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Ira Katznelson

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Measuring Liberalism, Confronting Evil: A Retrospective

Ira Katznelson

Departments of Political Science and History, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, USA;
email: iik1@columbia.edu

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Abstract

Taking liberalism's measure as an indispensable yet inherently fragile design grounded in the rule of law, government by consent, individual and public rights, and political representation, my work at the intersection of ideas, institutions, and methods to appraise behavior has focused on origins and transitions, membership boundaries and domination, and an unsteady bonding with the older regime model of democracy. Shaped by early and later life experiences and guided by the good fortune of stimulating networks and enabling institutions, my analytical histories of thought and events, primarily in the American experience, have asked when and why liberal democracies become normatively appealing (less closed and more tolerant) and more effective (less vulnerable and more secure). As a political scientist trained in history, I have been keen to advance a discipline that refuses to be enclosed or too crisply divided into subfields, or, indeed, to choose between quests for causality and understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago, Richard Valelly characterized my writing as an “interrogation of political liberalism in the United States and Europe—asking for definition of its many forms, their origins, their strengths and weaknesses, and what kinds there can be” (Valelly 2005, p. 797). This appraisal was on the mark. Across a range of subjects in a variety of modes, I have been concerned to understand when and how liberalism as a political tradition—marked by the rule of law, government by consent, individual and public rights, and political representation—has bonded on decent terms with the much older regime model of democracy, government of and by the people. Propelled in part by the historical shift from divine right to popular sovereignty as the main hallmark of political legitimacy, a transformation that liberal thinkers crucially helped advance, this source of practical reason and political judgment has offered means to place limits on the sovereign powers of rulers and has made states permeable to diverse preferences in civil society.

Neither fixed nor tranquil, liberalism has been fragile, perpetually unsteady, and capable of authorizing rejection and domination. It thus is imperative to ask not just whether liberalism can be secured in the face of determined adversaries, but about the conditions likely to advance its most appealing versions. As both a passionate supporter and a focused critic, my strategy has been to consider what might be characterized as liberal liminality. As I was instructed long ago by the philosopher Sidney Morgenbesser, “liminal” refers both to a transitional or initial stage in a process unfolding over time and to locations that extend to both sides of a frontier, a status that generates ambiguity and possibility. Moreover, the word’s Latin root *limen*, which signifies a threshold, designates potentially disorienting states of mind shaped by situated uncertainties of being in-between.

To explore such situations, especially at formative moments, I have sought to comprehend the character and results for public affairs of exchanges between distinctively formed groups in civil society and institutional sites for mobilization, deliberation, and making policy—especially political parties, which have rightly been identified as the “defining institutions of representative democracy” (Schneider 2006, p. 147; see also Rosenblum 2008). I also have been keen to understand the implications of physical and social space for political identities, preference formation, and matters of representation, whether directed to urban government, as in my early writing, or to Congress, as in more recent books and articles.

Attention to beginnings and borderlands is the standpoint from which my work has proceeded ever since I wrote an undergraduate senior thesis on the Chicago race riots of 1919, supervised by Richard Hofstadter, that sought to make sense of the assaults on blacks who swam across an invisible racial line in Lake Michigan or who traveled on trolley cars between homes and jobs. As the larger Great Migration of African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South proceeded, tensions ran high when black soldiers returning from duty in Europe and keen to secure a political standing long denied found themselves entering a zone of formal rights compromised by spatial, economic, cultural, and political barriers. Although blacks voted with a high turnout, higher at the time than almost any European immigrant group, local political organizations were reluctant to court black support too manifestly, lest they lose white supporters.

These subjects carried into my doctoral thesis, the basis of *Black Men, White Cities* (Katznelson 1973), which compared political responses to this mass movement in America between 1900 and 1930 and a comparable set of migration streams from the West Indies, India, and Pakistan to Britain after 1948. Among other matters, that book probes the effects of the organizational decision by New York City’s Democratic Party to create the United Colored Democracy of Tammany Hall, a city-wide mechanism of political inclusion for black newcomers that contrasted with the more intensively local, neighborhood-based political organizations the party machine utilized to mobilize support from recently arrived white Catholics and Jews.

Currently, I am writing a book about Christian toleration and Jewish marginality within English and American liberalism. Similarly focusing on moments of origins when previously excluded persons sought to cross a threshold into liberal citizenship, my work continues to privilege beginnings—whether for groups, structures, or ideas—in order to understand the formation of patterns that orient, direct, and constrain liberal possibilities, especially at fraught moments that generate fear.

This book is anchored by the story of legislation to naturalize Jews who wished to enter England, a proposal by the government of Prime Minister Henry Pelham in 1753. During the mid-eighteenth century in England, the transition to popular sovereignty was being mapped in conflict between Whigs, the dominant parliamentary faction tilting toward religious toleration and a constitutional monarchy constrained by parliamentary power, and Tories, many of whom, even after the Glorious Revolution of 1688–1689, preferred royal divine right and intolerance for religious dissent.

The Whig “Jew Bill,” as it was called, offering membership to non-Christian migrants for the first time, initially faced little resistance. By the time it passed in May, however, the law’s opponents had begun to mobilize anti-Jewish popular sentiment. A fierce pamphlet war and press campaign erupted, not just about the legislation, but questioning the very presence of any Jews in England (they had been expelled in 1290 and had returned in small numbers without formal authorization after 1655). Generating great passion, the campaign succeeded. The Act was repealed in late November (Perry 1962). Liberalism’s great strengths of open debate, free association, making states penetrable to opinion, and governing responsively with popular assent were marshaled as instruments of bigoted expression and hostile mobilization. Danger proved inherent in the good.

This legislative course captures themes in my empirical and historical writing about the liberal tradition that have recurred ever since my first efforts: population movements, loci of sovereignty, qualities of membership, the content of representation, persisting conundrums of race and religion, and the centrality of lawmaking. At the heart of my concern lie a state-centered understanding of the liberal tradition’s political ideas and actions together with a focus on conundrums associated with deep human difference, what John Rawls designated as “*the* problem of political liberalism” (Rawls 2005, p. xxv; italics added).

MEASURING LIBERALISM: BEGINNINGS AND FRONTIERS

In 1924, the American artist Arthur Dove painted—at the “point where abstraction and reality meet”—a symbolic portrait based on objects selected for their association with his friend Ralph Dusenberry (Kimmelman 2020). Framed with opened folding rulers, Dove’s image summarizes how I seek to take the measure of liberalism as a conceptual abstraction and as a variety of lived realities. For liberalism is a double structure of the imagined and the actual.

Within the academy, liberalism often tends to be considered as theory and ideology, with much effort devoted to tracking the lineage of essential figures in the Anglo-American world, spanning from John Locke to John Rawls via John Stuart Mill together with comparable assessments of the history of liberal ideas in other locales, especially France and Germany. Liberalism also has found a significant place in modern versions of regime typologies developed by students of comparative politics and political sociology, the kind pioneered by Aristotle. For historians, liberalism often appears as a constitutive quality within economic and cultural as well as political life, as a source of conflict, and as a barrier to preferred alternatives. For some, it is a cherished tradition marred by an engagement with other, separate, traditions, notably racism and patriarchy; for others, liberalism itself is the problem, not least for the history of colonialism and the racial ordering of humankind.

My orientation does not quite fit these intellectual tendencies. For my part, it is imperative to avoid either an uncomplicated approbation or a too-simple condemnation. A pressing task is to understand propensities and probabilities. Under what conditions is liberalism likely to be more open or more closed, more egalitarian or more hierarchical, more secure or more vulnerable?

At times, I have written directly about the history and development of liberalism through an evaluation of leading thinkers—including Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, James Madison and Thomas Paine, Benjamin Constant and Germaine de Staël in *Liberal Beginnings: Making a Republic for the Moderns* (Kalyvas & Katznelson 2008), and in essays on John Gray (Katznelson 1994a), W.E.B. Du Bois (Katznelson 1999a), Isaiah Berlin (Katznelson 1999b), and Jürgen Habermas (Katznelson 2012b). On other occasions, I have focused on how figures of consequence in social science have advanced liberal reason—including Hannah Arendt and Karl Polanyi, Richard Hofstadter and David Truman, Robert Dahl and Harold Lasswell, the persons whose scholarship I assessed in *Desolation and Enlightenment: Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the Holocaust* (Katznelson 2003a).

In the main, however, my research and writing have considered the character and fate of liberalism by surveying the patterning of politics in the United States and, at times, in England, within a comparative, historical, and institutional frame inflected by social and political theory. Ever since I first read Louis Hartz's provocative *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), I have been drawn to questions and orientations that later, starting in the 1980s, preoccupied the new subfield of American political development, an offshoot of historical institutionalism. Especially since my remarkable University of Chicago colleague, the late J. David Greenstone, brilliantly elaborated and renovated the claim by Hartz that liberalism in the United States is so pervasive as to be unseen, much like the air we breathe (Greenstone 1993), I have been fascinated by the ways American history can be mined analytically to study the meaning, substance, and standing of liberalism's bundle of concepts and designs. This body of writing has clustered in two sets of empirical and historical books. One trio is rooted in cities—*Black Men, White Cities* (Katznelson 1973), *City Trenches* (Katznelson 1983), and *Schooling for All* (Katznelson & Weir 1985). The other focuses on Congress and the place of race—*When Affirmative Action Was White* (Katznelson 2005a), *Fear Itself* (Katznelson 2013), and *Southern Nation* (Katznelson et al. 2018).

These books are stationed in what Robert K. Merton (1968) designated as theories of the middle range, oriented in the main neither to original idiographic discovery nor to broad and abstract models but to the identification of mechanisms tied to situated observations. Starting out, I found such methodological and stylistic bearings from four major authors. First was my teacher Richard Hofstadter. His call for historians to richly engage with social science theory and methods to advance what he called analytical history is a short text to which I often return, especially when confidence flags (Hofstadter 1956). Second was Ralph Dahrendorf, the German liberal sociologist. His *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* shows how it is possible to infuse organizationally oriented Weberian categories, especially state structures with authority (the possession of legitimate power), inside a dynamic *marxisant* orientation to conflict and change based on the social distribution of authority (Dahrendorf 1959). Third was Robert Dahl. His riveting considerations of democracy refused any methodological straitjacket and went to the heart of central issues for liberal democracy, its institutional arrangements, normative foundations, and arrays of preference and participation in different arenas of public policy. I decided to become a political scientist after reading Dahl's *Preface to Democratic Theory* (1956) and *Who Governs?* (1961), not because I simply agreed with his alternative to Madisonian and populist orientations or his account of political pluralism in New Haven but because in his writing I could discern the promise inherent in rigorous reasoning and systematic empirical research as means to address fundamental political questions. Fourth was Daniel Bell. His essays in *The End of Ideology* stimulated thought up and down a ladder

of abstraction while demonstrating that social scientists could write compelling prose and not shy away from controversy (Bell 1960).

Each of these scholars taught the importance of self-conscious attention to how we inquire, and each valued a wide array of observational and logical tools spanning archival research, fieldwork, statistical appraisals of legislative behavior, the analysis of texts and language, the lineage of ideas, and strategic analysis, insisting, in effect, that methods exist to serve substance, not the other way around.

From time to time, I have addressed methodological issues: in the edited volumes *Working-Class Formation* (Katznelson & Zolberg 1986) and *Preferences and Situations* (Katznelson & Weingast 2005), as well as episodic articles and chapters. These include the essays “Power in the Reformulation of Race Research” (Katznelson 1971), “Comparative Studies of Race and Ethnicity: Plural Analysis and Beyond” (Katznelson 1972), “Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics” (Katznelson 1997b), “Reflections on History, Method, and Political Science” (Katznelson 1997a), “Periodization and Preferences: Reflections on Purposive Action in Comparative Historical Social Science” (Katznelson 2003b), “Strong Theory, Complex History: Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics Revisited” (Katznelson 2009), and “Designing Historical Social Scientific Inquiry: How Parameter Heterogeneity Can Bridge the Methodological Divide Between Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches” (Katznelson & Wawro 2014). The most recent of these interventions has become the basis for a book Wawro and I are completing that aims to show how the rules of the game for historians and historical social scientists regarding context, temporality, and contingency should orient the methods of quantitative scholars.

I also have been keen to understand when and how social science knowledge advances decent political and social provisions. This line of thought has taken hortatory form in presidential addresses to the Social Science History Association and the American Political Science Association (APSA) (Katznelson 1999a, 2007), and in accounts of important moments for the development of modern social knowledge in university settings, as in “Knowledge About What? Policy Intellectuals and the New Liberalism” (Katznelson 1996a), “From the Street to the Lecture Hall: The 1960’s” (Katznelson 1998), and “The Professional Scholar as Public Intellectual: Reflections Prompted by Karl Mannheim, Robert K. Merton, and C. Wright Mills” (Katznelson 2003c).

From time to time, I have agreed to take on administrative roles at my universities, including my present position as Interim Provost at Columbia University, and at the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), hoping to advance democratic reason through the craft of sustained inquiry. With close colleagues, I also have participated in building small-scale institutions that help bring important scholarship from the periphery to the center, notably the journal *Politics & Society*; a Columbia workshop on twentieth-century American politics and society, convened for two decades with the late Alan Brinkley and now with Jeremy Kessler and Adam Tooze; and annual “Congress and History” conferences that have been meeting for two decades, ever since Wawro and I organized the inaugural gathering in 2001 (Katznelson 2011; Katznelson & Lapinski 2006a,b).

OPTIMAL MARGINALITY

If liminality constitutes a central feature of my approach to political liberalism, a sense of precariousness touched by fear has been its companion. I have been fascinated by situations in which anxiety runs deep, sometimes unremarked but widely dispersed. This circumstance and such sensibility suffused my quite happy, and in most respects carefree, childhood. Over time, I have come to understand some implications of the hushed sadness that was present in my immediate family and the locations in which I was raised: Washington Heights in northern Manhattan in my preschool years; then primarily a neighborhood of Russian and Polish Jews who had fled pogroms

until the immigration gate closed in 1924 and German Jews who had managed in more modest numbers to escape the Third Reich in the 1930s; then the Midwood section in Brooklyn, a more securely middle-class and largely second-generation immigrant neighborhood.

The dominant political and social orientation in these quarters recognized with profound thankfulness America's comparative safety and celebrated the contrast between Stalinist and especially Nazi danger and the mostly tolerant liberal democracy in which we lived, which my grandparents, parents, and neighbors closely identified with the New Deal and the fight against Hitler. But this deep appreciation was tinged by a pervasive and quite palpable wariness. I first experienced a mild and local version in warnings by parents and teachers about the need to be careful when navigating public spaces, streets defined by a boundary that divided "us" from an amorphous Christian world, principally Catholic and mainly Italian.

This immediate source of worry could not have been independent of the largely silent but inescapable context fashioned by the very recent murder of one in three of the globe's Jews. The Shoah, which peaked during the year of my birth, 1944, annihilated the communities from which my parents had come after World War I: Bobruisk and Minsk in Belorussia for my father (via British Palestine) and, for my mother, a *shtetl* in northeastern Poland, whose name was never spoken in my hearing. Only recently did I discover that Yad Vashem lists 2,186 persons whose names are variants of Katznelson (691 from Bobruisk alone), and 10,823 with my mother's name of Rosenbaum, who perished in the Shoah.

My parents and those of my classmates and friends belonged to the generation of the Pale Settlement immigrant intellectuals who wrote for the *Menorah Journal*, a publication founded in 1915. Its pages were dominated by three themes: the facets of Jewish tradition that would need to be muted in order to gain a more full entry into American life; the degree of responsibility American Jews should accept for brethren facing perils abroad; and how to engage with the Zionist movement.

To be sure, World War II did alter the place of Jews in American life, drawing us closer to an enlarged acceptance. But the *Menorah Journal* questions persisted. The British were preparing to leave Palestine. The gap between America as haven and Europe filled with jeopardy had become overwhelming. And America's Jews continued to confront uncertain restrictions, remaining guarded and partially segregated in residence and work. This, after all, was the moment of *Gentleman's Agreement*, Laura Hobson's novel and Elia Kazan's 1947 film, about anti-Semitism in New York and Connecticut.

From time to time, I have returned to these quite personal margins, first in a mid-1990s essay for *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, the comparative volume that Pierre Birnbaum and I edited (Katznelson & Birnbaum 1995). I often have reflected on the implications of dissimilarities in his and my early lives for how we think about human difference and the state. As I was being raised at a protected distance from European catastrophe, Pierre, who is four years older, was in hiding among peasant families in the Hautes-Pyrénées. "As a Jew," he has recalled, "I was born into a hostile world; both the Nazis and the Vichy French hunted my family, who, on many occasions and in the most incredible circumstances, only just managed to evade deportation." Writing about a pervasive "feeling of potential threat," he noted how "these earlier experiences linger to this day" (Birnbaum 1997, p. 177).

By the time I was ready to graduate high school in 1962 from the Yeshivah of Flatbush, the parochial school at which I had studied since the first grade (morning sessions all in Hebrew, secular education in the afternoon), I had developed a sense I could not yet articulate that liberal democracy creates an astonishingly positive state of affairs for persons who are sure of their standing while posing difficult tests and trials for those with uncertain membership. This understanding was supported by my first encounters with the mysteries and powers of race in the years between

Brown and Little Rock. Traveling outside the relatively homogeneous bounds of my corner of Flatbush—notably during trips by subway to Ebbets Field before the Dodgers departed to Los Angeles and by bus to the Brooklyn Public Library at the top of Eastern Parkway—made evident the cruel fact that a steep hierarchy of color was not confined to the Jim Crow South, and that black exclusion and Jewish situations in America, notwithstanding similarities, were qualitatively different.

FINDING A WAY

As for many persons of my age, the tumultuous 1960s, a time of great pressure and concentrated public politics, became a moment of private acceleration. At decade's start, I was a high school junior. By decade's close, starting in September 1969, I was a married assistant professor of political science at Columbia, the founding editor of a new journal, and a person who identified strongly with what, in retrospect, was the most assertively liberal moment of the New Left in struggles about racial justice and opposition to the war in Vietnam, also put off by the late-decade turn to sectarian political stringency. By the close of that decade, I had a strong sense, if still inchoate, that guardianship of an assertive, open, and egalitarian liberalism offered enticing prospects for a career with the qualities of a calling.

The time, of course, was intense and resonant, full of danger. During the first half of the decade I watched John F. Kennedy campaign for president in an open-top convertible, participated in an evening at Columbia listening to Robert Kennedy as he ran for the Senate, and heard Malcolm X speak from a platform on Lenox Avenue. Each soon was murdered. The sense of distress my parents had labored so hard to have me sidestep came to feel personal.

Various opportunities took me to Washington, DC. In January 1964, the Democratic Party sponsored a Young Democrats gathering for students from Columbia and New York University. We met members of Congress and were invited to the White House, though a Cyprus crisis Cabinet meeting derailed the appointment with President Johnson (we were greeted instead by daughter Lynda Bird). The opening session bizarrely included a speech on why America is the greatest country in the world by South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, the Dixiecrat candidate for president in 1948, weeks before his announcement that he was bolting to the Republican Party. I found myself asking a question that would motivate later writing: What were the implications for the Democrats and the country that members of Congress as different as Thurmond and the recently elected George McGovern of South Dakota belonged to the same party caucus—a marriage, as it were, connecting Sweden to South Africa?¹

Two other Washington events also had enduring significance for my work. As the News Director of WKCR, Columbia College's FM radio station, during my third and fourth college years, I twice visited Washington to interview more than 20 members of the House and Senate. I returned again early in 1966 to participate with some 20 "student leaders" (each of us at a campus newspaper or radio station) for two days of meetings at the Department of State, where we were briefed on the recent escalation of the war in Vietnam. Canapes and drinks in hand, we had extended and direct exchanges with, among others, Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and members of the Joint Chiefs. To a person, we left radicalized. Inchoately, another line of potential research about liberalism and national security was entering my consciousness.

¹As I entered that room, I did not appreciate the auspicious quality of the evening. I did not anticipate the moment I would meet Deborah Socolow, then studying at NYU, with whom I subsequently have spent a lifetime.

When I had finished high school in 1962, I expected to become a lawyer. Soon, however, I found myself transfixed by magically gifted teachers who revealed other possibilities. Columbia was intellectually vibrant, alive with concern for the prospects of liberal democracy and, at a time of turmoil, with how to connect ideas and systematic inquiry driven by curiosity to wider purposes. I was blessed to be instructed by original, at times idiosyncratic but always disciplined minds. The literary critic Angus Fletcher unforgettably introduced our class in literary humanities to *Mimesis*, the great wartime book about reality and signification written by Eric Auerbach, a German Jew who had fled to Istanbul. The extraordinary Spanish émigré sociologist Juan Linz introduced our political sociology class to the appeal of data-rich theoretical quests to understand the era's most fundamental political challenges. I encountered John Meyer in sociology (who taught an indelible class moving from Durkheim to Polanyi, linking empirical investigation to social theory), David Truman in political science (whose analyses of interest groups and Congress were motivated explicitly by a wish to strengthen liberal democracy), and Richard Hofstadter in history (who in our weekly meetings set uncompromising standards for evidence, argument, and writing). That privileged education also allowed me to get to know, if only a little, the extraordinary intellects of Arthur Danto and Sidney Morgenbesser in philosophy, later to become a cherished friend; Meyer Schapiro in art history; Joseph Rothschild in political science; and Daniel Bell in sociology. To a person, they were concerned, one might say obsessed, with the prospects for Enlightenment values and for how universities could advance them. I now see, as I then did not, that in a university that only recently had diversified its faculty this way, the majority of these teachers were both Jewish and charged with anxiety. With just one exception, Elliott Skinner in anthropology, African American faculty had yet to appear.

Nearly four decades on, as a member of the Columbia faculty, I focused my 2001 Leonard Hastings Schoff Memorial Lectures, published as *Desolation and Enlightenment*, on this generation—on how its members had rejected both a too-innocent celebration of reason and disenchantment with the quest for truth. Rather, they defended liberality and systematic scholarship “while insisting that the tradition of Enlightenment required a new realism, a good deal of repair, and much fortification” (Katznelson 2003a, p. 1). But not without limits. Their encounters at liberalism's perimeters and their witnessing or observation of the attractions of fascism made these scholars overly cautious about the 1960s movements for change, too uncritical about the excesses of the national security state, and rather silent about the country's deepest structural inequalities based on color.

Unexpectedly, my undergraduate period at Columbia was succeeded by three years overseas, at the University of Cambridge. There, the tone was cooler, the demography even more homogeneous, the culture more confident, and disdain for social science quite common. Nonetheless, I profited from witnessing how considerable scholars living within a different political liberalism were conducting noteworthy research on sovereignty (Harry Hinsley), religion and toleration (Owen Chadwick), class and stratification (John Goldthorpe), the strengths and limits of the liberal tradition's lineage of thought (Maurice Cowling), elections and social movements on both sides of the Atlantic (my PhD supervisor Henry Pelling), the complex qualities of democracy through an engagement with Alexis de Tocqueville (Hugh Brogan), and even political representation in the United States (Jack Pole). It was in Cambridge that I heard mesmerizing lectures by a visiting Isaiah Berlin and perceived disenchantment in the late-life ruminations about the Russian Revolution by the pro-Trotsky Marxist Isaac Deutscher.

Cambridge altered my intellectual trajectory in ways I had not planned. By the end of my junior year at Columbia, I had decided to apply to graduate school knowing that I would like to try to emulate how learned and serious scholars saw no conflict between their normative commitments and a methodical quest for knowledge. My first choice, happily secured, was a fellowship in political science at Yale University, where I could study with Robert Dahl.

Fate twice intervened. I was awarded a Eureka J. Kellett Fellowship (for which I had not applied) by Columbia College for study at the University of Oxford or Cambridge. Allowed by Yale to defer for a year, I soon was a student at St. John's College, Cambridge, with the intent to pursue a second BA degree in history for just one year. My supervisors that first term were Hugh Brogan, with whom I read Hegel, and Harry Hinsley, with whom I considered post-Bismarckian international politics. As luck would have it, Hinsley sent me to The Hague in early December 1966 to examine some League of Nations documents. At an Indonesian lunch during the one day he passed through, he suggested I apply to study for a doctorate in history at Cambridge, arguing that I could start immediately on a thesis rather than move through two or three years in classroom instruction ("far more efficient"). Soon I had to choose. I was about to get married, was enraged about Vietnam, was eager to get on with life. I stayed, foregoing Yale, no small loss.

But the advantages turned out to be substantial. Two and a half years later, I was defending my thesis. Along the way, I befriended a talented group of young historians who included Jay Winter, Simon Schama, Richard Kagan, and Bill Janeway (doing economic history in the Faculty of Economics), and I profited from the extraordinary access offered to research students, as we were called, and from one of the world's great libraries. As something of an informal anthropologist, I witnessed the commanding and at least outwardly self-confident scholarly and class heights at the interior of English life, marked by a different culture of feeling than I would experience as a faculty member at Columbia, Chicago, and the New School for Social Research, each rather more fretful and edgy.

INSTITUTIONS

Columbia

Despite my lack of relevant qualifications, I only applied for jobs in political science. Luck held, not least because universities still were expanding, and the post-Kerner Commission public concern with race worked in my favor. With a sense of awe and trepidation, I started to teach in September 1969 at Columbia, a campus still convulsed by the events of May 1968. My debts remain considerable to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Harvey Mansfield, Sr., Douglas Chalmers, Lewis Edinger, Julian Franklin, Mark Kesselman [coauthor of the multi-edition American politics text *The Politics of Power* (Katznelson & Kesselman 1975)], and Charles Hamilton (with whom I cotaught a graduate seminar on race in America shortly after he had coauthored *Black Power* with Stokely Carmichael). They treated me, though I was effectively untrained and just 25 years old, as if I actually deserved to be an assistant professor at a great research university.

My first graduate students were Andrei Markovits, now a chaired professor in comparative politics and German studies at the University of Michigan, and Gerald Dorfman, a student of British politics whose father, an early synthesizer of steroids, owned and ran Geron-X, a publisher of scientific journals. Gerald and I concocted the idea of creating a new journal, soon to be called *Politics & Society*. Launched in the fall of 1970, its statement of intent was assertive, charging that "the leading professional social science journals continue to be obsessed with technique at the expense of imagination, significance, and readability," and it promised to "encourage a variety of methodological approaches, convinced that methodological advances emerge out of work on significant problems" (*Politics & Society* 1970, p. 1). The constellation of the editorial board during the early years included the sociologists Fred Block, Theda Skocpol, and the late Erik Olin Wright; the economist David Gold; and the political scientists Gordon Adams, Philip Brenner, Amy Bridges, and Alan Wolfe as well as Margaret Levi, who was my successor in 1976 as the second lead editor (who later preceded me as president of APSA).

Crucially, those years at Columbia brought me to the South. In Montgomery, Alabama, in 1969, I presented my initial conference paper at the Association of Negro Life and History's annual meeting at the Tutweiler Hotel (which, pre-Civil Rights Act, had been a segregated all-black lodging) at a session chaired by Vernon Jordan, some two years before he became president of the National Urban League. Then, in 1971, I spent much of the spring semester at Tougaloo College, a leading historically black college just outside Jackson, Mississippi, as a Visiting Scholar at its Social Science Forum. My host was Ernst Borinski, a German-Jewish émigré I had met the prior year at a conference about race in Nashville, at Vanderbilt University. He had been teaching at Tougaloo since 1947. Professor Borinski, kindhearted and formal, still spoke English with a thick German accent. As I quickly discovered, he was a beloved figure on campus, not least for having courageously challenged Jim Crow in the 1950s and early 1960s by organizing black and white gatherings of faculty and students, falling afoul of the white supremacist Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission. I still feel the warmth with which I was greeted on campus.

Chicago

Over the course of that half-decade at Columbia, I learned about institutional fragility. I watched the self-confident university of my undergraduate years lose its assurance. Outstanding colleagues left. Hiring was at a standstill. Morale was low. Notwithstanding an early departmental vote for tenure in response to outside offers, I found myself yearning for more intellectual optimism and possibility. I found that, and then some, at the University of Chicago, to which I moved in late summer 1974.

There, I finally achieved what in effect was an intensive and advanced graduate education in political science. During a decade in Hyde Park, my departmental colleagues included Brian Barry, Joseph Cropsey, Jon Elster, Russell Hardin, Jane Mansbridge, Herbert Storing, and Nathan Tarcov in political theory; Leonard Binder, Adam Przeworski, Suzanne and Lloyd Rudolph, Philippe Schmitter, Tang Tsou, and Aristide Zolberg in comparative politics; Morton Kaplan, Charles Lipson, John Mearsheimer, and Albert Wohlstetter in international relations; and David Greenstone, Norman Nie, Gary Orfield, Ben Page, Paul Peterson, Kenneth Prewitt, and Theda Skocpol in American politics. And I had the chance to talk and argue economics with Gary Becker and George Stigler, engage with top sociologists like William Julius Wilson and Morris Janowitz, and profit from interaction with many other faculty, not least Peter Novick and Julius Kirshner in history, Barney Cohen in anthropology, Ralph Lerner and Allan Bloom at the Committee on Social Thought, Wayne Booth in English, and Gerhard Casper in law. Led by a deeply intellectual president, Hannah Gray, the University of Chicago offered a field that compelled intellectual growth and scholarly ambition.

Before moving to Chicago, I had finished most of my fieldwork and survey research for *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States*. But it was in Chicago, especially in my beloved Regenstein Library study, that the text gained an architecture. My orienting question concerned the meaning of urban conflict in the 1960s. Its hallmark, I argued, was a division in the American political landscape between workplace-based politics based on a conception of class as labor and community-based politics concerning urban services and group recognition based on ethnic identities. I tracked this patterning of political identities and conflict in the multi-ethnic setting of northern Manhattan, where the population, some 250,000 persons in Washington Heights and Inwood, included many Irish, Jewish, and Dominican residents, and smaller groups of Greek and African American residents.

Two initiatives followed. First was *Schooling for All* (Katznelson & Weir 1985), which deployed the history of public education in Chicago and San Francisco to test and elaborate the perspective

I had developed in *City Trenches*. That effort inaugurated a long-term interest in policy making concerned with contested subjects, where decisions affect the contours of liberalism in America. Second was a conceptual elaboration of class formation that I detailed in my opening essay on constructing cases and comparison in the *Working-Class Formation* volume (Katznelson & Zolberg 1986) that compared nineteenth-century arrangements in Western Europe and the United States.

My Gramscian title for *City Trenches* and my close engagement with matters concerning class reflected an absorbed if guarded engagement with Marxist tools of analysis of historical change, social structure, and identity. As I was finishing that book, I wrote a review article, “Lenin or Weber: Choices in Marxist Theories of Politics,” preceding by two years my membership on the SSRC Committee on States and Social Structures that sought to “bring the state back in.” That little essay rejected Marxist limitations in political analysis that treated modern states, axiomatically, as organizations with the functional responsibility to defend capitalist class structures and their class-divided societies. This line of thought characteristic of autarkic Marxist state theory, I argued, was not so much wrong as deeply inadequate because it downplayed country-specific analyses that make contingent the relations of class and state, the qualities of class and group formation, or the particulars of a given state’s organization, content, and character (Katznelson 1981).

New School

During my closing period as a departmental chair at Chicago, I was visited by F. Champion Ward, once dean of Chicago’s College and more recently a Ford Foundation executive who had taken a postretirement position as acting dean of the troubled Graduate Faculty at the New School for Social Research. He reported on how a once luminous institution that had rescued leading European figures from Nazism before and during the war, not least Hans Speier, Leo Strauss and Claude Lévi-Strauss, and continued to recruit such émigré scholars in the late 1940s as Hannah Arendt and Adolph Lowe, had fallen on hard times, with three of its six doctoral programs in receivership. The Trustees, he reported, were committed to rebuild. Would I be willing to apply for the deanship?

I was tempted. Yet, after talking with the soon-to-retire president and the board chair, I said no. Six months later, when a designated new president, Jonathan Fanton, renewed the possibility, I accepted, even though leaving Chicago was painful. With Fanton’s lead support, the Graduate Faculty revived all its dormant programs with the additions, among others, of Charles and Louise Tilly, who came from Ann Arbor; Aristide and Vera Zolberg from Chicago; Richard Bense and Elizabeth Sanders from Dallas and Houston; Richard Bernstein from Haverford; Agnes Heller and Ferenc Fehér from Hungary by way of Australia; and recurring faculty Eric Hobsbawm and Perry Anderson from the United Kingdom, Pierre Birnbaum from France, and Claus Offe and Albrecht Wellmer from Germany. These new recruits bonded with outstanding faculty in the existing strong departments: among others, Jerome Bruner and Leon Festinger in Psychology; Arien Mack, the psychologist of perception who edited *Social Research*; David Gordon in Economics; and Stanley Diamond in Anthropology.

My New School years, from 1983 to 1994 (serving as dean until mid-1989), proved pivotal for me, a time of intellectual reckoning and adventure. During this decade, I brought my urban and class formation thematic attention to a close with *Marxism and the City* (Katznelson 1992), a book that called for a spatial imagination and an embrace of complexity, and with “The ‘Bourgeois’ Dimension: A Provocation About Institutions, Politics, and the Future of Labor History,” an article that controversially counseled a reorientation of focus in this field toward the political, especially toward an engagement with the liberal political tradition (Katznelson 1994b, p. 24).

In 1983–1984, the New School’s Graduate Faculty celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with two ceremonies. In Berlin, it conferred an honorary degree on President Richard von Weizsäcker and invited Jürgen Habermas to give a keynote address; he spoke about the profound loss the extrusion of the Jews had caused German culture. In New York, honorary degrees were awarded to persons and groups exemplifying the humane rescue values of the founders. These recipients included the civil rights activist C.T. Vivian, the Maryknoll Sisters for their courageous activity in Central America, and Poland’s Adam Michnik, a leading dissident, then confined to prison (his degree was accepted by Czesław Miłosz).

In late 1984, after his release, the New School presented the degree at a small ceremony in Warsaw, an event attended by many leading intellectuals, at which Michnik suggested that the New School consider initiating a network of Democracy Seminars. That we did, with branches in Budapest (led by Georg Bence and János Kis), Prague (led by Jan Urban), and Warsaw (led by Michnik and Jerzy Szacki), each coordinating with New York, with vital roles played by Andrew Arato, Jeffrey Goldfarb, and Elzbieta Matynia.

These groups read the same texts each month, starting with Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951). We exchanged summaries and papers using couriers and established a series of visits to the region by the New School participants. This custom, carried on from 1986 until after the regime changes in Eastern and Central Europe, led to remarkable encounters; I made multiple visits to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland (as well as East Berlin, where I attended the small Jewish community’s last Chanukah party at the Moskva restaurant in December 1988), which exposed me directly to illiberal regimes and to the chance to see courage more profound than I had witnessed in the West on behalf of political liberalism. These gatherings included, after 1989, a joint session in Stupava, outside of Bratislava, and a magical event in March 1990, four months after the Velvet Revolution, when a crowd of over a thousand filled Prague’s Smetana Auditorium to witness a meeting chaired by President Vaclav Havel to celebrate the brave persons who had led Charter 77, the most exposed liberal movement in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. These occurrences induced me to write *Liberalism’s Crooked Circle: Letters to Adam Michnik* (Katznelson 1996b). One of the “letters” was concerned with the relationship between liberalism and various currents of socialism, the other with whether and how liberalism can recognize, appreciate, and manage human difference.

This unanticipated intellectual and political bounty opened doors. The Rector and founder, in 1982, of the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, Krzysztof Michalski, who had been away from Poland in 1981 when martial law was declared, invited me in 1990 to join Claus Offe to lead an expert committee on the social costs of postcommunist transformations. Our goal was to help local policy capacities in the postcommunist countries. That, too, became a chance to meet extraordinary persons, including Iveta Radičová, a future prime minister of Slovakia.

Before he had left Poland, Michalski, who was teaching philosophy at the University of Warsaw, came to know Krakow’s Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, who, years before, had earned a doctorate in Catholic philosophy. Their relationship continued after Wojtyła was elected Pope. John Paul II asked Michalski to arrange a series of biennial seminars where about a dozen participants would present papers on intellectual themes of shared interest in the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo. I was privileged to be invited in 1994, on the eve of my move back to Columbia, and again in 1996 and 1998—and then at a one-afternoon reunion at the Vatican in 2002 when John Paul manifestly was not well. In all, I had the chance to spend ten days with this extraordinary figure.

Each seminar was devoted to a single topic: political identities in Europe after Communism’s fall, cross-cultural conceptions of time, and, most remarkably, recent historiography regarding the Enlightenment (our host remarked that he knew that these figures were all deeply anticlerical, but

he added that their values and those of early Christianity, in his view, were fully compatible). Each gathering closed with a review by the Pope, in French and English, summarizing the conference, indicating what he believed we had learned, and offering critiques of the various papers.

He also conducted small group lunches and dinners with the different language groups (always speakers of Polish, German, French, and English). We could, and did, discuss many subjects at the unpretentious meals I attended, ranging from the history of Church anti-Semitism and prospects for a Third World pope to Church policies on sexuality and John Paul's impressions of Fidel Castro after a recent 1998 visit. At that year's lunch, he asked me if President Clinton had "confessed," as indeed he just had done. Conveying the status of the Lewinsky scandal may have been my most surprising moment, but not my high point. That occurred, rather, when I was asked to stay behind in August 1996 after the others had said their goodbyes. Holding my hand, Pope John Paul II thanked me "on behalf of the Polish people" for *Liberalism's Crooked Circle*. My parents, then in their mid-80s, found that moment quite wonderful yet nearly inconceivable, as indeed it was.

After teaching V.O. Key's *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949) at a New School graduate seminar, I began to write with two members of the class, Kim Geiger and Dan Kryder, what I thought would be a one-off article about Congress and the role of the Jim Crow South (Katznelson et al. 1993). I also wrote a second article with a graduate student in economics, Bruce Pietrykowski, to track the policy implications of southern congressional power on the character of national state formation during the 1930s and 1940s (Katznelson & Pietrykowski 1991). Little did I know that some 10 years after moving to Columbia in 1994, I would devote most of my empirical attention to congressional studies and to the effects on domestic and international policy of the power possessed by representatives from the country's segregated states, almost all Democrats. I focused first on the New Deal and Fair Deal and more recently on the earlier era after Reconstruction.

Columbia Again

Back in Morningside Heights, I was thrilled to enjoy a fully joint appointment in the Department of History alongside Political Science, the department that had first initiated my recruitment. My colleagues in History comprised some of the globe's best political historians of the United States (Eric Foner, Alan Brinkley, Alice Kessler-Harris, Barbara Fields, Betsy Blackmar, and Manning Marable, who was arriving in 1994 to found the Institute for Research in African-American Studies), British and European History (Susan Pedersen, Victoria de Grazia, and Fritz Stern, then Mark Mazower), and Jewish History (Yosef Yerushalmi and Michael Stanislawski, then Elisheva Carlebach and Rebecca Kobrin, each of whom has led the Institute on Israel and Jewish Studies). And in political science, I was reunited with Brian Barry, Jon Elster, and Bob Shapiro from Chicago days, while my continuing political science education was renewed under the tutelage of, among others, Al Stepan, Nadia Urbinati, Chuck Cameron, Helen Milner, Lisa Anderson, Nolan McCarty, Jack Snyder, Bob Jervis, Bob Erikson, and Greg Wawro. My intellectual cup runneth over.

I still thought my southern inquiries would take limited form, and I mainly attended to other subjects: an article on policy intellectuals and the new liberalism (Katznelson 1996a), the lectures that served as the basis for *Desolation and Enlightenment* (Katznelson 2003a), and other work in the history of ideas, taking in an overview of contemporary political science (Katznelson & Milner 2002), methodological pieces about large-scale comparison (Katznelson 1997b, 2003b), and a range of essays, already noted, about figures in the far (and less far) past within the lineage of modern liberalism. Most of these essays were cowritten with Andreas Kalyvas and, once revised, formed the core of *Liberal Beginnings* (Kalyvas & Katznelson 2008). With Martin Shefter, I edited

Shaped by War and Trade: International Influences on American Political Development (Katznelson & Shefter 2002), a first foray for me into security and military matters, to which I contributed an essay on the military in the *ante bellum* American republic. And with Barry Weingast, I organized a conference at the Russell Sage Foundation that led to our edited book advancing “situations” as basic to success for both historical and rational choice institutionalisms (Katznelson & Weingast 2005).

By that time I had returned, with gusto, to Congress, the Democratic Party, and the South. The white South had sought to be a separate nation. Building on V.O. Key’s congressional chapters in *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, I wished to understand the frequency, content, and impact on the national state and the country’s public domestic and international policies of the “Solid South” in Washington.

Tutored by outstanding graduate students more skilled than I in quantitative research—Sean Farhang, John Lapinski, and Quinn Mulroy, each becoming an articles coauthor (Katznelson & Farhang 2005; Katznelson & Lapinski 2006a,b; Katznelson & Mulroy 2012)—I launched the American Institutions Project to substantively code congressional votes over the arc of American history. Over time, I came to be sufficiently comfortable and confident with this roll call data set and relevant statistical work to help raise questions about the leading scholarship of this kind, Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal’s NOMINATE spatial modeling, in a paper about data and the New Deal with Lapinski and Josh Clinton (Clinton et al. 2016).

As I advanced the southern project, my goal was to address what I long had thought to be an unfortunate elision in Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*. At the outset of his remarkable chapter on the country’s three races that closes Volume One, he commented that this set of considerations only “are collaterally connected with my subject, without forming a part of it; they are American without being democratic; and to portray democracy has been my principal aim” [Tocqueville 1838 (1835)]. Missing is the chance to explore the haunting mutual constitution of liberal democracy and race in the United States.

Three books anchor my inquiries into the role of the South in national politics: *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (Katznelson 2005a), *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (Katznelson 2013), and *Southern Nation: Congress and White Supremacy After Reconstruction* (Katznelson et al. 2018). Respectively, they explore when the preferences, interests, and actions of the region’s representatives were pivotal in New Deal and Fair Deal social policy arenas, reinforcing and exacerbating racial inequality in the postwar years; how the South helped build a national state in the 1930s and 1940s that starkly distinguished between patterns of state capacity at home and abroad; and how southern members of Congress assiduously preserved their region’s racial hierarchy, at no small cost to the region, after 1877. Both *When Affirmative Action Was White* and *Fear Itself* profited enormously from the editorial pen of Bob Weil, a master editor at my trade publisher, and the keen advice of Gloria Loomis, a master agent, both of whom guided me to refuse any choice between systematic analysis and a compelling story. *Southern Nation* never could have taken flight during my period as president of the SSRC between 2012 and 2017 if not for the rich partnership in conceiving, analyzing, and writing with my former student, John Lapinski, and his former student, David Bateman.

My service from 2012 to 2017 as president at the SSRC, a grand institution now approaching its centenary, offered the opportunity to mount significant intellectual initiatives. At the top of my list sat *Anxieties of Democracy*. Chaired by John Ferejohn and Deborah Yashar, and motivated by a concern about whether the constellation of parties, elections, and parliaments in representative democracies can capably address large problems in the public interest, this program promoted research and dialogue about how well liberal democracies are solving the big problems

of climate change, political consequences of a changing economy, and challenges of deepening political polarization. The title drew from *Anxieties of Democracy: Tocquevillian Reflections on India and the United States* (Chatterjee & Katznelson 2012), a collection I had edited with my Columbia colleague Partha Chatterjee (who divides his time between Kolkata and New York) with APSA's help during and following my presidency of that association, based on meetings of the authors in Delhi, Shimla, and Harvard.

FULL CIRCLE

Time presses. In the interstices of my current role as interim provost, I am focusing attention on two book projects, located, respectively, at liberalism's borderlands of religion and national security. The first, noted at the outset, builds on my article "Regarding Toleration and Liberalism: Considerations from the Anglo-Jewish Experience" (Katznelson 2010b), which opens with a quotation from Friedrich Hayek: "Toleration is of course an essential and inseparable part of the great tradition of liberalism" (quoted in Mendus & Edwards 1987, p. 46). My manuscript ponders the "of course" in this confident statement by considering the contingent rather than fixed place of religious toleration within English and American liberalism. It reflects on two eras—the first spanning from the arrival of Jews in England who fled Crusader violence in Rouen in 1096 to the community's expulsion in 1290; the second beginning with the return of a small number of Jews to England and the arrival of Jews to New Amsterdam, both in the mid-1650s.

I first considered this project soon after completing *Paths of Emancipation* with Pierre Birnbaum, but, lacking sufficient background, I was not ready. Over the course of the past two decades, I have sought to build the relevant capacity. During early-twenty-first-century summers in England, I joined with the medievalist Miri Rubin to convene small conferences on a range of themes that concern Jews and religious toleration in the Middle Ages and early modern Europe under the aegis of the Centre for History and Economics at the University of Cambridge. Most of these events were not intended to produce publications, but two Centre gatherings did: *Religion and the Political Imagination* (Katznelson & Stedman Jones 2010) and *Religious Conversion: History, Experience, and Meaning* (Katznelson & Rubin 2014).

A period of leave at the Russell Sage Foundation gave me the courage to write a first effort, "To Give Counsel and to Consent': Why the King (Edward I) Expelled His Jews (in 1290)" (Katznelson 2005b). I then cotaught a seminar on toleration at the Christian-Jewish frontier with the sociologist Karen Barkey, which led us to write a joint article on "States, Regimes, and Decisions: Why Jews Were Expelled from Medieval England and France" (Barkey & Katznelson 2011). Concurrently, a small group of faculty—Akeel Bilgrami, Nadia Urbinati, and the late Al Stepan—summoned a reading group on toleration, focusing initially on its medieval origins; then, joined by Charles Taylor, the group thought together about the concept and its various conceptions. A Stepan-Taylor volume, *Boundaries of Toleration*, followed, to which I contributed "A Form of Liberty and Indulgence: Toleration as a Layered Institution" (Katznelson 2014).

In parallel, I also began to think and write about toleration in the United States. During my 2005–2006 term as APSA president, I asked Alan Wolfe to convene a task force on religion and its political character in America. Under his leadership, *Religion and Democracy in the United States: Danger or Opportunity?* (Wolfe & Katznelson 2010) brought together students of law, politics, history, and religion to probe how this basis of identity has intersected with relationships linking the state to civil society. My concluding essay "Reflections on Religion, Democracy, and the Politics of Good and Evil" (Katznelson 2010a) principally deployed Rawls's writings on political liberalism. I also undertook to write again about American Jews, allowing me to catch up with and find my own voice regarding a growing literature (Katznelson 2012a).

My second book in progress concerns dilemmas of liberty and security. It builds on coauthored essays with Ewa Atanassow (Atanassow & Katznelson 2017, 2020) and especially on the Stimson Lectures I delivered at Yale in February 2019 called “Exigencies: From Impermanent Emergencies to Enduring Exceptions.” Tentatively called *Dahl’s Nightmare*, taking note of fears he expressed for democracy in an atomic age in the early 1950s, the book proposes that with atomic weapons, the Cold War, and the rise of nonstate terror, the situation of emergency powers within liberal regimes—a subject dating back at least to Locke’s discussion of prerogative powers—altered decisively. The Roman dictatorship model, cited approvingly for its temporal limits by America’s Founders and by twentieth-century thinkers such as Clinton Rossiter and Carl Friedrich (who sought to find emergency means consistent with liberal constitutionalism), no longer could serve effectively. How, I wish to know, can we draw on the liberal lineage to craft meaningful constraints and systems of responsibility in the zone most characterized by fear and least likely to be amenable to the rule of law?

Finally, I am devoting time to a new venture, Columbia World Projects, serving as deputy director for its research and scholarly engagement, actively focusing on issues of democratic renewal and inclusive cities while also teaching (first with Avril Haines, now with Jack Lew) a weekly seminar for each of the first three cohorts of our Obama Foundation Scholars. These are young global leaders, often from difficult and dangerous locations, who come to Columbia to consider how best to connect thinking and doing with a shared commitment to diversity and liberal democracy.

CODA

I believe that measuring liberalism is a means to confront evil. Perhaps what we most need is a social science of menace. Much of what we do as scholars in our search for causal inference resembles a famous image by Nicolas Poussin, “Landscape with a Calm” (1651), where only a brown horse is in motion and all else is still. Yet our actual world is more like an earlier Poussin painting, “Landscape with a Man Killed by a Snake” (1648), depicting a corpse being eaten by a murderous serpent, a second person running off in fright, and a third stunned and puzzled.

When the art historian T.J. Clark returned day after day over the course of six months to a gallery at the Getty Museum that displayed these paintings together, the meaning of each was transformed (Clark 2008). As he varied the distance, duration, and angles of his examinations, and as the character of natural light and other features for viewing changed, how he comprehended each painting adjusted, often substantially. Hung with the menacing “Killed,” “Calm” no longer seemed fixed, but precarious. When, and why, their juxtaposition demanded, does steady constancy transform to tremor-charged terror? Reciprocally, when and how can a wild site filled with threat turn into composed decency, taming vulnerability? Questions, alas, without fixed answers, but with persistent and urgent purpose.

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