



*Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness! / This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms, / And bears his blushing honours thick upon him:  
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost, / And,—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a-ripening,—nips his root, / And then he falls, as I do. I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders, / This many summers in a sea of glory,  
But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride / At length broke under me, and now has left me  
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy / Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.*

Shakespeare [King Henry VIII](#)

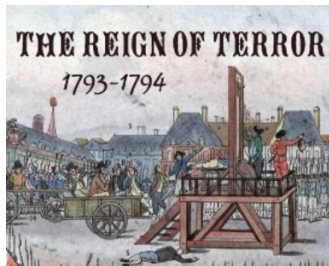
If Conrad is correct, passionate Belief springs from “*the normality of ... place, and time and race*” (what Hannah Arendt called *the banality of evil*). But suppose that all Beliefs - despotic or dulcet according to the feckless whims of time - spring from a common, concordant source: the abiding human instinct for severe dominion over others and the suppression of difference. Then, however mildly or harshly Values manifest themselves, they are, in some fundamental way, always the same and Memory has, after all, no power to change us.



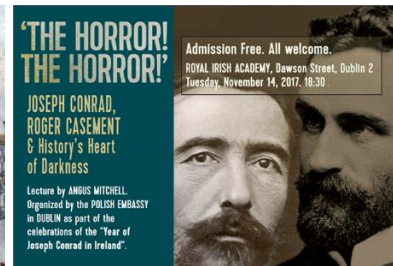
[Maximilian Robespierre](#)



[Michelle Rowland](#)



[Virtue](#)



[Knowledge](#)

*I could never see why people were so happy about Dickens's A Christmas Carol because I never had any confidence that Scrooge was going to be any different the next day.* [Karl Menninger](#)

## [2021, August 4: Last post p.1](#)

More on the King's Two Bodies.

## [2024 February 1: New to My Website p.3](#)

“I went on chattering”.

## [2024, September 30: Unto this Last p.4](#)

Autumnal reflections on how to live.

## [2021 August 4: Last post](#)

### [New to my website](#)

### [Musings From the Lists 1995 to date](#)

*Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to **these Epistles**.*

*If **they** have anything pleasing it will be that by which I am most desirous to please,  
the truth and the sentiment; and if anything offensive,  
it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend...*

[with apologies to Alexander Pope](#)

### [AUS-ARCHIVISTS LISTSERV 1995 – 2010](#) In preparation

These are what can still be recovered from the Internet.

[Aus-Archivists List 1995 - 2002 The early years](#)

[Aus-Archivists List 2002 - 2010 The lost years](#)

### [ARCHIVES-AND-RECORDS AUSTRALIA 2010 – date](#)

These are the most recent postings to the [current List](#) presented serially

[Archives-and-Records- Australia List 2010 – June 2017](#) In preparation.

[Archives-and-Records-Australia List July 2017 – June 2021](#)

Threads include:

- The Fight to Survive (decay, obsolescence, and the assaults of philistines)
- Who Do We Think We Are (what we do and what we call ourselves)
- Recordkeeping (the good, the bad, and the ugly)
- What's On the Public Record ("Palace Letters" & other examples of confusion)
- Access & Use (what we can see and what remains secret)
- Reporting Back From Conferences (impressions of a roving archivist)
- Odds 'n' Ends (a miscellany that may inform and amuse)

### **THE BATTLE FOR MEMORY: ... 2017 - 2021**

*In judging men and things Ethics go before Dogma, Politics or Nationality.  
The Ethics of History cannot be denominational. [Lord Acton](#)*

Edmund Burke believed that memory is the debt we owe to posterity ...

### **The HEINER AFFAIR 1996 – 2003**

*History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it myself. [Churchill](#)*

This is a gathering of Listserv postings from the most savage and unseemly professional debate in which I have ever been involved ...

~~~~~

*FALSE world, good night! since thou hast brought That hour upon my morn of age;  
Henceforth I quit thee from my thought, My part is ended on thy stage.*

-----  
*..... I do know that I was born To age, misfortune, sickness, grief  
But I will bear these with that scorn As shall not need thy false relief.  
Nor for my peace will I go far, As wanderers do, that still do roam;  
But make my strengths, such as they are, Here in my bosom, and at home.*

[Ben Jonson](#)

### **Goodnight, Mrs Calabash - wherever you are.**

<<[David Povey](#): ... I have been working on a collection that brought to mind Hurley's posts on the King's two bodies ... It has been some time since we discussed the strange nature of kingship ... >>

### **2022 September 10:**

Anne Twomey's [article](#) in *The Conversation* dealing with the "legal and constitutional consequences" of the Queen's death is a nice illustration. The answer is that [nothing changes](#) because "demise of the crown" means (paradoxically) that "upon the death of the monarch [the] Crown transfers automatically to the monarch's heir."



The only way to achieve a similar result in a republican system (as in the US) is for there to be a Vice-President and an established [order of succession](#). But that only provides for incapacity or death in office of an elected head of state during their term in office – not for a

seamless transition to a successor (by means of election or appointment) upon expiry of the president's term.

Where a monarchy is not hereditary (e.g. Holy Roman Empire) the identity of a new head of state cannot be known pending election and/or coronation, hence the need for the two bodies doctrine separating the office from the person of the occupant so there may be continuity during an interregnum. If Australia becomes a republic, there will need to be enacted new constitutional provisions replacing the existing mechanism of inheritance with one providing for the process of succession to ensure that the "[King's Peace](#)" does not expire (similar to the ceremony of swearing in a new president in the US).

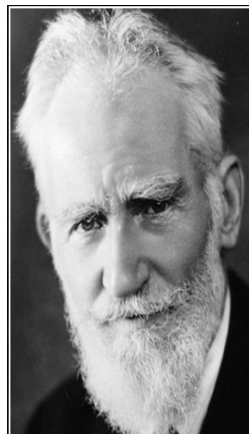
**PS.** In 2018, it was [agreed](#) that Charles will also succeed as Head of the Commonwealth but I can't find out if this is a doctrine for future application or just a one-off.

### 2022 September 11:

<<[Chris Gousmett](#): I would argue that in every case the office is separate from the person holding the office. What differs between the different offices is the manner in which a person is appointed to occupy the office. It may be by election (presidential election, the Holy Roman Emperor) or by inheritance, as with the Queen and Charles. The recognition of this distinction is often signaled by the words "in his/her private capacity" thus indicating rights, possessions, actions, etc. pertaining to the person of the office holder but not the office itself. One way to explain this distinction is to consider what might happen if the monarchy were abolished. The person of the monarch continues, the office they formerly held is extinguished and King Charles III, for instance, would become Mr Charles Windsor, private citizen. There are also the occasional situations where the monarchy is shared, as with William and Mary. This was not the case with Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, since on their marriage there was a dynastic union of Castille and Aragon, but these kingdoms remained legally separate and were not formed into a unitary state until the eighteenth century. Similarly James I was simultaneously king of Scotland and king of England, but he was king of Scotland (one office) prior to becoming king of England (a second, distinct office). So the office is always separate from the officeholder.>>

### 2024, February 1: [New to My Website](#)

As I grow older, I notice changes. Physical changes, of course – weakening eyesight, wobbly knees, hearing loss, mobility issues, unsettled bowels and bladder, irregular heartbeat. One word we old folk wish got used less often is "irreversible".



It is the inefficiency and sham of...  
our schools... that save us from  
being dashed on the rocks of false  
doctrine instead of drifting down  
the midstream of mere ignorance.

— George Bernard Shaw —

AZ QUOTES

*The blossom is blighted, the leaf is withered, the God of day goes down upon the dreary scene, and in short you are for ever floored. ([Mr Micawber](#))*

I live in a house full of books, many of them unread or barely skimmed. Yet, increasingly, I find myself curled up with one I read many years ago – a familiar old friend. I call this



## POSTSCRIPT

bibliographical reflux. Meanwhile the mind, possibly in preparation for eternity, also enervates, dwelling more on useless, timeless, existential questions.

1. Is it possible to eat honey without getting sticky?
2. What's the difference between a nook and a cranny?
3. How many children had Lady Macbeth?

That sort of thing.

Having promised to quit the List, after a brief pause I went on chattering for nearly three more years. The themes are (like old, familiar books) not new but the tone of these twilight tweets is mellow, reflective, somewhat dark. Mostly they deal with [who](#) we (archivists) are; [what](#) we (archivists) think we're doing; [whither](#) we (archivists) are drifting. They say many of them are inappropriate on a List about archives-and-records. This is incomprehensible. We work within a society that struggles with contending views about Knowledge, Memory, and Belief. We cannot detach ourselves from that struggle (should not try to do so). It contextualises all we do however hard we try to be objective. The mind may despair, but the heart (thank God) remains optimistic –

*New thoughts and hopes were whirling through my mind, and all the colours of my life were changing* (Charles Dickens [David Copperfield](#))

**PS.** The answers to the questions posed above are: 1) No. 2) Essentially, one is a corner and the other a crack. 3) It [doesn't matter](#).

### PPS.

1. What is the difference between “jingling” and “jangling”? cf. [The Invisible Man](#).
2. Do [baked beans](#) count as vegetables in a [balanced diet](#)?
3. And (the biggie) [how many angels](#) **can** dance on the head of a pin?

### [Archives-and-Records-Australia List June 2021-January 2024](#)

#### Threads include:

- What a difference a word makes (strife over words and meaning; substituting virtue for thought)
- Neglecting Libraries and Archives (under-funding and the bane of “efficiency cuts”)
- Indexing (discovering knowledge, organising memory, recordkeeping, and Artificial Intelligence)
- Knowing What We Know (misinformation, disinformation, Aristotle, archivists, and truth)
- Will the Centre Hold? (relationship between the archivist and society)
- Miscellanea (a mixed bag that may inform, arouse, amuse, or offend)
- Postscript (dark thoughts)

All the best

Chris Hurley

[www.descriptionguy.com](http://www.descriptionguy.com)

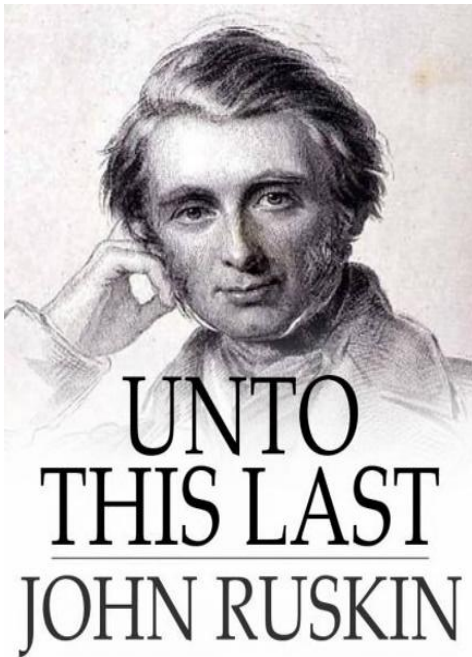
[K.450](#) rocks

### **2023, September 30: [Unto this Last](#)**

... [respect for others](#), equality for all, concern for one's neighbours,  
and an insistence on justice for all ...

... my joy is great to find myself henceforth in a minority of two, at any rate. The Dismal-Science people will object that their science expressly abstracts itself from moralities, from etc., etc.; but what you say and show is incontrovertibly true—that no 'science,' worthy of men (and not worthier of dogs or of devils), has a right to call itself 'political economy,' or can exist at all, except mainly as a fetid nuisance and a public poison, on other terms than those you shadow out to it for the first time. **Thomas Carlyle**



**What Ruskin wants**

That the business elite improve the conditions of the lower classes out of moral responsibility.

Though no socialist, Ruskin proposes government intervention regarding education, vocational training, and more.

Ruskin wants employers to agree on rates of pay for each category of work and give workers more employment security than day labour.

Ruskin was a very early environmentalist who recognised how much human beings lose when they are denied sunlight, fresh air, and open meadows.

He makes clear his great abhorrence of war.

Ruskin wants political economists to focus much more on how well people live.

<<12 June 2020 **What a Difference a Word Makes**: It's become a vehicle for expressing various discontents that is sweeping up many from the usually disorganised (and often apathetic) mainstream and from the commonly quiescent amongst the affluent ... I'm troubled by the enthusiasm because I doubt its intellectual integrity and I grieve that skepticism is not the norm ... You may dismiss me for not understanding the connection between a statue and oppression, but I might just as well dismiss you for not understanding the difference>>

<< 10 November 2023 **Knowing What We Know**: Because I think the referendum was unwisely divisive, I obviously don't believe we should be reacting now to that error by choosing sides in the wake of its defeat. But I don't get a sense of thoughtful reflection about what it all means from either side ... The referendum forced unthinking, benign, well-meaning mainstream Australia to take sides on indigenous affairs (unwillingly, I thought)>>

<<23 April, 2024 **What a Difference a Word Makes**: Does this unfairly taint social justice and community history with the brush of cancelation extremism? No more, I would say, than hatred of Israel is tainted with the brush of antisemitism or opposition to The Voice was tainted with the brush of racism>>

Readers of three disjointed pieces in the *Weekend Oz* would have been led to a dismal place.

**We wuz robbed**

**Invisible Voices Unheard**: A year on from the failure of The Voice Referendum, aimed at re-introducing race into the Constitution, "bruised" Indigenous Leaders are reflecting (without much reflection) on what happened. They were "*side-lined*" they say, "frozen out" of the debate, made "*invisible and swept under the table*". Their work "*was captured by politicians and people of bad faith*" (Megan Davis). Not for a heart-beat do they seem to consider they may have been wrong and the majority of us right. No. It's the fault, apparently, of politicians. They were dudded by Albo and Dutton turning it into a political game while Indigenous Leaders were "ignored". Give me a break. If there was a battle, it was between elected politicians and self-appointed politicians. When Albanese and Dreyfus tried to get them to modify their position in hopes of getting it up, they were intransigent, refusing to budge an inch. Megan Davis was not "*invisible*"; that's the last attribute you would apply to her performance in the debate. Oh yes. they're politicians all right, but happily incompetent ones. Not invisible at all, but **ir**-reconcilable maybe. And the failure to reflect, on both sides, just gives us another one of [History's shadows](#) lying across our future. The

elected politicians can't help us with that; they don't lead us or mislead us very much really: they're too busy trying to adjust their message to irreconcilable differences. The Indigenous Leaders have spotted that once the campaign started to sour, their fair-weather friends began to peel away. At least they aren't stupid enough (like [Laura Tingle](#)) to put it down to racism inherent in mainstream Australia.



The Voice went down in every State and Territory bar the ACT. Talk to them down there and you'll find many of them are proud about that – being out of touch with the rest of us. They're entitled to their views, of course, but if you want to know what's wrong with the People's Republic of Canberra think about that for a moment: those who are helping to run this country don't just think differently from the majority of us, they're proud of it.

**Not just racists, we're antisemites now**

**It's Time for Good People to Speak Up:** *Leaders have failed to speak out against anti-Semitism as the nation's values are attacked, warns Steven Lowy (a former co-chief executive of Westfield Corporation) ... "When protests morph into support for a barbaric terrorist group ... when they say Israel should be wiped off the map 'from the river to the sea', then those of us who believe in Australian values should speak up, loudly and often.*

It's OK to protest but, for goodness sake, don't morph. The words drip with reason and tolerance but the import is that you can't protest Israeli brutality and also be a *good person* for fear of morphing. He speaks with the clear intention of marginalising those he disagrees with on the issue of Israel. He'll tolerate anything so long as you agree with him about that. It's that old, woolly-headed confusion (possibly deliberate) conflating hatred of Israel for what it does with hatred of Jews for who they are. They're not the same and no amount of pious incantation or devious propaganda can make them so. In this way is *impartiality* distorted to mean *even-handed* (with a dash of anti-terrorist rhetoric to deflect the moral compass). These, he tells us, are the Australian values.



**Steven Lowy**



**Kim Williams**

**Abandon hope**

**Niche In, Mainstream Out:** Incoming ABC Chair, Kim Williams, says (with all the caveats you would expect from the mealy-mouthed) that

*the National Broadcaster may need to trade off a mainstream audience in some areas in order to deliver niche programs to boost its arts and culture coverage ... in a fragmented media landscape, it [is] a mistake to chase a single audience ... not the way things operate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century ... the ABC “must provide a balance between ... programs of wide appeal and specialised broadcasting programs ... It’s also about the curatorial responsibility in preparing audiences for the future ... in actually educating audiences about different ways they can consume information – you need to lead people” ...*

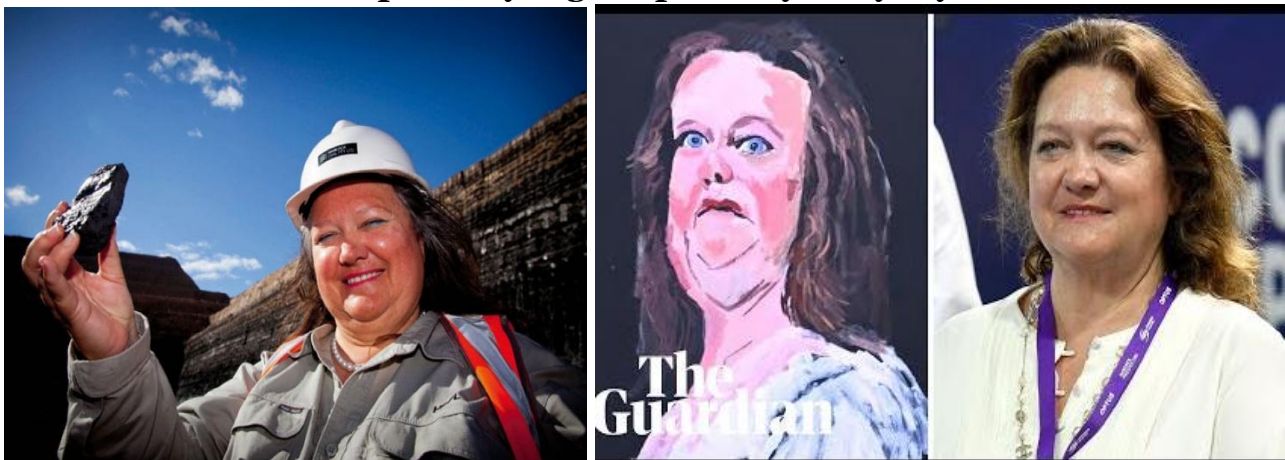
... and if they won’t follow, knuckle under and speak only to those who will. Been hearing this all my life: one lesson for the bright kids, another for the dummies; one rule for the rich, another for the poor; always make sure to distinguish the Ins from the Outs. The kind of division being hyped by Get Up, Advance, and Sky-After-Dark and by some of our less amiable politicians. The people can’t be trusted; they must be led to Virtue (Torquemada, Robespierre, Lenin, ACMA, SAA, etc. etc). Not against arts and culture. Indeed, I think they lie at the heart of **our** brief too. But the idea that they are “niche” and not for the downtrodden or the deplorables – how dangerous an idea is that? Maybe it’s **the kind** of arts and culture the ABC trades in that’s the problem.

If Williams is correct and we live in an age unique for its fragmentation (I don’t believe it for a moment, tho’ looking at the toxicity in the US you have to wonder), then it’s time for the National Broadcaster (and us too) to stand up for **something** - not to resort to intransigent conviction or to cower in uncertainty and give in, making ourselves a backwater and, in a wider sense, irrelevant. But stand up for what? For us it would mean keeping an open mind and not buckling under to boutique special interests (virtue, dogma, and intolerance) and preserving a devotion to our own gods. It would mean proclaiming that what we do matters for everyone, not just for a chosen few. Unless, of course, you think truth, objectivity, and impartiality are emblems of just another special interest.

But I’m old now, and I can’t speak about **us** any more.

**2024, October 10:**

**All publicity is good publicity (they say)**



The rhetoric of *offence=harm* is becoming (has already become?) ubiquitous. Story in [last weekend’s SMH](#) (you’ll need to navigate a pay wall) -

Billionaire miner Gina Rinehart asked the National Gallery of Australia to “permanently dispose” of two portraits of her... [she asked for] the “so-called” portraits to be taken down ...



When the Gallery refused -

... more than 26 emails from Rinehart's supporters ... described [her] as "One of Australia's most prestigious people" and "our most powerful and successful woman" as they called for the portraits [to] be removed for their "disrespectful" and "extremely upsetting" depictions ... One suggested the "insult" be met with a formal written apology from the NGA expressing regret for the "disrespectful portrayal" ...

But the campaign had the opposite effect, propelling the portraits to international attention, creating a surge in gallery visitor numbers and media coverage across Europe and the United States.

Akin all this to those who call you "divisive" just for disagreeing with them, just for winning the argument. Perhaps the Gallery could boost its numbers even further by being "offensive" to Megan Davis.

**<<... "bruised" Indigenous Leaders are reflecting (without much reflection) on what happened. They were "side-lined" they say, "frozen out" of the debate, made "invisible and swept under the table". Their work "was captured by politicians and people of bad faith" (Megan Davis) ... They were duded by Albo and Dutton turning it into a political game while Indigenous Leaders were "ignored" ... >>**

**<< It's OK to protest but, for goodness sake, don't morph ... the import is that you can't protest Israeli brutality and also be a good person for fear of morphing ... He'll tolerate anything so long as you agree with him ...>>**

**From *The Guardian* ([a year ago](#))**

Prominent Indigenous campaigners have criticised the [Albanese](#) government's response to defeat in the referendum ... [following] a statement released on Saturday evening from unnamed Indigenous leaders asking for a week of silence for Australians to reflect on "the role of racism and prejudice against Indigenous people" in the no result ... The Uluru Dialogue, co-chaired by Prof Megan Davis and Pat Anderson, is the group behind the 2017 Uluru statement from the heart ... members of the Uluru Dialogue were scathing of the response from Albanese, [Indigenous Australians](#) minister Linda Burney and treasurer Jim Chalmers.

... Allira Davis – Megan's niece and chair of the Uluru youth dialogue – claimed ... "Our mobs are devastated. And the PM's speech is cruel ... Sally Scales, a senior campaigner with the Uluru Dialogue, tweeted: "... Albanese and the ALP will not accept the lies that we put up with. We have been rejected by the Australian people. Reconciliation is dead."

... The unnamed leaders thanked millions of Australians who voted yes, the prime minister Anthony Albanese, Greens, independents and particularly some "Liberal parliamentarians who bravely advocated for the voice". "Now is not the time to dissect the reasons for this tragic outcome ... Much will be asked about the role of racism and prejudice against Indigenous people in this result. The only thing we ask is that each and every Australian who voted in this election reflect hard on this question."

The vision of Christ that thou dost see  
Is my vision's greatest enemy.  
Thine has a great hook nose like thine;  
Mine has a snub nose like to mine.  
.....  
And Caiaphas was in his own mind  
A benefactor to mankind.  
Both read the Bible day and night,  
But thou read'st black where I read white.

William Blake ([The Everlasting Gospel](#))



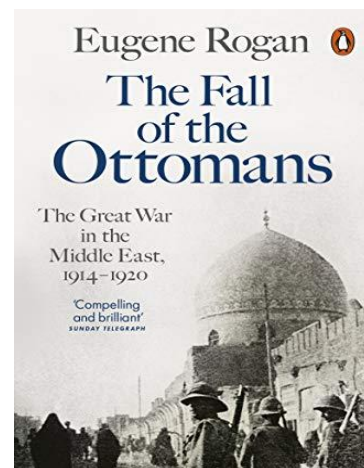
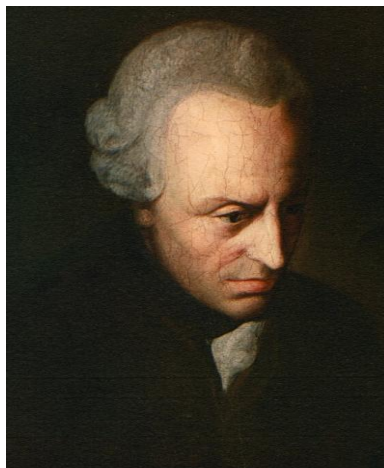
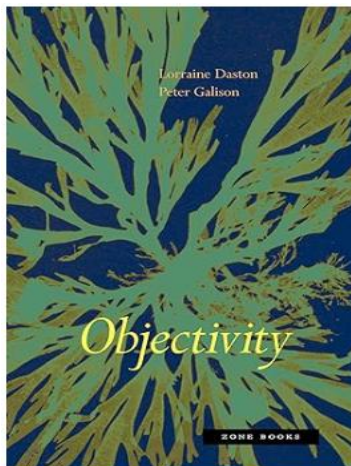
**PS.** I can talk glibly and w/o shame about “winning the argument” because, as a life-long holder of minority opinions, I seldom do.

**<<But stand up for what? For us it would mean keeping an open mind and not buckling under to boutique special interests (virtue, dogma, and intolerance) and preserving a devotion to our own gods. It would mean proclaiming that what we do matters for everyone, not just for a chosen few. Unless, of course, you think truth, objectivity, and impartiality are emblems of just another special interest>>**

The history of scientific objectivity is surprisingly short. It first emerged in the mid nineteenth century and in a matter of decades became established not only as a scientific norm but also as a set of practices ... However dominant objectivity may have become in the sciences since *circa* 1860, it never had, and still does not have, the epistemological field to itself. Before objectivity there was truth-to-nature; after the advent of objectivity came trained judgement ...

The situation is familiar enough in the case of moral virtues ... The claims of justice and benevolence can all too plausibly collide in cultures that honor both ... Epistemic virtues are distinct as ideals ... As ideals, they may more or less peacefully, if vaguely, coexist. But at the level of specific, workaday choices – which instrument to use, whether to retouch a photograph or disregard an outlying data point, how to train young scientists to see – conflicts can occur. It is not always possible to serve truth and objectivity at the same time, any more than justice and benevolence can always be reconciled in specific cases.

Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison *Objectivity* (Zone Books, 2010), pp.27-28



This is a book about the history of science, difficult to approach without more scientific knowledge than I possess. Nothing in the Index about Archives, Evidence, Records or (surprisingly in a book published in 2010) Post-Modernism. The authors do acknowledge a more venerable tradition, however –

Immanuel Kant’s philosophical reformulation of the scholastic categories of the objective and the subjective reverberated with seismic intensity in every domain of nineteenth century intellectual life ... Whether Kant invented this idea from whole cloth or simply articulated a new way of dividing up the world is immaterial for our purposes ...

*Ibid*, p.205

Perhaps philosophers just gave up being witch-doctors sooner than scientists.

Another aspect of Objectivity (or lack thereof) in our world is the matter of **Completeness** and **Balance** –

I came away from Gallipoli struck by how little we in the West know about the Turkish and Arab experiences of the Great War. The scores of books published in English on the different Middle Eastern fronts reflect British or Allied experiences ... Social historians, keen to break with the official history’s top-down approach, probed the experiences of the common soldier by reading the diaries and letters held in private paper archives in London’s Imperial



War Museum, Canberra's Australian War Memorial, and Wellington's Alexander Turnbull Library. After a century of research, we have a comprehensive view of the Allied side of the trenches ...

It is actually quite difficult to approach the Ottoman front from the Turkish side of the trenches. While there are dozens of diaries and memoirs published in Turkey and the Arab world, few Western historians have the language skills to read them, and only a fraction of published primary sources are available in translation. Archival materials are even harder to access. The Turkish Military and Strategic Studies Archive in Ankara (ATASE) holds the largest collection of primary materials on the First World War in the Middle East. Yet access to ATASE is strictly controlled, with researchers required to pass a security clearance that can take months – and is often denied. Large parts of the collection are closed to researchers, who face restrictions on copying materials ... Elsewhere in the Middle East, national archives, where they exist, were established well after the conflict and do not place particular emphasis on the Great War.

... Unlike in Turkey, where the Gallipoli battlefield is punctuated with Turkish monuments and memorial celebrations are held each year, there are no war memorials in the towns and cities of the Arab world. Though nearly every modern Arab state was drawn into the Great War in one way or another, the conflict is remembered as someone else's war – a time of suffering inflicted on the Arab people by the failing Ottoman Empire and its rash Young Turk leadership. In the Arab world, the Great War left martyrs ... but no heroes.

Eugene Rogan [\*The Fall of the Ottomans; The Great War in the Middle East\*](#) (Basic Books, 2015), pp.xvi-xvii.

*At rare intervals there appears among us a person whose virtues are so manifest to all, who has such a capacity for relating to every sort of human being, who so subordinates his own ego drives to the concerns of others, who lives his whole life in such harmony with the prevailing standards of the community, that he is revered and loved by everyone with whom he comes in contact. Such a man Dalton Trumbo was not. **Ring Lardner Jr***

*In the clearing stands a boxer / And a fighter by his trade  
And he carries the reminders / Of every glove that laid him down  
Or cut him till he cried out / In his anger and his shame  
"I am leaving, I am leaving"..... But the fighter still remains.*

**Paul Simon (The Boxer)**