his writings. As he insisted, “There is no crime more infamous than the violation of truth. It is apparent that men can be social beings no longer than they believe each other.

When speech is employed as the vehicle of falsehood, every man must disunite himself from others, inhabit his own cave, and seek prey only for himself.” Because we see as through a glass darkly, frauds of any type only worsened the already clouded maze of human meaning with truth-seeming unrealities and consequently weakened trust in ourselves and others.



My interest in Johnson the English truth-teller and in Macpherson the Scottish literary liar began in graduate school at Harvard University and led to some early articles on the phony *Ossian* poems. When many years later I turned to preparing a book for publication by Cambridge University Press, I was surprised to find that my youthful scholarship on the *Ossian* fraud had provoked my own mini-controversy with revisionist academics bent on rehabilitating Macpherson’s dubious reputation and regarding him as an important “creative” author for his powerful impact on the literature of Europe and the United States. This development made me redou-

ble my efforts during a decade of field research in archives at England, Scotland, and Ireland funded by CART grants climaxing in a Presidential Fellowship at Bridgewater State College, in conjunction with awards from The National Endowment for the Humanities. I undertook a comprehensive survey of all *Ossian* scholarship over the past 250 years and made a painstaking evaluation of all the made-up *Ossian* poetry that Macpherson falsely claimed to have translated faithfully into English. I compared his spurious English work with authentic Gaelic verse, in consultation with Gaelic specialists. The result of my inquiries reads like a detective novel in

my book, uncovering layer after layer of sheer fabrication. As it turned out, Johnson rightly denounced Macpherson as an impostor in public, even at the risk of being challenged to a deadly duel on the streets of London. What follows is the little known story of their famous feud.

With the monumental exception of his *Lives of the English Poets*, Johnson's most notable literary undertaking in old age after his edition of Shakespeare was debunking Macpherson's hoax. Johnson's sense of the falsity of the *Ossian* works was correct, despite professions to the contrary by some modern scholars. Twenty-eight out of Macpherson's thirty-nine titles—72 percent of all the individual works comprising *Ossian*—have no apparent grounding in genuine Gaelic literature and are therefore entirely his own handiwork. The remaining 28 percent of the titles have but generally loose ties to approximately sixteen Gaelic ballads. Contrary to his assertions, Macpherson was no editor or translator of ancient poetry. He was the author of new, largely invented literature in violation of true history, legitimate Gaelic studies, and valid national identity in Scotland. As Johnson had charged, Macpherson committed literary fabrication.

The public response then and into modern times was enthusiastic. Why? Readers embraced the *Ossianic* craze believing that it offered them genuine antique novelty in an English dress. But they were actually indulging in the taste for sentimentalism and historical heroics found in contemporary poems and novels, in the grand style of popular melodrama, with the solemnity of English Bible rhetoric and the epic seriousness of Dryden's *Vergil* and Pope's *Homer*. What was behind the ruse? A logical explanation would be raw ambition firing a Highland lad, somewhat familiar with Gaelic, hungry for literary fame and fortune. Early in October of 1759, with an introduction from the Gaelic-speaking academic, Adam Ferguson, he talked about old Highland poems with John Home, author of a controversial play, *Douglas*. According to Home, "When Mr. Home desired to see them, Mr. Macpherson asked if he understood Gaelic. 'Not one word.' 'Then how can I show you them?' 'Very easily,' said Mr. Home, 'translate one of the poems which you think a good one, and I imagine that I shall be able to form some opinion of the

genius and character of the Gaelic poetry.'" Let it be carefully noted that Home's recollection of the very beginning of the *Ossian* fraud revolved around a request for faithful English translation of genuine Gaelic literature. It was a demand destined to elicit false assurances of its being fulfilled. Seven times in all the *Ossian* publications to come, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* of 1760 and the epics *Fingal* as well as *Temora Together with Several*

Other Poems in 1762 and 1763, there are hollow professions of having performed literal translation, when in fact most of the *Ossian* canon was Macpherson's creation. That is why Johnson wisely called for the Gaelic originals of *Ossian* so that experts could decipher the truth about the made-up version published in English. And he rightly suspected that no substantial Gaelic counterparts existed.

Macpherson's fabricating *Ossian* and then calling it true were bad enough. Equally discreditable was his concocting in 1771 a specious history book on early Scotland supporting his literary hoax.

Even worse was his contriving a Gaelic *Ossian* and then passing it off as the authentic original of his English "translations." Johnson from the first considered *Ossian* fraudulent and awful poetry. As his renowned biographer, James Boswell, noted, "Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained they had no merit. . . . Dr. [Hugh] Blair [the foremost defender of *Ossian*] asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, 'Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children.'" More noteworthy is a record of Johnson's only face-to-face encounter with Macpherson: Macpherson in 1764 "fell in company with Mr. Johnson, who put to him several questions relating to his publications: he answered each of Mr. Johnson's questions with a short, round assertion; but he got off from the subject as soon as he could; & turned the discourse to something else."



Samuel Johnson in Scotland.

Johnson did not let him off the hook. Famous for rock-solid integrity, Johnson went to Scotland in 1773 partly in search of *Ossian's* authenticity. He made public his well-taken skepticism in his classic travel book, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* in 1775: "I suppose my opinion of the poems of *Ossian* is already discovered. I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. [Macpherson] has doubtless inserted names that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some wandering ballads, if any can be found; and the names, and some of the images being recollected, make an inaccurate auditor imagine, by the help of Caledonian bigotry, that he has formerly heard the whole." This was correct, even though Johnson elsewhere made many mistakes about the amount, age, and quality of genuine Gaelic verse and the durability of oral tradition. The misguided Scottish defenders of *Ossian* received Johnson's rebuke in the *Journey*, "A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love Scotland better than truth." Johnson's criticism provoked a foolish challenge to a duel from hotheaded James Macpherson.

Macpherson was stung to the quick and allowed himself to be swept up in an embarrassing confrontation that has come to rank as "one of the most famous minor episodes in literary history," according to the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of Johnson, Walter Jackson Bate. Surprisingly, this celebrated conflict has come under critical fire as mere myth manipulated by sympathetic commentators to aggrandize Johnson's fame and discredit his Scottish foe. The facts of the case, disclosed here for the first time, contradict this modern misreading of the past. Some time around the *Journey's* distribution to booksellers on 13 January 1775 and before the announcement of its publication on 18 January, Macpherson got wind of offending passages, accusing him of insolence, arrogance, and guilt in imposing a false *Ossian* on a credulous readership: "The editor, or author, never could shew the original; nor can it be shewn by any other; to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence, with which the world is not yet acquainted; and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt." These fighting words, taunting Macpherson to do the impossible and reveal nonexistent Gaelic originals behind his pretended translations, ensured an immediate response at the very time when Macpherson planned to publish a two-volume history of modern Britain under William Strahan, the same London-based Scottish publisher who brought out Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* criticizing *Ossian*. Macpherson's credibility lay wide open to merciless ridicule.

True to his surly disposition, he commenced a barely civil correspondence with Johnson in the expectation of securing a retraction under the implicit threat of harsh retribution. The formal language of a challenge to a duel comes through clearly, with studied coolness. In such a mood on 15 January Macpherson directed Strahan in writing to mediate a change to less provocative language in the *Journey* by "that impertinent fellow" and enclosed for Johnson's possible reading a note, in which the following threat appears under a polite guise: "But I suppose you will agree with me, that such expressions ought not be used by one gentleman to another; and that whenever they are used, they cannot be passed over with impunity. To prevent consequences that may be, at once, disagreeable to Dr Johnson and to myself, I desire the favour that you will wait upon him, and tell him that I expect he will cancel from his *Journey* the injurious expressions." He contacted Strahan yet again in an angrier vein, perhaps with growing impatience for some response. Were it not for the need to avoid spoiling current publication plans, Macpherson informed Strahan, "I should before this time have traced out the author of this journey, in a very effectual manner. Unless I have a satisfactory answer, I am determined (indeed, it is necessary) to bring that business to a conclusion before I begin any other." With this new letter Macpherson submitted an example of the kind of "advertisement" of apology wanted from Johnson. This ghostwritten advertisement had Johnson denying any intention to give personal offence and agreeing to the deletion of obnoxious words in a "second impression" of the *Journey*. On 17 January Strahan promised to extract the requested apology from Johnson pronto.

Of utmost importance, on the next day, 18 January, Strahan confirmed that Johnson was the first of the belligerents to take a decisive step for ending the dispute: "I have seen Dr Johnson. He declares under his Hand to me, that he meant no personal affront to you, and we shall take care that exceptionable Words shall be left out in all future Editions, the present ones being already too dispersed to admit of Alteration. He says it is not to Temora but to Fingall he makes Objections." This previously unknown disclosure of Johnson's peace-making gesture, tantamount to an apology, sheds crucial new light on the primary instigator of the dispute, once the *Journey* became public property. The troublemaker now was not Johnson. If Strahan is to be believed, Johnson denied that his object was to malign Macpherson, when the principal purpose, after all, was exposing *Ossian*. He let it be known that he still doubted the largely made-up epic poem, *Fingal*, but, strictly speaking, had not inquired about the equally made-up epic, *Temora*, and therefore could say nothing about it conclusively. In addition, Strahan with Johnson's

backing promised to excise offensive language in all future editions.

This acknowledgement might have appeased Macpherson, were it not for Strahan's failure to fulfil the accommodation. There was only a private assurance of Johnson's non-malicious intent but not the public advertisement of a removal of offensive words that Macpherson demanded in a "second impression" of the *Journey*. Even worse, it was impossible for Strahan to have sanitized a second printing, because it was already on its way into the public domain and beyond alteration. Strahan seems to have deviously communicated concessions that he could not carry out. The damage done to Macpherson's reputation had no remedy, and an explosion was inevitable, owing perhaps to bad-faith bargaining on Strahan's part.

We do not have the one important final note from Macpherson causing the explosion. The evidence points to an offensive letter of defiance, using again the style of a challenge to a duel found in Macpherson's earlier communications to Strahan. There is the testimony of a William Duncan: "I was the bearer...of a letter of challenge [Macpherson] wrote to the late Dr Samuel Johnson." Second, Johnson himself bore witness to Macpherson's "intimidating me by noise and threats." Third, a letter in the National Library of Scotland elaborated on the threats: "Mr. Macpherson tells the Dr. that after his having obstinately shut his eyes against any species of conviction with regard to the authenticity of the Poems, he thinks himself at liberty to load the Dr. with the most opprobrious epithets; since the Dr.'s age & infirmities debar Mr. Macpherson from demanding the satisfaction of a Gentleman, for the impeachment of impositions, which Dr. Johnson has thrown on him." This affront caused a self-respecting man like Johnson to grab a truncheon and reply by stern letter how well he could take care of himself against abuse from a lying fool. In his famous letter of defiance on January 20, 1775, he disparaged Macpherson as a "Ruffian," defined in his *Dictionary* as a brutal, boisterous, mischievous fellow; a cut-throat; a robber; a murderer: "Mr. James Macpherson—I received your foolish and impudent note. Whatever insult is offered me I will do my best to repel, and what I cannot do for myself the law will do for me. I will not desist from detecting what I think a cheat, from any fear of the menaces of a Ruffian."

What happened when Johnson defied Macpherson to make good his threats and promises of authentication? Nothing. He backed down from further controversy, although he fought a nasty rear-guard action of retaliation through other writers. To do Johnson justice, his presumption of *Ossianic* fraud stood the test of time. But life is not fair. Macpherson died a rich man, unrepentantly bequeathing money for a phony Gaelic *Ossian* in 1807 to authenticate his phony English work. The

proud Scotsman bought himself a burial site in Westminster Abbey, but the proud Englishman earned his resting-place there. On one side of the sanctuary lies the foremost practitioner of poetic falsehood in modern history, and on the other side, also in The Poets' Corner, lies England's supreme moralist and critic, a good and great man who so memorably defended truth in life and literature.

—A professor of English at Bridgewater State College, Tom Curley has published several books and articles on eighteenth-century literature, most notably *Sir Robert Chambers: Law, Literature, and Empire in the Age of Johnson (1998)*, nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in biography and winner of the *Choice Outstanding Academic Book Award*. His most recent book, *Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland (2009)*, was published by Cambridge University Press on the occasion of the tercentenary of Samuel Johnson's birth. This article for *The Bridgewater Review* is adapted from a paper delivered at the international Johnson at 300 Conference at Pembroke College (Johnson's college), Oxford University, in September of 2009.

Seeing the Future: Biology Research Allows Undergraduates New Insight into Their Own Futures

Merideth Krevosky and Jeffery Bowen



INTRODUCTION

Upon arrival at Bridgewater State College, most students have little to no idea of what they want to do when they graduate four or more years away. Students often choose their majors with little more input or insight. For example, Biology faculty often hear that students want to do what “those people do on Crime Scene Investigations” (CSI) or similar shows.

Certainly, with a rare exception or two, students are not thinking about research and the impact it may have on their futures, let alone about graduate school and earning a doctorate.

The story of how many BSC Biology faculty members went from small undergraduate programs into graduate studies has been mirrored in our own students' experiences. Like our students, some of us were the first in our families to go to college, and we certainly didn't know anything about academia or how to enter its “hallowed” halls. Fortunately, something along the way provided us with a glimmer of what the possibilities were; a small crack in the proverbial door to our futures. For us in the sciences, that epiphany to pursue an advanced degree is often stimulated by the experience of undergraduate research. An interesting and common theme is that most of the BSC Biology faculty attended primarily undergraduate institutions, and/or had direct contact with professors who profoundly shaped our lives and served as valuable mentors.

Biology faculty members are not concerned that our undergraduate research students make profoundly significant breakthroughs in the field, such as discovering a gene to cure an illness or forging that critical compound that cures cancer. That isn't our goal, although we'd take it. Our goal here at BSC is to take that spark for biology and add fuel to it, thereby igniting a passion for doing science that will serve our students well throughout their lives and impact the lives of people they touch. In addition, we want to generate confidence in our students and to open their eyes to the possibilities of what they can become. Students must also realize that ‘just wanting’ to do or become something isn't enough.

For some of our students, those who came to Bridgewater with talent and clear goals, success was almost a certainty. However, the research experience and close personal interactions with faculty members

has also improved the students' confidence. Karen Debalsi (BSC 2005), for example, had worked for over fifteen years as an occupational therapist. Unhappy with her career choice, Karen returned to school to pursue her degree in biology and chemistry with the ultimate goal of attaining a position in research. In collaboration with Dr. Edward Brush in Chemistry, Karen focused her efforts on the biological effects of a novel compound she created with Dr. Brush, writing and defending an Honors Thesis which could rival many dissertations in depth and thoroughness. Karen has since joined the Program in Cell and Molecular Biology at Duke University where she is pursuing a doctorate.

Another non-traditional student, Betsy Powers (BSC 2008), had been a tax accountant for more than thirty years when she returned to BSC to complete her science coursework in preparation for veterinary school. While Betsy only planned on taking the necessary courses to enter veterinary school, she became involved in, and enthralled by, research. She never looked back. Betsy's dedication to her project focusing on the role of intercellular signaling in apoptosis was unparalleled, and after presenting her work to admissions counselors during her veterinary interview process, she learned that her work helped to solidify her acceptance into the program at Ross University where she is now a second year veterinary student.

Two of our other research students arrived at BSC with clear goals in mind, knowing that they wanted to be veterinarians or doctors, and embarked upon this goal from day one as biology majors. Karyn O'Connell (BSC 2005), matriculated in Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine where she received her Masters in Science degree. Her involvement in research during her studies at BSC helped to shape Karyn's long term goal, which is to serve as a faculty member at a veterinary school where she can continue to do research as well as teach. Brian Agbor-Etang (BSC 2008), is working toward his dream of becoming a physician as a second year medical student at Meharry Medical College. While Brian always knew his future was as a clinician, his research experience enhanced his medical school application, helping him to gain entry to medical school directly

upon graduation from BSC, a rare accomplishment. For each of these students, involvement in research was instrumental in allowing them to learn to think critically and to arrive at their destinations a little more easily.

STUDENTS AS RESEARCHERS

There are several key elements available on our campus that have opened doors to the future for our students, and have allowed them to see their potential and a wide range of opportunities that they had never envisioned. These opportunities include participating in our seminar series, conducting undergraduate research and working with world renowned scientists at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. Importantly, many of our students participate in as many opportunities as they can. They realize that as these doors start to open, and the challenges are presented to them, they can rise to the occasion and use these opportunities to better themselves and brighten their futures.

Over the last ten years, the Department of Biological Sciences has adopted a philosophy that encourages undergraduate research. Research is something that faculty and students talk about and share. It is common to find one of our faculty members in the Biology Museum discussing some aspect of research with our students. Even more remarkably, it is now part of the departmental culture to see groups of students discussing their research!

Part of the reason is the Friday Informal Seminar Hour, or FISH. The concept of FISH was brought to our campus by Dr. Kevin Curry who 'caught' the idea while on sabbatical at Dalhousie University. FISH is a seminar series that allows our undergraduates to talk about their research and hear about the research of others in a casual, informal setting. We began using this concept of FISH with our undergraduate research students in 2003 when we concentrated on reading and discussing scientific literature related to our field of research, cancer biology. Not long after that we expanded the concept of FISH to include the entire department. It is now firmly entrenched in the departmental psyche. Students now have a forum to share their data, talk about the problems they encounter in their work and to define possible solutions with insight from others.



The 2008–2009 Apoptosis Research Group with (left to right) Allison Galanis (BSC 2010), Anna Grodecki (BSC 2009), Janelle Mapes (BSC 2009; now in the doctoral program at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana), and Ryan Bagley (BSC 2009, now at Zeiss, Inc.).

Photograph provided by A. Galanis.

Students are given many opportunities to discuss their research progress so that once they are ready to begin to present their research outside of BSC, whether at conferences or during interviews for jobs or graduate schools, they are quite comfortable talking about their projects and can even describe them to a layperson. The change in confidence in our students who participate in FISH is often striking. One such student who benefitted from presenting her work at departmental seminars for

faculty and students was Courtney Calabria nee Tanzi (BSC 2001). The first time she spoke in public about her research her voice was barely above a whisper, and she rarely looked at the audience. Each time she presented there was marked improvement. The Courtney we saw at her last presentation as a BSC student was clearly not the same person. Her confidence had grown tremendously and paralleled the skills she had developed in the laboratory. Courtney went on to receive her Masters in Biotechnology at UMass Boston and is now at Tufts Veterinary School. This story is not uncommon. Biology alumni often remark on the impact that FISH has had on them. They join research labs and feel that they are ahead of the learning curve because they already know how to critically read scientific papers and talk about their data. In short, our students have begun to see themselves as contributing members of a scientific community.

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) and the Adrian Tinsley Program (ATP) have also had major impacts on our students. Under the directorship of Dr. Lee Torda, OUR and ATP provide our students with opportunities to write competitive grants based on their research and to present their findings at a year-end symposium. The value added to their growth, development and marketability is immeasurable. It is very rare for students applying for jobs, graduate school, or professional school to have this type of experience. Additionally, OUR and ATP allow students to present their findings at meetings both on campus through the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium at BSC, and off-campus at regional, national, or international conferences.

We have seen several students "change course" during their studies. This is especially the case for those who

have worked in our lab and been exposed to the conduct of serious research. For example, Megan Dobro (BSC 2006), aspired to become a high school biology teacher. After engaging in research as an undergraduate her focus changed. Her desire to pursue her graduate studies in biology became so strong that she turned down the opportunity to enter a doctoral program at Harvard in order to expand her personal and professional horizons by attending the California Institute of Technology. There, Megan has traveled extensively as part of her graduate work, and has been privileged to meet several Nobel Laureates, including James Watson, who discovered the three dimensional structure of DNA. Megan credits the personal attention she received from the faculty in biology at BSC for influencing her path, leading her to her true passion.

Another such example is Janelle Mapes (BSC 2009), who was exposed to research during her freshman year. As a student in Dr. Bowen's general biology course, Janelle found the course much less challenging than many of her peers did, so she was challenged to read a scientific research article to engage her further in the subject. Janelle took the bait and became more and more curious about the opportunities of research. She was subsequently recruited to join our research team, and ultimately was accepted into three graduate programs. She chose to matriculate into the Cell and Developmental Biology Program at University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana beginning in the summer of 2009.

Finally, several of our students have been able to take advantage of off-campus opportunities presented to them. For example, we have a long standing relationship with the world-renowned Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. During the summer, MBL hosts for professors, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate students a number of special courses that are focused on very specific scientific topics. These courses are taught by the leading world experts in their fields, including several Nobel Laureates. In fact, fifty six Nobel Laureates have been affiliated with MBL, including three of the 2009 Nobel Laureates.

Our students have worked for various courses as Course Assistants and Course Coordinators. Beyond their routine responsibilities such as making photocopies, setting up audio-video equipment and preparing and cleaning the labs, students also attend lectures and are often invited to participate in cutting-edge lab exercises. Along the way, students become well acquainted with the various instructors and lecturers, and become very close to the course participants. The amazing result of

this interaction is that our students come to see something of themselves in many of the course participants. They get to see the instructors and students as real people who are much like them in terms of background and experience. By the time our students are done working for these courses, their confidence in their potential is dramatically improved. Regardless of their level of activity, the students have always been extremely dedicated and very hard working, traits that have resulted in the directors inviting BSC students to return as course assistants year after year. In fact, most of our students have been heavily recruited to apply to graduate school at a number of institutions. Most recently, Ryan Bagley (BSC 2009), had the opportunity to work as a course assistant at MBL, a position in which he performed admirably. Over the course of his experience Ryan grew in confidence in, and understanding of, microscopy. As a result, he was recruited to an internship with Zeiss (the Mercedes Benz of microscopes), an experience which served as a springboard and an opportunity to be hired full time upon graduation.

REAL STUDENTS DOING REAL RESEARCH

Thanks to the successes of our students, BSC is becoming known as an outstanding institution for training and preparing undergraduate students in the sciences for technical jobs, graduate school, and professional school. We were able to use that reputation along with a novel research problem to attain the prestigious National Institutes of Health Academic Research Enhancement Award (NIH-AREA) to study the cell biology of retinoblastoma tumors. (Please see the accompanying sidebar to learn some of the specifics of this retinoblastoma research project.) This important work, and the first grant of its kind at Bridgewater State College, will further our understanding of this devastating childhood disease. Equally important, this grant will help advance the training of qualified undergraduates at Bridgewater State College and expose these future scientists to the exciting field of research.

We have seen an explosion of student interest in post-graduate careers, and of their dedication to the task of comprehending some pretty complicated thoughts and ideas. In all, we have had the great fortune of having nearly thirty students come through our lab, and we hope that we have inspired them as much as they have inspired us. Even better, we hope these students will someday mentor and inspire others to reach new heights.

—Merideth Krevosky is Associate Professor and Jeffery Bowen is Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences.

EYE RESEARCH PROVIDES VISION FOR THE FUTURE

While relatively rare, retinoblastoma is the most common ocular tumor in children, which can be life-threatening and may result in loss of vision. As such, it is an important clinical problem facing ocular oncologists. Current treatments for retinoblastoma most often employ a strategy known as chemoreduction which uses chemotherapeutic agents to reduce the size of the tumor prior to radiation treatment. The goal of these treatments is to kill the tumor cells while sparing normal cells. However, one of the major problems facing patients and physicians is that cancer cells can be resistant to chemotherapy drugs and radiation. This is often because tumor cells find ways in which to avoid a process of cell suicide known as apoptosis. Apoptosis, from the Greek *apo* meaning "away" and *ptosis* meaning "falling off" as in leaves from a tree, is a fundamental biological process by which over abundant and redundant cells are eliminated during development. Additionally, damaged or potentially harmful cells can be destroyed with this process, often with the help of a person's immune system.

All cells are born with a program that dictates their longevity. Long-lived cells will remain with an organism from birth until death and include cells such as cardiac and skeletal muscle cells, neurons, and cells in the lens of the eye. Other cells in the body have to be replaced more rapidly, such as the cells of the skin, within the digestive tract, and even bone cells which allow the skeleton to be replenished once every seven to ten years. When the lifespan of a given cell has expired, the cell needs to be removed in a way that is not harmful to the body. Apoptosis is that cell suicide process which allows the safe removal of cells that are programmed to die. However, defects in apoptotic cell death underlie a wide spectrum of diseases, including cancer, wherein many tumor cells acquire genetic mutations that make them resistant to death by apoptosis. "To die or not to die," that is the question that we are attempting to answer using retinoblastoma tumor cells. Understanding how retinoblastoma cells can evade apoptosis is the hallmark of this study.

While this concept seems relatively straight forward, unfortunately, there are hundreds of genes that are involved in the process of apoptosis. Cancer can result when genes that promote apoptosis are inactivated or when genes that inhibit apoptosis are activated. Both paths provide tumors with a selective growth advantage and play a critical role in the initiation and progression of cancer. Unfortunately, some genes that prevent apoptosis also render tumors resistant to chemotherapy and radiation therapy, a major problem that limits the effectiveness of current cancer treatments.

Consequently, a better understanding of the molecular mechanisms of cancer cell death can lead to improved therapies.

One way in which cells can avert apoptosis is to increase the expression of protective stress proteins inside the cell. One family of stress-related proteins are the heat shock proteins, so named because these proteins were first shown to increase in cells exposed to heat in order to protect the cell. Heat shock proteins function as molecular chaperones that ensure that other proteins are made correctly and maintain their proper shape when exposed to stressful conditions that can disrupt proper protein structure. Rather ironically, chemotherapy and radiation therapy induce stress within cells, leading the cell to make heat shock proteins to protect itself. Thus, heat shock proteins prevent cancer cells from undergoing apoptosis, the very thing treatments aim to promote. Consequently, the role of heat shock proteins is likely to be key in understanding how cancer cells become chemoresistant.

Until recently, very little was known about how heat shock proteins inhibit apoptosis. We now know that heat shock proteins interfere with the "cell death machinery" to prevent the cell from undergoing apoptosis. One such heat shock protein is called alphaB-crystallin, which is found normally in a wide variety of cells, including cells that are very long-lived such as neurons and cardiac and skeletal muscle cells. Importantly, in the study of the eye, alphaB-crystallin is found in the cells that make up the lens of the eye. In fact, crystallins were named for their translucent nature and are solely responsible for keeping the cells of the lens viable for up to 100 years! AlphaB-Crystallin has recently been detected in diverse tumors and has been linked to one of the more invasive types of breast cancer. Given these findings, it is our premise that retinoblastoma cells may fail to die and become resistant to chemotherapy and radiation because they express this specialized protein.

The experiments currently being done by our research students use cells derived from patient tumors that are maintained using *in vitro* cell culture techniques, and are the first to explore the role of alphaB-crystallin in tumors of the eye. Hopefully, with the support of the NIH-AREA grant, the Office of Undergraduate Research, the Biology Department, and Bridgewater State College, our students will identify new markers in retinoblastoma that can be targeted to improve treatment. We may discover novel treatment strategies that target alphaB-crystallin and other small heat shock proteins that could help save the lives and the eyesight of children suffering from retinoblastoma. For more information go to <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/jbowen/research.htm>

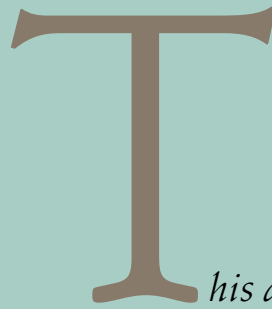
The Realist Cause:

Early 20th Century Paintings
from the Permanent Collection, 1901–1930

Mary Beth Alger



LEON KROLL, *Nude*, c.1916–1923
Oil on canvas
Gift of Dr. Gordon F. Lupien, 1998



his article is the first in a series of thematic presentations of the college's permanent collection of art to be published in the Bridgewater Review. The series begins with the overarching theme of Realism, since a group of realist paintings, executed between 1901 and 1930, forms the basis of our collection. Realism in this context refers not to a particular style or movement but to a common commitment to an observation of the natural world, even after abstraction had taken hold in Europe and to some degree in the United States.

Some of the most important works in our collection, are by painters who belonged both to the celebrated group of American painters known as “The Ten,” and to the acclaimed Boston School of Painting. Others are by students of these painters. “The Ten,” also known as “The Ten American Painters,” were America’s premier Impressionist group. They were “the ten” who left the Society of American Artists in 1898 when it became adamant that impressionism was an inferior type of realism. Members of the New York and Boston-based “Ten” were Frederic Child Hassam, Julian Alden Weir, John Henry Twachtman, Thomas Dewing, Edward Simmons, Joseph Rodefer De Camp, Willard Metcalf, Frank Benson, Robert Reid and Edmund Tarbell. Of the “Ten”, Edmund Tarbell and Joseph Rodefer Decamp would go on to become leading members of the Boston School of Painting, as would their students Aldro Hibbard, Marguerite Pearson and William Kaula. These five artists are represented in our collection.

William Kaula (1871–1953), a Boston-born painter of impressionistic landscapes and a student of Edmund Tarbell, is represented in our collection by his landscape of the hills of New Ipswich, New Hampshire. This piece demonstrates Kaula’s sensitive appreciation of the New England countryside; his penchant to paint vast, evocative skies; and his ability to imbue a landscape with mood and feeling, accomplished here through a

carefully limited palette of gold, orange-yellow and soft green. Kaula would always be considered a “Tarbell-ite,” even though his preferred subject would remain the landscape rather than genre scenes.

Aldro Hibbard’s (1886–1972) *Breaking Up—West River*, painted around 1925, is another fine example of the American impressionist style. Hibbard studied with Edmund Tarbell and Frank Benson. He enjoyed painting winter scenes, often spending hours in very cold weather so that he could record the special quality of brilliant winter sunshine and capture with utmost precision the icy snap of a cold day. The artist’s dazzling lighting effects and his quick, impasto brushstrokes make this painting particularly radiant.

New England artist Leon Kroll (1884–1974), whose work is represented in our collection by two pieces, *Girl with an Apple* and a nude (both painted sometime between 1916–23), was a student of J. H. Twachtman, one of “The Ten.” Kroll would later win a fellowship to study at the famous Academie Julien in Paris. This Paris experience acquainted the artist with the work of the French impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Indeed, his *Girl with an Apple* reflects the style of Cezanne with its collapsed space and modeling in large color patches. However, the subject, a single girl in a beautiful mo-

WILLIAM J. KAULA, *Hills of New Ipswich*, early 20th century. Oil on canvas.



ment of arrested action, is reminiscent of Vermeer, whose work had begun to be collected by Americans at the start of the twentieth century. In this instance, the girl is one of Kroll's neighbors, whom he painted on more than one occasion.

Kroll's nude is surely one of the highlights of our collection. There is a certain calculated rationality to this representation, as if the artist set out to paint a classical nude through deliberate and careful simplification of form. The entire figure appears to be developed through the basic geometric forms of cone, cylinder and sphere, a practice also used by Cezanne, but the fluid, sketchy brushstrokes and warm color produces a piece more sensual than coolly rational.

American Impressionist painter Lillian Genth (1876–1953) was born in Philadelphia. She was a student of James Abbot McNeil Whistler in Paris for two years, a compliment to her since Whistler rarely accepted female students. Genth's early career is characterized by depictions of female nudes in pastoral settings. Later on, as the artist began to travel, more exotic themes entered her work, as exemplified in *Cuenca: Spanish Woman in an Outdoor Setting*, one of the college's finest paintings. Cuenca refers to the picturesque village in the background, against which a dark-haired woman wearing a richly embroidered shawl and a typical Spanish head-dress, sits in contemplation of the nature around her.

The painting was recently cleaned and restored by BSC alumna Teresa Carmichael, a highly regarded art conservator.

Philadelphia born Marguerite Pearson (1898–1978), whose portrait of her cousin Jeannette Pearson is another fine work from our collection, studied at the Boston Museum School with Frederick Bosley and privately with Edmund Tarbell. She would become one of Tarbell's favorite students. In fact, the small cast of the Venus de Milo included in the portrait reproduced here belonged to Tarbell, who loaned it to only his preferred students. Pearson would become an active member of the Rockport Art Association and eventually one of the most sought after artists of genre scenes, landscapes and portraits, selling literally thousands of prints during the 1930s and '40s.

In the famous Armory show of 1913, European Abstraction commanded American audiences' attention, as did the work of more pioneering American artists such as Joseph Stella, John Marin and Stuart Davis. Following the Ten's twentieth and final show in New York in 1917, critics began to think that the group was no longer the revolutionary force it once was. With their reputation in decline, several members of "The Ten" would go on to have successful commercial careers, painting portraits of businessmen, educators,

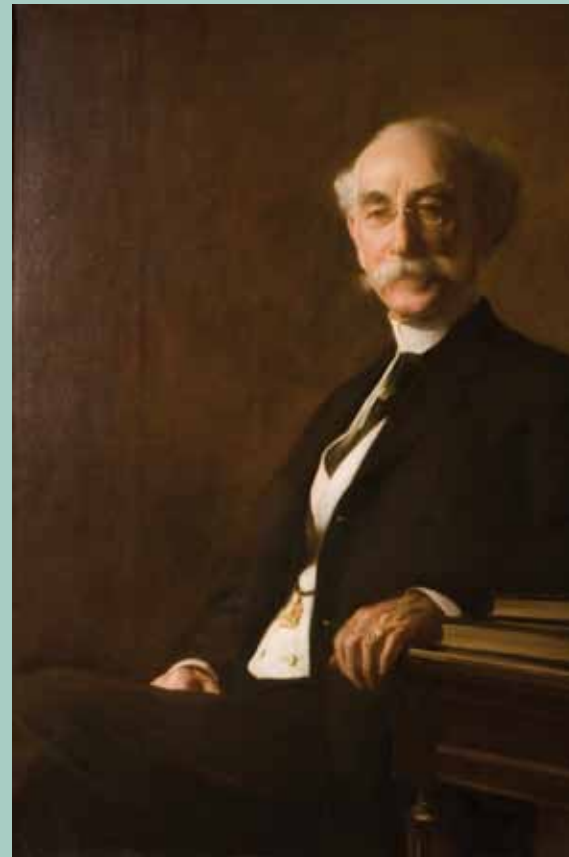
ALDRO HIBBARD, *Breaking Up—West River*, c.1925. Oil on canvas. Gift of BSC alumni.



statesmen and eventually, United States presidents. Joseph Rodefer De Camp's (1858–1923) *Portrait of Railroad Tycoon William Henry McDoel of Indiana* is such an example. In this portrait, the President of the Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railway sits to the side of a writing desk, his gaze focused directly on the viewer. This is a formal portrait but not lacking in psychological verity. Through a play of light and dark, for which De Camp was known, the artist focuses our attention on the shrewd and distinguished face with its shock of white hair and bushy mustache.

The works discussed here are currently exhibited in the Permanent Collection gallery within the Art Building. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 until 4:00.

—*Mary Beth Alger is Visiting Lecturer in Art History and Curator of Exhibitions and Collections.*



JOSEPH RODEFER DECAMP, *Portrait of Railroad Tycoon William McDoel of Indiana*, c.1918. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gar

LILIAN GENTHE, *Cuenca: Spanish Woman in Outdoor Setting*, early 20th century. Oil on canvas. Gift of Dr. Gordon F. Lupien.



MARGUERITE PEARSON, *Portrait of Jeannette Pearson*, c.1930. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mrs. Irene Pearson Doughty.



Crisis? What Crisis?

Global Recession and Learning at Bridgewater State College

Andrew Holman

In the past decade, educators in America have been blessed (or cursed) with an abundance of “teachable moments,” those unpredictable times when circumstance opens a door and provides an immediate, cogent, colorful episode that demands to be addressed in classroom discussion. These events can be particularly welcome grist for a slowing (or halted) mid-semester mill; there is nothing like a current event to give instructors punch for their delivery and demonstrate convincingly to their students that their discipline, their approach to learning, is relevant to today’s latest happening—that History (or any other discipline...fill in the blank) really does matter to us today. President Obama would see the senseless murders of servicemen and women at Fort Hood, Texas, by a Muslim American soldier in early November 2009, a “teachable moment,” as he did the embarrassing flap that involved Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the Cambridge policeman who arrested the professor for breaking into his own home in July 2009. No doubt, there were some instructors at BSC who used the notoriety of these events to good tutelary advantage in their classrooms. Veterans’ Day, the *Christian Science Monitor* tells us, is used profitably by K–12 schools in parts of West Virginia, Alabama, South Dakota and other states as a chance to emphasize the importance of the ideas of sacrifice and duty for modern American citizenship (alas, not so in Massachusetts, we’re on holiday). All of us who taught classes on September 11, 2001 are not likely to forget the feelings of horror and hope when we stood in front of our charges, nor the admonitions from our deans and others to look upon the occasion as an important teachable moment.

Trying to define a teachable moment is a little bit like trying to nail jelly to the wall. But like former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s 1964 “definition” of pornography, all good instructors know it when they see it. Still, being able to identify a teachable moment does not always mean that we know what to do with it. As revelatory as the Fort Hood and Gates incidents were as pedagogical prompts for discussion on the stresses of military service, the *chiaroscuro* of immigrant loyalties, respect for law and order, or the continued prevalence of racial profiling, other episodes’ lessons are not quite so

clear. My first reaction to being encouraged to use 9/11 as a teachable moment in the week following that life-changing event was, I am now embarrassed to admit: “To teach what, exactly?” Since then, after the dust settled (literally and figuratively), the plethora of meanings that 9/11 held, and holds, has become more cogent and useful. But the point remains. Often, the dust kicked up in those moments makes them too slippery and difficult to “teach.”

The current global financial crisis gives us a case in point. Curiously, it has had deep and difficult effects on all of us, but most of us are hardly sure of what to make of it. The recession has altered the conditions of college life and news stories about higher education from across the country have revealed its consequences: declining financial aid, proposals for a three-year degree, a drop in university endowments (in both giving and performance) and, in many places, a freeze on construction. Much less has been written, however, about the meanings of the crisis for pedagogy and how faculty members can use the currency of this subject in the classroom.

Strong fiscal planning by Bridgewater State College’s administration has limited the most negative effects of the financial crisis on BSC and we have not suffered the depth of possible consequences. No programs have been cut. Thankfully, no full-time faculty or staff members have been laid off, and retirement replacements have continued as before. But the crisis has indeed come to Bridgewater State and it is visible in many ways. “Some of my students are working longer hours and extra jobs to contribute more to family economies in which someone has become unemployed,” notes economics professor Matthew Parrett. Accounting professor Carleton Donchess observes that an increasing number of his students are not purchasing course texts and materials, presumably because they cannot afford to (though they do not seem at all willing, his informal class surveys reveal, to cut back on their cell phone plans!). To finance professor Shannon Donovan, there appears to be more transfers to BSC from “expensive private colleges” where some of them “just cannot afford to finish.” Bleaker still were the concerns expressed by some of professor Michael Jones’s economics students last Spring that they might not be able to finish school. The

consequences are felt on the other side of the lectern, as well. “I think it has affected the retirement planning of professors,” says Professor Harold Silverman, who teaches business law. “The drop in value of retirement savings has made some faculty rethink and put off retirement.” Recession is among us all.

But at Bridgewater State, it has not been employed as widely in our teaching as one might expect. A brief survey of faculty members in the School of Business has revealed that many have used the recession as a topic in classroom discussion only generally, as a normal way of broadening student knowledge of events in the nation and the world. As a taught subject, it is mentioned “very, very briefly,” one respondent noted; “very little (if at all),” another said. One result, another professor notes, is that some students generally do not have a clear grasp of the reasons behind the crisis: “It is unlikely that they understand the causes,” perhaps because they “not adequately concerned.”

However, in “Principles of Macroeconomics,” professor Anthony Cicerone reports, “we talk about the financial crisis all the time. The ‘housing meltdown’ is a useful example to explain economic theory, but a challenging one.” The complexity of the issue is only one hurdle to teaching it in the classroom. Economists disagree hotly about the causes of the recession and their explanations are divided ideologically. What were the main causes of the crisis that began in the autumn of 2008? Scheming Wall Street bankers and investor greed? Poor risk control in the financial-services industry? Lax and inefficient government regulation? All of the above? “Almost everybody agrees,” Cicerone argues, “that the most important cause of the crisis in the subprime mortgage market involved asset securitization, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Their guarantees prompted speculation and spurred financial institutions to make loans where they normally wouldn’t, where they couldn’t measure the risk.” But there were other causes, too, including an oversupply of money in the economy allowed by the Federal Reserve, which had the effect of decreasing interest rates and making credit inordinately available to consumers, many of whom couldn’t afford to pay back the loans and adjustable-rate mortgages they were being offered. Economists part company on the long-term solution to the crisis as well. Is long-term interventionist government regulation of the financial services sector the answer, or does substantial government support of investors (in the form of the Federal



Deposit Insurance Corporation and other agencies) create a “moral hazard” that incentivizes banks to make more and unwise loans? The answer to this fundamental question will tell us more about a respondent’s ideological bearings, perhaps, than his or her mastery of fiduciary science. That debate, and the want of a common, politically neutral lesson to be drawn from the episode, makes the moment less “teachable.”

But hopefully not wholly unteachable. The current financial crisis remains an important moment because of the very real, immediate command that it

delivers to our students: to become financially literate. “This crisis is built on the foundations of financial illiteracy,” SUNY–Buffalo finance professor Christian Ioan Tiu wrote in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* a little more than a year ago. “Why can’t we take all we know about risk aversion and translate it into prudence?” University of Indiana professor emeritus Frederick Risinger echoed this sentiment in a March 2009 piece in *Social Education*: “the vast majority of U.S. citizens went blithely along as the housing bubble turned into a bust and watched—even participated—as credit card debt went through the roof and the national savings rate plummeted.” In some measure, we are seeing the enemy, and he is us.

Whatever any “stimulus” or institutional reform might achieve, preventing a recurrence of the crisis may well depend on consumers becoming better educated.

“Businesses, governments and individuals overextended themselves, buying things they could never afford to pay back. Everyone is now blaming someone else,” Professor Donchess states boldly. “Unless governments, business and individuals get their collective houses in order and live within their means, we will be in for much more serious economic and societal problems in the future.”

Meantime, as the dust settles, some of us are finding pertinent ways to use the financial crisis in America as a teachable moment. Professor Donovan’s real estate students discuss, for example, “how much harder it is to qualify for mortgages and the greater importance of getting and keeping a good credit rating” using recent research and publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*. No doubt more of us—inside and outside the School of Business—will find ways to use this moment and other current world events to help make our classroom teaching more meaningful and timely.

—Andrew Holman is Professor of History and Associate Editor of the *Bridgewater Review*.

Not Quite a Full House: The Case for Enlarging the House of Representatives

Brian Frederick



For almost a century the United States House of Representatives has consisted of 435 members. This seemingly permanent fixture of American politics often obscures the reality that during the first century of the country's existence the House was increased almost every ten years after its original size of 65 members was established. Increasing the size of the House was once a representational imperative in order to offset the growth in the nation's population. However, after the last increase that occurred in 1911 members concluded that the House could no longer operate efficiently if the size of its membership continued on an upward trajectory. The major consequence of refusing to increase the size of the body is that the average number of citizens each House member represents has risen dramatically in the subsequent decades. While the House has remained constant in size for nearly 100 years the nation's population has grown by more than 200 percent to over three million people. When the results of the next Census are revealed, House members will represent on average more than 700,000 people per district. As a point of comparison, at the time of the nation's founding, the corresponding figure was 30,000 citizens. In light of these developments, political commentators across the ideological spectrum have raised serious questions about whether the House can retain its representative character if the present 435-seat limit remains in place as population growth continue to spiral upward.

In my new book *Congressional Representation and Constituents: the Case for Increasing the Size of the House of Representatives*, I investigate this issue with an unprecedented empirical examination of how the sharp escalation in the average constituency size has influenced the quality of representation its members provide. A careful review of this evidence shows that the representational character of the House has been undermined by the cap that was placed on its membership. Members who represent larger constituencies are on average, less responsive and less accessible to their constituents. Based on this diminished state of repre-

sentation I argue that it is now time for the House to be immediately increased to 675 seats and to undergo decennial increases following the census to accommodate population growth. Implementing this change would lead to better representation in three ways. It

would: make it easier for House members to remain in touch with their constituents, improve the policy responsiveness of House members and provide better descriptive representation for historically underrepresented demographic groups in what is an increasingly diverse country. Significantly increasing its size would move closer toward fulfilling the ideal that the U.S. House is truly the people's House.

Why do I support 675 seats as the appropriate size of the House? The original decision to impose a limit of 435 seats was made in an arbitrarily fashion without the consideration of any empirical

criteria. However, there is a more systematic method to determine the appropriate size of the House. In most advanced democracies, the lower house of the national legislature approximates the cube root of the nation's population. Comparative legislative analysts have classified this empirical pattern as the cube root law of national assembly size. There is a rationale that undergirds this empirical regularity. All legislative bodies must balance the trade-off of the need to operate efficiently while providing effective representation to the citizens in their districts. Legislators need to communicate with their fellow members and stay in touch with their constituents. The cube root law projects that the optimal assembly size is determined by the number of seats relative to the ratio of citizens per district that will accommodate these competing demands. Legislatures are not designed to expand in a limitless fashion or in direct proportion to the population because to do so would undermine the capacity to legislate effectively. The size of a legislature tends to increase in line with the growth of the population in a country, but at a lower rate. However, if the average number of constituents in a district becomes too large, the legislator will be unable to communicate effectively with constituents.

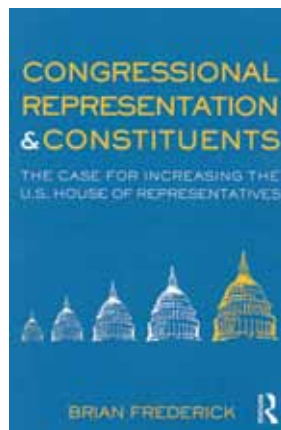
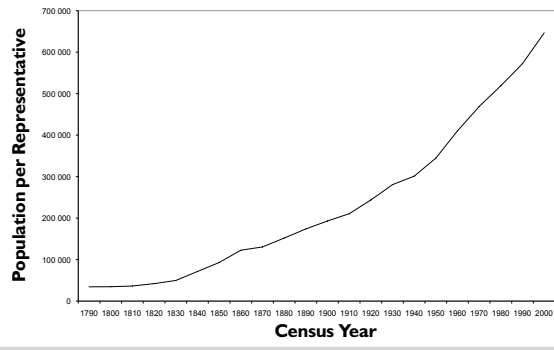


FIGURE I-1: Average Population per Representative for the U.S. House from 1790–2000

During the first century of the nation's history the U.S. House conformed rather well to cube root law of national assembly size.

The cube root law provides the most rational formula for balancing the trade-offs involved in determining the size of any legislative body. Not only would it bring the House into alignment with international legislative norms, it would also help restore some balance on the representative side of the ledger between the competing imperatives of representation and legislative efficiency. The House would be well served to return to the policy of increases every ten years linked to the cube root of the population. Passing such a law would mean that following the 2010 census the House should be increased to approximately 675 members, the projected cube root of the U.S. population in that year.

An ideologically diverse group of advocates calling for an increase in the size of the House, including liberals like U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings of Florida and conservatives like columnist George Will, have argued that it would make it easier for representatives to stay in touch with their constituents. Although senators from more populous states tend to be less accessible and less popular than senators from less populated states, until recently there was not much evidence to show that such a relationship exists in House districts. However, in my book I demonstrate that House members who represent larger constituencies also confront a similar challenge in trying to remain in touch with the citizens in their district. Looking at survey data I found that as constituency size increases, citizens are less likely to report having contact with their representative and having met their representative in person. The evidence also indicates that citizens are less likely to make an attempt to initiate contact with their representative in larger districts.

Not only is contact between citizens and their representatives undermined by a larger constituency, but so are citizens' perceptions of legislative responsiveness. Citizens living in the most heavily populated congressional districts are less likely to believe their representative would be helpful should the need to contact them arise. The same relationship applies when citizens are questioned about whether their representative does an

adequate job of staying in touch with the people in the district. Moreover, serving additional constituents also increases the probability that the representative will be disapproved of by the people in their districts. Future increases in the ratio of citizens per representative are likely to aggravate the discontent citizens feel toward their elected representatives in the U.S. House.

As predicted by the cube root law of national assembly size, the failure to increase the size of the House to accommodate dramatic population growth has interfered with channels of communication between representatives and their constituents. A continued refusal to adjust the size of the chamber as the population continues to expand will further strain the connection between citizens and their representatives. Returning to the practice of decennial increases in the size of the House tied to the cube root of the nation's population would enable representatives to be more accessible to citizens and would help citizens feel more connected to their representatives.

In addition to increasing constituent access to their representatives, a larger House would facilitate better policy representation. Many scholars have argued that as constituencies become larger the probability that a representative will reflect constituency opinion in the district declines. The research presented in my book documents that this dynamic is present for the U.S. House as well. When I analyzed the voting patterns of House members at various levels of district population size, I found that a larger constituency creates more policy divergence between constituents and their representatives than would otherwise be the case. The presence of a considerable number of additional citizens in the district has the effect of pushing representatives farther away from the views of their constituents. The result is a voting record that tends to gravitate toward the activist base of party supporters in the district and veers farther away from the median voter than would be the case in a smaller constituency. This outcome was forecasted by critics of the 435-seat limit at the time it was established and appears to have come to fruition. Although the available evidence does not indicate that constituency size is the only variable that leads to divergence between the issue positions of constituents and their representatives, it does offer support for the proposition that larger constituencies diminish policy representation.

Increasing the size of the of the House to account for population growth in line with the cube root law of national assembly size is far from the only solution for remedying the lack of responsiveness of House members to their constituents' policy views, but it would certainly make a contribution toward bridging the divide that presently exists. If the average House district population size continues to expand, the prospect for greater divergence between constituency preferences and policy responsiveness will be heightened. Since the

larger the size of a district's population the less likely representatives are to reflect opinions of the majority of their constituents, in smaller, more ideologically cohesive constituencies it will be easier for House members to reflect the policy preferences of the people they represent.

Another significant benefit of enlarging the size of the House is that it would improve descriptive representation. The concept of descriptive representation holds



that the composition of a legislative body ought to reflect the demographic makeup of society. This form of representation matters because members of certain groups may pursue policies that are in the interests of those groups in the policy-making process. Furthermore, it may allow for unarticulated interests to be heard in the deliberative process and may give members of groups, such as women and minorities, who have been systematically excluded from full participation in politics, the chance to demonstrate their ability to participate effectively in the governing process. This country is far more diverse than it was when the 435-seat limit was originally imposed. A House consisting of over two hundred additional members would better accommodate the vast ethnic and racial diversity that currently exists in the United States.

Most House members get elected not by defeating an incumbent but by winning a seat that becomes open either through retirement, resignation, or death. There is a greater likelihood that women will emerge victorious in open-seat races. Women have typically made substantial gains in the first election following reapportionment when more seats are open. Under my proposal, after each census the number of new seats apportioned would rise, creating additional opportunities for women and minorities to run successfully for the House. For African Americans and Latinos, less populated congressional districts would make it easier to create majority-minority districts that would be likely to elect members of these underrepresented groups.

According to survey data presented in my book, women and African Americans are highly supportive of increasing the size of the House of Representatives for this purpose. Doing so could enhance minorities' sense of political trust and efficacy and strengthen the bonds they feel with their elected representatives. The present 435-seat figure impedes the entrance of members of

underrepresented groups into the House. A larger body would open up opportunities for women and minorities to serve, resulting in greater numbers of citizens who feel that they have someone in the House of Representatives to look out for their interests.

Even critics of increasing the size of the House concede that some benefits would accrue from a larger House. They maintain, however, that these benefits are not worth the costs. From their perspective an increase would be too costly, undermine legislative efficiency and diminish the quality of debate in the body. In the book I acknowledge that although many of the critics' concerns are valid, none of them rise to the level that would outweigh the positive impact on representation a larger House would produce. In short, I contend that any additional costs to the treasury would be a fraction of the total federal budget, the legislative process would not become more inefficient as long as the institutional rules are structured properly and that the overall quality of deliberation on legislation would not be reduced.

As someone who studied the Congress closely for many years I am under no illusions that a change of this magnitude is on the horizon in the current political environment. In the

final analysis, a United States House of Representatives consisting of close to 435 members seems likely to remain a permanent fixture of the political system for years to come. Increasing the size of the House may carry tangible benefits for representation, but the odds that it will ever occur in the foreseeable future are slim. Nevertheless, for the U.S. House to genuinely live up to its status as the institution in the federal government closest to the people, it ultimately must be a larger House and continue to grow as the nation's population grows. A failure to do so would be contrary to the representative character this institution is supposed to embody. Even though I concede the prospects for an increase seem bleak at this juncture, that does not mean it should be discounted as policy option that is off the table for serious consideration from national policymakers. The fact that a policy option is not likely to gain any traction does not make it any less worthy of being adopted. Political realities should not be allowed to derail an increase in the size of the House that is so desperately needed to enhance the representativeness of what is supposed to be the people's House.

—Brian Frederick is Assistant Professor of Political Science.



Cultural Commentary:

Where Do We Go From Here?

William C. Levin

Our favorite cousins from Tampa visited this summer. We went sailing in Buzzards Bay (best wind in the world) and no one got sea sick. We had a big lobster bake. Not only did these “lifer” southerners vacuum out the last scraps of lobster meat from the tiniest crevices of the beasts, but they polished off three pounds of steamers, leaving behind only the actually inedible bits. We even survived the Braintree merge on the way into Boston and enjoyed our surly-waiter treatment at Durgin Park. Given the success of our visit, my wife and I were surprised when, during the ride to Logan, they asked “So when are you retiring to Florida?”

“Why would we retire to Florida?” I asked. But my cousins were ready for this.

“You have noticed how many people move from places like Boston and Detroit to the sunny south, haven’t you? How many times have you heard a Floridian say ‘I can’t wait to get out of this warm weather so I can retire to Massachusetts?’”

They had us there, though we were put off that they had lumped together Detroit and Boston. The pattern they cited is undeniable. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Florida is exploding with American migrants, actually with retirees from countries all over the globe that suffer from any sort of winter. As it turns out, so are Arizona and California.

It started us thinking about the possibility of moving from our beloved Marshfield to retire. After all, we are both in our early sixties, so planning for a possible retirement move seems prudent. We then did what anyone who has an internet connection would do; we Googled “best places to live” and sorted through the results.

What luck! We wouldn’t have to move far. In fact, just a few miles north of where we live now is Milton, just voted by *Boston Magazine* a “Best Place to Live” in Massachusetts, and by *Money Magazine* as one of the “Top 5 Places to Live in America.” Who’d a thunk? To us Milton has been completely invisible, a town marked

only by highway signs seen briefly on our drives into Boston on the Southeast Expressway. We’d have to check it out. Call us cynics, but we are not ready to take the word of *Boston* or *Money* Magazines, even if their evaluations are clearly affirmed on the web site of the Town of Milton.

Assuming we wanted to stay in Massachusetts, we had to also consider the 2009 rankings of “Most Livable Cities” produced by *Forbes Magazine*. Worcester. Really! Ninth in the country, in fact. The ranking seems solidified by the assertion on the city’s web site that it has been “named an All-American city five times.” See how important it is to keep an opened mind? However, we were somewhat put off by the WBZ report at the time of the rankings that at least one resident of Worcester, when told of the good news about her city, responded “That’s a joke! This is a ghost town, there’s nowhere to shop.” Of course, top-notch shopping is not high on our list of must-haves for retirement. Perhaps we’ll take it up.

What if we were willing to leave Massachusetts, if only by a little bit? Good luck! New Hampshire has been identified, more than once recently, as the “Most Livable State” in America. Morgan Quinto Press makes a living at this ranking business, using in its calculations positive factors like household income, homeownership, job growth and educational attainment and negative factors such as rates for crime, poverty, infant mortality

BILL LEVIN'S TOP TEN PLACES TO RETIRE

- 1 Where the weather suits your clothes
- 2 Where you can drive to see friends and family
- 3 Where there are lots of ethnic restaurants
- 4 Where there are bookstores
- 5 Where you can afford to live
- 6 Where there are three public radio stations on the dial
- 7 Where my wife would like to be as well
- 8 Where there are enough kids to take care of your cat when you are away
- 9 Where the wind for sailing is reliable
- 10 Where the leaves change color

and unemployment. With any luck we won't need to worry about employment opportunities, but who can tell these days? And the Morgan Quinto folks also rank New Hampshire fifth among the "Healthiest States" with neighboring Vermont number one. (For this ranking they're considering the availability of medical care, smoking rate and like that.) Health. That would be good to have as we grow old. Perhaps we can live on the border between New Hampshire and Vermont, in Barton or Hinsdale say, and get the best of both states. New Hampshire! And they have a few miles of coastline wedged between Massachusetts and Maine. Too bad about the Old Man of the Mountain, though.

Once you are willing to leave New England, however, things get really bewildering. Pittsburgh has been showing up on lots of lists as "America's Most Livable City."

Places Rates Almanac

and *The Economist*, for example, agree on this. Lots of these rankings lean heavily on economic indicators, such as housing costs and employment opportunities, but they also like quality of life factors such as open space, culture and ease of getting around. I've been to Pittsburgh, and you can forget about the old stereotype of the steel producing city. That's over with. It's a nice city. Three rivers right in town, very good music and museums, and less than half an hour in any direction you can find really good deer hunting. But while we don't have to move to Florida just for the weather, living through Pittsburgh winters in our seventies is a deal breaker.

You may have noticed by now that some of the sources of these picks may not have your priorities in mind when they go about ranking places for livability. In fact, some seem downright biased in their judgment about what matters to regular folks. Take, for example, the selection of Chapel Hill by the 2009 "Mayors' City



Livability Awards Program." First on their list of criteria was "Mayoral Leadership." No kidding. If a place doesn't have top notch mayoral leadership, we're not retiring there. I guess that eliminates from consideration Hoboken, Secaucus and Jersey City whose mayors, along with a handful of Rabbis from New York City, were recently arrested on corruption charges. I wonder if Rabbi-corruption levels should count against a city's eligibility for inclusion on our list of places to retire.

At this point my wife and I have taken to digging out information that we think is unbiased, and which reflects our wishes and needs. For that we are using data from government sources, such as the 2009 edition of the Statistical Abstract of the United States, produced by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/>) Consider these tidbits.

It would be expensive to stay in Massachusetts. We have the ninth highest cost of living index in the country (the District of Columbia is the most expensive), and the northeast in general is an expensive place.

Only in California and in the District of Columbia does housing cost more per unit than is the case in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. As of 2006 (the most recent figures in the 2009 Statistical Abstract of the United States), the median value of a housing unit in Massachusetts was \$370,400, while in California it was over \$535,000. Florida was a relative bargain at \$230,600. Of course, that includes lots of trailer parks. Want the least expensive housing? Move to Mississippi where the median value was \$88,600. In line with these costs, vacancy rates are lowest in the most expensive places in the country. In 2007 the vacancy rates were 1.9% in Boston-Cambridge, but 7.4% in Orlando. By the way, if we decide to move to Worcester we might have some trouble finding the right place. Its vacancy rate in 2007 was just 0.5%. Maybe things have opened up since then.

There are other quality of life issues that should be considered, like the company you can keep. In 2006, 15.6% of Massachusetts residents had advanced degrees

On our way to retirement paradise with many choices: Worcester (five times named "All American City" by *Forbes Magazine*), Pittsburgh ("*Best in the U.S.," according to the *Economist Magazine*), nearby Milton (voted by *Boston Magazine* a "Best Place to Live in MA" and by *Money Magazine* as one of the "Top five Places to Live in America").

(highest in the nation, save the District of Columbia), while in Florida the figure was just 8.9%. If this matters to you, you might want to avoid Arkansas (6.2%) and Mississippi (6.1%). And we admire good citizenship. The highest voter turnout rate for any state belongs to South Dakota (62.1%), while Massachusetts isn't bad at 50%. We're sort of in the middle of the pack here, but a bit better than the national average of 43.6%. Florida, is not so hot on this. Only 38.4% of Floridians voted in 2006, one of the lowest rates in the country. Also, Florida is pretty closely split by party affiliation, with Democrats outnumbering Republicans by a few percent. Obama won the 2008 presidential contest by 9% in Florida, but by 34% in Massachusetts. That might feel odd to us.

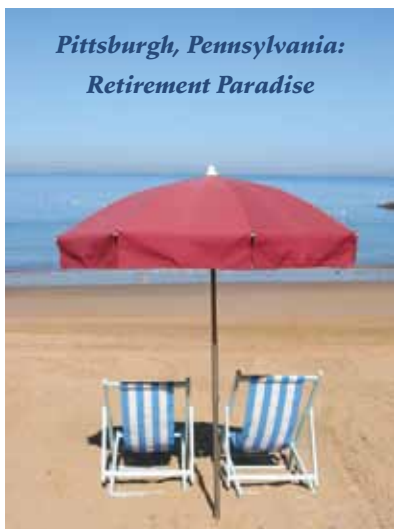
Florida, Arizona and California are getting older as retirees move to these warm weather states. In 2007, 17% of the residents of Florida were over the age of 65, while in Massachusetts the figure was 13.3%, just higher than the national figure of 12.6%. As a couple who very soon will be counted in that figure, we might like the company of people our age, but we also want access to good health care. In Massachusetts the figures suggest we would be in a good place. In 2007 Massachusetts had 461 physicians per 100,000 residents of the state, highest in the nation after the District of Columbia which, for some reason, had the outlandish rate of 799 physicians per 100,000 residents. (Perhaps this is why health care legislation takes them so long to pass down there.) Given the high percent of older Americans who live in Florida, it must make for some problems that they have had such a low rate of physicians in residence (243 per 100,000 population).

Lastly, what about the weather? After all, that is what started all this talk. Yes. We admit the weather is nicer in Florida. In 2006, for example, Massachusetts

experienced 43.3 inches of snow, hail, ice pellets and sleet. Florida had none. But the weather is also worse in Florida. For every day that we have to stay indoors to stay warm and out of the storms, they have one that they have to stay indoors to keep from parboiling or frying.

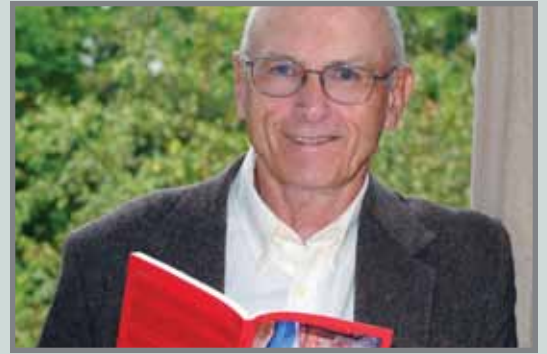
After all the comparing, we are still looking for reliable data on the number of friends and family who live nearby, or foods and scenery that make us feel at home. Just consider the lobsters, the steamers and the reliable winds on Buzzards Bay. There seem to be no tables of data for them.

—William C. Levin is Professor of Sociology and Associate Editor of the *Bridgewater Review*.



Here and Gone: New and Selected Poems

Don Johnson



The Knee

They huddled around me, slow-handed
and quiet, light haloing their bodies blurred
by the two red pills the prep nurse
had brought to my room in a white cup.

Going down, blind-sided again,
I saw Norman Chung's face at my knee,
smiling as it did that afternoon
of my first college football game

twenty five years before in Salt Lake City—
until my first blown ligament
made me scream. The trainer said
it was stretched, and wrapped a wide Ace

Bandage around it. That night
I left half way-through *Psycho's* premiere,
unwinding the Ace in a doorway
on State Street, relieving the pressure.

So Norman Bates was part of it, too,
his face leering at me in white light,
the upraised fist at his ear
gripping the broad-bladed knife.

Purple and soft, the knee that the nurse
unwrapped the next morning wasn't mine,
but some sixty-year-old accountant's
delivered frozen by a crooked undertaker

moments before the operation.
Examining the sutured meat,
the surgeon said only, "Gooooood,"
like Karloff in *The Bride of Frankenstein*.

But now I'm being rehabilitated, helped
from one bubbling vat to another,
then onto the padded table where a sleeve
slipped over my bent leg inflates

and flattens, breathing in a rhythm
my lungs pick up. Electrodes
connected to my narrow-gauge scars
tighten and release the muscles

beyond my control. The transformer's
needle says today I took more current
than yesterday. The trainer tells me,
"You'll be a new man soon."

But when I step outside, the odor
of betadine and analgesic slips
through the door, and something
in the air, the failing light

takes me back to high school,
the door of the dank locker room
I left every evening after practice,
tired, sometimes sore, but hungry

and hard-bodied, clean as white tape,
assured of a ride home and a dinner
kept warm in the oven, certain
I would never grow old, never die.

(for Jim Connolly)

Muskrat

The muskrat, flattened
on the slough,
pushes upstream
toward the pool,
his wake defined
by sun low
enough to shadow
ripples. A heron,
all wings, neck,
legs, glides
just above its head
aiming downstream.
On parallel planes
they pass
just as a trout rises,
scribing a ring
that grows to encircle
the muskrat.
Two hooded ducks
bob beyond its compass,
mergansers,
their crest fans
luminous
against the dark green
water, the brown stalks
of weeds on the bank,
the night already
scaling trees
on the far side
of the island.

Two Hawks, A Body, A Torn Dollar Bill

That summer the rain lingered
at our back door
like the tramp
my mother had been kind to.
Cicadas returned from a time
I could not remember
and I tore up a dollar bill
while watching two hawks
torment a snake in mid-air
above the barn.

I had gone to the store
for sugar, but sneaked
into Gaten's Funeral home
to view my first dead body,
a woman whose husband
had shot her the day before.

She lay in a black dress,
her small white face
smooth as church music,
her mouth a ripe melon's
heart. I had just touched
the platinum curl below her ear
when a floorboard's creak
sent me home

where steam from my mother's
canning blistered the kitchen windows.
She did not know where I had been,
but paid me the dollar
for chores. Her hands,
rough as turkey wattles, glowed.

On the back step
I watched the hawks jostle
and collide above the weather
cock. In the seconds
between one's letting it go
and the other's taking it up
the snake writhed

in free fall. Cicadas pulsed
in the wood lot. And not
looking down, I fished
that dollar bill from my jeans
and spent it blindly on
the heavy air—for her, for her.

Hangover Fly

Tied to imitate
 a fat, white nymph,
 the hair of the dog
 dead now four years
 still takes in trout.
 Its wet bristles criss-
 cross my thumb like scars
 barbed wire inscribes
 when I shake loose
 the hook boned
 in the rainbow's jaw.

Afraid I couldn't do it
 after, I dug her grave
 in the rain
 while she watched,
 half-blind and deaf,
 nosing the slick clods
 until the clay stained
 her muzzle rusty.
 Her damp fur clotted
 on my hands when I
 lifted her into the truck.

All day I have followed
 my nymph downstream
 to where the river braids,
 spills to one sound,
 and disappears in shadows.
 My legs are gone
 to the cold. My backcast,
 collapsing in tired loops,
 threatens to bury my hook
 past the barb in the
 loose graying folds of my neck.



*Don Johnson taught in the English department at Bridgewater State College from 1971 until 1983 when he left to become chair of the English department at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN. After serving as chair for six years he returned to full-time teaching, and from 1992–1994 while on a leave of absence from ETSU, he taught at Iolani School in Honolulu. His poems and criticism have appeared in numerous journals, anthologies, and literary magazines. Other books include *Hummers, Knucklers and Slow Curves*, a collection of contemporary American baseball poems, and *The Sporting Muse*, a critical analysis of American poets and poetry about sport. He currently lives on seven acres along the bank of the trout-filled Watauga River in northeast Tennessee in a house that was originally constructed when George Washington was president.*

In the sculpture you might see the hanging fire of Captain Ahab in the recesses of **MELVILLE's** eye openings. This will serve to recall the great author who wrote so well of the whales, whalers and the sea, stimulating the vivid imagination of his readers worldwide.



LEONARDO made his mark on our planet as artist, scientist and vegetarian with a square and a circle, the vitruvian man. Will I leave a sign, be it ever so slight, that i was here as well?

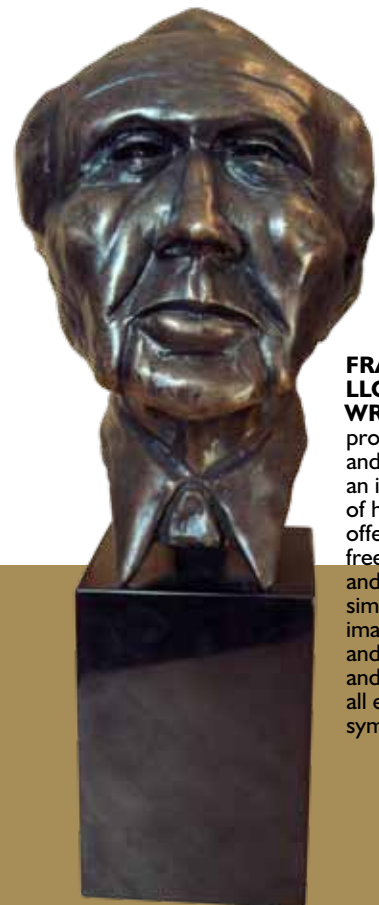
*"My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But oh, my foes and ah, my friends—
It gives a lovely light."*

—**EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY**

...

*"Rejoice in the aura of a burning candle
make it your conscious moment
for it has always been and
never will it end"*

—Dave Englund



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT prophet, poet, and architect an interpreter of his time offering freedom and organic simplicity imagination and integrity and above all exquisite symmetry.

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