

Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

WHAT DOES IT
MEAN TO BE AN
AMERICAN?

ON RACE, AND THE
ARTS AND SCIENCES

HONORING HENRY
LOUIS GATES, JR.

CHECKING
KLEPTOCRACY



Global
Instability
and Nuclear
Arms Control

SUMMER 2022

SELECT

UPCOMING EVENTS

September

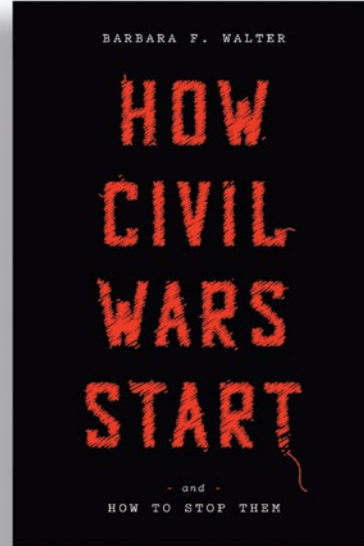


9-10 Cambridge, MA
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25 San Diego, CA
San Diego Members' Reception
Featuring **Barbara Walter**

Details about these and other upcoming events are available at amacad.org/events.



“At a time when there are active efforts to make it harder to vote, making voting a duty sends a signal to every part of the political system that the obligation of that system is to make it as easy as possible for people to carry out their duty.” – What Does It Mean to be an American? Reexamining the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

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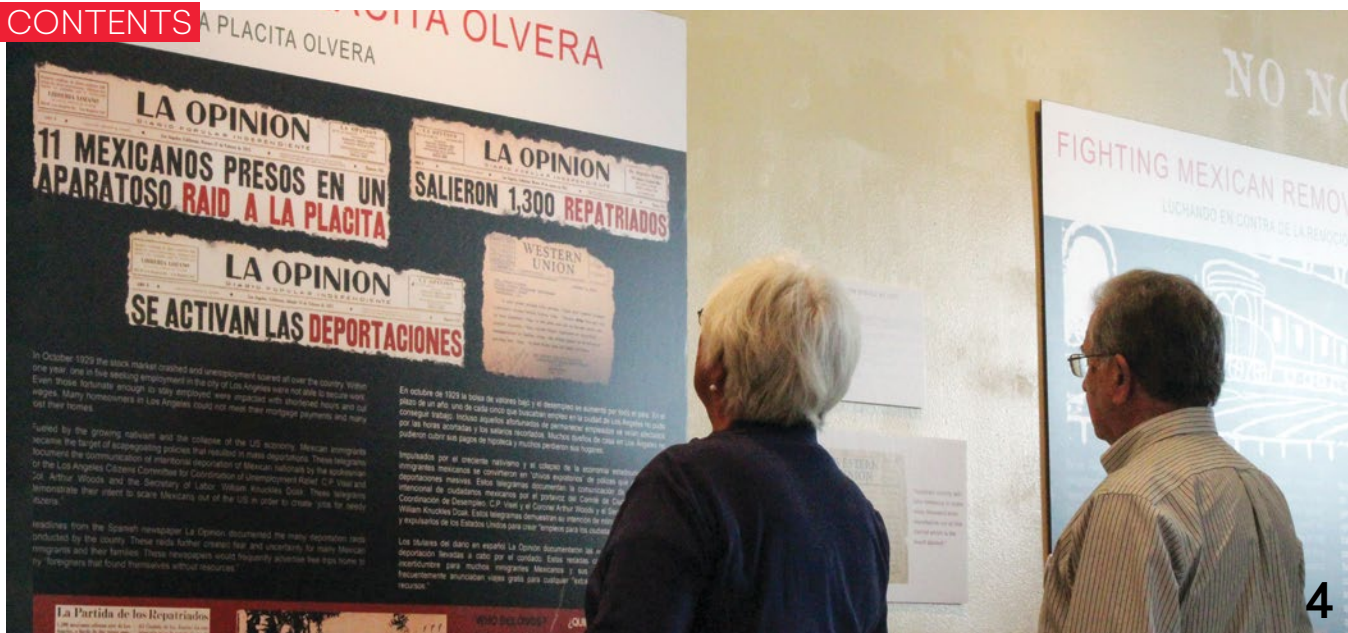
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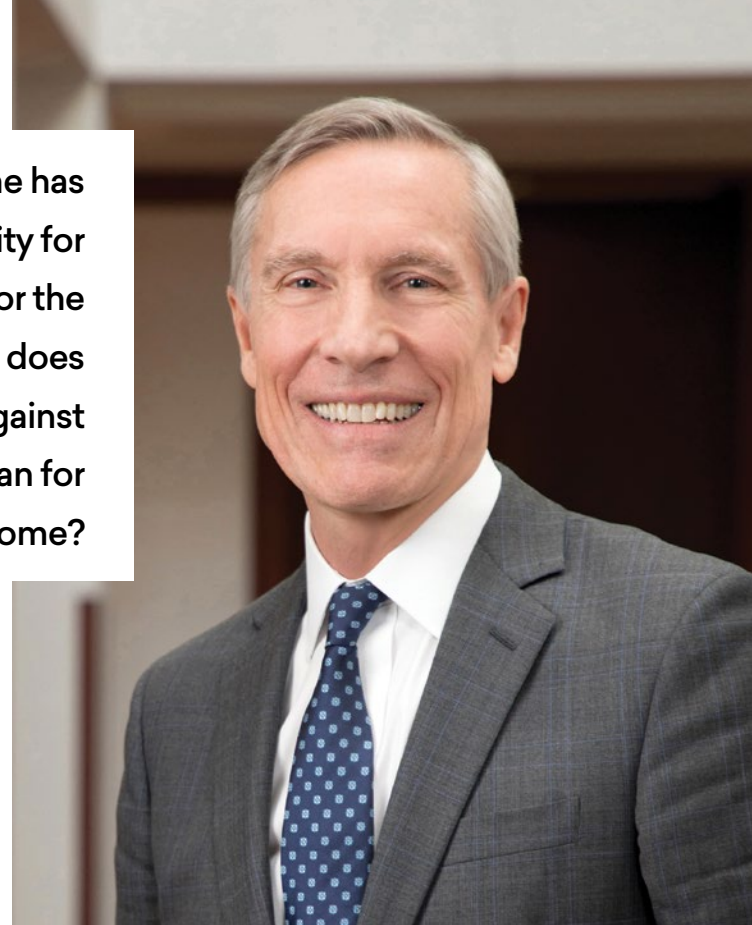
“Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has ushered in a new era of uncertainty and instability for the global order. What does the conflict mean for the future of nuclear arms control? What role does corruption play in the erosion of constraints against aggression? And what will the conflict mean for democratic institutions, both abroad and here at home?”

From the President

As I write this, I reflect on a spring that should have been a season of hope for a world slowly emerging from the grip of a devastating pandemic. And yet Russia’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has ushered in a new era of uncertainty and instability for the global order. While the suffering of the people of Ukraine should be foremost in our minds, the conflict also raises important questions about the future of the international system. What does the conflict mean for the future of nuclear arms control? What role does corruption play in the erosion of constraints against aggression? And what will the conflict mean for democratic institutions, both abroad and here at home?

In this issue of the *Bulletin*, you will find the Academy engaging with all of these key questions. The Academy’s project on “Promoting Dialogue on Arms Control and Disarmament” has convened discussions among scholars and practitioners from the United States, Europe, China, and Russia to explore key challenges to arms control, build international relationships, engage with policy-makers, and help shape the Academy’s future research agenda. In May, the Academy convened an exploratory meeting on “Checking Kleptocracy: Considering the Potential Establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court.” Experts from around the world gathered at the House of the Academy to discuss a potential mechanism that would hold corrupt leaders accountable and thereby prevent the human rights abuses and international conflicts that are often the product of grand corruption.

The conflict in Ukraine has not only heightened concerns about threats to democracy abroad but has also made us even more sensitive to the threats we face here at home. In April, the Academy convened a group of



experts, including Danielle Allen, E.J. Dionne Jr., María Teresa Kumar, and John Shattuck, to discuss the state of our fractured democracy and how Americans could come back together with a greater sense of common purpose. At the Academy’s first “Higher Education Forum at Aspen” in June, college and university leaders convened to discuss the role of higher education at a time of global crisis and how colleges and universities can support equity, free expression, social mobility, and democratic citizenship. And our Summer 2022 issue of *Dædalus* on “The Humanities in American Life: Transforming the Relationship with the Public” explores the role of the humanities in a twenty-first-century American democracy.

One of the highlights of the Academy’s spring was the presentation of the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies to Henry Louis “Skip” Gates, Jr. In conversation with David Rubenstein, Skip concluded his remarks by noting that “. . . we are all immigrants, even my African American ancestors. We are a nation of immigrants, but at the level of the genome we are 99.99 percent the same.” It is a thought well worth remembering at this time of division at home and conflict abroad. I hope you will read the pages that follow with interest and share your thoughts about how the Academy can work to bridge divides and build a more hopeful global future.

David W. Oxtoby



Dædalus Explores the Public Faces of the Humanities

By **Jessica Taylor**, *Louis W. Cabot Fellow in Humanities Policy at the Academy*, and **Robert B. Townsend**, *Director of Humanities, Arts, and Culture Programs at the Academy and Codirector of the Humanities Indicators*

The Summer 2022 issue of *Dædalus* offers a new perspective on an old subject. While the humanities have been around as subjects of study for centuries, a focus on how they engage with and connect to the public outside of academia is relatively new.

Recent research from the American Academy's Humanities Indi-

cators project tracks the field's troubles in academia (as measured by degrees awarded and jobs advertised for new faculty members), but also points to the vitality of the humanities among the public (through historical television shows, reading, and visits to museums and literary events). The *Dædalus* volume takes up this apparent contradiction

and explores the relationship between academia and the public from both directions. Essays written from the perspective of academics assess where and how their disciplines are evolving to connect with the public in new ways or address large public problems. Other essays, by leaders in the public humanities, consider how the challenges in the

academy relate to their work in local and state programming and museums, as well as efforts to help students enter the workforce.

Given that dual focus, people in the humanities will find much of interest in this collection, but so should anyone who cares about the future of the field or engages with the humanities through museums, books, and other media. The seventeen essays explore the relationship between the public and the humanities in three ways. First, some essays offer the latest research on where, how, and why the public thinks about and engages with the humanities in a variety of forms. Second, other essays gather examples from some of the most interesting and engaging public-facing projects in the humanities. This ranges from the work of the state humanities councils to projects on both coasts working with and for underserved communities to preserve and share their stories. And the third way is more conceptual, with leaders in emerging areas of the field (such as the medical, environmental, and Positive Humanities) describing developments that can open new forms of public engagement with the humanities.

Throughout the volume the authors wrestle with recurring perceptions of a “crisis” in the humanities. Judith Butler (Academy member and Distinguished Professor, University of California, Berkeley) states that “If there is a single hope that any of us can have for the future of the humanities, it is that the public humanities become a way to assert the public value of the humanities.” But she also warns about the risks of aligning uncritically with structures and institutions that have undermined public attitudes about the field. On the other hand, Carin Berkowitz and Matthew Gibson (Executive Directors of the New Jersey and Virginia humanities councils, respectively) argue for a more

The Summer 2022 issue of *Dædalus* on “The Humanities in American Life: Transforming the Relationship with the Public” features the following essays:

Introduction

Carin Berkowitz, Norman Bradburn & Robert B. Townsend

The State of the Humanities circa 2022

Robert B. Townsend & Norman Bradburn

What Everyone Says: Public Perceptions of the Humanities in the Media

Alan Liu, Abigail Droge, Scott Kleinman, Lindsay Thomas, Dan C. Baciu & Jeremy Douglass

The Public Futures of the Humanities

Judith Butler

Beyond the Survival of the Global Humanities

Sara Guyer

Reframing the Public Humanities: The Tensions, Challenges & Potentials of a More Expansive Endeavor

Carin Berkowitz & Matthew Gibson

Opening the Humanities to New Fields & New Voices

George J. Sánchez

Creating Knowledge with the Public: Disrupting the Expert/Audience Hierarchy

Denise D. Meringolo with Lee Boot, Denise Griffin Johnson & Maureen O'Neill

Grassroots Museums & the Changing Landscape of the Public Humanities

Fath Davis Ruffins

Why Public Humanities?

Susan Smulyan

The Case for Bringing Experiential Learning into the Humanities

Edward J. Balleisen & Rita Chin

Communication & Media Arts: Of the Humanities & the Future

Roderick P. Hart

Religious Studies & the Imagined Boundaries of the Humanities

Jodi Magness & Margaret M. Mitchell

Philosophy, the Humanities & the Life of Freedom

Kwame Anthony Appiah

Patients Are Humans Too: The Emergence of Medical Humanities

Keith Wailoo

The Positive Humanities: A Focus on Human Flourishing

James O. Pawelski

Planetary Humanities: Straddling the Decolonial/Postcolonial Divide

Dipesh Chakrabarty

positive vision of that engagement, calling for “a humanities of new expressions of culture and of new understandings derived from shared perspectives . . . to address the divisions and disconnectedness so common in contemporary America.”

The analytical essays offer a statistical perspective on the relationship between the humanities and the public, drawing on recent research from the Humanities Indicators about the public and academia as well as a new analysis of a massive corpus of social media and news publications. Notably, the latter study finds that the humanities

Ethnicity and History, University of Southern California) and Denise Meringolo (Associate Professor of History and Director of Public History, University of Maryland, Baltimore County), for instance, the connections are built with and in relation to members of their communities. Sánchez describes efforts with his students to create a museum for the Boyle Heights neighborhood in Los Angeles, while Meringolo summarizes her collaborative work to capture and present the stories of communities in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray in police custody.

Director of Education, Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania) calls on humanities scholars to recognize the psychological benefits that engagement with the humanities can have to promote human flourishing. Collectively, these essays attest to Appiah’s assertion that, “We need not the sure path of one science, but a difficult conversation among all the different kinds of systematic knowledge. We need it because people need it, and all the disciplines of the humanities have something to contribute.”

While the authors approach the question from a variety of perspectives, together they demonstrate that the humanities are actively engaging with the public and their concerns. Though it remains to be seen whether these efforts will have an effect on the troubling trends in the academic humanities, the *Dædalus* issue bears witness to a field rising to the challenges of today.

The issue was coedited by Carin Berkowitz, Norman Bradburn (Academy member and Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus and Senior Fellow at NORC at the University of Chicago), and Robert B. Townsend (Director of Humanities, Arts, and Culture Programs at the American Academy).

&

“The Humanities in American Life: Transforming the Relationship with the Public” is available on the Academy’s website at www.amacad.org/daedalus. *Dædalus* is an open access publication.

Page 4: Two visitors examine the Boyle Heights Museum exhibition *Aquí Estamos Y No Nos Vamos* at CASA 0101 in East Los Angeles, 2017.

While the humanities have been around as subjects of study for centuries, a focus on how they engage with and connect to the public outside of academia is relatively new.

appear often in the media, but in ways that differ substantially from the sciences (which are much more likely to be noted for new discoveries, while the humanities tend to come up in more mundane contexts – ranging from event announcements to obituaries). The research team on the WhatEvery1Says project concludes that “In order for the humanities to engage with grand challenges, a chain of linkages from their discrete practices to more general values needs to be established and communicated.”

The efforts to create these chains of linkages are the subject of most of the essays in the volume. In contributions by George Sánchez (Professor of American Studies &

Other authors describe efforts to construct the linkages by rebuilding and opening their disciplines to the evolving interests and concerns of the public at large. Kwame Anthony Appiah (Academy member and Professor of Philosophy and Law, New York University) reimagines how philosophy can reorient public thinking about evolving questions of justice, while Keith Wiloo (Academy member and Professor of History and Public Affairs, Princeton University) traces the emergence of the medical humanities from an aspirational goal to a pandemic necessity. And in an essay on the new area of research called the Positive Humanities, James Pawelski (Professor of Practice and



Global Instability and Nuclear Arms Control

By **Poul Erik Christiansen**, former Raymond Frankel Nuclear Security Policy Fellow at the Academy

Following several years of fractious and uncooperative international relations between major world powers, the global security landscape shifted dramatically on February 24, 2022. The Russian invasion of Ukraine underscores a widening division between competing visions of global order. Despite unity among European and NATO states and a bipartisan consensus rarely displayed in U.S. politics, many countries around the world have been less willing to condemn publicly the Russian military operations. This fault line is highly consequential, with several nuclear-armed states reluctant to follow the West despite repeated threats of

nuclear weapons use by Russian officials.¹ Although the United States and its allies have been able to provide significant aid to Ukraine, including military hardware, they have stopped short of engaging in military action against Russia because of the nuclear shadow. This situation suggests that nuclear deterrence is holding for now – but at what cost? And what lessons are other nuclear states drawing from these events, particularly China as it considers ways to resolve its ambitions for Taiwan?

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academy has quietly been a laboratory for ideas and proposals to reduce nuclear dangers.

In collaboration with Stanford University's Hoover Institution, the Academy held expert virtual discussions to analyze the range of challenges on the international security agenda and to identify opportunities for policy influence on nuclear weapons issues. The series was initially prompted by the Spring 2020 release of the *Daedalus* volume on "Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age," guest edited by Robert Legvold and Christopher F. Chyba, chairs of the Academy's project on Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age.² In 2021, with the pandemic still thwarting plans to hold in-person meetings, Steven E. Miller, chair of the Academy's

project on “Promoting Dialogue on Arms Control and Disarmament,” renewed the discussion series with American scholars, former officials, and Russian, Chinese, and European experts among the participants.³ The series continued through the spring of 2022 and has contributed to the project’s objectives by:

- examining the range of issues confronting the arms control agenda;
- identifying opportunities for connections and policy influence with the new U.S. administration;
- engaging members of Congress and their staff to deepen their knowledge on key issues and challenges in arms control;
- strengthening the relationships with Russian and Chinese colleagues;
- enabling American participants to hear a diversity of opinions; and
- developing themes for the project’s publication series.

In the summer of 2020, a critical concern was whether the nuclear arms control architecture that had been painstakingly built up during the Cold War, including pioneering contributions by the Academy, would be destroyed.⁴ The two countries possessing the largest nuclear forces, the United States and the Russian Federation, have a special responsibility to lead on arms control. Although the Biden administration’s swift signature on February 3, 2021, to extend the New START Treaty – which limits the strategic nuclear forces of each side – heralded a more positive environment, two decades of neglect and willful abandonment of several key treaties

regulating nuclear forces have led to a perilous situation that threatens to spiral toward an unconstrained arms race implicating several other nuclear weapon states. This stalling motivated the experts involved in the discussion series to think creatively of what the future of arms control might look like.

A central problem has been that the regularized dialogue between the United States and Russia on nuclear arms control that was a mainstay of the Cold War years has not been a priority in recent years. The last sustained effort was the conclusion of the negotiating sessions in November 2009 that produced the New START Treaty. Despite the resumption of “Strategic Stability Dialogue” meetings during 2021, there remain marked differences in the U.S. and Russian agendas, which are reflected in both official and expert-level discourse. The brutal and prolonged Russian attack on Ukraine has halted the process, and it remains to be seen on what grounds and when the relationship can be reset so that nuclear arms control discussions can be renewed.

One further complicating factor is that the evolving nuclear equation now involves several regional rivalries. For example, despite the clear disparity in size of the current nuclear forces,⁵ there are several factors that call for China to be treated as a “great power” and thus included in arms control efforts, such as the aggressive scale of their nuclear modernization program, an emboldened foreign policy beyond their neighborhood, and their critical position in the global economy. While the Trump administration insisted on China’s inclusion in official arms control talks, Russia reciprocated by calling for the inclusion of France and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, China is embroiled in

a rivalry with nuclear-armed neighbor India, which in turn is in a direct and historically complex rivalry with nuclear-armed Pakistan, creating an uncomfortable regional triangle with no clear incentive for cooperative solutions.⁶

Many of the Academy’s discussion sessions were focused on how to address this security landscape, one so markedly different from the bilateral Cold War days that shaped arms control as a practice. In addition to the greater number of nuclear rivals, there are also a range of interconnected issues and domains that affect and complicate the nuclear environment: for instance, several countries have developed a variety of offensive capabilities using emerging and disruptive technologies, including cyber, artificial intelligence, advanced missiles, and space-based systems. There is deep concern in scholarly communities around the world that there has been little official dialogue among competitors about the risks created by this “entanglement” of nuclear and conventional systems, and there is a clear need to develop common understandings to avoid unnecessary escalation and conflict resulting from their deployment.⁷ Implicitly, the broadening of the arms control agenda will entail deeper conversations with all the other nuclear weapons states in the longer term and renewed emphasis on multilateral forums.

More immediately, the nuclear threats issued by Russian officials during the invasion of Ukraine are worrisome and expose the fragility of the nuclear taboo.⁸ Moreover, the invasion heralds an inflection point in European security and the global order: it is now clear that the lack of attention paid to maintaining and strengthening

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the security architecture was a mistake; indeed, the deliberate demolition of the patchwork of treaties and agreements since the end of the Cold War has left Washington and its NATO allies in an uncomfortable and dangerous position. More work will need to be done to rebuild trust, predictability, and confidence with Russia in order to resume strategic stability talks or negotiations at the official level. However, as Steven Miller notes, arms control took place in the most tense and fraught days of the Cold War, and usually resulted in enhanced mutual security and facilitated détente.⁹

Though the risks associated with a lack of relations and trust make errors more likely, the near-future period may be seen counterintuitively as an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and allow the Academy's project to play an important role in fostering understanding and predictability between nuclear-armed rivals. Serious and sustained engagement will be needed to tackle the confounding array of interrelated nuclear challenges with both Russia and China. The efficacy of deterrence, the suitability of current nuclear doctrines, and the feasibility of arms control and risk reduction measures between the major nuclear actors will all need to be addressed. Identifying issue areas ripe for cooperation will be the focus of project work in the months and years to come.

ENDNOTES

1. On March 2, 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution ES-11/1, "Aggression against Ukraine." The voting revealed that one-fifth of the 193 countries either abstained (thirty-five countries, including China, India, and Pakistan) or voted against the resolution (five countries, including Russia and the DPRK). For more details, see "Aggression against Ukraine: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly," <https://digital.library.un.org/record/3965290?ln=en>.

2. A summary of the recommendations emerging from this 2020 virtual series can be found on the American Academy's website. All sessions throughout the series were held under the Chatham House Rule.

3. The project Promoting Dialogue on Arms Control and Disarmament seeks to identify a range of measures to enhance strategic stability among the major nuclear powers and to avoid costly arms races. Through a series of Track-2 meetings with U.S., Russian, and Chinese experts and former policy-makers, the project aims to provide recommendations that will address multipolar strategic stability and reduce the risk of nuclear weapons being used.

4. The Academy convened a series of conferences and programs that led to the seminal 1960 special issue of *Daedalus* on arms control, which President John F. Kennedy subsequently called the "Bible" on the subject. Read extensively by scientists and government leaders, the *Daedalus* issue helped fashion an intellectual framework for the fledgling area of nuclear weapons arms control.

5. China is estimated to have approximately 350 nuclear warheads, with the United States and Russia holding 5,428 and 5,977, respectively. See <https://fas.org/issues/>

nuclear-weapons/status-world-nuclear-forces/.

6. Many of these themes are addressed in a parallel Academy project, "Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age, Phase II: Deterrence and New Nuclear States," led by Scott Sagan and Vipin Narang. The project is publishing an edited volume of essays with Cornell University Press (forthcoming, January 2023).

7. On the problem of "entanglement," see James M. Acton, "Technology, Doctrine, and the Risk of Nuclear War," in *Emerging Risks and Declining Norms in the Age of Technological Innovation and Changing Nuclear Doctrines* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2018). Upcoming publications in the "Promoting Dialogue" series include multiple essay monographs on "Space and Strategic Stability" and on "Missile Defense."

8. As shown in the Spring 2020 issue of *Daedalus*, it is widely believed that the likeliest path to nuclear use is by inadvertent escalation in the context of a conventional conflict.

9. Steven E. Miller, "The Rise and Decline of Global Nuclear Order?" in *Nuclear Perils in a New Era: Bringing Perspective to the Nuclear Choices Facing Russia and the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2021).



To learn more about the project on Promoting Dialogue on Arms Control and Disarmament, please visit the Academy's website at www.amacad.org/promotingdialogue.



Checking Kleptocracy:

Considering the Potential Establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court

By **Kathryn Moffat**, Senior Program Officer for Global Security and International Affairs at the Academy

On May 19–21, 2022, the American Academy convened an exploratory meeting to discuss the efficacy and potential establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court (IACC). A distinguished group of experts from thirteen countries, including Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Mexico, South Africa, and Singapore, participated in the event. Chaired by Robert Rotberg (President Emeritus of the World Peace Foundation and Founding Director of Harvard

Kennedy School’s Program on Intrastate Conflict), the meeting continued the Academy’s work on the IACC, which included a conference in March 2019 and a *Dædalus* issue on “Anticorruption: How to Beat Back Political & Corporate Graft” in Summer 2018.¹

A background paper prepared by Judge Mark L. Wolf (Senior United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts and Chair of Integrity Initiatives International), Professor Rotberg, and Justice Richard Goldstone (Retired Justice of

the Constitutional Court of South Africa and former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda) provided discussion material for the exploratory meeting.

The event began with a keynote presentation from Judge Wolf, who shared how his experiences throughout his career, including as the U.S. attorney leading the Public Corruption Unit in the District of Massachusetts and as a federal judge, led him to develop the idea of a court that could investigate and



prosecute grand corruption. Since 1990, Judge Wolf has been speaking around the world about his anticorruption work and the role of judges in combatting corruption. Observing that the impunity with which corrupt leaders violate human rights in much of the world is generally not due to a lack of laws, he questioned whether there might be a way to emulate some of the tools federal courts provide for combatting state-level corruption, for example, in Massachusetts, in an international environment to help facilitate enforcement of existing national laws.

Judge Wolf initially proposed the idea of an IACC in a paper issued by the Brookings Institution in 2014, which he elaborated on in a *Dædalus* essay published in 2018.² As chair of Integrity Initiatives International, he has led an effort to advance the potential development of the court, including securing endorsements in May 2022 from more than forty former presidents and prime ministers. The meeting at the Academy of—ferred both supporters and skeptics of the IACC a timely opportunity to discuss whether such a court could play an effective role in combatting corruption globally, and, if so, how it might be implemented.

COMBATTING GRAND CORRUPTION

Presenters on the first panel at the meeting explored ways to combat corruption using existing tools and discussed the implications for the potential establishment of an International Anti-Corruption Court. They noted that the new court would need to build on or outperform current models in order to be a valuable addition. The presenters stated that more research is needed to identify where advocacy can be most helpful and where it risks being counterproductive (similar to arguments about how human rights

prosecutions may be counterproductive to peace and democratic stability even as they deter future violations). Later, panelists examined the role that existing institutions, such as domestic courts, international bodies like the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), and the International Criminal Court (ICC), can play in combatting grand corruption. One major obstacle that the court would need to overcome is immunity of state officials. In addition, since there is no obvious way to compel states to cooperate, the issue of how the court could operate if it cannot rely on states and civil society to secure evidence requires careful consideration.

During the group discussion, the participants identified several factors relevant to the design of the potential court. One person observed that the tendency to store funds abroad means a potential IACC would have advantages that the ICC does not: if money is laundered through a state that is a party to the IACC, that state could give the IACC jurisdiction and freeze assets even if prosecutors in the kleptocrat's home country are unable or unwilling to take action themselves. Additionally, the existence of an international body fighting corruption could help give domestic whistleblowers the courage to come forward.

Several participants expressed doubt about whether an International Anti-Corruption Court could increase the effectiveness of global anti-corruption efforts, noting that the inability to prosecute corruption cases domestically stems not only from failures in the court system but also from broken political systems that an international court cannot address directly. If domestic prosecutors or courts are corrupt, that may make it more difficult for the IACC to work with them. One issue put forward during the meeting was how would a court handle

a case in which an international prosecutor might see an incident of grand corruption, but a local prosecutor might not consider that conduct in the same way.

After the conclusion of the first panel, Danilo Türk, former president of Slovenia, delivered a keynote address in which he called attention to the legal, policy, and ethical obstacles to the creation of the court. He identified three legal problems that require careful consideration: 1) How do we define grand corruption for the purposes of prosecutions? 2) How do we address the issue of complementarity, since even if an IACC were to be established most prosecutions would still occur at the national level? 3) How do we avoid frivolous or inappropriate prosecutions? He suggested that countries may be more willing to be involved if it is clear that corruption everywhere will be prosecuted with equal treatment, and that criticisms of being a neo-colonial court, like those leveled at the ICC, can be avoided. He urged those advocating for the court to consider how to resolve these issues as early in the process of developing the court as possible. And while he questioned the prospects for new international cooperation in the current turbulent environment, he also warned against delaying as a tactic, noting that the idea for the ICC was initially raised in the 1940s and buried before the need for it eventually became clearer.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR THE POTENTIAL NEW COURT

During the second panel of the meeting, the participants considered what form the court should take and discussed its proposed mandate and guiding principles. While the participants had a shared commitment to combatting corruption, there was less consensus on the right approach to achieve that

goal. Some questioned whether the proposed court could indeed reach its five suggested goals: namely, constitute a fair and effective forum for the prosecution and punishment of kleptocrats and their collaborators; deter others tempted to emulate their example; and recover, repatriate, and repurpose ill-gotten gains for the victims of grand corruption. Those in favor of the court suggested ways to strengthen the proposal to improve the effectiveness of the court.

Some of the key ideas to emerge from the discussion include:

- **THE JURISDICTION OF THE COURT:** The group debated whether an international convention against corruption with universal jurisdiction might be a more effective model than an IACC, or whether universal jurisdiction would keep states from agreeing to launch the court. Because corruption is transnational

in nature, some argued that universal jurisdiction is unnecessary because many crimes would fall within the jurisdiction of states parties. The group also discussed whether universal jurisdiction might give states an incentive to prosecute corruption cases domestically.

- **DRAFTING THE STATUTE FOR AN IACC:** The participants considered whether recognizing domestic anti-corruption laws rather than defining them specifically in the statute would help promote agreement, and whether initial negotiations could proceed more effectively within or outside the UN system. A major topic of discussion was the idea that negotiations could begin with a group of twenty to thirty-five states, especially if they included key countries in the international financial system and representation from the Global

South. Several participants noted that this would be an effective way to generate momentum and encourage more states to support the treaty. Others worried that it might fatally undermine the court's legitimacy.

- **DEALING WITH STOLEN ASSETS:** The participants discussed whether it would be appropriate to allow whistleblowers to accept a portion of the frozen funds, whether all the funds should be returned to the treasuries of the nations in which they were misappropriated, or whether, in cases in which the state itself is highly corrupt, the funds should be used to benefit the population directly, such as through scholarships to students.
- **OBTAINING EVIDENCE:** One participant highlighted an important difference between the crimes covered by existing international courts and the proposed IACC.



Bonnie J. Palifka (Tecnológico de Monterrey), **Fen Osler Hampson** (Carleton University; World Migration and Refugee Council), **Gareth Evans** (International Crisis Group; formerly, Foreign Minister of Australia), and **Mathea Falco** (Drug Strategies; formerly, U.S. Department of State) participate in a panel discussion.

While there is sometimes no effort made to hide mass atrocities, or the nature of the crimes makes it impossible to do so, perpetrators of corruption typically go out of their way to cover up their actions. This means witness testimony alone would not be sufficient for prosecuting many crimes of this type. Instead, the court would need to secure financial documents as evidence and banks would have to cooperate with the court, which they are unlikely to do voluntarily. The court, therefore, would need their cooperation to be mandated.

- **IMMUNITY:** The immunity from prosecution accorded to heads of state in countries that are not party to the treaty would limit the court's ability to prosecute the "biggest fish." But since corruption usually involves many people, it may still be possible to prosecute other individuals within these corrupt governments if their actions, including money laundering, cross the borders of states parties. However, if the court is established with only twenty to twenty-five states parties, accused kleptocrats could travel to any number of states without risking arrest, making prosecutions more difficult.
- **PROCEDURAL LAW:** Another participant raised the following questions: According to what procedural law would the court operate? Would there be international modes of liability? Or will the court apply laws of liability based on the legal system of the accused's country or the state where the money was laundered?

HOW TO ESTABLISH THE COURT

On the final day of the meeting, the participants considered the lessons that past international agreements

may offer for the creation of the IACC. Drawing on his own involvement in developing the Anti-Personnel Land Mine Treaty, the ICC, and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, including during his time as Canadian Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy identified several important elements for success. These include considering how to make the case for *why* a treaty is needed; developing an effective outline for *how* agreement will be achieved; recruiting at least seven or eight key countries to act as champions; and then ensuring that the size of the group increases so that eventually specific, targeted, and clear anchor documents can be endorsed by a large assembly of countries.

Gareth Evans (President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group and former Foreign Minister of Australia) called for the development of a clear advocacy strategy for building political will, with peer countries mounting pressure on issues of moral and national interest as well as on financial, domestic, and political matters. Fen Hampson (Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University and President of the World Migration & Refugee Council) proposed six requirements for a pre-negotiation strategy: the need for a strong evidentiary basis; a compelling moral narrative to help make the case; a core coalition to kickstart the process; leadership who can convey the moral urgency of the issue; converts to the cause; and an innovative negotiating forum to facilitate progress.

A presentation by Oona Hathaway (Gerard C. and Bernice Latrobe Smith Professor of International Law at Yale Law School) prompted a wider discussion about involving the private sector. Professor Hathaway suggested that a proposal for a court that might focus on aiding and abetting corruption – not just on prosecuting corrupt officials – could prompt resistance from

corporations that might pressure states not to accept the court because of the corporations' own fear of liability. Many participants noted that, although some corporations might fear liability, honest multinationals – particularly those in countries like the United States and Canada that criminalize those who pay bribes – are disadvantaged because they do not want to pay bribes and they are also the most vulnerable to prosecution if they do so. Leveling the playing field internationally might help garner their support.

The insights shared by the participants in this exploratory meeting – including about a number of legal, procedural, and diplomatic questions that would need to be resolved in order to create a strong foundation for the court if it were to go forward – will be incorporated into a revised version of the background paper that guided the meeting and will help inform wider discussions on the potential court, including those hosted by Integrity Initiatives International.

ENDNOTES

1. See Brendan Roach and Erik Mortensen, "An International Anti-Corruption Court," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Spring 2019), <https://www.amacad.org/news/international-anti-corruption-court>; and "Anticorruption: How to Beat Back Political & Corporate Graft," *Daedalus* 147 (3) (Summer 2018), <https://www.amacad.org/daedalus/anti-corruption-how-beat-back-political-corporate-graft>.
2. Mark L. Wolf, "The World Needs an International Anti-Corruption Court," *Daedalus* 147 (3) (Summer 2018), <https://www.amacad.org/publication/world-needs-international-anti-corruption-court>.



The Academy will publish a revised version of the background paper prepared by Judge Wolf, Professor Rotberg, and Justice Goldstone this fall. The paper will be accessible via the Academy's website and in print.



President David Wilson (Morgan State University) and President Sean Decatur (Kenyon College) talk with Provost C. Cybele Raver (Vanderbilt University) and Dr. Seth Pollak (University of Wisconsin–Madison).

The Higher Education Forum at the Academy

By **Kimberlee Eberle-Sudré**, *Program Director of Education and the Development of Knowledge at the Academy*

On June 13–16, 2022, the Academy held the inaugural Higher Education Forum in Aspen, Colorado. The event was an opportunity for more than ninety higher education experts and leaders, including university presidents, provosts, and academic deans from many of the Academy’s Affiliate institutions, to engage in discussions on topics such as democracy and trust, equity and inclusion, as well as what the COVID-19 pandemic has meant to higher education. In addition to these pressing issues, members of two of the Academy’s major commissions – the

Commission on Reimagining Our Economy and the Commission on Accelerating Climate Action – discussed with the attendees ways in which higher education can address the nation’s economic conditions and the health of our democracy as well as climate change. In addition, the meeting included discussions with experts who spoke on topics that intersect with higher education and present-day challenges, such as the effects of poverty on the young brain, misinformation about the war in Ukraine, and the complex ways in which social mobility and higher education interact.

We are grateful to the many speakers and attendees who challenged us to explore differing views and opinions of some of the pressing issues in higher education that are present on college and university campuses and throughout society. Future events will continue these important conversations.



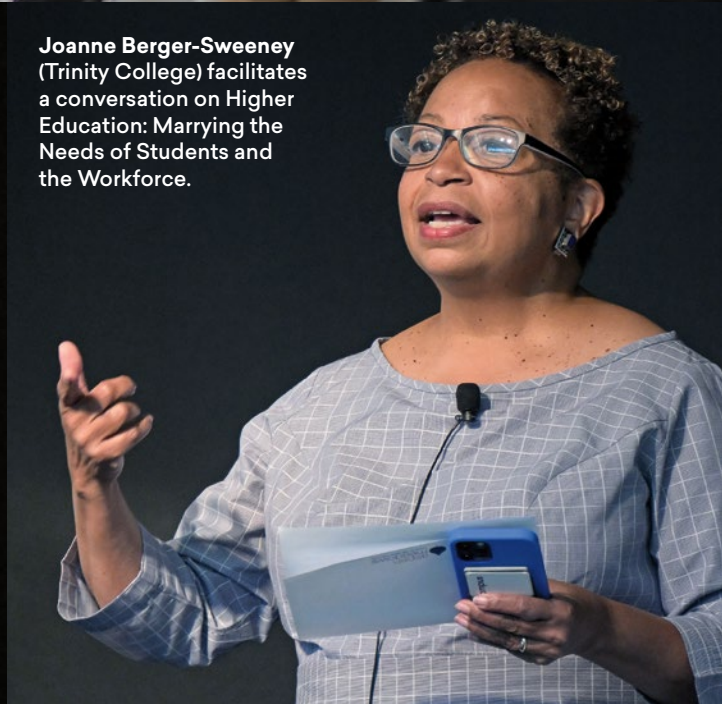
To learn more about the Forum and the Aspen meeting, visit www.amacad.org/project/higher-education-forum.



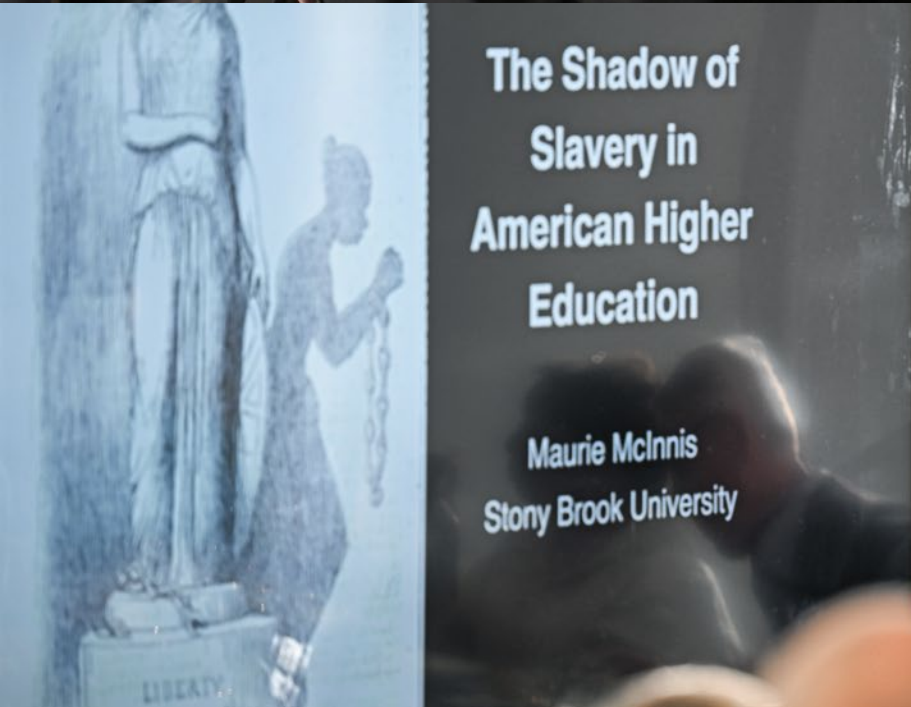
University leaders and attendees engage in deep conversation in a relaxed mountain setting.



Ruth Watkins (Strada Education Network) and Eduardo Padrón (Miami Dade College) in a panel discussion on Higher Education: Marrying the Needs of Students and the Workforce.



Joanne Berger-Sweeney (Trinity College) facilitates a conversation on Higher Education: Marrying the Needs of Students and the Workforce.



The Shadow of Slavery in American Higher Education

Maurie McInnis
Stony Brook University



Maurie McInnis (Stony Brook University) leads a dinner conversation on "The Shadow of Slavery in American Higher Education."

Maurie McInnis

Honoring Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

2105th Stated Meeting | April 1, 2022 | Hybrid Event
Annual David M. Rubenstein Lecture

On April 1, 2022, the Academy presented **Henry Louis Gates, Jr.** with the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies in recognition of his groundbreaking work as a scholar and public intellectual. The program, which was the Annual David M. Rubenstein Lecture, included remarks by Academy President **David Oxtoby**, the presentation of the award by Chair of the Academy's Board **Nancy C. Andrews**, and a conversation between Gates and **David M. Rubenstein**. An edited version of the presentations and conversation follows.



David W. Oxtoby

David W. Oxtoby is President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected a Fellow of the American Academy in 2012.

I want to welcome everyone to our program honoring Henry Louis Gates, Jr. with the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies. This is the first Stated Meeting of the Academy that we have held in person since February 2020. We have an intimate group of friends gathered with us here and a large group that has joined us on Zoom from around the country to celebrate our colleague.

I want to begin by welcoming our guest of honor, Professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Skip Gates is a scholar and public intellectual whose prolific output has changed our collective understanding of ourselves and the world around us. He is the true

Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of The Carlyle Group, a leading philanthropist, and a steward of this nation's cultural and educational institutions. Among his many roles, David serves as Chairman of the Boards of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Gallery of Art, the University of Chicago, and the Economic Club of Washington. David was elected to the American Academy in 2013. He is a member of the Academy's Board of Directors and a member of the Academy's Trust, and has made two transformative gifts to our institution, including a \$10 million pledge last year that will both help preserve the nation's past through support of the Academy's archives and strengthen American democracy through the establishment of the Rubenstein Fund for American Institutions. David is a skilled, thoughtful, and thorough interviewer, who in recent Academy events has inter-

“Skip Gates is a scholar and public intellectual whose prolific output has changed our collective understanding of ourselves and the world around us. He is the true embodiment of the Don M. Randel Award, which is given in honor of remarkable humanistic pursuits. Skip's contributions to both academia and the public humanities are groundbreaking, altering our understanding of the African American experience and our recognition of the significance of Black intellectual life in this country.

embodiment of the Don M. Randel Award, which is given in honor of remarkable humanistic pursuits. Skip's contributions to both academia and the public humanities are groundbreaking, altering our understanding of the African American experience and our recognition of the significance of Black intellectual life in this country. As Director of Harvard's Hutchins Center for African & African American Research and coauthor of twenty-five books, Skip's scholarship has had a seismic impact on a number of disciplines. In his work as a documentarian and television host, he has brought greater understanding of history and our place in it to millions. Skip has been a member of the American Academy since 1993. We are proud to be conferring this award and grateful to Skip for the example he sets in so generously sharing his talents with the world.

I also want to welcome David Rubenstein, who will lead tonight's conversation. David is

viewed Justice Sonia Sotomayor, astronaut Kathryn Sullivan, and actress Anna Deavere Smith. We are grateful to David for his generosity and service.

I also want to acknowledge our prize committee led by Pauline Yu, president emerita of the American Council of Learned Societies, for the care they take in awarding the Academy's eleven prizes. The Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies is named in honor of musicologist and former Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors, Don Randel, who served as president of the Mellon Foundation and of the University of Chicago. Don is unfortunately not able to join us this evening, but he asked that I convey his warmest regards and great admiration for his friend Skip.

Now it is my pleasure to invite Nancy Andrews, Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of Boston Children's Hospital and Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors, to join me in conferring the award.

Nancy C. Andrews

Nancy C. Andrews is Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of Boston Children's Hospital and Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors. She was elected a Fellow of the American Academy in 2007.



It is my pleasure to read the award citation and present the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies to Henry Louis Gates, Jr.:

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences was founded by a group of patriots who devoted their lives to “cultivating every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.”

Established in 1975 to recognize superior humanistic scholarship and renamed in 2017, the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies is presented to an individual for their overall contributions to and influence on the fields of Humanistic Studies.

For his distinguished achievements, the American Academy confers the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies on *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.*

Son of small-town West Virginia, of whom great things were expected, you take as your subject the greatest theme of all: the reformation of the human community.

Coming of age as the fight for equal laws was ending, and the fight for equal opportunity just beginning, you help create a path for scholars once excluded from the classrooms

and libraries of the world's most prestigious universities. Following Davis, Williams, and Soyinka, you pursue a scholarship both rigorous and engaged.

Your research reveals the significance of an African American aesthetic, the ironies and serious play of a vernacular tradition that is and has always been at the very center of our national culture.

You uncover new voices from the past, introduce new texts, and advocate new standards of cultural inclusion. You gather communities of scholars, across disciplines, to attend to the gaps in our knowledge of literature and art, law and philosophy, and economics and sociology that have been unattended for far too long.

Having found the origins of your own family in the life story of your great-great grandmother, you help all Americans find their roots, the complex and branching pasts that feed our present lives and from which our futures will flourish.

Literary critic, teacher, theorist, public intellectual: by studying the many and varied codes of the past, you have revealed the complex ancestry of American culture.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research at Harvard University. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1993.



This truly is a great honor for me, all the more so because it was completely unexpected and I never imagined that I could ever be considered as the recipient of this award. And that the award is named in honor of my friend Don M. Randel makes it even more special, since Don and I met and became friends when we were young and brash professors at Cornell University in the mid-1980s. ”

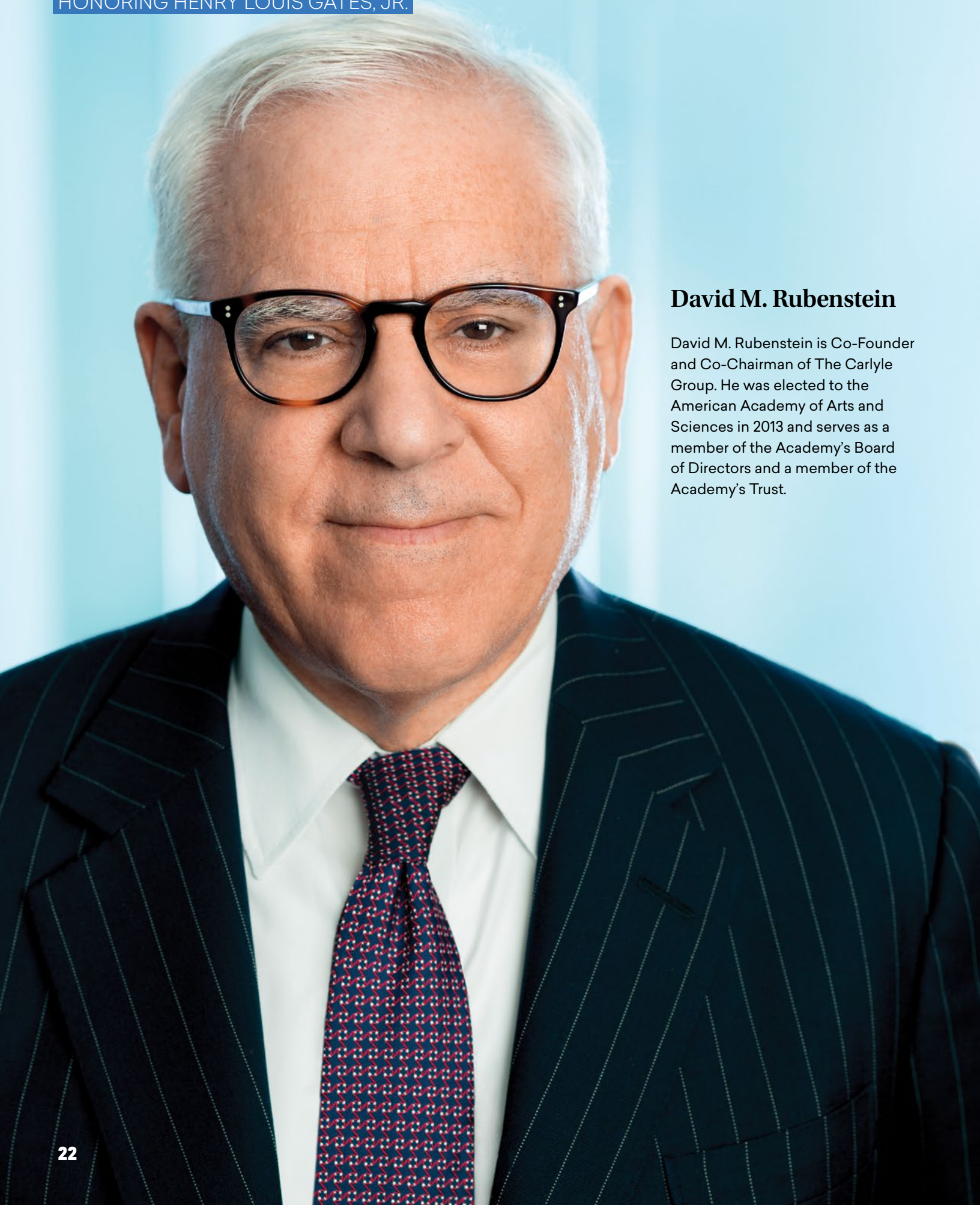
Thank you so much. I'm a bit overwhelmed. It's great to see so many of my dear friends in person and on Zoom. This truly is a great honor for me, all the more so because it was completely unexpected. As I mentioned to David, I wasn't even aware that this award existed, let alone that I could ever be considered as its recipient. And that the award is named in honor of my friend Don M. Randel makes it even more special, since Don and I met and became friends when we were young and brash professors at Cornell University in the mid-1980s.

A word about Don Randel. Don is one of the great musicologists in the academy. It's fitting that his specialties include the music of the Renaissance, because Don is the quintessential "Renaissance Man." As a scholar, he has generated fascinating and important studies on everything from Arabic music theory to Latin American popular music to Mozarabic chants. And here's something that resonates with my own work and intellectual interests: Don is concerned about canons and the relation of a canon to a discipline, to all that we understand to be proper to study – or to be the proper object of study – in a given field. This is a matter of enormous import to those of us who reform

traditional or received definitions of a discipline – in Don's case musicology, in my case, English and American literature, as well as literary history and literary theory. Don understands this relation between canon reformation and disciplines exceedingly well, for Don is a canonizer, having edited the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, the *Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*, and the *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Not bad for a Princeton man!

But it doesn't end there. He also served as president of both the Mellon Foundation and the University of Chicago, so he understands intimately the power of institution-building and the relation of institutional rituals – whether they be academic or cultural – to traditional disciplines and to larger social issues, especially issues such as sexism, homophobia, and racism. It's such an honor to be associated with his remarkable record of academic and administrative excellence, and, not least, his curiosity for knowledge and how best to share it with the world.¹

1. See "On Race, and the Arts and Sciences," Reflections from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. on Receiving the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies, in this *Bulletin* issue.



David M. Rubenstein

David M. Rubenstein is Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of The Carlyle Group. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2013 and serves as a member of the Academy's Board of Directors and a member of the Academy's Trust.

Conversation between David M. Rubenstein and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN: Where did you get the name Skip?

HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.: My mom was reading a book when she was pregnant, and the character was called Skipper or Skippy or Skip. So I was Skip and that's the way it's been for seventy-one years. But my name wasn't Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Until I was twenty-five, my name was Louis Smith Gates. My high school diploma, my Yale diploma, my Phi Beta Kappa diploma: all have Louis Smith Gates. And I was Louis Smith Gates because my mother's best friend was Olivia Smith, and Olivia Smith was a brilliant teacher at the colored school, as we would have said then.

In Mineral County, West Virginia, in the year I was born, there were two thousand people in Piedmont, a paper mill town, and 380 or so were Black. *Brown v. Board* is in 1954. Schools integrated in my county in 1955, and I started school in 1956. And when the schools consolidated, there was a Black county high school, Howard High School, and a Black elementary/middle school called Lincoln. They fired all the Black teachers except for one teacher from the elementary school, Miss Olivia Smith, and the principal of the high school, Mr. John Edwards, who was my father's best friend. My mother somehow promised Miss Smith, who was single, that the child that she was carrying, who was going to be a girl, would be named Olivia. But when Olivia came out it wasn't Olivia! Now, Oliver wasn't playing in Piedmont, West Virginia, at that time. So, they named me Louis Smith Gates. My brother Paul is five years older, and he was named for two grandfathers. Paul was my mother's father and Edward was an old Gates name. And so he was Paul Edward, and I was supposed to be Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Instead I became Louis Smith Gates. After I came back from Cambridge to go to Yale Law School, which I attended for thirty days, I changed my name to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. I had to go to court and my father and mother were there, and my father cried and I cried, and it was wonderful. And then I had to go and change all these diplomas.

RUBENSTEIN: Have you ever thought about how much more you could have done for society if you had become a lawyer?

GATES: You know . . .

RUBENSTEIN: How did your family wind up in West Virginia?

GATES: I knew a lot about my family because they were property owners, but now I know a lot more because some of the finest genealogists in the world have unearthed my family tree. Growing up, I knew on the Gates side that Jane Gates was a slave until Maryland abolished slavery in 1864. She had five children. They all looked white, and in 1870 she paid \$1,200 in cash for a house in an essentially all white neighborhood in Cumberland, Maryland.

RUBENSTEIN: What did your father do?

GATES: My father had two jobs. He worked at the paper mill in the daytime, and he was a janitor at the telephone company in the evening. But you have to get from Jane Gates to my father.

RUBENSTEIN: Okay.

GATES: Jane's oldest son was Edward Gates. He was born in 1857 and he had several sisters. Jane never told them the identity of their father. She just said that their father was white. So, Edward, the first, had a son and three daughters and my grandfather was that son. He was born in 1879. The three daughters at the turn of the century went to Howard University. The son worked on the Gates's farm in Mineral County, a two-hundred-acre farm, and I am descended from that son. He and his father had a chimney sweep and janitorial business.

RUBENSTEIN: When you were growing up, did you say, "I want to be the leading African American scholar in the country?"

GATES: Are you kidding? My parents would have thrown me out of the house if I had said that.

RUBENSTEIN: What did you want to be?

GATES: I was going to be a doctor. As far as my mother was concerned, in heaven there was the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and a medical

doctor. You know, being a doctor was what smart little colored boys and girls were supposed to be.

RUBENSTEIN: Were you an athlete when you were growing up?

GATES: I was, but I broke my hip playing football when I was fourteen years old. But I was never a jock. My brother was a jock. He was the captain of the basketball team, but I became the scorekeeper, the statistician.

RUBENSTEIN: Is it correct that because you got poor medical care you never really recovered from that injury?

GATES: Yes. It was a misdiagnosed slipped epiphysis, which is very common among overweight adolescent boys. The ball and socket joint separates. It was misdiagnosed in the Potomac Valley Hospital in Keyser, West Virginia. When my parents, outraged by this situation, took me to West Virginia University Medical Center, a doctor looked at it and said, “He has a broken hip.” They pinned it but that didn’t work. So they did arthroplasty, and I have had two hip replacements.

RUBENSTEIN: You must have been a pretty good student?

GATES: Yes.

RUBENSTEIN: Did you know you were going to get into Yale? Were a lot of Black people being accepted at Yale in those days?

GATES: No. Remember my father’s cousins, the three daughters who were sent to Howard? One, my Aunt Pansy, became a nurse at Freedman’s Hospital. She married a dentist. The other two became teachers. One married a pharmacist, and one married a sign painter. And the son of the pharmacist went to Harvard, got a master’s degree, and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1949. He married a Black woman, Dorothy Hicks Lee, who is the second woman and the first Black person to get a PhD from Harvard in comparative literature. So, I was raised with stories about these people.

RUBENSTEIN: Did you apply to Harvard?

GATES: I’m going to get there. It’s a funny story. When I was twelve years old, my mother was very, very sick. My mother went through severe menopause. It doesn’t sound like much to people who don’t understand the chemistry of menopause and the history of the treatment of women who were suffering severe hormonal imbalances because of menopause. My mother was hit hard when she went through menopause. I was twelve years old, and I was sitting on the floor of our living room on a Sunday. I looked up and my parents were all dressed up. My mother bent over, and she told me she was going to the hospital to die and that I should be good and obey my father. She cried and I cried. My mother and I were very close. They went off to the hospital, and I went up to my bedroom and I prayed to God. I made a deal with Jesus that if he let my mother live, I would give my life to Christ, as we say. Three days later, miraculously, my mother came home. I was so happy and then I remembered my promise.

RUBENSTEIN: What happened? Were you going to be a minister?

GATES: Not exactly. I had to join the church. The Gates are Episcopalian. My mother’s family was Methodist. And my grandmother – Big Mom – and Miss Sarah Russell were the Sister Holy Ghosts. They were the anchors of the church. There was one Black preacher for two segregated Methodist churches: one in Keyser, the county seat, and one in Piedmont. Church was on Sunday morning in Piedmont, and on Saturday afternoon in Keyser. So, without telling my parents, on the following Saturday I hitchhiked to Keyser – I was twelve – and I went to the service. The average age of the people at the service was about eighty. There’s a place in the church service called the call to worship for anyone who wants to give their life to Christ. I can’t remember it verbatim. So I stood up and the minister thought I had to go to the bathroom. He said, “Skippy, the toilet’s back there.” And I said, “No, I want to join the church.” Everyone got around me, and it was very moving. It was one of the most moving things that I have ever experienced. They asked questions like, Do you promise this? Will you do this? And I answered yes. Everyone cried, I cried, and then I hitchhiked home.

This was in 1962. We had three television channels then. On Saturday night, we watched *Gunsmoke*. *Bonanza* was on Sunday. So, we are watching *Gunsmoke* and my dad asked, “Anything new happen today?” And I answered, “I joined the church.” And my parents said, “What? Are you crazy?” They thought I was joking. But then my dad said, “Well, you have to obey all the rules if you’re going to do it.” He thought that I would break. And so for two years I sang in the choir. I like to sing. And I didn’t play cards even though I loved to play; I come from a big card playing family. My brother and my father have perfect memories and my mother’s memory was fabulous. I have a very good memory for text, but not for cards. But I didn’t play cards, I didn’t dance – though I like to dance – and I didn’t listen to rock and roll.

Until I was twenty-five, my name was Louis Smith Gates. My high school diploma, my Yale diploma, my Phi Beta Kappa diploma: all have Louis Smith Gates. And I was Louis Smith Gates because my mother’s best friend was Olivia Smith. ”

RUBENSTEIN: So what did you do?

GATES: I read the Bible. I went to church. I sang. I prayed. And I thanked God that my mother was alive.

RUBENSTEIN: You later applied to Yale and Harvard?

GATES: My brother is a third-generation dentist in the Gates family; the other two generations graduated from Howard in 1919 and 1947. While he was in dental school, he came home in the summer of 1964. I think the Beatles’ *A Hard Day’s Night* was playing in the Cumberland Mall. And he said to me, “This is so crazy that you are in a fundamentalist church. I’m going to take you to a movie.” I hadn’t been to a movie in two years. And I was beginning to feel like a hypocrite because I had the same mind as I have now. I was worshipping with people who believed the world was created in seven days and everything in the Bible was literal, and I knew better than that. I was feeling embarrassed and awkward. So, he took me to *A Hard Day’s Night* and I loved it. I was exhilarated, but I thought a

bolt of lightning was going to come down and strike me dead. I decided then that I was going to join my father’s church, the Episcopal church, because you don’t have to believe in God to be an Episcopalian.

Now, the part about Harvard. I had to be confirmed and the diocese of West Virginia’s church conference center is about 18 miles from Piedmont. By the way, where I grew up is very near where Drew Faust grew up. They sent me to Peterkin, the church camp. There were 102 kids there but only three Black kids. All the cool kids were rich white preppy kids. And the coolest kid of all was Mark Foster Etheridge III; his father was the editor of the *Detroit Free Press*. Mark was the editor of the camp newspaper, and he ran an editorial accusing the bishop of cheating in softball. And I thought this guy has chutzpah. This guy is my man. I asked him where he went to school, and he answered Exeter. I had never heard of Exeter. I said, “How do you spell that? X what?”

So I applied to Exeter. Someone from the school called me and said that I had to be interviewed by an alumni representative and there were two choices: Billy Campbell, the golfer, who was in Huntington, or John Rockefeller IV, who had just moved to West Virginia. And I said to myself, what is this, an IQ test? I chose John Rockefeller IV. I was accepted to Exeter. That’s where I met Joel Motley, Connie Motley’s son, one of my oldest and dearest friends to this day. But I was only there for six weeks. I was horribly homesick so I came home and I never went back. I graduated from Piedmont High School and was valedictorian. I applied to Exeter for a postgraduate year (PG), and I was sure that they were going to let me in. I apologized; I said I had made a mistake. But they turned me down.

So, I spent my freshman year at Potomac State College, which is a junior college five miles away in Keyser, West Virginia. It’s a branch of West Virginia University. My brother had gone there before he went to West Virginia. And I got straight A’s. I sent a letter to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. And Harvard – remember my name then was Louis Smith Gates – thought my name was Louise Gates and sent my letter to Radcliffe and Radcliffe sent me an application. So that killed that, and I didn’t apply to Harvard.

RUBENSTEIN: So, where did you apply?

GATES: I applied to Princeton, but the school had the wrong vibe for me. And I applied to Yale.

RUBENSTEIN: When you got to Yale did you think the people there were not as smart as you thought they would be or were they a lot smarter than you thought they would be?

GATES: I thought everybody there was Alberta and Albert Einstein.

RUBENSTEIN: So how did you do at Yale?

GATES: When I went to Yale in September 1969, two things happened that were fundamentally different than any other class before. First, there were 96 Black students and there were 250 women. And among my classmates were Sheila Jackson Lee, Congresswoman from Houston; Kurt Schmoke, first Black mayor of Baltimore and a Rhodes scholar – his example, in part, prompted me to apply for fellowships to go to Oxford; and a young geeky premed guy who was quiet and didn't hang out much: Ben Carson. We were all there together. It was really exciting, and I was terrified. On a Friday night I was studying hard, and I had said I'm not going to go out because this is Yale. My brother called me, and he said, "What are you doing at home?" I said, "It's Yale, man." He said, "If you can't go out on Friday and Saturday night and relax and recover yourself then you don't belong there. You need to quit and come home." And that changed my attitude. After that I went to movies and parties.

RUBENSTEIN: And how were your grades?

GATES: For my first paper in Afro-American history, the first Black history course I ever took, I got an honors. At the time you had honors, high pass, pass, and fail. And then I realized they were rating on a curve, and if I got an honors then almost nobody else did. So, I did very well.

RUBENSTEIN: Why did you apply for a scholarship to go to Cambridge? Why didn't you go to Yale Law School?

GATES: Well, I wanted to go to Harvard or Yale, and I also wanted to go to Oxford or Cambridge. So, I applied for everything. I was a junior Phi Beta Kappa; I was scholar in the house; I was going to graduate summa. And I was Black from West Virginia. I figured I had a good chance of getting a Rhodes or a Marshall or a Fulbright. And I was a finalist for

all these fellowships, but I didn't get any of them. I was blowing the interview. I wanted to get a medical degree and a law degree and nobody could wrap their head around that and I couldn't articulate why I wanted that, but that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to go to Oxford, which has a PPP major: psychology, philosophy, and physiology.

RUBENSTEIN: Did you ever meet the people on those Rhodes committees that didn't select you? Have you ever told them they made a mistake?

GATES: I have never heard from them again. I was down to my last fellowship, which is the Mellon Fellowship. At Yale, the Mellon Fellowship is given to two Yalies to go to Clare College at Cambridge, where Paul Mellon went, and two people from Clare go to Yale. I'm sitting in the waiting room and the guy who went in for the interview before me said, "I want to go to Cambridge and I want to work with this professor in English." I didn't know anybody at Cambridge. I just wanted to go there. So, when I went in and they asked, "Why do you want to go to Cambridge?" I answered, "Well, I don't even know what I want to study." But Yale had an amazing program called Five Year BA that was funded by the Carnegie Corporation, and I had been selected for that. It was very competitive. It was a gap year between your sophomore and junior years.

I always wanted to go to Africa from the time I was ten years old in 1960. I believe seventeen African nations became independent that year (1960). I memorized the names of all the capitals, the countries, and the presidents. I had this thing about Africa that nobody in my family could figure out. So, I got this fellowship, and at that time I was premed and Episcopalian. And that's important because the Anglican Communion is divided up between what we used to call first world and third world dioceses. The sister diocese of West Virginia was the diocese of Tanganyika, as it was called then. I got a job working in the operating room in a mission hospital in the center of Tanzania. And I took the year off from Yale.

RUBENSTEIN: Should I assume that cured you of wanting to be a doctor?

GATES: When I came back to Yale after that year, I wrote a guest column for the *Yale Daily News* about

the experience, and I realized that I was more interested in writing about the experience than being a doctor.

RUBENSTEIN: So what did you get your PhD in at Cambridge?

GATES: English literature. I was trying to decide among philosophy, art history, or English. As I mentioned, I had been very interested in Africa since I was ten and I had spent this year living in Africa. Someone told me that at Cambridge there was a Nigerian playwright who was in exile. He had been in prison for twenty-seven months during the Biafran Civil War, twenty-four months in solitary confinement, and that he was there in political exile because when he got out of prison, he wrote a prison memoir and the government was trying to imprison him all over again. So he had to flee. I went to see him, and he said that he would tutor me in African literature and mythology. His name was Wole Soyinka and thirteen years

GATES: Yes. In fact, my degree was awarded on May 22, but because of COVID it will be presented in June. Theirs will be awarded in June.

RUBENSTEIN: When you came back from Cambridge, was it easy for an African American scholar to get a job teaching? Were there a lot of jobs for you?

GATES: Well, I went to Yale Law School from September 1, 1975, to October 1, 1975, and I took a leave of absence. The last time I checked I was still on leave.

RUBENSTEIN: What did your family say? You got a PhD from Cambridge, and then you went to law school. Did they say you should get a job?

GATES: I went to law school for a month. I'm a good typist. I used to play saxophone. And the boys in my high school, Piedmont High School, had to take typing in the ninth and tenth grades. The first Black teacher I ever had was our typing teacher and she was drop dead gorgeous. So I was highly motivated to learn how to type. Charles Davis, the first African American to get tenure in the English department at Yale and the second chair of what was then called the Program in Afro-American Studies, and his wife, who was a member of the New Jersey Matrons – one of those Black sororities and fraternal organizations behind the veil; her best friend was my Great Aunt Pansy Gates: they knew me. Linda Darling, who was my girlfriend junior year and she is now the great Linda Darling-Hammond – a professor at Stanford, and by the way she's watching this program tonight – she and I took a seminar with Charles Davis my junior year. When I came back after dropping out of law school, he said, "We happen to have a vacancy for a secretary." So they hired me as a secretary, and I typed letters for the faculty.

RUBENSTEIN: With a PhD from Cambridge, that was your job?

GATES: I hadn't written my dissertation yet; I was ABD. I took Charles Davis's graduate course in Afro-American literature and then the following June, they made me what was called a lecturer. I had two years to finish my PhD and if I didn't, I was going to be fired. So two years later I wrote my thesis.

RUBENSTEIN: At the time, the state of African American scholarship was not very great in the United States?

I always wanted to go to Africa from the time I was ten years old in 1960. I believe seventeen African nations became independent that year (1960). I memorized the names of all the capitals, the countries, and the presidents. I had this thing about Africa that nobody in my family could figure out. ”

later he won the Nobel Prize. There were two other Black students in Clare College. One had been studying medicine his first year and hadn't done so well because he didn't want to be a doctor and he switched to philosophy. He was an Anglo Ghanaian and that Anglo Ghanaian and that Nigerian took me out for an Indian meal in October 1973. They wanted to dispel this foolish notion that I was ever going to be a doctor. They told me I was going to get a PhD in English, and I was going to come back to the states and rebuild African and African American studies. Those two people were Wole Soyinka and Kwame Anthony Appiah. In June, Cambridge is giving us all honorary degrees.

RUBENSTEIN: So that's going to be your 59th honorary degree?

GATES: Oh, there were great scholars, fabulous scholars. Harvard, by the way, has an amazing tradition, which should be celebrated by the history department, of training some of the greatest and earliest historians of the Afro-American experience. Du Bois in 1895, Carter Woodson in 1912, Rayford Logan, who was engaged to my great aunt, in 1936.

RUBENSTEIN: They were good scholars. What do you think you added to the scholarship that existed in that area? What did you do that was different than the others? How did you build on what they had done?

GATES: Well, I had been a history major at Yale as an undergraduate, but I switched fields completely to English literature and studied new literary theories under the rubric of structuralism and then post-structuralism and then eventually deconstruction. And it occurred to me that I could apply those to African American and African literature. I wasn't alone. I was part of a young group of literary critics who were educated in traditional departments and with this new way of close reading. And our group of people fundamentally changed the way African American literature was studied and the way it was taught. We were fighting to integrate the canon of English departments and American studies departments, and to bolster fledgling programs in Afro-American studies, many of which had been set up to fail because they were a direct response to student pressure in the late 1960s.

RUBENSTEIN: So after you did that, you built a great reputation as a scholar, one of the greatest scholars in this area. Then you started a television series on genealogy. Did you ever realize with the power of television, which would take you all over the world, how you would be much better known than you already were?

GATES: I watched Kenneth Clark in the television series *Civilisation* in 1969 and I was enamored of the whole process of a scholar standing in front of a camera and giving a lecture. I really wanted to do it, but I didn't tell anybody. I couldn't even admit it to myself because I was going to be a doctor. And there was no way that I was ever going to be able to do it. Then I watched Jacob Bronowski

in *The Ascent of Man*, and I watched him again and again. At Cambridge, I was very good friends with David Ignatius, who had graduated from Harvard, Jamie Galbraith, and E.J. Dionne, who was at Oxford, and we all would hang around together: the Americans. Jamie invited me to meet his father, John Kenneth Galbraith, who was making *The Age of Uncertainty*. This is 1975. I spent one of the greatest days of my life at 26 Francis Avenue with John Kenneth and Kitty Galbraith. He was telling me about making this documentary series, and I remember when I left, I turned around and looked at the house and thought, if I could ever be a professor at a place like Harvard, live on a street like Francis Avenue, and be the host of a documentary film series I would have died and gone to heaven. And that was 1975. In 1991, I was hired by Harvard and in 1995, I bought the house two doors from John Kenneth Galbraith.

RUBENSTEIN: So . . .

GATES: Be careful what you wish for.

RUBENSTEIN: Did your parents live to see your success as you became world-renowned?

GATES: My father lived to be ninety-seven and a half. The Gates have pretty good longevity. Mom died from heart disease when she was seventy.

RUBENSTEIN: Did they ever call you and say, "Hey, we did a great job raising you"?

GATES: The day that they were the happiest was the day I was a clue on *Jeopardy*. That was a big day. They loved *Jeopardy*. We watched every episode. Do you remember Mac McGarry of *It's Academic*? We were close to Washington. Our daily newspapers were *The Baltimore Sun* and *The Washington Post*. Cable was really invented for eastern West Virginia, western Maryland, and western Pennsylvania because no signal could get over the mountains. All of our television programs came from cable.

RUBENSTEIN: What did you learn about your own genealogy? Anybody in your past that you are happy about or embarrassed about?

GATES: I was raised with knowing my mother's side: that J.R. Clifford was my grandmother's

uncle. He was a cofounder of the Niagara Movement with Du Bois and, in fact, the second meeting of the Niagara Movement was held in Harpers Ferry. Piedmont is near Harpers Ferry, relatively speaking. J.R. was the host, and he was the first Black person admitted to the bar in the state of West Virginia. He was the publisher and editor of his own newspaper, *The Pioneer Press*, in Martinsburg. So he was a big deal. In my office, I keep

My impulse to search for my roots came from a bad case of *Roots* envy because of Alex Haley. I'm looking across the ocean to try and find the ethnic group that I belong to in Nigeria or Senegambia or Angola, and it turns out that the rich roots were right under my feet, that my family had been freed for two hundred years. ”

a photograph of him with Du Bois at the Niagara Movement, so I always knew about him. My mother used to say, “You come from people.” I didn't really know what that meant. But after they did my family tree, I learned that I am descended from three sets of fourth great-grandparents who were free. Two sets were freed by the American Revolution and the third set, on my father's mother's side, was freed in 1823. And they all lived thirty miles from where I was born.

My impulse to search for my roots came from a bad case of *Roots* envy because of Alex Haley. I'm looking across the ocean to try and find the ethnic group that I belong to in Nigeria or Senegambia or Angola, and it turns out that the rich roots were right under my feet, that my family had been freed for two hundred years. These three sets of fourth great-grandparents all knew otherwise. They were the Cliffords and the Bruces and the Redmans. I'm a Redman on my mother's side and a Redman on my father's side. It's amazing.

RUBENSTEIN: What about the genealogy that you've traced of others? Have you ever found something that might be embarrassing, and you can't tell them? Or do you ask them if they want to know?

GATES: We have an ethics protocol that I keep in a file folder right by my desk. If you were a guest and we found out that the man you called your father was not your biological father, I follow the ethics protocol. It can be a very fraught issue; it's complicated.

RUBENSTEIN: What do people say when you tell them that?

GATES: I say, “David, we have found something in our research that is forever going to change your understanding of your family. Do you want to know or not?”

RUBENSTEIN: What do most people say?

GATES: Everyone says yes. Because what are they going to do, say no? And then I tell them, “The man you called your father was not your biological father.” The effects can be quite dramatic. We have a privacy protocol – all the results are coded, we use pseudonyms – and only three people in our production staff, including me and CeCe Moore, who solves all those cold cases, know who John Smith is.

RUBENSTEIN: So you are a leading scholar, you are a University Professor at Harvard, you run the African American studies program . . .

GATES: Being a University Professor at Harvard is the greatest honor that I have ever experienced.

RUBENSTEIN: Next to the award you received today.

GATES: Well, yes, they are different.

RUBENSTEIN: So you have all these things. What's left to accomplish?

GATES: I keep Du Bois's complete works on a shelf in our living room. And I have a first edition of Samuel Johnson's dictionary because I'm a Du Bois junkie and I'm a Samuel Johnson junkie. I was made a Johnsonian last year, which is a great honor for me. When I look at *The Lives of the Poets* by Samuel Johnson and I look at the dictionary that he essentially did by himself, with some amanuenses, I feel like I'm standing still. Every Saturday when I

read Anthony Appiah's *Ethicist* column I think, Jesus, how does he crank out that brilliant column every week? I feel like I'm just not keeping up. But I do the best that I can do. At Cambridge I had a fantasy with Anthony that we would edit the Du Bois *Encyclopedia Africana*, and we did that with *Encarta Africana*. And I just got a grant from the Mellon Foundation that hasn't been announced yet . . .

RUBENSTEIN: Well, you just announced it now.

GATES: True, but it's not a secret. Working with Oxford Press and with twelve other scholars, mostly linguists, we are going to do the Black version of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. And I'm very excited about that.

RUBENSTEIN: Two final questions before we wrap up. One, do you do anything outside of scholarship for fun and relaxation? Do you have any hobbies, sports, anything that would make people feel that you're just a regular person?

GATES: I love to fish, and I go bone-fishing once a year with Glenn Hutchins, whom you know is a bone fisherman par excellence. And I like to shoot pool, though when Marial and I bought Niall Ferguson's and Ayaan Hirsi Ali's house, there is this beautiful room on the third floor that was going to be my billiard room. My daughter Maggie – I have two daughters – had my only grandchild, Eleanor Margaret Gates Hatley, and when she saw that room she claimed it. So my pool room is Ellie-land now. It has pink castles and Barbie dolls and tea sets. I guess we have to wait until she goes to Harvard. Or Yale.

RUBENSTEIN: Second question: out of everything you've done in your life, what is the thing that you are most proud of? Your scholarship? Your genealogy work? Your other public work? Other than, of course, this interview that you're doing.

GATES: That is a tough question. I'm proud of the fact that I stayed the course when I joined the church because that was very hard. My intentions were good. I believed in God, and I believed that my mother was given life in part because of that pledge. So I had to fulfill that obligation and I did my best to do that. And I'd do it again in a heartbeat. But I think that the success of *Finding Your*

Roots pleases me the most because of one of the recurring themes of *Finding Your Roots*: that is, we are all immigrants, even my African American ancestors. Genetically I'm 50 percent European and 50 percent sub-Saharan African. But my Black ancestors didn't come here willingly; they came here from elsewhere. And even Native Americans came here from elsewhere 15,000 or so years ago. We are a nation of immigrants, but at the level of the genome we are 99.99 percent the same. And I think that's why people like the series so much. We also tell good stories. It's a way of understanding world history, a way of understanding what we all have in common despite our apparent differences. Two million people watch the show every week, and the fact that so many people do I think reveals the hunger for programs, books, and messages that speak to healing, that speak to the fissures that we are feeling so acutely in our society today.

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RUBENSTEIN: Skip, this has been a great conversation about a great life. You should be very proud of it. I assume your children and your grandchild are very proud of you. I'm sure your parents would be proud too of what you've accomplished. Congratulations and thank you for what you've done for our country.

GATES: Thank you.

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Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

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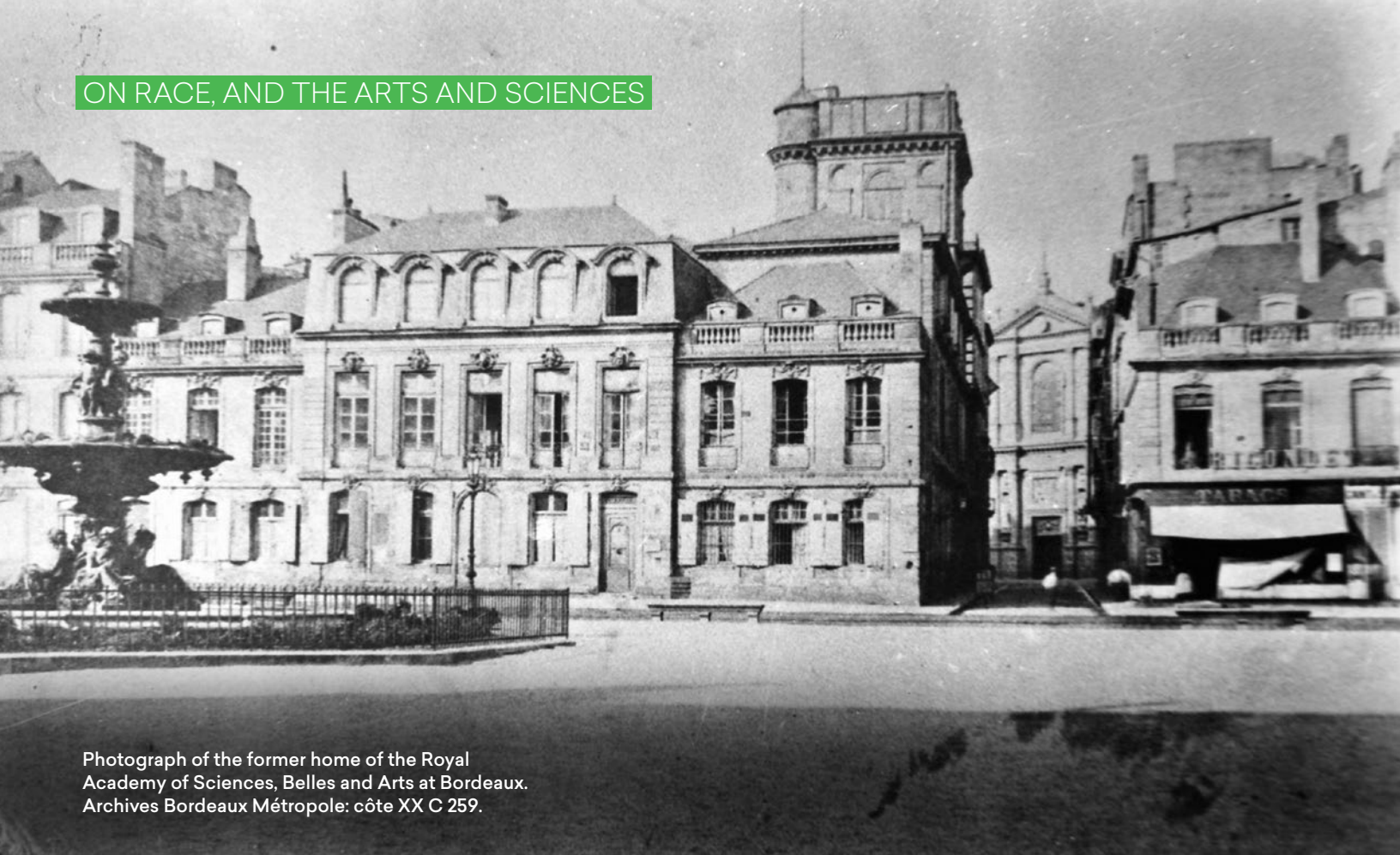


On Race, and the Arts and Sciences

Reflections from Henry Louis Gates, Jr. on Receiving the Don M. Randel Award for Humanistic Studies

As we have gathered together today in one of the world's greatest learned societies – founded in 1780, the second oldest in the United States, I believe – I'd like to take a few minutes to think about the nature and function of such "academic academies" in general, and, more specifically, the relation of their pursuit of excellence in "the arts and sciences," and the relation of that pursuit to the history of race and race relations in Europe and America, which leads us back to the Enlightenment.

During the past few years, I have returned to two of my scholarly passions: the eighteenth century and the history of the so-called science of race. The most recent project along these lines is a new book entitled *Who's Black and Why?* which I edited with Professor Andrew Curran at Wesleyan; the book is being published with Harvard University Press this spring. I'm taking this occasion to share a glimpse of a project about which I am very excited.



Photograph of the former home of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Belles and Arts at Bordeaux. Archives Bordeaux Métropole: côte XX C 259.

Who's Black and Why? also marks a return for me to the type of archival work that I love. The book itself features sixteen never-before-published essays that were submitted to a contest on the source of blackness organized by the Bordeaux Academy of Sciences in 1739.

Sent in by a varied group of thinkers that included theologians, anatomists, naturalists, and climate theorists, this collection of essays is kind of like a focus group . . . that allows us to see how the notion of *race* was taking shape in European thought at the time.

Among these essays there is a lot of disagreement about where Africans came from. Some religious thinkers maintained that either Adam or Eve was Black. Others said that black skin was a mark of God denoting sinfulness. A number claimed that God made people White, but that this original group had “degenerated” into Black people due to a brutal climate, poor food, or bad air. Two more maintained that blackness was a God-given gift to allow people to live in the “torrid zone.” One of the more earnest authors lamented the fact that Black Africans had a moral defect in their parents, which had led their children to be Black.

There were also early “scientific” explanations. One author stated flatly that Africans had black

semen. Several mentioned the fact that “blackness results from the blood” and that Africans have darker blood due to the effect of air. Another anatomist claimed that Africans had a special black bile circulating in their bodies or were the product of the black sperm of the father. My favorite is that White women produced Black children when they thought about an African or the color black during the sex act.

Ultimately the Bordeaux Academy did not choose any of these essays as the winner, which it would declare in 1741 after all the essays eligible for the prize had been received. Perhaps they found the answers wanting; perhaps some of the essays were too dangerous; perhaps they had second thoughts about drawing Europe’s attention to the city of Bordeaux’s relationship to the slave trade.

Recall that the essay contest posed a challenge to explain the curious phenomenon of the blackness of the color of the skin of sub-Saharan Africans. Curiosity about the skin color of Africans has a long history, predating the Enlightenment by as many as two thousand years. I have long found it fascinating that various cultures and societies denominated peoples living on the African continent by the color of their skin, or by their perception of the color of an African’s skin, starting with the

Greeks, whose name for Africa was “Aethiopia,” signifying “burnt-faced.”

But the Greeks were not alone: in addition to Aethiopia, there are the words Zanzibar, Sudan, and Abyssinia – all are variations of the phrase “Land of the Blacks.”¹ It has long struck me as curious that “black” was the color chosen to represent, or cloak, the range of brown colors that reside in the skin of African people. Be that as it may, the members of the Bordeaux’s Royal Academy of Sciences weren’t the first or, by far, the only scholars under the sun seeking wisdom and knowledge, who had become intrigued by the color of Africans who lived around and beneath the Equator.

The phrase “the arts and sciences” was an encompassing term for the accumulation of all human knowledge as “knowledge” was defined in the West. But “the arts and sciences” also coded for Reason, with a capital “R,” the very thing that separated man from beast, and, as it turns out, man from man. As Francis Bacon put it in 1620:

Again, let a man only consider what a difference there is between the life of men in the most civilized province of Europe, and in the wildest and most barbarous districts of New India; he will feel it be great enough to justify the saying that “man is a god to man,” not only in regard to aid and benefit, but also by a comparison of condition. And this difference comes not from soil, not from climate, not from race, but from the arts. . . . Now the empire of man over things depends wholly on the arts and sciences. For we cannot command nature except by obeying her.²

All too quickly, the arts and sciences would serve as a metaphor as Europeans attempted to figure out their place on the great chain of being and on the scale of nature, and their relation to the continent of Africa and its brown and black inhabitants, ways sadly more pernicious than mere intellectual or evolutionary assessment, ways truly “born of our vices,” to summon Rousseau’s curiously cautious admonition again. If we think of “the arts and sciences” as text, in what context did they unfold? Put simply, the absence and presence of knowledge of the arts and sciences would be used to justify the slave trade, the traffic in human beings that shipped 12.5 million Black people from their native land to the New World. To see the ways in which this discourse unfolded and was mediated, let us turn to two pillars of the Enlightenment: David Hume and Immanuel Kant.



DAVID HUME, 1711–1776

Allan Ramsay (1713–1784), *David Hume, 1711–1776. Historian and Philosopher, ca. 1776. Oil on canvas. Bequeathed by Mrs. Macdonald Hume to the National Gallery of Scotland and transferred. Scottish National Portrait Gallery. Image published under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC license.*

Writing in 1754, David Hume, in a footnote added to the second edition of his highly influential essay, “Of National Characters,” had the following to say about the relation of “the African” to “the arts and sciences”:

I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient Germans, the present Tartars, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are negro slaves dispersed all over Europe, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; though low people without education will start up amongst us and distinguish

themselves in every profession. In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.³

Here, Hume is referring to the legally trained Latin poet, the Free Jamaican, Francis Williams. I'll have more to say about him a bit later.

We could perhaps pardon Hume for this blanket indictment of Africa and its Africans if his knowledge of Africans stemmed, as it would for Kant, from books and books alone. But surely Hume would have seen the portraits of Job Ben Solomon and William Anseh Sessarakoo, reproduced in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of June 1750, just four years before he added his infamous footnote.



JOB BEN SOLOMON (1701–1773) AND WILLIAM ANSEH SESSARAKOO (FL. 1739–1749)

“Two African Princes [Ayuba Suleiman Diallo and William Anseh Sessarakoo],” *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 20, June 1750, facing p. 272. Copy in Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library. Image published under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC 4.0 International license.

The stories of both men, freed from slavery because of their noble births and then repatriated to their families in Africa, were so widely circulated and celebrated in England that it's highly unlikely that Hume had not either read this story in the magazine or had not heard of their miraculous deliveries from enslavement.



WILLIAM ANSEH SESSARAKOO (CA. 1736–1770)

Gabriel Mathias (1719–1804), *Portrait of William Anseh Sessarakoo, son of Eno Baisie Kurentsi (John Currantee) of Anomabu, 1749*. Oil on canvas. Image courtesy of the Menil Collection.

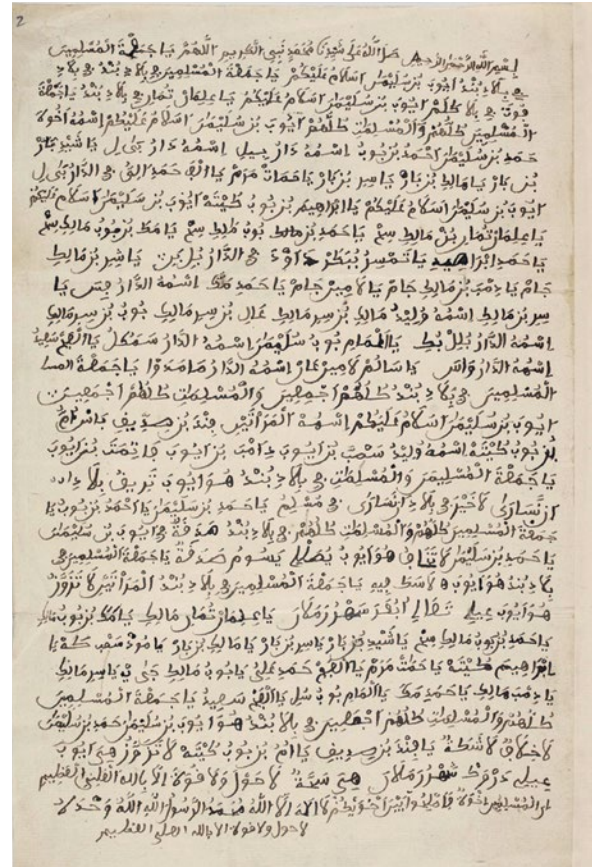
William Anseh Sessarakoo was the son of a wealthy Fante trader. He was kidnapped into slavery around 1736 but eventually was freed by the strenuous efforts of his father. He was taken to London, where he soon became a celebrity. He was introduced to King George III, and attended a performance of the extremely popular play, *Oronooko, or the Royal Slave*, based on the best-selling novel by Mrs. Aphra Behn. In 1749, he returned to Ghana.⁴



JOB BEN SOLOMON

William Hoare of Bath (ca. 1707–ca. 1792), *Ayuba Suleiman Diallo (Job ben Solomon)*, eighteenth century. Oil on canvas. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.

The other man, wearing the turban, is Job Ben Solomon, or Ayuba Suleiman Diallo. He lived between 1701 and 1773. Diallo grew up in Senegal, the scion of a prosperous family. While taking two slaves to be sold, he himself was captured and brought to Annapolis, Maryland. While in jail (he kept running away to pray, as a Muslim), his fluency in Arabic and his aristocratic bearing attracted the attention of a lawyer who happened to be passing through and visiting the jail. Diallo wrote a letter to his father and gave it to the lawyer, Thomas Bluett, who sent the letter to the Royal African Company in London, which in turn sent it to be translated by the Regis Professor of Arabic at Oxford (“There is no good in the country of the Christians for a Muslim,” it read).⁵ They freed



Letter from Ayuba Suleiman Diallo to his father, ca. 1731–1733. Image courtesy of the British Library.

him! Bluett took Diallo to London, where he was the toast of the town. He had his portrait painted, and Bluett even wrote a book about him. Diallo returned to Senegal as an agent of the Royal African Company in 1734, the same year that Bluett published his book about him, in English and in French. And what do you think he did as soon as he got home? He bought a female slave. Diallo was the first African to write his way out of slavery. And, curiously, this act of writing oneself into freedom would become the leitmotif for authors of the slave narratives in this country for well over the next hundred years.⁶

And there were other prominent Black people in Europe in the eighteenth century of whom Hume would know, no one more so than Angelo Soliman.



ANGELO SOLIMAN (CA. 1721–1796)

Gottfried Haid, based on an artwork by Johann Nepomuk Steiner, ca. 1750. Engraving. Courtesy of Harvard University, Collection of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, Cambridge, Mass.

Soliman was “the powerful black man in Europe,” according to art historian David Bindman. Born we think in northeastern Nigeria, he was a friend of Austrian Emperor Joseph II and was the tutor to the son of the Prince of Liechtenstein. He married the sister of a prominent French general, Marshal of Napoleon Bonaparte. He was a member of the famous Masonic lodge, “True Harmony,” of which Mozart and Haydn were members. He even became Grand Master of this lodge and changed its rituals to have a more scholarly bent, so much so that he is still celebrated as “The Father of Pure Masonic Thought.”

But the point is Hume almost certainly knew about Sessarakoo and Diallo, and quite probably had heard about Soliman. He knew that these men could read and write, that they were intelligent,

articulate, sophisticated, and aristocratic. But he ignored the evidence, not even mentioning the great Black sixteenth-century university in Timbuktu, just as he ridiculed the achievements of Francis Williams at the University of Cambridge, and just as he ignored any proof of civilization on the African continent. And he did so, consciously or unconsciously, in a discourse he created that we might call “race and reason,” which became a powerful tool in the justification of the slave trade, at the very height of the Enlightenment in Europe in the eighteenth century. All the major thinkers in the Enlightenment who wrote about this question took their starting point from Hume.

And what of the context of the slave trade in relation to Hume’s notion of the absence of the arts and sciences among Africans? By 1750, 4,713,773 Africans had been shipped to the Americas, and of this number, 1,394,823 had been shipped on British vessels. In fact, in the entire history of the slave trade, England would be the second largest exporter of enslaved Africans to the Americas, while France would be the third largest. In the year 1754 alone, the year in which Hume added his footnote, of the 74,559 Africans shipped to the New World, fully 27,500 – more than one-third – were shipped by England alone.⁷

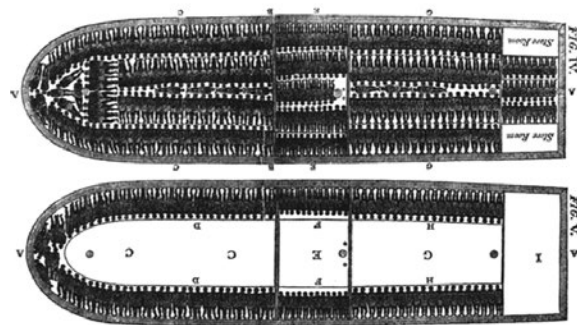
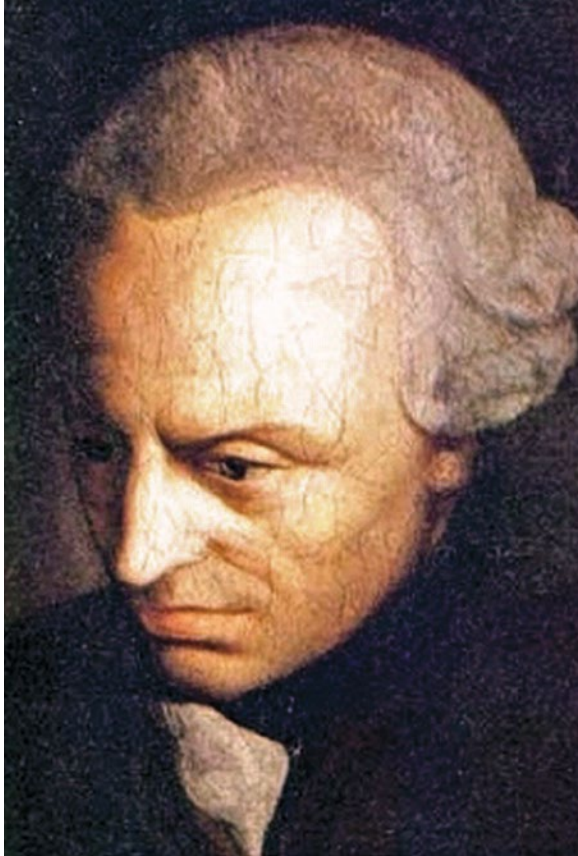


DIAGRAM OF A SLAVE SHIP FROM THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE, 1790–1791

Wood engraving. Courtesy of The Lilly Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Ten years later, in section IV of his “Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime,” in a riff on David Hume’s footnote, Immanuel Kant had this to say:



IMMANUEL KANT (1724–1804)

Artist unknown, *Portrait of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)*, ca. 1790. Painting. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praise-worthy quality, even though among the whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world. So fundamental is the difference between these two races of man, and it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color. The religion of fetishes so widespread among them is perhaps a sort of idolatry that sinks as deeply into the trifling as appears to be possible to human nature. A bird feather, a cow's horn, a conch shell, or any

other common object, as soon as it becomes consecrated by a few words, is an object of veneration and of invocation in swearing oaths. The blacks are vain but in the Negro's way, and so talkative that they must be driven apart from each other with thrashings.

[By contrast]: Among all savages there is no nation that displays so sublime a mental character as those of North America. They have a strong feeling of honor . . . truthful and honest . . . extremely proud . . . if a lawgiver arose among the Six Nations, one would see a Spartan republic rise in the New World; for the undertaking of the Argonauts is little different from the war parties of these Indians . . . Valor is the greatest merit of the savage and revenge his sweetest bliss.⁸

I could go on at length about this passage, but suffice it to say that Kant's contribution to racist science was the conflation, in this very passage, of "character," as it were, with "characteristics": all that this poor man had to say was "stupid" because of the color of his skin, which was "black from head to toe." So, twenty-three years after the close of the competition at the Bordeaux Academy, blackness had come firmly to signify an absence, all that was opposite or counter to "the arts and sciences," the absence of Reason itself.

The book I have published with Professor Curran about the Bordeaux Academy's curious essay contest is a window into a critically significant moment in proto-anthropology. While the explanations I have cited tell us very little about the riddle of blackness, they reveal the Enlightenment-era desire to explain Black people as a-rational, as morally corrupt, and eventually as pathological.

The essays provide the intellectual infrastructure allowing Europeans (and their descendants in the New World) to pass on centuries of misinformation about Africans and people of African descent in a much more structured and understandable way.

The Bordeaux Academy helped usher in a new era, one in which science would claim the right to provide compelling anatomy-based explanations for humankind's many varieties. These new methods and discoveries would, of course, have another function as well: vindicating the ongoing dehumanization of people of color within the American plantation system. In other words, almost from

their very beginnings, the “considerations” given by men of learning in the most august of learned societies, ours included, to the place of people of color on the Great Chain of Being, and their relation to knowledge of the arts and sciences, reveal how anti-Black racist discourse was, and remains, continually imbricated in the discursive fabric of the world of learning, at least since the Enlightenment. Am I over-reading here? Or projecting backwards, anachronistically and unfairly imposing a connotation from today’s discourses about race onto our innocent academician forebears?

Well, we can begin to answer this question by noting that this very relation was depicted visually in American artist Samuel Jennings’s 1792 painting, *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*, for the Library Company of Philadelphia, aimed at promoting the cause of abolition in the United States.

The painting, as Charmaine Nelson and Robert C. Smith point out, depicts Liberty personified as a white, blond-haired female, in full possession of “the arts and sciences.” In their description of the painting, they include philosophy, agriculture, a bust of an unidentified learned man, a scroll labeled “geometry,” a globe symbolizing geography, a broken Corinthian column symbolizing the heritage of Graeco-Roman civilization to which Europe is heir, a lyre and sheet music, and symbols of history and heraldry. She – the subject of the painting – is presenting all of these objects to passive, wide-eyed, formerly enslaved persons, depicted in counterpoint as objects observing, but not possessing, the accumulation of knowledge that the Enlightenment represents. Further in the background, more formerly enslaved people dance with wild abandon around a liberty pole, symbolizing their exuberance at the idea of freedom, if

not at their own mastery of these arts and sciences, which the painting suggests remains a dream of Black Enlightenment, a dream as distant as the dancers are from Liberty’s remarkable scene of instruction.⁹

Even then, the relation between the mastery of the arts and sciences, the accumulation of knowledge, had become racialized and visualized in binary tropes of Black/white, knowledge/ignorance, absence/presence – all too familiar to Western subjects. Black people can *observe* knowledge, wide-eyed, but not partake of it, and not create it. Nevertheless, the painting itself seems to be a reversed troping, signifying through its positioning and symbolism, on Francis Williams’s portrait, whose poetry David Hume trashed, and which art historian David Bindman has brilliantly deduced is a self-portrait.¹⁰



LIBERTY DISPLAYING THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Samuel Jennings (fl. 1789–1834), *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences*, 1792. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.



FRANCIS WILLIAMS

Artist unknown, *Francis Williams, the Scholar of Jamaica*, ca. 1745. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Which brings us back to Bordeaux and the curious competition of 1739. It's all too easy to spot the mote in our antecedents' eye, ignoring the beam in the perspective that we, ourselves, bring to intellectual inquiry. So, let me ask you to engage in a thought experiment with me – a hypothetical. Imagine if, next year, we were to organize a new Bordeaux conference by soliciting the greatest minds on the planet today to speculate on one of the burning questions of our times – experts demonstrating their expertise with words. I can think of many topics. I'm sure you can, too: inequality, democracy, race and class, capitalism, public health, sexuality and gender, and, of course, climate change. It's exciting to think about what they'd tell us that we don't already know. Now, I'd like you to imagine what our Academy heirs three hundred years from now will think of our contest of ideas. Would they say, oh, they got it right – how prescient? Or would our human frailties be glaring to them? Would they look at our conference ideas and see how we were bounded by the limits of our present, or, perhaps, compromised in positions? Would they point out our continued preference for gas-powered automobiles and planes, our home heating systems, or the extent to which our pension funds are invested in the fossil-fuel economy? You get the idea, which is why we must approach subjects like the Bordeaux conference with rigor as well as humility, skepticism alongside a recognition of the limits of our own ability to divine “the truths” of our world. My friends, let these virtues – and an awareness of our vices – form the basis for the affinity that we, the members of this august Academy, share as our defining characteristic; let them be our fundamental, guiding principles in uncertain times, when big ideas, with big stakes, are being discussed and debated at every level of society. This – and the responsibility we have to examine how our own research reflects, affirms, or encodes far deeper social and economic contexts unfolding around us in the darkest places – is both the opportunity and challenge of our beautiful community.

It gives me an enormous amount of pleasure to accept this award in a spirit of fellowship for those of us who love and honor the great tradition of scholarship in the humanities, and I do so with the journey of our ancestors very much top of mind.



JOHN ADAMS (1735–1826)

Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), *John Adams*, ca. 1800–1815. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mrs. Robert Homans. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

When John Adams and his colleagues founded the American Academy in 1780, my maternal fourth great-grandfather, a free African American named John Redman, had been serving that Patriot cause in the Continental Army for two years. Little could John Adams – or, for that matter, John Redman – have imagined that 213 years later, a Black man’s descendant would be inducted into the fledgling Academy, or that 241 years later, that descendant would be honored by the Academy for scholarship about the contributions of persons of African descent to a redefined notion of “the arts and sciences.” I accept this award also on behalf of the African American people as a whole, who have endured centuries of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination, in part, by holding fast to a dream of a non-racial republic of letters, synonymous with full and equal access to education.

I have devoted my professional life to studying and advancing our ancestors’ struggles against anti-Black racism, both inside and outside of the academy. In this time of turbulence and pain, division and despair, let us draw strength from the many sacrifices made by those who have gone before us, determined to hold fast to the ideals on which our republic and this Academy were founded. For almost a quarter of a millennium, the



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Daederot, *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Cambridge, Mass., March 2009.

American Academy’s goal has been to serve as a paragon of enlightenment and the unfettered pursuit of truth, a place where, as Du Bois so eloquently put it, “wed with Truth [we] dwell above the veil.” And while its members have sometimes fallen short of this goal, through the necessary process of self-critique and the free exchange of ideas from members representing the broadest diversity of race, of gender, of religious and sexual preference, we may begin to approach and embrace a genuinely “human” definition of “the arts and sciences,” one far broader and more encompassing than our founders dared to imagine.

I consider it the honor of a lifetime in letters to be selected to receive an award created as a tribute to a scholar who himself exemplified these values in his own pioneering work in musicology and in the history of music long before doing so was popular or trendy.

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ENDNOTES

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9. See Charmaine Nelson, "Hiram Powers's America: Shackles, Slaves, and the Racial Limits of Nineteenth-Century Identity," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 34 (2) (2004): 175–176; Robert C. Smith, "Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences: A Philadelphia Allegory by Samuel Jennings," *Winterthur Portfolio* 2 (1965): 85–105; and Hugh Honour, "The Atlantic Triangle," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume IV: From the American Revolution to World War I, Part 1: Slaves and Liberators*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 28–31.
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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

Reexamining the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

2106th Stated Meeting | April 20, 2022 | Virtual Event
Jonathan F. Fanton Lecture

Amid extreme partisan polarization, trust in government institutions hovers near record lows and many Americans believe that their values are under attack. In this context, what values hold the nation together and what does it mean to be a “good citizen”? The Academy convened a distinguished panel of experts – **E.J. Dionne Jr.**, **María Teresa Kumar**, **John Shattuck**, and **Danielle Allen** as moderator – to examine how the rights and responsibilities of American citizenship are connected and how they might be used to create a greater sense of common purpose. An edited version of the panelists’ remarks follows.





David W. Oxtoby

David W. Oxtoby is President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected to the Academy in 2012.

Good afternoon and welcome. As President, it is my pleasure to formally call to order the 2106th Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Our event today is a Jonathan F. Fanton Lecture, named for my predecessor who served as president of the American Academy from 2014 to 2019. Jonathan has joined us virtually to participate in today's program, and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge his outstanding stewardship of this institution.

Today's event stems from initiatives that began during Jonathan's tenure. In 2018, under his leadership, the American Academy launched a project to explore the pathways and barriers to participation in our democracy and what it means to be a good citizen in the twenty-first century. The work of the Academy's bipartisan Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship has grown more essential since then as a series of crises has deepened the cracks in our political culture. We are grateful for Jonathan's prescience in recognizing the need for this effort, and for his continued service as a member of the Commission.

Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century, the Commission's final report, was released in June 2020 and offers thirty-one bold recommendations to help the nation emerge as a more resilient democracy by 2026. We are in the implementation phase of the project, and it has been inspiring to see how many Americans from across the country are committed to improving the health of our democracy. We are grateful to all who have joined us in this important work.

Today's conversation on the rights and responsibilities inherent to American citizenship connects directly to the core questions that animated the Commission and led to the *Our Common Purpose* report. I look forward to exploring together what it means to be a good citizen in the twenty-first century and hope that today's discussion will help us all practice better citizenship in our own communities.

I want to welcome our panelists: E.J. Dionne Jr., María Teresa Kumar, and John Shattuck. I also

want to thank our moderator, Danielle Allen, a co-chair of the Commission. Danielle is the model of a scholar patriot, working tirelessly to protect and promote the ideals that underpin our democratic system through her scholarship and, most recently, as a candidate for office in Massachusetts. We are grateful to Danielle for her service and her example.

Danielle Allen

Danielle Allen is Director of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Ethics and James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard University. She was elected to the American Academy in 2009 and is a cochair of the Academy's Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship.

Thank you, President Oxtoby. I truly appreciate your kind words and having you preside over this important conversation. It's wonderful to be here to celebrate Jonathan Fanton's work and leadership for the Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship. We have extraordinary panelists joining us today for this question of what does it mean to be an American? What does it mean to be a good citizen? The questions sound antique, and yet they are core to our ability to function together in our massive and multicultural, diverse, and beautiful society. What does it mean to be a good citizen and a good civic participant? These roles and modes of engagement are broad.

The work of the Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship really began because Jonathan Fanton sent up a flare and asked, "Who else out there thinks that we are in a red-alert moment in our democracy?" And for those of us whom he reached out to first, we all had our own moments of red alert. In my own personal case, my sense of the fragility and the failures of our democratic system date back to 2009. Growing up, I had a mixed sense of light and dark about our country: a sense of hope, optimism, and pride in our accomplishments but also a clear-eyed focus on the limitations and failures.

In 2009, I lost my younger cousin Michael to a combination of mass incarceration and gun violence. That was a real turning point for me. It gave me a bleaker view about where we were as a country and what it would take for our democracy to



Danielle Allen

reach a place where we don't leave people trapped in situations that don't permit them the well-being and flourishing that our Constitution and democracy promise. My other red alert came in 2013 when Congress had an approval rating of 9 percent. As Jonathan made calls to lots of people, he found red alerts all over the place and all kinds of people who said, "It's time for us to really dig deep and figure out what a healthy democracy consists of."

At the end of the day, a democracy can't be anything other than the people who make it. So, fundamentally, that question about what we need for the health of our democracy is a question about what it means for us to be citizens and civic participants and to do that work together. Fundamental to that are benefits captured in a vocabulary of rights. We earn those benefits by fulfilling a set of responsibilities. Rights and responsibilities: those are the core components of the social contract.

As we come together today to talk about this question, we are dusting off some old categories and some old ideas, but we are doing that because of their urgency in the present. We have a pressing need to figure out a new, reimagined, reinvented democracy. We have a pressing need to answer the question of what rights and responsibilities we have to each other and to the practice of democratic citizenship. We have an incredible group of panelists here today, true leaders of both thought and practice. I will share their bios, and then I will jump in with a single question to each. Then we'll bring everybody together for a shared conversation.

E.J. Dione Jr. is a journalist for *The Washington Post*, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a university professor at Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy. E.J. works at the intersection of journalism and scholarship with expertise in community and civil society, in elections, politics, polling, faith-based initiatives, ideology, journalism, and the role of religion in public life and public opinion – all at the heart of our current struggles. He is the author of several books, but for today's conversation, let me note a brand-new book with democracy advocate Miles Rapoport entitled *100% Democracy: The Case for Universal Voting*.

I am also pleased to introduce María Teresa Kumar, the founding president of Voto Latino, a civic engagement organization that leverages youth, technology, social platforms, and influencers, and is responsible for registering more than

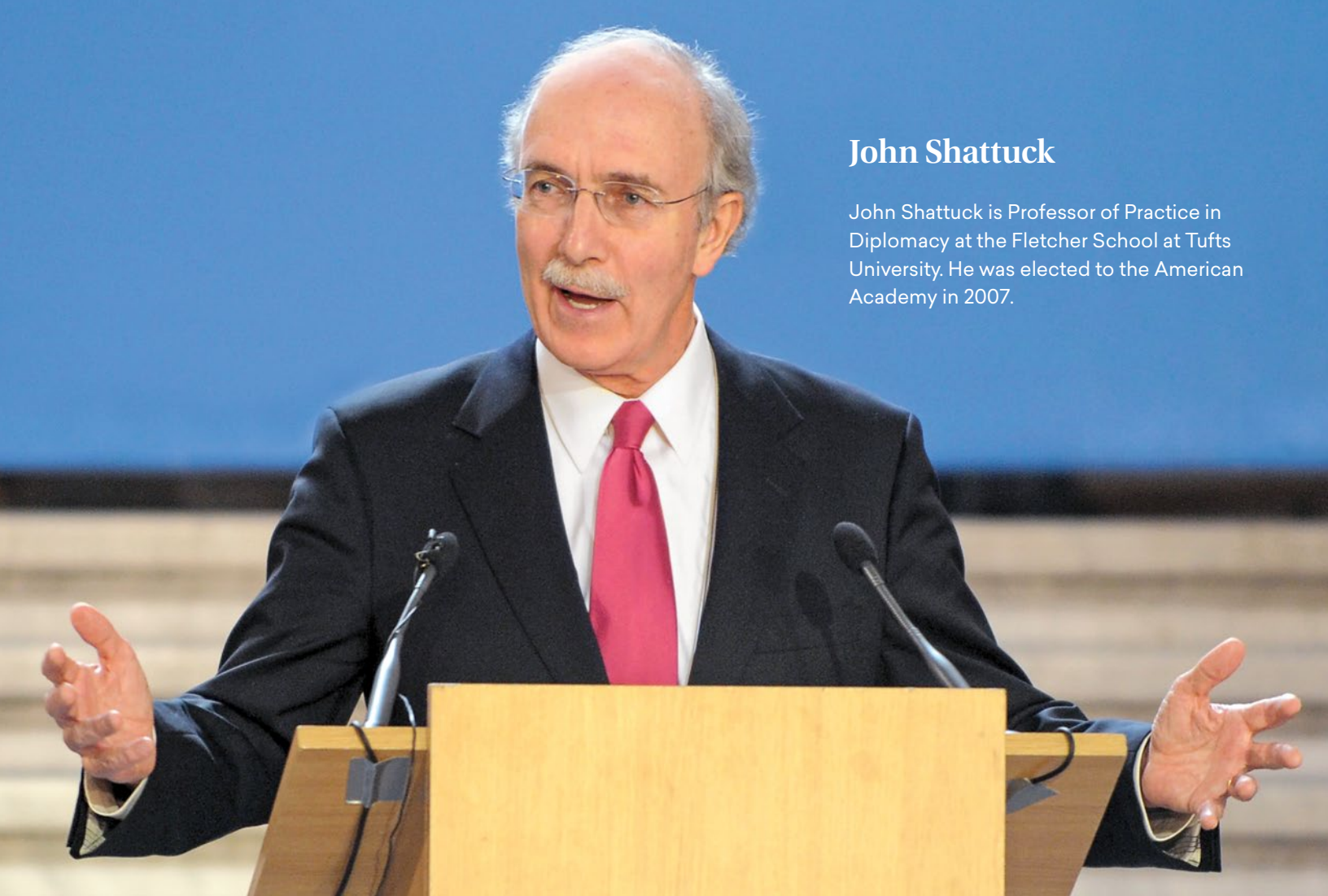
five hundred thousand new voters. María Teresa is also an activist and social entrepreneur, as well as an Emmy-nominated MSNBC contributor. She has been named as one of the top one hundred creative minds by *Fast Company*, one of the ten most influential Latinos by *Hispanic Executive*, and one of the ten most influential women in D.C. by *Elle*.

Last, but not least, I am glad to introduce John Shattuck. John is Professor of Practice in Diplomacy at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He is a former Senior Fellow at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard, and served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. John has also been the

“What does it mean to be an American? What does it mean to be a good citizen? The questions sound antique, and yet they are core to our ability to function together in our massive and multicultural, diverse, and beautiful society.

Washington director of the American Civil Liberties Union and a U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic. His new book, with coauthors Sushma Raman and Mathias Risse, is titled *Holding Together: A Hijacking of Rights in America and How to Reclaim Them for Everyone*. John is a master of thinking about rights and responsibilities.

I will kick off our discussion with a question for John. Some years ago, you and I had a conversation about rights and responsibilities. I was very impressed that you were grabbing hold of these two terms that people often want to push off to the side. In your new book *Holding Together*, you tell a powerful story about an America where we have large bipartisan majorities for some core values. This goes against the grain of our current understanding of ourselves because we take ourselves to be polarized. Can you fill us in on what you found about what Americans think about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship?



John Shattuck

John Shattuck is Professor of Practice in Diplomacy at the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He was elected to the American Academy in 2007.

Thank you, Danielle. And a salute to you for the many ways you've demonstrated your leadership on democracy, including your outstanding academic work, your commitment to public service, and your recent campaign for governor of Massachusetts.

I would like to say a few words about some relevant history in answering your question. The United States is a nation of unprecedented diversity. Unlike other countries, which are built on common ancestry, we are built on successive waves of immigration, and on a legacy of enslavement and the subjugation of Indigenous people.

Over the centuries, Americans have been thrown together by chance and exploitation, but have been held together by a promise reflected in the Declaration of Independence – a promise that all people are created equal and have rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have failed to implement the promise of rights in many ways, but most Americans still have a deep belief in it. In that sense, the promise of rights is a core set of values that has been handed down over time.

The founders were an elite slice of the population. They were white men with property who had an exclusive view of rights: basically, rights for white men with property, like themselves. This historic exclusion has been challenged throughout American history. And the great struggle for equal rights, which is the struggle that we're talking about in our new book – a struggle for the right to vote, for equal protection and equal opportunity, for freedom of speech, religion, individual dignity, due process of law, and, above all, a democratic form of government – this ongoing struggle defines what it is to be an American.

In our book, we wanted to find out what Americans think today about their rights. We conducted a series of national polls and town hall meetings, and collected some remarkable data that frankly surprised us. Eighty percent of people across the political spectrum said that “without our rights, America is nothing.” Now, of course, rights have very different meanings for different people. We certainly know that there can be a conflict between the right not to wear a mask and the right to be protected from COVID, which is a contemporary version of

“Over the centuries, Americans have been thrown together by chance and exploitation, but have been held together by a promise reflected in the Declaration of Independence – a promise that all people are created equal and have rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We have failed to implement the promise of rights in many ways, but most Americans still have a deep belief in it.

these conflicts. But despite the conflicts, our polls show that 80 percent believe that Americans “have more in common than most people think.”

This is remarkable, because it’s at odds with the division and extremism that we see all around us. Let me give you just a bit more data. A majority of Americans agree that rights must be balanced with responsibilities. Eight out of ten people agree that personal freedom should be balanced against a responsibility to keep people safe in a pandemic. Eight out of ten agree that the police can protect the public from crime while also being held responsible for their own crimes. And seven out of ten agree that the United States should have automatic voter registration or universal voting, as E.J. and his colleagues write in their book, to reinforce the right and responsibility to vote.

So, there is a lot going on here that is counter-intuitive given the polarization that we face in the country today. The bottom line – and there’s a lot of polling data in our book to back this up – is most Americans have an expansive view of equal rights and see rights and the responsibilities of citizenship as core values of the nation, values that determine what it is to be an American. This silent majority, which consists of a wide range of citizens – Democrats, Independents, Republicans – disagrees on specific issues but has a common commitment to democratic values.

They have the potential to hold the country together, but their diversity keeps them from being politically cohesive. They are overshadowed by an active minority that is working to polarize people. This minority is made up of a mostly white constituency motivated by fear, an extremist constituency that denies the equal rights of others that they regard as threats to their own racial, cultural, and political identity.

They are attacking American values in the electoral process, where we find an increasing assault

on voting rights. Thirty-five new state laws have been adopted by nineteen states over the last year that would weaken, restrict, or put burdens on the right to vote in various ways.

But our polls show that most Americans want to strengthen, not weaken, the right to vote. Eighty-seven percent, including 80 percent of Republicans, favor national standards to protect the electoral process. Eighty-four percent favor the Justice Department reviewing voting regulations to make sure they aren’t racially discriminatory. And 82 percent, including 55 percent of Republicans, favor increased early voting to promote maximum participation.

So, we see a disconnect between the polling, the underlying values that Americans feel they continue to have, and the activities that are going on in a highly polarized political arena. The data that we include in the book show where this disconnect begins.

ALLEN: Thank you, John. You have given us a picture of hope. Maybe we agree on more than we think we do. You raised some questions about the disconnect between us and what our policies are. We will come back to that disconnect later. Let me now turn to E.J. Dionne.

John just articulated a hope that this big, silent supermajority that he’s saying is out there wishes that their voices could be brought to the surface to lead and guide our politics. You have just published an extraordinary and controversial book, which has the job of trying to make sure everybody’s voice is truly heard in our politics. In *100% Democracy*, you argue that voting shouldn’t be something we think of as a right, and it shouldn’t be something that we think of as a moral obligation. It should be an actual legal duty. We should be required to vote, every single one of us, just as we are required to serve for jury duty. Why should we want that? Tell us why we should take this unprecedented step.

A portrait of E.J. Dionne Jr., a middle-aged man with grey hair and glasses, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and some lights.

E.J. Dionne Jr.

E.J. Dionne Jr. is a journalist for *The Washington Post*, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, and a university professor at Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy. He was elected to the American Academy in 2005.

I love that way of introducing it. First, let me say it's a real honor to be with you, Danielle. I admire you for many things, including your writing and scholarship, of course, but I really admire you for jumping into the political fray. Three of our last five presidents – Obama, Bush, and Clinton – had an election race in their lives that didn't turn out the way they intended, and they became president. You are now fully qualified to become President of the United States. God bless you.

I want to thank the Academy for hosting this session and for their extraordinary report on American democracy that includes a set of reforms that are deeply valuable. Among them is an idea that I want to discuss today, a proposal supported by my coauthor Miles Rapoport, María Teresa, Norm Ornstein, and many others in the democracy and voting rights communities.

Our core argument is that rights and responsibilities reinforce each other. Often when people talk about rights and responsibilities, they seem to think that responsibilities somehow limit or qualify rights. What we argue is that in the case of

voting, the best way to defend the right is to assert the legal responsibility of everyone to vote. Let me just parenthetically say that we call it *universal voting* and not *compulsory voting* for a very specific reason: nothing in our proposal requires anyone to vote for anyone.

Our proposal is modeled largely after Australia's system, although there are some two dozen democracies that enacted versions of the idea, and many of them have made it work very well. But Australia is really the ultimate proof of concept. They've had it for one hundred years, and if one hundred years isn't a good enough proof of concept, I don't know if we'll ever get one. Under our system and Australia's system, you are required to participate but not to pick a candidate. If you don't like anybody on the list, you don't have to vote for them. You can write in any name, say Danielle Allen, or María Teresa, or John Shattuck. And just to make sure that this requirement cannot be viewed as compelled speech, we would add a "none of the above" option to the ballot, which exists now in Nevada and Arizona.

The core idea here is that American elections have become like fancy dinner parties: you have an A-list of likely voters, a B-list of people who are registered but don't vote that often, and a C-list of people who haven't been able to register. By the way, this last category includes large numbers of young people because our voting system is very unfriendly to the young who move around a lot more than older people do. The dinner party approach to elections means that politicians spend almost all their time appealing to the A-list, the likely voters, which means they spend a lot of time trying to turn out their base. As my friend Miles likes to say, that often means "campaigns based on enrage to engage," just to pull people out.

But they also spend a lot of time trying to depress the other side's base, sometimes by erecting legal barriers but often through attacks discouraging partisans from supporting their own side's candidate. This leads to campaigns that are needlessly divisive. Now, Miles and I do not pretend our idea will fix everything that ails the system, nor do we think political campaigns will all be peaceable kingdoms. Candidates will go after each other. But we believe the dinner party system aggravates divisiveness and aggravates the tendency to be negative.

This system might produce a somewhat more moderate electorate, since many who don't vote are less ideological than those who do. This seems to be what it does in Australia.

There is a larger point, captured by our Declaration of Independence, in which the founders declared that a legitimate government depends upon the consent of the governed. They didn't say the consent of two-thirds of the governed, which was our turnout rate in the 2020 election. They didn't say 50 percent of the governed, which is what we got in what was in historical terms the high turnout midterm election in 2018. They said, "the governed." That means all of us.

But the other side of this is that at a time when there are active efforts to make it harder to vote, making voting a duty sends a signal to every part of the political system that the obligation of that system is to make it as easy as possible for people to carry out their duty. We argue that we would need a variety of what we call "gateway reforms" to make sure it's easy for everyone to vote. One of my great research assistants, Amber Herrle, was looking at all the ways in which Australia makes it

easy for people to register to vote. And she came running into my office and said, "Look at all this cool stuff Australia does to make participation easier. We should do this, too."

As it is, we're becoming two Americas on voting. The Brennan Center for Justice reports that twenty-five states have expanded access since 2020, but nineteen states have pulled back access. We want to be one America, indivisible and fully participating.

I'll close by mentioning jury duty, because that's another area in which rights and responsibilities reinforce each other. One of the greatest victories of the civil rights movement was to end discrimination against Black Americans in jury service and to allow Black Americans to serve on juries. But remember what that victory really meant. Charles Ogletree, a great scholar at Harvard and a civil rights activist, has pointed this out. It meant that Black Americans, like white Americans, would be *compelled* to serve on juries. That is a form of compulsion that increases freedom, increases fairness, increases the justice of our system, because everyone is included. And we think everybody should be included in our election process too.

ALLEN: Thank you, E.J., and thank you for mentioning that *Our Common Purpose* includes an endorsement of universal voting as one of its recommendations. The report has thirty-one recommendations for securing the health of our democracy and reinventing the practice of democratic citizenship.

We will come back to this question of why, when we have this supermajority with a commitment to voting, and we have a mechanism to include everybody's voice and achieve universal voting, aren't we there yet? What are the obstacles? I would like now to invite María Teresa to join us and to share her perspective on this question. You are an advocate for voting rights. You have increased people's participation in voting. You have deep knowledge and expertise of the experience of Latinx communities, both in facing hurdles to voting and finding ways to overcome those hurdles.

When does it help for us to talk about voting as a responsibility and as a duty? Is that a useful thing? And what do you think about the prospect of going all the way to a mandate for voting to make it truly universal?



María Teresa Kumar

María Teresa Kumar is President of Voto Latino and an MSNBC contributor.

There is an assault on our democracy and on our institutions. Danielle, you did one of the bravest things: you put your hat in the ring. Remember it's not just about running; it's about finding great candidates because that's how we change the equation.

I joined E.J. and Miles Rapoport in the Universal Voting Taskforce, and through that journey, I was sold on the idea of universal voting. Our biggest challenge is making sure that people of color, and poor people in general, are not penalized for not voting. John, thank you for the conversation, but more importantly, for being brave enough to have it at a time when people are polarized. I would say that there are a few of us who are polarized and a lot of us who are a silent majority. And oftentimes, the person who screams the loudest is the one who gets amplified.

I would like to clarify something about our work at Voto Latino. We actually registered 1.2 million voters in this last election, according to a report by Tufts University, in which the movement's work, not just Voto Latino's, is audited. Of the voters we registered, 56 percent were first-time voters, and, equally as important, 57 percent had less than a college education. This is hard work. We got people, who are often apathetic to government, excited. Officially, we are the largest online direct voter registration outfit in the country. And we're the second largest voter registration organization in the country, second only to the Voter Participation Center. I say this only because it's taken eighteen years of a longtime experiment to convince people that if we target young Latinos, talk to them, and tell them that they belong in this space, they listen.

One of the things that we have found is that when we talk directly to individuals in the Latinx community, and especially young voters, and create a space where they can ask questions, where we can tell them that you don't need a degree, that this democracy is theirs, they start paying attention and participating. We are living at a time when the government that they are trying to participate in doesn't look like them. So how do we change that equation? We do it by voting and running for office.

I've been doing a lot of reporting recently on what's happening in Ukraine, and one of the things I found most fascinating was that the parliamentarians who were talking on MSNBC and

CNN, each one seemed younger than the next. I finally asked the question, "What is the average age of a Ukrainian parliamentarian, not including the president?" It turns out that it is forty-six. These individuals are representing a rising generation in Ukraine.

This idea of universal voting brings the largest and most diverse group of Americans, Generation Z, into the fold. We are starting to see what that means when they run for office and when they participate. They are talking about intersectional issues that make older folks uncomfortable, but that is their lived experience, and it is allowing us to make monumental change. I often say that I don't have to convince a young person that climate change is real. I just have to convince them that the system works if they elect officials who reflect their values.

“When we talk directly to individuals in the Latinx community, and especially young voters, and create a space where they can ask questions, where we can tell them that you don't need a degree, that this democracy is theirs, they start paying attention and participating.”

And so, universal voting is an opportunity for us to convince people about participation. I'm very proud of the 1.2 million people that Voto Latino has registered, but to be honest, Voto Latino should not be in the business of registering voters. That's a government function. Our charge should be convincing people about the policies that will make their lives different.

In 2004, when we first started, our job was just to register voters. Then, after the gutting of the Voting Rights Act, we had to explain to people how they could make their vote count. And now, with the onslaught of over four hundred pieces of legislation trying to prevent people from voting, we have to sue the states. We're suing the State of Texas. We've sued the State of Florida, the State of Arizona, and the State of Colorado. That

should not be our charge. But because there is a group of individuals trying to repress the vote, we would not be doing our function in advocating for democracy and for our voters if we were not in the fight.

I am sold on universal voting because it brings everybody in, and we can get back to a place of negotiating for the best policy possible. That takes patience and time, but it allows us to address the fundamental issues that we're facing in this country.

By creating a space for universal voting, you put the onus of how to run an effective, efficient election back into the hands of secretaries of state and local election officials. Their charge becomes, 'We need to create efficient voting so that everybody can vote.' ”

ALLEN: Thank you. You put a lot of rich material on the table for our conversation. I would like to invite E.J. and John back to join us. Let's pick up the conversation about universal voting and about the hard problem of polarization.

I'm with you on universal voting. It's a beautiful idea, and I can see all the incredible virtues: no more money spent on keeping other people's voters from voting; we reduce the negative advertising; we turn voting into a holiday; we become like Australia and embrace all these ease of access measures for participation. But there is something else that is gnawing at me, which María Teresa alluded to. Currently, turnout is the lowest for communities of color, and communities of color are the most overburdened by too many laws and too much enforcement. So, are we going to add another law and increase the number of fines and fees that communities of color find themselves fighting their way through?

I know that you have all thought about this question. We would like to hear what answers you arrived at as a part of your taskforce work. María Teresa, I'll start with you.

KUMAR: I would like to remind everybody that fifty states certified a fair and free election, and that's when they decided they were going to add

more restrictions. One of the things that I took umbrage with was when people were saying, "Can you believe they can't pass water out to people waiting in line?" And I'm thinking that's the wrong question. Why are people waiting in line? By creating a space for universal voting, you put the onus of how to run an effective, efficient election back into the hands of secretaries of state and local election officials. Their charge becomes, "We need to create efficient voting so that everybody can vote."

The other thing that E.J. highlighted, which is equally important, is that we're not forcing you to vote for someone. We're asking you to show up, ideally on a holiday, so you can register your grievance or your support. From years of research at Voto Latino, we found that there are two reasons why young Latinos, and Latinos in general, don't register and don't vote. One, no one is asking them. And two, they don't feel that they are smart enough on the issues. With universal voting, it allows for conversations like, "Well, I know I have to vote. What do I need to know to do that?"

One of the things we do at Voto Latino is provide people with crib sheets because we recognize that our communities are overburdened, overworked, and overtaxed. We ask them to tell us what they care about, and then we work with Ballot Ready, a nonpartisan organization, to produce the crib sheets that help them navigate the voting process. Just like everybody has to file their taxes – and the government makes sure that you file your taxes – there are ways to do the exact same thing for voting.

ALLEN: That's a metaphor I would not recommend using for universal voting!

KUMAR: But it's efficient. The government has the capacity to do these things. Why not when it comes to modernizing our electoral systems?

ALLEN: I appreciate the argument you're making. I just want to underscore one important point. You are making the case that a universal duty is an invitation to every single person, and that's powerful and very compelling. We currently do not have a system that formally invites everybody to participate.

DIONNE: Whenever Richard Nixon was asked a question that he didn't want to answer, he would say, "I'm glad you asked that question." In this

case, I really am glad you asked that question because it is an issue Miles and I and members of our working group on universal voting struggled with. We met with several civil rights groups in the course of studying the idea, and it's worth noting that the NAACP is among the civil rights groups that have endorsed this idea, precisely because they see it as tearing down barriers and inviting everybody in. But we were concerned with what has come to be called the "Ferguson problem," when low-income people, particularly low-income people of color, end up having penalties and fines piled on top of them, and then those fines become criminalized.

We want our system to have nothing to do with that. It should be seen as more a nudge than a shove or a hammer. In Australia's system, the fine for not voting is \$20 Australian, which is about \$15 American. If you don't vote, you receive a notice in the mail asking why you were not able to cast a ballot. If you give any sort of reasonable excuse, they don't fine you. Only about 13 percent of Australians have to pay the fine. The system we imagine would work in the same way. But we make very clear that this fine is not criminal, it can't be compounded, and no interest accrues. It's \$20, period. And if you didn't want to pay it, you can do an hour of community service instead.

We also talk about incentives to vote. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley is very interested in the idea of creating a tax credit for everybody who registers to vote: say, \$100 or \$50. It would be refundable so it would go to everyone, even those who did not pay income taxes. To avoid running afoul of antibribery laws, laws against vote-buying, you would get a tax credit to register, not to vote. So, you could imagine that with the tax credit, the actual fine for not voting would involve returning \$20 of the \$50 you received for registering, which further reduces the danger of penalizing those with low incomes. We want a system that doesn't aggravate existing problems. I think a well-designed system could do that.

ALLEN: I appreciate that. I'll throw out one more idea. If indeed the onus is on our government institutions to ensure universal participation, then let's fine the secretaries of state. Let's fine the parties and the institutions of state government that should have the job of turning everybody out.

DIONNE: I agree that the obligation to register people to vote is a state obligation. Ninety-six percent of people in Australia are registered, and so you need a good system to make that happen. By the way, we may be the only country in the world that has a partisan system of running elections, which is an odd idea by international democratic standards.

SHATTUCK: I'm going to be the civil liberties contrarian here because I think it's important that somebody present this point of view. Mandating that you exercise the right to vote is oxymoronic in many ways. A mandate is not a right. There are many things that need to be done to protect and promote the right to vote, above all automatic registration, which is very popular. Approximately 75 percent of the people we polled are interested in that, and another 82 percent are interested in national standards for voting to ensure that there is voting integrity. But I suspect if the question were, "Do you believe in *mandatory* voting?" the numbers would go down significantly.

“Mandating that you exercise the right to vote is oxymoronic in many ways. A mandate is not a right. There are many things that need to be done to protect and promote the right to vote, above all automatic registration.”

My civil liberties objection is partly a matter of principle. There is a concern that if you're requiring something that is a constitutional right to do *or not do*, then that is problematic from a constitutional standpoint. But from a practical political standpoint, you also don't want to give arguments to the opponents of expansive voting rights who are saying that the whole electoral apparatus is essentially a giant government program that is burdening the American people, because that is one of the causes of polarization in the country today.

Having said all of that, I'm in favor of the most expansive view of the right to vote, though I would oppose making it a mandate.

DIONNE: Two quick points. One, our polling shows that right now, only about a quarter of Americans support our idea. So, we have a way to go. On the other hand, 61 percent of Americans, equal in both parties, believe that voting is a right and a duty. So, I would ask John, should we abolish the requirement that people serve on juries if they are called? Is the obligation to serve on a jury a violation of your civil liberties?

SHATTUCK: I would distinguish jury duty from voting. Voting is a constitutional right. Serving on a jury is an obligation of citizenship that the country decided can be imposed on citizens.

We think that the obligation to help shape the future of your country in an election is a civic duty that is as important as serving on a jury. And if you make voting as convenient as it should be, allowing people to vote by mail, it's far less of a burden. ”

DIONNE: We could go back and forth on this. I just want to emphasize that I really think they are equivalent. The obligation to serve on a jury, as Ogletree and others have written, undergirds the right to a fair trial. No universal jury service, no fair trial. We think that the obligation to help shape the future of your country in an election is a civic duty that is as important as serving on a jury. And if you make voting as convenient as it should be, allowing people to vote by mail, it's far less of a burden.

This demand, with the tiniest of fines that are easily waved, makes perfect sense for what is also a fundamental duty of citizenship.

ALLEN: I am going to jump in here and pull us in the direction of another question that you've each put on the table. John, coming back to your original argument, you gave us a picture of a supermajority of Americans who are strongly committed to a right to vote. It's a little unclear whether that's mandatory universal voting. But nonetheless, there is a strong, powerful commitment. And yet we have, in your account, a minority driving polarization and division.

Several of you have referenced the challenge of polarization as an obstacle to achieving change.

I'm glad to have you each share your thoughts about polarization and what it really does tell us about where we are in our politics right now.

SHATTUCK: I will put three or four things out as bullet points, and then others can take them apart or amplify them. Why polarization? What is going on? Where did it come from? To be provocative, I think it is coming primarily from an extremist political position. It is a very dangerous wing of our electorate that is determined to divide people and deny others their rights because they are seen by the extremists as a threat.

The second point is the spread of disinformation. It's extremely easy to propagate all kinds of disinformation through social media and the digital world. We've just gone through the big lie and the spurious claim of election fraud, which was unanimously rejected by scores of judges across the country and virtually all nonpartisan voting officials, but which led to the violent insurrection at the Capitol. That's an example of the type of polarization that develops when this kind of fraud is put forward in such a broad way.

The third point concerns the politics of grievance, which are practiced primarily by the extremist minority that I'm talking about. When President Trump attacked the press as enemies of the people, that essentially put an open season on the media for a lot of people who were listening to him. I also think there are structural issues, such as party primaries that promote extremism, primaries that punish moderates because they're seen as not being extreme enough, and the winner-take-all election system that we have that essentially freezes a lot of voters out of the results.

These are some of the factors that I think have contributed to polarization.

DIONNE: I would offer two points. First, polarization is, in part, the product of partisanship overlapping much more tightly with our various other identities than it used to. Party identification overlaps more than ever with race, with religion, with the type of community you live in, for example, metro versus small town/rural. And from the data, we find that we are more likely to live near people who agree with us because of these overlapping identities.

There is a name for this mysterious group that John described. And that name is the right wing of the Republican Party. Right now, polarization is asymmetric. The Republican Party as a whole has moved much more to the right of center



than the Democratic Party has moved to the left of center.

Now, this doesn't mean that all Republicans are extremists. If you look at the nominees of the Republican Party in 2008 and 2012, John McCain and Mitt Romney, they were mainstream people. In John's excellent book with Sushma and Mathias, you find a slew of issues in which people who call themselves Republicans agree with people who call themselves Democrats. But, in practice, Republican primaries are now dominated by voters much farther to the right and dominated by issues that have little to do with the problems John, Sushma, and Mathias polled on.

I think having a functional center-right party again is an essential building block to healing our polarization. That doesn't mean I vote for them or agree with them. I'm more on the progressive side of politics. But I have a lot of respect for center-right people who believe in democracy, fair elections, and access to the ballot. I wouldn't fear their election. But I am genuinely worried and afraid about this right wing in the Republican Party that is too powerful now.

ALLEN: María Teresa, you were talking earlier before we began the webinar about the disconnect between parties and the people. We'd love to have

“ At a time when there are active efforts to make it harder to vote, making voting a duty sends a signal to every part of the political system that the obligation of that system is to make it as easy as possible for people to carry out their duty.

you expand on that and tell us why it is an important distinction.

KUMAR: Both John and E.J. hit the nail on the head: there is an extremism within the party. When you do polls on voting, for example, and you ask individuals – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents – whether they believe that everyone should have access to the voting booth, overwhelmingly they say yes.

It is one of the few issues that cut through party lines. And that gives me pause. It leads us to ask, “Well, then, who are the culprits?” There was a recent study that paid individuals who normally watch Fox News between \$10 and \$15 to watch

CNN instead, and then they were polled to see if they changed their minds on any of the issues. What they found was that exposure to more analytical media caused these individuals to change their minds and to have a different worldview.

Sadly, once the money was exhausted, those individuals went back to watching Fox News. It is an example of what media is doing to help polarize and reinforce terrible ideas of who our fellow Americans are. I would argue that one of the reasons we are in this state of polarization has everything to do with a growing multicultural America, and that instead of talking about using our multiculturalism as an asset, it's being used to drive racism in the country.

There are all kinds of reasons to worry about the media and Fox News. I am worried about the decline of local media. Local papers help build community. Local papers help keep state and local politicians accountable and all kinds of other local institutions accountable. If we lose our local media, our democracy is in big trouble. ”

I say this because Shelby County experienced a 90 percent increase in its Latino population in 2010. For the second decade in a row, American-born Latinos accounted for 52 percent of America's population growth. Yet, three months after the gutting of the Voting Rights Act, twenty-two jurisdictions lifted their efforts to protect the vote.

The difference between 2010 and 2020 is that in 2010, most of those Latinos were under the age of eighteen, but in 2020, they were eligible to vote. And so, when we're talking about birtherism, when we're talking about the big lie, when we're talking about these meaty issues that challenge our democracy, all of them lead to a multicultural America that's vastly different from the people right now who are occupying most elected offices.

What encourages me is that in 2020, we had the most Americans who had ever participated in an election. And the multicultural America – the Black, white, Asian, African American, gay, and straight – that voted in favor of democracy and against an autocratic government was the one that

won. What gives me encouragement is that there are so many millions of us who are turning eighteen that we need to make sure that we're preparing them so that they, too, can participate. By the 2022 midterms, we're expecting an additional six million more young voters who are going to be eligible to vote, and two-thirds of them are young people of color. How do we make sure that they see themselves in this democracy?

ALLEN: I'm going to bring in some questions from the Q&A. First, I want to note a suggestion in the chat from Donna Shalala, who says that if the goal is universal participation, maybe lowering the voting age to sixteen should be on the table. If we wave a magic wand and have universal voting with everybody participating, what else do we need in our civic infrastructure so that voting can be a productive, healthy process and experience? María Teresa, let me invite you to weigh in first.

KUMAR: California is my home state. When we first started Voto Latino, we did a lot of work in California. Secretary Alex Padilla, a good friend, allowed sixteen-year-olds to preregister so now Voto Latino doesn't need to run a program at scale any longer. Our work today is encouraging people to turn out. I think oftentimes we fail to realize that there is modernization taking place at the state level. How do we make sure that it is translated to the federal level, so that everybody gets to reap those benefits?

I think it requires also a deeper analysis of what are the systems that are preventing people from participating. We need a better understanding of what those metrics are. At the same time, the states are doing an excellent job and we don't necessarily need to look outside our borders for all the solutions. Some quite dynamic things are happening right here at home.

ALLEN: That's another interesting thought: universal preregistration of sixteen-year-olds might be the most efficient steppingstone to universal voting. E.J., do you have thoughts on the issues around information, media ecosystems, voter education, and the like?

DIONNE: In our book, Miles and I very much support preregistration and we'd love to link it to expanded civic education in the schools. Our kids took the AP government class. It's a great class that could easily be generalized to the entire population. And I've noticed, though this is purely

anecdotal, and maybe there is some self-selection here, that a lot of the students who took that class seem to stay engaged in politics.

We have all kinds of reasons to want to abolish the Electoral College. One of them is to make everybody's vote matter. If you live in Massachusetts, or Utah, or Idaho, or Vermont, you might well make a calculation that your vote will not affect the presidential election and you might choose not to vote. Population movements will make both the Senate and the Electoral College increasingly unrepresentative. Roughly 70 percent of us are expected to live in fifteen states by 2040 – meaning that 70 percent of the population will have representation of just 30 percent of the Senate. That's also going to wreak havoc with the Electoral College.

Finally, I encourage everyone to look at my *Washington Post* colleague Margaret Sullivan's great book on the decline of local media, particularly local newspapers. There are all kinds of reasons to worry about the media and Fox News. I am worried about the decline of local media. It's far easier for national newspapers to turn a profit on the basis of subscriptions because their subscription base is national and international. But a great many fine local papers are either going out of business, or confronting large cutbacks in the number of reporters they can hire. Local papers help build community. Local papers help keep state and local politicians accountable and all kinds of other local institutions accountable.

I think that foundations, changes in the tax law, and other measures can strengthen local media. Because if we lose our local media, our democracy is in big trouble.

ALLEN: Let me take that as an opportunity to plug the *Our Common Purpose* report again. We have recommendations that are about supporting re-growth of local journalism, and some good ideas for how to work on that. The report also has a response on the Electoral College question, although it's a different one: it's the alternative solution of increasing the size of the House and getting back to a place where the size of the House and the allocations of representatives change over time, as demographic patterns change.

I'm going to close with one last question for all of you from one of our participants. "I am afraid for the 2024 election. What should a concerned citizen be doing proactively to try to optimize a

good democratic experience, neutralizing the poison that our elections do not work?" Let me ask all of you, what can a concerned citizen proactively do to try to make sure that the people around them have a good democratic experience so that we can have confidence in our elections?

SHATTUCK: That is an important question, and there's no one answer. I think, above all, the things that we're talking about here are what citizens can do. They can vote, and they may even, if E.J. and Miles are successful, be mandated to vote, although I want them to vote no matter what. In addition, they need to get more information. I think there are various ways in which citizens can participate now in pushing for more information. For example, there is an effort underway to understand better how the disinformation that comes out of social media gets promulgated so widely. And the very specific effort there, which is supported in

“ One of the reasons we are in this state of polarization has everything to do with a growing multicultural America, and that instead of talking about using our multiculturalism as an asset, it's being used to drive racism in the country.

our polls, is to require that social media platforms provide their algorithms for general inspection, so we understand how it is that people are getting targeted, and how information is getting out there in a much broader way. It's complicated, but there is an appropriate social media regulation movement in which people can participate.

There are also various other kinds of reforms that people can throw themselves behind. One is to develop what we call ranked-choice voting, which we haven't mentioned yet in this conversation. Ranked-choice voting is a way to get more moderate candidates by having a series of choices so you can rank the candidates that you're voting for. It's been adopted by a number of jurisdictions, particularly at the local and city level, but also in some states, like Maine and Alaska.

The great struggle for equal rights – a struggle for the right to vote, for equal protection and equal opportunity, for freedom of speech, religion, individual dignity, due process of law, and, above all, a democratic form of government – defines what it is to be an American. ”

Above all, I think what a concerned citizen can do is research the issues that are of interest to them and learn more. There’s a great deal of information that can be obtained, but you need to know that this information is widely accessible. I think the problem is that there isn’t sufficient civic education right now, which E.J. and María Teresa have touched on.

DIONNE: I agree that ranked-choice voting would be good for a great many reasons. Australia does it in conjunction with universal voting.

Second, we don’t have enough polling places, we don’t have enough election workers, and we don’t finance our elections properly. Long lines, as one election lawyer put it, are voter suppression in action.

Next, we need to make sure that the people who run elections – secretaries of state in states that have them or local voting boards – want an honest count. Then, we need volunteers to work the polls. My sister is head of the Board of Canvassers in her town. She has gone into the high schools to recruit a whole new generation of poll workers. And finally, we need to help people who face voter suppression measures to get around them, whether it’s voter ID laws or other measures aimed at making it harder for them to vote.

KUMAR: I want to remind everybody that our job is to rinse and repeat 2020. Had we had this conversation in November of last year, I would have been less optimistic, but the good news is that a lot of the congressional maps that we feared were going to be heavily gerrymandered have been thrown into the courts and the courts have washed them. They’ve said, “No, you cannot gerrymander communities of color like you intended to.” So, most of our maps are safe. That’s not to say that Texas is out of the woods yet. Full disclosure: Voto Latino is suing the State of Texas, but so is the DOJ. And the same for Arizona.

But for the most part, we want to make sure that even though it’s a midterm election, we want the same level of enthusiasm that we saw in 2018. That means what you can do as an ordinary citizen is volunteer to be a poll worker. And make sure your friends and family are going to participate, because again, it is rinse and repeat.

ALLEN: I want to thank our panel, which has fully embraced the responsibility to make sure everybody has access to their right to vote. We are grateful to you for your leadership example.

OXTOBY: This has been a wonderful program. I would like to thank E.J., María Teresa, John, and Danielle for your time and your insights today, and for all that you are doing and have done in service to our democracy. This concludes the 2106th Stated Meeting of the American Academy.

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To view or listen to the presentation, visit www.amacad.org/events/rights-responsibilities-citizenship.



The Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship explores the factors that encourage and discourage people from being engaged in their communities. The Commission’s final report, *Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century*, seeks to improve democratic engagement in the United States with a set of thirty-one bold recommendations that reach across political institutions, civic culture, and civil society to revitalize American democracy by increasing representation, empowering voters, making institutions more responsive, and reinvigorating our civic culture.

In Memoriam: Peter Michael Nicholas (1941–2022)



Peter Michael Nicholas, elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1999, died two days before his 81st birthday at his home in Boca Grande, Florida. Pete had been Cofounder, CEO, and Chairman of Boston Scientific, a medical device company. He was an important benefactor of both the American Academy and Duke University, where the Nicholas School of the Environment and the Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions were named in his honor.

Pete was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to parents who had emigrated from Greece. He graduated from St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, planning to follow his father's path by attending the U.S. Naval Academy until he was disqualified due to his eyesight. Instead, he entered Duke University, beginning a lifelong relationship that included service as Chair of the Board of Trustees, among other committee, campaign, and board roles, and culminated with the awarding of the 2021 University Medal – Duke's highest honor for service. Upon graduation from Duke, Pete spent two years serving in the Navy and then earned his MBA from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He received the Joseph Wharton Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020.

In addition to his college education and many subsequent accolades, Duke gave Pete his life partner, Virginia (Ginny) Lilly Nicholas, whom he married shortly after their graduation in 1964. Ginny is the great-granddaughter of Eli Lilly, who founded the eponymous pharmaceutical company. Although it had not been his original plan, family connections led Pete to an interest in health care. He spent a decade working at Lilly, rising to the position of general manager for Europe. He was open to new opportunities when he met John Abele, a neighbor with a shared interest in medical devices. Together they founded Boston Scientific and built one of the leading medical device companies in the United States.

Dr. Fred Lovejoy, another neighbor and longtime friend, remarked, "Peter, his wife Ginny, and their two

sons and daughter resided for 35 years in Concord, Massachusetts. He lived out his family life true to his beliefs, with deep commitment and caring for his family, abiding loyalty to close friends, and great generosity in time and devotion to the institutions that he served so well. He will be sorely missed by so many in Concord."

Pete was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1999 and became active soon afterwards. He served on the Committee on Investments from 2002–2010. He was a founding member of the Academy Trust in 2002, serving as Cochair from 2005–2010 and continuing as a member until 2016. At the Academy's 225th Anniversary Special Program in April 2005, his remarks captured the essence of what the Academy aspires to do:

"... [W]hat is particularly exciting about the Academy is its ability to adapt its historic mission to ensure that we remain a vital resource for contemporary society. The Academy's success is due to its capacity to use its traditions imaginatively, while always promoting constructive change."

Pete generously supported the Academy's work with his time, intellect, and philanthropy. In addition, in September 2012, Pete loaned to the Academy an oil on canvas portrait of George Washington by Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860). The piece was installed in the hearth area of the atrium at the House of the Academy, where it remains on display. The original five-year loan was extended in 2017, and again in 2022. The portrait reminds Academy members of our organization's history and also of our great friend, Pete Nicholas.

In addition to his wife Ginny, Pete leaves three children, who also hold Duke degrees – Katherine, Peter Jr., and J.K. – and seven grandchildren.

Nancy C. Andrews

Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors;
Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer
of Boston Children's Hospital

Select Prizes and Awards to Members

MEMBERS ELECTED TO THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Mary Carruthers
New York University;
All Souls College,
University of Oxford

Francis Collins
National Human Genome
Research Institute

France Cordova
Science Philanthropy
Alliance

Christopher Field
Stanford University

Suzan Shown Harjo
The Morning Star Institute

Alberto Ibarguen
John S. and James L. Knight
Foundation

Maria Jasin
Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Desmond King
Nuffield College,
University of Oxford

Anita LaFrance Allen
University of Pennsylvania

David Laibson
Harvard University

Nicholas Lemann
Columbia University

Tanya Luhrmann
Stanford University

Tobin Marks
Northwestern University

Kathleen McKeown
Columbia University

Tracy Palandjian
Social Finance

Kimberly Prather
University of California,
San Diego

Jahan Ramazani
University of Virginia

Jennifer Richeson
Yale University

David Spergel
Simons Foundation

Howard Stone
Princeton University

Natasha Trethewey
Northwestern University

OTHER PRIZES AND AWARDS TO MEMBERS

Larry Abbott (Columbia University) was awarded the 2022 Gruber Neuroscience Prize. He shares the prize with **Emery N. Brown** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital), **Terrence Sejnowski** (Salk Institute for Biological Studies), and **Haim Sompolskiy** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Wanda Austin (Aerospace Corporation) received the 2022 ISE Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Southern California.

Emery N. Brown (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital) was awarded the 2022 Gruber Neuroscience Prize. He shares the prize with **Larry Abbott** (Columbia University), **Terrence Sejnowski** (Salk Institute for Biological Studies), and **Haim Sompolskiy** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Sallie W. Chisholm (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was awarded the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Earth and Environmental Science by The Franklin Institute.

Laurie H. Glimcher (Dana-Farber Cancer Institute) was named to the 2022 Class of *Modern Healthcare's* 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives.

Bryan T. Grenfell (Princeton University) was awarded the 2022 Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences by the Inamori Foundation.

Clare Grey (University of Cambridge) is the winner of the 2022 ACS Central Science Disruptors & Innovators Prize, given by the American Chemical Society.

Katherine High (University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine) was awarded the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Gold Medal.

Mark Horowitz (Stanford University) received the ACM-IEEE CS Eckert-Mauchly Award.

Ehud Hrushovski (University of Oxford) was awarded the 2022 Shaw Prize in Mathematical Sciences. He shares the award with Noga Alon (Princeton University).

Akiko Iwasaki (Yale School of Medicine) was awarded the 2022 Lupus Insight Prize by the Lupus Research Alliance.

Katalin Karikó (BioNTech; University of Pennsylvania) received the 2022 Tang Prize in Biopharmaceutical Science. She shares the prize with **Drew Weissman** (University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine) and Pieter Cullis (Novartis Therapeutics; Integrated Nano Therapeutics). **Dr. Karikó** also received the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science from The Franklin Institute. She shares the award with **Drew Weissman**.

Cato T. Laurencin (University of Connecticut) is the recipient of the AOA Distinguished Contributions to Orthopaedics Award, given by the American Orthopaedics Association.

Yo-Yo Ma (Cambridge, Massachusetts) was awarded the 2022 Birgit Nilsson Prize.

David MacMillan (Princeton University) was awarded a knighthood in Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday Honours list.

Carver Mead (California Institute of Technology) was awarded the 2022 Kyoto Prize in Advanced Technology by the Inamori Foundation.

Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia) received the 2022 Princess of Asturias Award for Social Sciences.

Guy J. Nordenson (Guy Nordenson & Associates; Princeton University) was elected a member of the National Academy of Engineering.

Ralph G. Nuzzo (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) was awarded the 2022 Kavli Prize in Nanoscience. He shares the prize with David Allara (Pennsylvania State University), Jacob Sagiv (Weizmann Institute of Science), and **George Whitesides** (Harvard University).

Thomas R. Palfrey (California Institute of Technology) was awarded the 2021 William H. Riker Prize in Political Science.

Jessica Rawson (University of Oxford) received the 2022 Tang Prize in Sinology.

Carol V. Robinson (University of Oxford) received the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Chemistry from The Franklin Institute.

Jeffrey D. Sachs (Columbia University) was awarded the 2022 Tang Prize in Sustainable Development.

Terrence Sejnowski (Salk Institute for Biological Studies) was awarded the 2022 Gruber Neuroscience Prize. He shares the prize with **Larry Abbott** (Columbia University), **Emery N. Brown** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital), and **Haim Sompolinsky** (Hebrew University of Jerusalem).

Laurence Senelick (Tufts University) received the CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title award for *Jacques Offenbach and the Making of Modern Culture*.

Peter W. Shor (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) received the 2022–2023 James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Paul Slovic (University of Oregon) received the Bower Award and Prize for Achievement in Science from The Franklin Institute.

Haim Sompolinsky (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) was awarded the 2022 Gruber Neuroscience Prize. He shares the prize with **Larry Abbott** (Columbia University), **Emery N. Brown** (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Harvard Medical School; Massachusetts General Hospital), and **Terrence Sejnowski** (Salk Institute for Biological Studies).

Nancy Stokey (University of Chicago) is the recipient of the 2021 CME Group–MSRI Innovative Quantitative Applications Prize.

Darren Walker (Ford Foundation) was named Commander of France's Order of Arts and Letters.

Christopher A. Walsh (Harvard Medical School; Boston Children's Hospital) was awarded the 2022 Kavli Prize in Neuroscience. He shares the prize with Jean-Louis Mandel (University of Strasbourg), Harry T. Orr (University of Minnesota Medical School), and **Huda Y. Zoghbi** (Baylor College of Medicine; Texas Children's Hospital).

Sheldon Weinbaum (City University of New York) received the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Biomedical Engineering from The Franklin Institute.

Drew Weissman (University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine) received the 2022 Tang Prize in Biopharmaceutical Science. He shares the prize with **Katalin Karikó** (BioNTech; University of Pennsylvania) and Pieter Cullis (Nanovation Therapeutics; Integrated Nano Therapeutics). **Dr. Weissman** also received the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science from The Franklin Institute. He shares the award with **Katalin Karikó**.

George Whitesides (Harvard University) was awarded the 2022 Kavli Prize in Nanoscience. He shares the prize with David Allara (Pennsylvania State University), **Ralph G. Nuzzo** (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), and Jacob Sagiv (Weizmann Institute of Science).

Frank Wilczek (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was awarded the 2022 Templeton Prize.

Teresa K. Woodruff (Michigan State University) received the 2022 Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award from the American Council of Education.

Huda Y. Zoghbi (Baylor College of Medicine; Texas Children's Hospital) was awarded the 2022 Kavli Prize in Neuroscience. She shares the prize with Jean-Louis Mandel (University of Strasbourg), Harry T. Orr (University of Minnesota Medical School), and **Christopher A. Walsh** (Harvard Medical School; Boston Children's Hospital).

New Appointments

René Bernards (Netherlands Cancer Institute) was appointed to the Board of Directors of LiXte Biotechnology.

Tomiko Brown-Nagin (Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study) was appointed to ProPublica's Board of Directors.

Titia de Lange (Rockefeller University) was elected a foreign member of the Royal Society.

Jennifer L. Eberhardt (Stanford University) was elected to the Innocence Project Board of Directors.

Hugh Grant (St. Louis, MO) was appointed to the Board of Directors of CIBO Technologies.

Nancy Ip (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology) was appointed President of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

Daniel Kahne (Harvard University) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of Avilar Therapeutics.

John Kuriyan (University of California, Berkeley) was named Dean of the School of Medicine Basic Sciences at Vanderbilt University.

Arun Majumdar (Stanford University) was named inaugural Dean of the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability.

Lynne E. Maquat (University of Rochester) was appointed to the Scientific Advisory Board of RevIR Therapeutics.

Jennifer L. Mnookin (UCLA School of Law) was named Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Janet A. Napolitano (University of California, Berkeley) was appointed Secretary of President Biden's Intelligence Advisory Board.

Julia M. Phillips (Sandia National Laboratories) was appointed a Member of the National Science Board.

Kenneth Scheve (Yale University) was named FAS Dean of Social Science at Yale University.

Tommie Shelby (Harvard University) was elected cochair of the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Ginger Thompson (ProPublica) was elected to the Pulitzer Prize Board.

Abraham Verghese (Stanford University School of Medicine) was appointed to the Board of Directors of Athos Therapeutics.

Tara Zahra (University of Chicago) was appointed the Roman Family Director of the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society.

Select Publications

NONFICTION

Ken Burns (Florentine Films). *Our America: A Photographic History*. Knopf, October 2022

Noam Chomsky (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and **Vijay Prashad** (Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research). *The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and the Fragility of U.S. Power*. New Press, August 2022

David Hackett Fischer (Brandeis University). *African Founders: How Enslaved People Expanded American Ideals*. Simon & Schuster, May 2022

Howard Gardner (Harvard Graduate School of Education) and **Wendy Fischman** (Harvard Graduate School of Education). *The Real World of College: What Higher Education Is and What It Can Be*. The MIT Press, March 2022

Henry Kissinger (Kissinger Associates). *Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy*. Penguin Press, July 2022

Richard Kramer (City University of New York, The Graduate Center). *From the Ruins of Enlightenment: Beethoven and Schubert in Their Solitude*. University of Chicago Press, October 2022

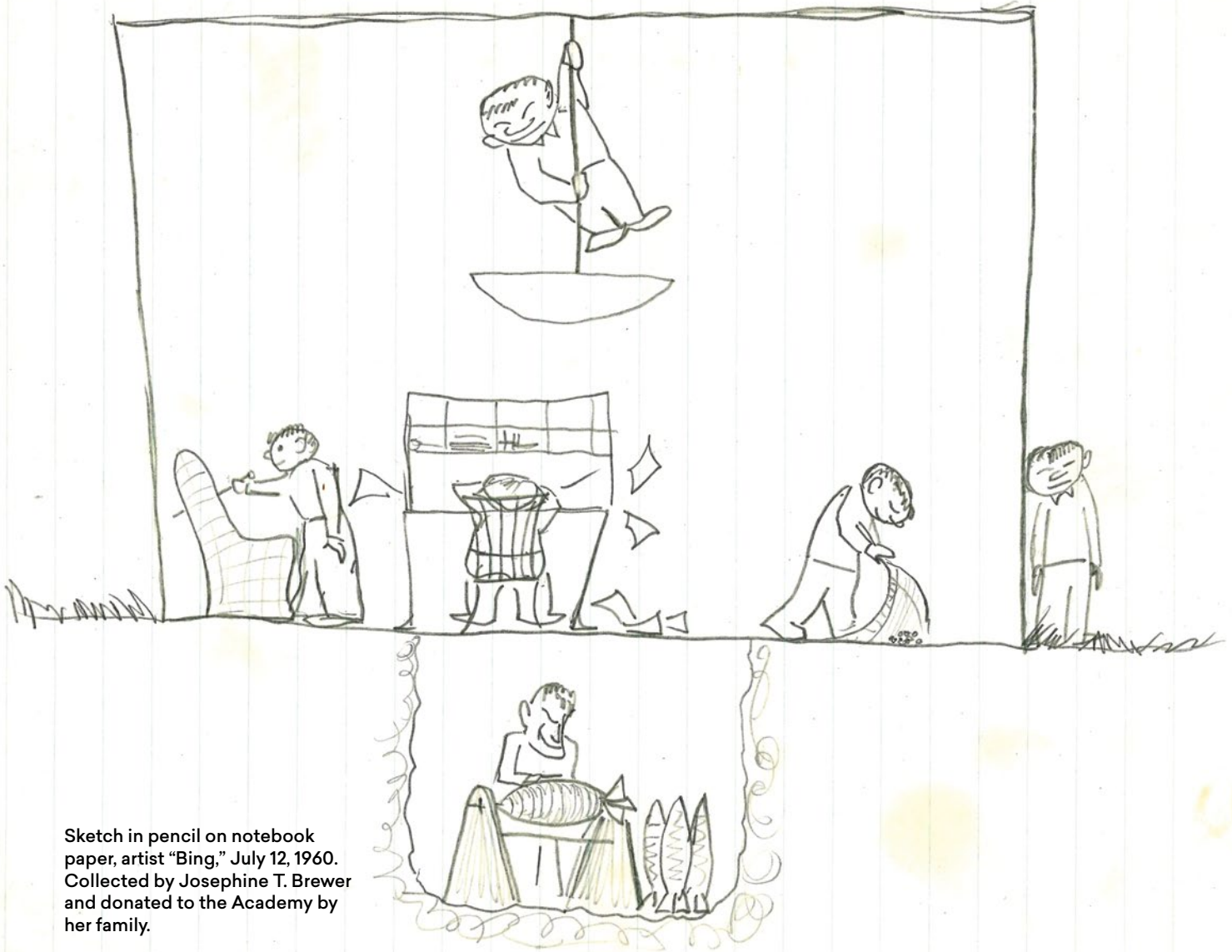
Dahlia Lithwick (Slate). *Lady Justice: Women, the Law, and the Battle to Save America*. Penguin Press, September 2022

Robert Pinsky (Boston University). *Jersey Breaks: Becoming an American Poet*. W.W. Norton, October 2022

Moshe Safdie (Moshe Safdie and Associates). *If Walls Could Speak: My Life in Architecture*. Atlantic Monthly Press, September 2022

Laurence Senelick (Tufts University). *The Final Curtain: The Art of Dying on Stage*. Anthem Press, May 2022

We invite all Fellows and International Honorary Members to send notices about their recent and forthcoming publications, new appointments, exhibitions and performances, films and documentaries, and honors and prizes to bulletin@amacad.org.



Sketch in pencil on notebook paper, artist "Bing," July 12, 1960. Collected by Josephine T. Brewer and donated to the Academy by her family.

By **Maggie Boyd**, Associate Archivist at the Academy

The first Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs was held in July 1957, in a small fishing village in Nova Scotia, from which its name is derived. Academy members Eugene Rabinowitch and Leo Szilard encouraged the Academy in 1958 to initiate efforts that led to the Academy steering the United States' participation in International Pugwash from 1961–2005. Members involved in these early efforts included Hans Bethe, Paul Doty, and Victor Weisskopf, among others.

As part of their work, the group oversaw a project on the Technical Problems in Arms Limitation (1958–1962). In the summer and fall of 1960, the project held a series of meetings at MIT's Endicott House estate near

Boston to discuss and advance issues concerning arms control and to share data on potentially important technical and strategic problems.

Years later, the Academy was contacted by the family of Josephine T. Brewer, who had been an Academy employee at the time the meetings were held. They were in possession of several sketches that she had collected, identified as having come from the meetings by inscriptions on the back, such as "TPAL '60 July 12 Bing." While the Academy does not normally accept outside accessions, because the sketches were a record of an Academy project, we happily accepted the gift when offered. This drawing and the others like it provide some insight about the important meetings held in 1960 on arms control.

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The views expressed in the *Bulletin* are those held by each contributor and are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors and Members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

ONLINE

As shared via social media, a delegation to Boston from Belgium celebrated the election of Belgian scientist and physician Peter Carmeliet to the Academy in 2021. A professor at the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Dr. Carmeliet specializes in angiogenesis, the growth of new blood vessels.



The gathering included (left to right) **Luc Sels** (KU Leuven), Academy member **Rakesh Jain** (Harvard Medical School), Chair of the Academy's Board of Directors **Nancy C. Andrews** (Boston Children's Hospital), Her Royal Highness **Princess Astrid** (Belgium), new Academy member **Peter Carmeliet** (KU Leuven), and Academy member **Michael A. Gimbrone, Jr.** (Brigham and Women's Hospital; Harvard University).

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