

Panel 1

Bourne: The Historical View

Casey Blake: Let me invite the members of the first panel to join me up here at the front of the room. Let me ask you if the mike is sufficient for those of you in the back of the front. OK.

About ten years ago, shortly after I had published a book about Randolph Bourne and his circle, I had a startling and, I must say, unsettling dream. I dreamt that Bourne was still alive, that he had not died in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, but rather he had been hidden by his friends in a Columbia dormitory where he was still secretly living decades later. I was not at the time a member of the Columbia faculty; in fact, I was living in the Midwest, and in my dream I jumped in my car and drove halfway across the country, parking right by the campus. And I made my way eventually into a dark and rather dingy dormitory room—this was Columbia of course after all—and there I found Bourne himself, amazingly unchanged since the photographs I'd seen of him from the nineteen-teens.

Now, unfortunately, I woke up in a start before we began the good talk I'd been waiting for during my travels across the country, but I'm delighted to see Mr. Bourne with us today, and I'm delighted of course to see all of you this morning, you early risers. Thank you.

"If any man has a ghost," John Dos Passos wrote famously in his novel *1919*, "Bourne has a ghost, a tiny, twisted, unscared ghost in a black cloak, hopping along the grimy old brick and brownstone streets still left in downtown New York, crying out in a shrill, soundless giggle, 'War is the health of the state.'" Now there's no evidence that Bourne spoke in a giggle, soundless or otherwise. But Dos Passos was exactly right when he described him as a ghost haunting the conscience of modern America. If one measure of a culture hero is the extent to which subsequent generations make use of his or her memory to goad our conscience, then Randolph Bourne passed the test long ago.

Bourne's courageous attacks on the pro-war intelligentsia during World War I would have made him an intellectual icon in any case, but it was his tragic death at age 32 that made him a martyr. Throughout the 1920s both modernists and socialists claimed Bourne's legacy, even as they lamented his passing as the last great American critic to combine cultural and political radicalism.

During the years of the Hitler-Stalin pact, communists cynically invented a Randolph Bourne Award to honor opponents of U.S. intervention in World War II, and I must imagine that that award was quietly put into the files after June of 1941.

In the aftermath of that war, Bourne's name again resurfaced with former supporters of American intervention, like Louis Mumford, as well as former opponents, like Dorothy Day and Dwight Macdonald, endorsing Bourne's insight that total war had made all modern nations increasingly totalitarian.

By the middle of the 1960s the New Left had also made its way to Bourne. The publication in 1965 of Lillian Schlissel's anthology *The World of Randolph Bourne*, and of

Christopher Lasch's penetrating analysis of Bourne in *The New Radicalism in America* made his work available to opponents of the Vietnam War. Student activists avidly read the young critic's polemics against John Dewey and the *New Republic* as a preface to their own attacks on the Cold War liberals in the Johnson administration.

After the implosion of the New Left, radical scholars like Olaf Hansen drew parallels between Bourne's work and the romantic Marxism of the Frankfurt School. Others explored the connection between his cultural criticism and his politics, with a particular interest in his treatment of the predicament of the self in an industrial corporate culture.

Bourne-againists have subsequently made his essay "Trans-National America" a focal point of contemporary debates about multiculturalism and national identity. Yet others have identified him as an intellectual forerunner of the disability-rights movement.

In our own time in the early twenty-first century, Bourne is again the subject of renewed interest, this time among journalists like Allan Jalon and especially, I think, war correspondents like Chris Hedges whose book *War Is A Force That Gives Us Meaning* strikes a dark Bournian note.

Bourne's ghost continues to haunt us then, and we all should all be grateful for that. As Richard Chase wrote many years ago, "We're more fortunate than Bourne because he is a part of our radical tradition."

Over time, after many years of thinking and writing about Bourne, I've come to admire above all else his unflinching honesty about the possibilities and limitations of the intellectual life. Bourne had no use for the complacency and cheerleading that stifle creative ideas, arguing instead that intellectuals should draw on what he called "the deep dissatisfaction with self" that he believed was the wellspring of critical thought. "Is there no place left," he asked, "for the intellectual who can not yet crystallize, who does not dread suspense, and is not yet drugged with fatigue?" Bourne was as unsparing in his critique of his allies on the Left as he was in his treatment of pro-war progressives. "Educated radicals who don proletarian garb to pose as prophets of the people" were in his view shortchanging the very movements they claimed to champion. "The only way by which middle class radicalism can serve," he insisted, "is by being fiercely and concentratedly intellectual."

Days before his death Bourne wrote a letter to his mother about the end of the conflict in Europe. "Now that the war is over," he wrote, "people can speak freely and we can dare to think. It's like coming out of a nightmare." In these perilous times we seem again to be living in Randolph Bourne's nightmare. This morning's speakers are evidence nonetheless that it's not too late for people to speak freely again and dare to think.

Let me introduce our panelists, and I think what I'll do in order not to break up the sequence of presentations is introduce them all at once from the outset. I should say, by the way, that I'm sorry to learn that Leslie Vaughn is not able to join us this morning. We have nonetheless a terrific group of people here to speak to us.

Our first speaker is Robert Westbrook, professor of history at the University of Rochester. Professor Westbrook is the author of the magisterial *John Dewey and American Democracy*, and just recently, *Why We Fought: Forging American Obligations in World War II*. He has a book in press titled *Democratic Hope: Pragmatism and the Politics of Truth*.

Our second speaker, Jonathan Hansen, is a member of the history faculty at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Lost Promise of Patriotism: Debating American Identity 1890 to 1920*. He's currently working on two book-length projects, one a study of twentieth century American expatriates, and another a history of the U.S. naval base in Guantanamo Bay.

Speaking after Professor Hansen is Chris Lehmann, the features editor at *New York* magazine, and before that the deputy editor at the *Washington Post Book World*. His articles and reviews have appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *Raritan*, the *American Prospect*, and other publications.

And finally our last speaker is Christopher Phelps, a member of the history faculty at the Ohio State University, and author of *Young Sidney Hook*. Professor Phelps has also contributed many essays to journals of opinion, including "Bourne Yet Again" for the magazine *New Politics*. He is now at work on a second book-length project on African-American intellectuals associated with the anti-Stalinist Left.

So let's begin with Robert Westbrook.

Robert Westbrook: . . . though delightful as that is, nothing perhaps other than grandfather-hood has reminded me more of the passing years, but nonetheless it's great to be here with them and with Jona, who's a student of two of my best friends and whose work I've been lucky enough to follow over the years.

I've titled my talk today "Bourne over Baghdad," which perhaps makes it a talk better suited for this afternoon's session than our own, though feeling that I had just about said everything I had to say about Bourne and John Dewey, I took this opportunity to extend my reach. I've done so, as Casey suggested, as historians often do, by talking about ghosts.

I take my epigraph from another of John Dewey's sharpest critics, Reinhold Niebuhr, who in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* in 1932 wrote:

The best means of harmonizing the claim to universality with unique and relative life of the nation, as revealed in moments of crisis, is to claim general and universally valid objectives for the nation. . . . The men of culture give themselves to it with less conscious design than the statesmen because their own inner necessities demand the deceptions, even more than do those of the simple citizens. . . . A few of them recognize the impossibility of such a procedure. Among most, the force of reason operates only to give the hysterias of war and the imbecilities of national politics more plausible excuses than the average man is capable of inventing. So they become the worst liars of war-time.

Now I thought one advantage of being the first speaker would be that I would be the first to quote John Dos Passos on Randolph Bourne, but Casey—I forgot there

was an introduction, I should've guessed—has beaten me to it, but it's worth repeating those memorable lines from 1919.

Bourne has a ghost,
a tiny twisted unscared ghost in a black cloak
hopping along the grimy old brick and brownstone streets still left in downtown New York,
crying out in a shrill soundless giggle;
War is the health of the state.

Dead at 32 in the influenza pandemic of late 1918, Bourne was in the last months of his brief life an outcast from the community of progressive reformed intellectuals that had once welcomed him as a most promising acolyte. His sin, as Don Passos said, "in the crazy spring of 1917," was to turn the withering irony of his limpid prose on the rush of most of this community, this community of progressive intellectuals, to join the Great War. As Dos Passos said,

for Progress Civilization Education Service,
Buy a Liberty Bond,
Strafe the Hun,
Jail the Objectors.

Bourne disturbed the peace of John Dewey and other intellectuals supporting Woodrow Wilson's crusade to make the world safe for democracy, and they made him pay for it. As Dos Passos said, "He resigned from *The New Republic*; only *The Seven Arts* had the nerve to publish his articles against the war. The backers of *The Seven Arts* took their money elsewhere; friends didn't like to be seen with Bourne, his father wrote him begging him not to disgrace the family name. The rainbow-tinted future of reform democracy went pop like a pricked soapbubble."

But Bourne's enemies could not still his spirit. The giggle of Bourne's ghost was less soundless than Dos Passos imagined. As Casey said, his specter stood beside critics of many of the American wars that followed World War I. Dwight Macdonald invoked his shade during World War II, as did Noam Chomsky and Christopher Lasch during the war in Vietnam.

Bourne's name no longer carries the resonance it once did in the wider culture. One of his recent biographers has labeled him "a forgotten prophet." Occasionally his apparition has appeared in debates over the war in Iraq, though rarely with anything like a full appreciation of Bourne's dissent from Wilsonian orthodoxy. But since so many on the Right and the Left alike has justified the Iraq war in strikingly Wilsonian terms, it is perhaps worth looking more attentively than we have yet to the ghost of what Dos Passos called "[t]his little sparrowlike man" as we consider their arguments. Hence my title "Bourne over Baghdad."

Bourne's wartime attack on Dewey is often said to have marked a break with Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, which he had once enthusiastically shared. But I've contended it did not. Rather Bourne demanded that Dewey and other progressive intellectuals provide him with the compelling pragmatist's case for American intervention in the war, that is, a good argument that would demonstrate that war was an effective means to the democratic ends that they sought and that he shared

with them. When none was forthcoming Bourne instead made a pragmatist's case against intervention, one cast within the framework for ethical deliberation that he had learned from Dewey; that is, he turned Dewey's own "logic of practical judgment," as Dewey called it, on the illogic of the judgments that Dewey made about the war. Bourne's argument fell on deaf ears, but it was nonetheless a powerful one.

In a brilliant article entitled "The Collapse of American Strategy," published in August 1917, Bourne argued that if the end for which the United States entered the war was, as Wilsonians claimed, the creation of an international order that would prevent the recurrence of world war, it was worth asking, if one was a pragmatist, how entering the war was to serve, and since April it had served, as a means to this end. The country entered the war in the face of the resumption of German submarine attacks, pro-war progressives argued, not to secure an Allied victory but to prevent a German victory and secure a negotiated "peace without victory" which could serve as the basis of the international organization necessary to prevent future conflicts.

At the time, Bourne said what he called "realistic pacifists" like himself had argued for the use of naval force to keep the shipping lanes free, a policy of "armed neutrality," he said, aimed directly at the submarine problem. If it was successful in rendering submarine warfare ineffectual, such a policy might have convinced the Germans that they could not win, while at the same time it might preserve the possibility of a negotiated settlement mediated by the United States.

By entering the war the United States lost any leverage it may have had for securing "peace without victory," and instead indeed lifted the hopes of the Allies for a "knockout blow" against the Germans. If American participation in the war was supposed to liberalize the war aims of the Allies it had, Bourne argued, been a miserable failure. Instead American war aims themselves had been transformed. The nation had been effectively enlisted on behalf of the reactionary goal of an Allied "peace with victory." And, he said, "American liberals who urged the nation to war are therefore suffering the humiliation of seeing their liberal strategy for peace transformed into a strategy for a prolonged war."

Devastating as Bourne's criticism of the strategy of the Wilson administration was, his essays were even more damning of the even greater shortsightedness of Dewey and other left-Wilsonian intellectuals and New Republicans, a reference to the magazine the *New Republic*, who hoped to turn Wilson's war to ends far more radical than any contemplated by Wilson, let alone Colonel House. Moved by Wilson's rhetoric, these progressives defended American intervention in the war on the grounds that it would provide a unique opportunity to reorganize the world into a radically democratic social order.

"Industrial democracy is on the way," Dewey told a *New York World* reporter in July 1917. "The rule of the Workmen and the Soldiers will not be confined to Russia; it will spread through Europe; and this means that the domination of all upper classes, even what we have been knowing as 'respectable society,' is at an end." This was, to say the least, poor prophecy, the result not of the informed judgment that Dewey's ethics required but what he himself called "footless desires." As Bourne said, "The 'liberals' who claim a realistic and pragmatic attitude in politics have disappointed us in setting up and then clinging wistfully to the belief that our war could get itself

justified for an idealistic flavor, or at least for a world-renovating purpose. . . . If these realists had had time in the hurry and scuffle of events to turn their philosophy on themselves, they might have seen how thinly disguised a rationalization this was of their emotional undertow."

As some have already suggested today, one cannot reread Bourne's war essays today and not be taken by their pertinence to the current war in Iraq. Once more we are assailed by Wilsonian rhetoric from the White House, evermore so since the prewar claim of a threat to American national security posed by Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction has collapsed. Scrambling to cloud the public memory of the principal American war aims he articulated before the conflict began, George W. Bush has reinvented the war as one designed primarily to free the Iraqi people and build a model democracy in the Middle East. A war to destroy an adversarial regime purported armed with dangerous and imminently threatening weapons and allied with terrorists who slaughtered American civilians is now justified retroactively as a war that aimed to destroy Saddam Hussein's regime as such, weapons or no weapons, al Qaeda alliances or not, and supplant it with a model liberal-capitalist democracy, a legitimization that was a hard sell at home and abroad before the war began.

As Ronald Steel says, ". . . Wilson has been invoked as the patron saint of the Iraq war." On the face of it Wilson's commitment to national self-determination and international organizations makes this seem peculiar, but as Steel says, Wilson's overriding goal was that of "constructing the world according to American principles." He sought to protect, he said, Wilson said, "the rights of peoples and the rights of free nations," suggesting that nations that were unfree by his lights, such as Mexico, were another matter. His internationalism was a means to "remodel the world on American lines," and only useful insofar as it proved effective to this end. Hence, one of our own New Republicans, again referring to the journal, Lawrence Kaplan, was guilty only of hyperbole when he declared that Bush II is the most Wilsonian president since Wilson himself.

But I suspect that if Bourne's ghost hovers around us he has his eye less on Bush or on the neoconservative right Wilsonians than on our own left Wilsonians; that is, it is less William Kristol, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz who would interest him than the likes of Paul Berman, Christopher Hitchens, and Michael Ignatieff, left-wing intellectuals who echo the arguments of Dewey and other pro-war progressives as they rush to support the war in Iraq as above all a war for human rights and liberal democracy in the face of tyranny.

These intellectuals have no need belatedly to move humanitarian regime change to the top of the list of their war aims, since it was there from the start. Long before Bush grabbed for a fallback *ex post facto* rendering of the war as a human-rights intervention, they were asking, as Ignatieff put it, "Who seriously believes 25 million Iraqis would not be better off if Saddam were overthrown?" Since this was a question difficult to answer in the negative, one has to ask whether Bourne had anything to say that might inform the thinking of those such as myself who hold no brief for Saddam Hussein and are glad he is now behind bars, and yet remain as troubled by the military humanism that seeks to legitimate the war that put him there as Bourne was by the "military humanism" of Dewey and others of his time, however much he sympathized with their ends.

The shortcomings of the arguments of the military humanists for humanitarian intervention in Iraq are manifold, but I can't address them here in full. Let me stick to the more limited question at hand: What might Randolph Bourne's essays attacking the left-Wilsonian intellectuals of his day contribute to a critical assessment of the pro-war stance of our own left Wilsonians? At least three things, I would suggest.

First, one cannot observe Berman, Hitchens, and Ignatieff marching to war arm in arm with Rumsfeld, Cheney, and Rove without recalling Bourne's acid comment on the strange bedfellows Dewey and other pro-war intellectuals had made in 1917. "Only in a world where irony was dead," he wrote, "could an intellectual class enter war at the head of such illiberal cohorts in the avowed cause of world-liberalism and world-democracy." To be sure, our left Wilsonians have been made uneasy by this alliance, but Ignatieff argues that one should not be criticized for "the company you keep" in this case since "[o]pposing the war doesn't make you an anti-globalist, an anti-Semite or an anti-American, any more than supporting the war makes you" a Cheney conservative or "an apologist for American imperialism." But Ignatieff and his left-Wilsonian comrades are not merely "keeping company" with the Bush administration, they are relying on it, as Dewey was relying on the Wilson administration to serve their purposes. They hope to make it their instrument.

Wilsonianism rests on the supposed coincidence of American power and international human rights. The United States is best served when people everywhere are free, and people everywhere benefit from the exercise of American power because it aims to make them free. American exceptionalism renders American hegemony, even American imperialism, benign. Right Wilsonians see the promotion of human rights as a means to ensuring the preponderance of American power. Left Wilsonians see a preponderance of American power as a means to promote global human rights. But since it is the right Wilsonians who are in charge, the left Wilsonians have to hope for a coincidence of their ends with the means employed by their allies, allies whose human rights and democratization record is, shall I say, unimpressive. For much of the world the iconic representation of the war in Iraq is not the falling statue of Saddam Hussein, but a photograph of an Iraqi prisoner in American custody in the very torture chamber Saddam employed, standing hooded and half naked on a box with electrical wire attached to his fingers. This should give left Wilsonians pause, Bourne might well say.

The photographs from the Abu Ghraib prison bring to mind another important, second important, feature of Bourne's war essays, his repeated warnings about the unpredictable and uncontrollable consequences of employing what he called repeatedly *war technique*, the war technique. War, he said, "determines its own end—victory, and government crushes out automatically all forces that deflect, or threaten to deflect, energy from the path of organization to that end. All governments will act in this way, the most democratic as well as the most autocratic. . . . Willing war means willing all the evils that are organically bound up with it." War, even a just war for human rights, is likely to abridge human rights, which is why most human-rights advocates place so much strictures on the use of military force for purposes of humanitarian intervention. The war in Iraq violated these strictures, which left Wilsonians, no less than right Wilsonians, have treated with cavalier disdain.

Finally, Bourne warns us of the dangers of putting human rights in the hands of the

state, which he capitalized, capitalized *State*, even a state as putatively different from others as the United States. His famous refrain, "War is the health of the State" reflected his understanding of the state, as he put it, as "essentially a concept of power, of competition; it signifies a group in its aggressive aspects. And we have the misfortune of being born not only into a country but into a State International politics is a 'power politics' because it is a relation of States and that is what States infallibly and calamitously are, huge aggregations of human and industrial force that may be hurled against each other in war."

Something like this understanding of the state explains why most human-rights advocates are reluctant to call on state power to protect human rights. Like war, which is its favorite instrument, the state will most likely than not ride roughshod over human rights at home and abroad. And, as Reinhold Niebuhr noted, the state, most especially the American state, will nonetheless often cloak its quest for power in the high-minded language of a universalist ethic of human dignity.

The right Wilsonians in the Bush administration have been refreshingly candid about their imperial ambitions. Their aim is to extend American global hegemony, and they have articulated a radical doctrine of "preventive war" to that end. Left Wilsonians have been made uneasy, as I say, by this naked imperialism, but they have swallowed it. Indeed they have in effect added an equally radical corollary of their own to the Bush doctrine. Against the conventions of international law and the tenets of just-war theory they argue that the overthrow of a tyrannical regime is grounds for unilateral humanitarian intervention by the United States; that is, they call for the U.S. to foster what might be called *revolution from without* in other nations whenever prudent. This doctrine makes the state of the United States the arbiter of the domestic politics for the rest of the world, the judge, jury, and executioner of all regimes that fail to meet its liberal democratic standards, standards it claims are universal. This, I would say, is American exceptionalism with a literal vengeance.

Pragmatists' ethics of the sort Bourne practiced and Dewey portrayed during World War I does not promise certainty, it offers no moral algorithms, it hopes for conviction and consensus, but it not surprised when moral deliberation produces disjunctive agreements, regretful answers, tragic choices, or persistent disagreements. Hence I cannot with confidence say that a good pragmatist's ethical argument could not be offered for the invasion of Iraq, though I know of none that has. Certainly none has been forthcoming from a prominent right or left Wilsonian, both of whom insist that removing Saddam from power involved no moral questions, only prudential ones. As moralists, both right and left Wilsonians betray a rigid ethical certainty reminiscent of, well, Woodrow Wilson.

It is perhaps noteworthy nonetheless that both Richard Rorty, the leading pragmatist of our time, and Jürgen Habermas, a German philosopher whose work is deeply indebted to American pragmatism, have strongly opposed the war. The worldview of both of these philosophers is shadowed and shaped by the horrors of Hitler and Stalin. Neither can be accused of an indifference to tyranny. And though Habermas has declared that in the war "the normative authority of the United States lies in ruins," this is a judgment for him filled with regret, even sorrow. Neither Habermas nor Rorty can be accused of reflex anti-Americanism, nor for that matter can the ghost of Randolph Bourne.

Thank you.

Jonathan Hansen: I want to begin by thanking Allan Jalon for including me in this event, and for his marvelous introduction. And, as a preemptive strike at the ghost among us, although to my relief I don't see him here, I want to testify to my great admiration for Bourne. But my sense is that we best honor Bourne by subjecting him to the sort of criticism he would undoubtedly inflict on us.

The United States' rise to imperial status at the turn of the twentieth century raised a series of troubling questions about the relationship between democracy and political and economic development. These questions provoked responses from, among others, Randolph Bourne and William James, the philosopher whose posthumous endorsement Bourne craved. Bourne and James's responses to the questions of America's role in the world speaks suggestively to the current concern about U.S. imperialism, and the interest in transnationalism, globalization, and the frontier as arenas of cultural contact.

Scrutiny of Bourne's writing on transnationalism and the frontier is fought with tension, yielding only *some* of the egalitarian and ecumenical spirit for which he continues to be touted in scholarly literature, a disjunction that warrants examination. Scrutiny of James's writing on American imperialism, by contrast, yields a model of cultural inquiry rooted in epistemological humility that seems capable of, at the very least, exposing American global arrogance for what it is.

Having once occupied the advance guard of transnational thinking, Bourne and James proved themselves to have been ineluctably caught up in what makes the concepts of the frontier and transnationalism both alluring and problematic. On the one hand, the pluralism, contingency, and boundlessness that they imply, on the other, the romance and naïveté they induce. From Bourne particularly we discern the danger of turning analytic tools, like the transnational and the frontier, into fetishes and truncheons. From James we learn that the measure of such tools will be their potential not to displace alternative ways of illuminating experience, national history for instance, but to eliminate experience hitherto obscured.

Historian Ian Tyrell observed over a decade ago that undergirding Bourne's transnationalism was a belief in American exceptionalism that verged on cultural imperialism. Undergirding Bourne's exceptionalism in turn was the logic of the frontier, which induced in Bourne, as in so many of his compatriots, a romanticized understanding of American history, blind to irony and innumerable homegrown incidences of oppression.

As everybody here knows, in summer 1916 Bourne published "Trans-National America," in which he marveled at hyphenated English-Americans lamenting immigrants' provincialism. Far from promoting assimilation, Anglo-American chauvinism had the paradoxical effect of encouraging a cultural particularism, a development that Bourne viewed not as evidence of a failure of American democracy, but as a sign of its enduring strength. The unintended consequences of nativism inspired Bourne to contemplate "what Americanism might really mean." Bourne viewed America as "a wandering star in the sky, dominated by two colossal constellations of [European] states." He hoped the nation might "work out some position of her own, some life of being in, yet not quite of, this seething and embroiled European world."

In contrast to contemporary transnationalists, Bourne insisted that the point was not to jettison nationalism but to redeem nationalism from nativism by displacing the modifier in Anglo-America. In the U.S., all citizens were foreign-born, all arrive seeking liberty and opportunity, all proved equally reluctant to surrender Old World traditions. To insist that Anglo-Saxons possessed a unique predilection to democracy and liberty was to misinterpret both the nature of mankind and the significance of the saga unfolding on the American frontier. For it was the frontier in Bourne's analysis, not Anglo-Saxon political inheritance, that made America unique. Inanimate and inert, all potential and free from prejudice, the frontier constituted a universal public sphere. On the frontier, national cultures combined with nature to produce "a democratic cooperation in determining ideals and purposes in industrial and social conditions." Skeptics need only compare "the great 'alien' states of Wisconsin and Minnesota" to the American South to comprehend the frontier's transforming force. Notwithstanding the nativists' best efforts, America was becoming the arena of a "thrilling and bloodless battle of cultures, distinct but cooperating to the greater glory and benefit, not only of themselves, but of all the native Americanism around them." If citizens would cultivate this "world federation in miniature," America might lead the way out of the devastating cycle of nationalist wars.

Bourne returned to the subject of the frontier in "The State," (1919) which, while ostensibly exposing the deep strain of mythology informing United States history, perpetrated some mythmaking of its own. Missing from accounts of U.S. history was what Bourne called "the shockingly undemocratic origins of the American state." Beholden to elite institutions, historians eschewed unpalatable truth for patriotic myth and legend." A distinction between *country* (or *nation*) and *state* informs this discussion. To Bourne, state represents the influences of an elite elevated to power by the U.S. Constitution; country, the "inescapable group into which we are born and which makes us its particular kind of citizen of the world." Where the state was inescapably coercive, country was innately creative. Hence, according to Bourne, it was the country, not the state, that loosed its energy on the American frontier. "The history of America as a country is quite different from America as a state," Bourne wrote. Countryhood comprised "the drama of the pioneering conquest of the land, the growth of wealth and the ways in which it was used, the enterprise of education, and the carrying out of spiritual ideas, the struggle of economic classes." By contrast, statehood involved "playing a part in the world, making war, obstructing international trade, preventing itself from being split into pieces, punishing those citizens whom society agrees are offensive and collecting money to pay for it all."

This reading of westward expansion is notable for discounting the nexus between violence, exploitation, and economic development, and for discounting the state's role in vanquishing the frontier. Read in conjunction with "The State," Bourne's enthusiasm in "Transnational America" for "the forward-looking drive of a colonial empire" takes on an ominous character, consistent with a triumphalism of Bourne's nativist adversaries.

And indeed Bourne shared much of his adversaries' blindness. He yearned that America might develop an indigenous aesthetic tradition capable of garnering the respect of European cultural elites. In the name of cultural originality, Bourne encouraged imitation by excluding from his beloved community legions of Americans who did not conform to his static notion of cultural authenticity. Blasting the "fringe"

elements of American cultural groups, he neglected not only the hidden reservoirs of aspiration or "eagerness", as William James would call them, that constitute individuality, but also the social and political forces that thrust individuals toward the cultural margins in the first place. Bourne's writing betrays condescension, not unlike that which Jane Addams detected among civil service bureaucrats. Exalting the core, Bourne execrated the periphery: "those hordes of men and women without a spiritual country, cultural outlaws without taste, without standard but those of the mob."

In an era of increasing sensitivity to cultural distinctions, Bourne's transnationalism lagged. Where James would caution Americans against judging foreign cultures on the basis of local norms, Bourne did not waver when describing the salutary potential of his transnational ideal on "the laggard peoples" of southeastern Europe. Anglo-Americans need not fear for the loyalty of America's migratory communities," Bourne suggested, for while they often took their earnings back to the old country they inevitably returned with a critical appreciation of, "the superiority of American organization to the primitive living around them."

To James such appreciation would've seemed unfortunate. James hoped America might export a democratic spirit, not a specific model of democratic organization, much less a cultural or commercial type. James would've recognized great irony in Bourne defending cultural pluralism at home while celebrating the process by which all of Europe was becoming America.

James himself participated infrequently in nineteenth century political debates. He became politically active in the 1890s, a decade devastating to the labor and civil-rights movements. In the face of mounting inequality at home and exploitation abroad, James criticized Americans' tendency to equate liberty with material wealth. James viewed liberty as the freedom to pursue moral, rather than material, development. His critique of laissez-faire influenced his ideas about the nature of citizenship, the role of community, the function of the state, about the meaning of America itself. From James's perspective, the U.S. annexation of the Philippines in 1898 proved that the meaning of America was very much up for grabs.

U.S. annexation of the Philippines appeared calamitous to James. Having once seemed to James champions of self-determination, Americans were now "to be missionaries of civilization," and "to bear the white man's burden painful as it often is." American "civilization" had come to represent stultifying provincialism, and the Filipinos the universal striving for self-realization. "One Christian . . . one Buddhist or Mohammedan . . . one ethical reformer or philanthropist" could do more to promote the "inner realities" of the Filipino soul, he sighed, than America's "whole Army and Navy . . . with our whole civilization at its back."

The Filipino independence movement had warranted American support. What inspired McKinley to treat Aguinaldo like a criminal? James blamed "the great Yankee business concern," whose commercial interests the administration concealed behind the rhetoric of Christian and Republican missionizing. Undergirding the Western market economy, in turn, was a blindness toward non-Western civilizations and cultures afflicting American leaders. James's recognition that the Filipinos possessed an "inner reality" beyond the ken of Western civilization made him a maverick among anti-imperialists who generally condemned imperialism from an isolationist and often racist perspective. Nations possessed their own "ideals which are a

dead secret to other nations," he wrote. "Each has to develop in its own way." America had "treated the Filipinos as if they were a painted picture, an amount of mere matter in our way. Blind to the secrets of the Philippine soul," even the best intentioned Americans could only "work disaster." The situation called for "different men."

Different men bearing different ideals. James engaged the subject of difference in a collection of popular essays written throughout the 1890s and published in May 1899 as *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on some of Life's Ideals*. "The facts and worth of life need many cognizers to take them in," James wrote in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." No individual or nation could boast a perspective "absolutely public and universal. Private and uncommunicable perceptions always remain over, and the worst of it is that those who look for them from the outside never know *where*."

The source of Western myopia, James argued, was a vocational or functional narrowness that overwhelmed individuals confronting the challenges of everyday modern life. Fixated on the practical, individuals fail to comprehend the significance of others' lives. This point was brought home to James on an excursion through the American South. In the mountains of North Carolina he encountered a method of settlement contradicting his sense of taste. "Ugly indeed seemed the life of the squatter," he mused. "Talk about going back to nature. No modern person ought to be willing to live a day in such a state of rudimentariness and denudation." James asked his escort about the sort of people who could endure such a life. "'All of us,' replied the escort. 'We ain't happy here unless we're getting one of these coves under cultivation.'" The scales fell from James's eyes. "I instantly felt that I'd been losing the whole significance of the situation," he reported, "because to me, the clearing spoke to me of naught but denudation. I thought that to those whose sturdy arms and obedient axes had made them, they could tell no other story." But the clearing "was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very paeon to duty, struggle and success." James came to refer to the significance he discovered in those Appalachian coves as "eagerness." Eagerness could be found outside North Carolina, of course. "Sometimes the eagerness is more knit up with motor activities," he observed, "sometimes with the perceptions, sometimes with the imaginations, sometimes with reflective thought. But wherever it is found there is the zest, the tingle, the excitement of reality, and there is 'importance' in the only real and positive sense in which importance can anywhere be." James's epiphany inspired a new idea of progress: the dawning recognition that civilization comprised "fundamental static goods," as common among Filipinos as Americans.

In contrast to so many of his compatriots who touted the expansion of civilization and law across space, James envisioned the evolution of civilization and law. It was not enough for James that Filipinos would one day be incorporated into Western civilization; he expected civilization—the storehouse of wisdom and experience through the ages—to go equally far to meet them. Nor did James believe Aguinaldo to be "a second George Washington," as Woodrow Wilson had scoffed. James merely insisted that we lacked the information to conclude that Aguinaldo was *not*. Herein lay the cogency of his anti-imperialism. The dialectical logic of civilization-savagery opposition relieved Americans of the obligation to confront Filipinos with an open mind. No familiarity with Filipino society was required to conclude that it was chaotic, lawless, bloodthirsty. A fatal lack of fellow feeling on the part of Americans had doomed the

Filipino revolution. To those who would protest that fellow feeling for unknown peoples is perhaps too much to expect, James had a ready answer. "Hands off," he concluded in "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." "It is enough to ask of each of us that he should be faithful to his own opportunities and make the most of his own blessings without presuming to regulate the rest of the vast field." "Let the Filipinos work out their own issues," he wrote a few years later. "We Americans surely do not monopolize all the possible forms of goodness."

Thank you.

Chris Lehmann: Good morning. I am Chris Lehmann, I'm the stunt journalist on the panel. And the stunt journalist . . . everyone else is a historian, and I've been . . . I was under the impression that I should, being the journalist, address present-day issues, but Rob again beat me to the punch there. Actually, I also am speaking about "Trans-National America" and its legacy in present-day America, and in a true Bournian spirit I want to completely contradict most of what Professor Hansen just said, and I look forward to the discussion session to extend the dispute with you.

One of Randolph Bourne's great virtues in both his thought and his writerly temperament was to insist that intellectual life cohere with lived experience. Yet, as Rob and others have pointed out already, this kind of pragmatist outlook can make for mixed and confusing legacies beyond the terms of one's own thought. No end of thinkers from John Dewey to Richard Rorty to Jürgen Habermas illustrate this tendency within pragmatism.

In his 1916 essay "Trans-National America," one of Bourne's most forward-looking works of social criticism, Bourne's intellectual afterlife has been mixed indeed. As thinking about ethnic identity in the American nation has moved in the late twentieth century into its multiculturalist phase, "Trans-National America" was adopted as a foundation text for the multicultural ideal.

As students of Bourne's work well know, Bourne's critique of the anti-immigration Americanization movement of the early twentieth century was taken up by Bourne's friend Horace Kallen who then worked it into his thinking about cultural pluralism, and Kallen in turn has become a very, perhaps the most, influential American thinker in multicultural circles. As a result, the only Bourne aphorism as widely-quoted today as "War is the health of the state," is his plea in "Trans-National America" to reconceive America as "a federation of cultures."

Yet returning to Bourne's original arguments, it's clear that "Trans-National America" is quite different from the protests over European hegemony and cultural domination one hears from multiculturalists and postcolonialist thinkers. True, Bourne, like today's multiculturalists takes vigorous exception, as Professor Hansen noted, to the essentialist notion of a fixed and pure American ethnicity that's locked up in the misty genealogies lovingly attended by self-described Anglo-Saxons. "The Anglo-Saxon," Bourne wrote, was merely a first immigrant, the first to found a colony on American shores. "He's never really ceased to be the descendent of immigrants, nor has he ever really succeeded in transforming that colony into a real nation." And here I'd suggest we're already hearing an important clue that Bourne's project is about something more than an omni-tolerant cultural pluralism. The transnational

America he envisions is indeed "a real nation" made up of discrete and vigorous nationalist traditions within it. "Threads of living in potent cultures, blindly striving to weave themselves into a novel internationalist nation, the first of its kind. These threads," he continued, are bound in the "common enterprise" of a multiethnic democracy, to educate and to be educated." As so Bourne also hails, for example, the instrumental importance of the "common language" of English, which far from marginalizing recently arrived immigrants via the logic of monocultural domination, schools citizens in the shared public sphere. "The common language has made not only for the necessary communication," Bourne wrote, "but for all the amenities of life."

Second, as Professor Hansen noted, Bourne is emphatically an American exceptionalist, albeit in a characteristically paradoxical way. The starting point for "Trans-National America" is the obvious limitation of assimilation. "Instead of washing out memories of the Old World"—and again, he's talking principally about European immigrants—absorption into the new one has "made them more and more intensely real," those memories of the Old World.

Yet the challenge implicit in this condition is to move beyond the shibboleths of melting-pot assimilation toward a "higher ideal," to reconfigure these vivid memories of existing nationalist cultures into an American experience, far richer than that envisioned under either the bland dispensation of assimilation or the smug certainties of "Americanization." This must emphatically involve the decisive rejection of old-stock immigrant purism. "America should be what immigrants have a hand in making it," Bourne declares. Indeed the Americanization debate misses the central point that this dynamic doesn't concern present tense America at all. "It is not what we are that concerns us," Bourne wrote, "but what this plastic next generation may become in the light of a new cosmopolitan ideal." And here again I would just gently point out that Professor Hansen is stressing the frontier, which I think is a fair kind of metaphor for this kind of orientation toward the future, given the historical limitations of Bourne's own time; but I think the frontier was sort of a—what's the word?—a synecdoche. You know, it's the particular thing that Bourne was trying to use to express this general idea that the new internationalist American nation is very much a quality of the American future.

Now another important paradox arising out of all this is that this reconfigured nation thrives on its own internal conflict. Bourne hails the "thrilling and bloodless battle of cultures that mark the modern trans-national America. Even in the recent baleful outburst of anti-German sentiment that accompanied the onset of the Great War," Bourne discerned "bracing rivalries of philosophies," which gave full play to "deep traditional attitudes in each hyphenate American camp": Victorian moralism on the English side, and the realpolitik theory of the "integrated States," which Bourne was obviously more dubious about, on the German. The wonder for Bourne is that this rivalry had been bloodless, for the most part anyway. And I agree with Professor Hansen that, you know, "Trans-National America" doesn't take full account of the bloody character of much of American history and adventure. But certainly in contrast to the Old World original brand of intellectual rivalry, Bourne's point is that Americans had figured out a way for cultures to conflict with each other in a largely nonviolent capacity, or hopes—again, "Trans-National America" is very much a forward-looking essay.

So this suggests, as Professor Hansen noted, that America affords the intellectual materials for the "world federation in miniature," which struck me as kind of, you know, an inverted Wilsonianism, that, you know, we don't need to conquer foreign lands because we contain, within the exceptionalists' model, all the makings of a new internationalist culture. And again that clearly is an exceptionalist position if ever there was one.

And this is indeed where their whole notion of transnationalism comes in. In lieu of what Bourne calls a "premature and sentimental nationalism" on the part of this new internationalist nation, which could all too simply degenerate into new kinds of self-congratulation in New World xenophobia, Bourne proposes a scheme of dual citizenship and free passage back and forth from immigrant homelands. This bespeaks, in Bourne's view, a confidence in the cohesion of an American identity, rather than a mere assertion of anodyne truisms on the order of America being a country of immigrants.

Very much by contrast, Bourne insists that transnational Americans, like their narrow Americanizing counterparts, long passionately for an integrated and disciplined America. Only this integration and discipline must grow out of civic notions of order and justice, not the blood-and-soil kind that dominated the nativist side of the Americanization debate.

Advocates of a cosmopolitan dual citizenship do not want an America "integrated only for domestic economic exploitation of the workers, or for predatory economic imperialism among the weaker peoples." And I want to stress that, in view of Professor Hansen's contrast between James's anti-imperialism and Bourne's transnationalism, Bourne is very much, in my view, an anti-imperialist; so I think that juxtaposition hinges on, you know, kind of a false opposition.

Likewise, the advocates of the new internationalist American nation reject Old World conceptions of militarism, the truculent assertion, Bourne called it, of "a medieval code of honor." Of course such visions of specific internationalism are themselves key elements of America's distinctive roots and enlightenment thought. One finds much the same confident rhetoric of new globalism echoing in works like Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* for example. Yet I'd argue Bourne also stands apart from these utopian citizen-of-the-world reveries, just as he does from our own post-enlightenment romance with cultural particulars for its own sake.

Dual citizenship is not a scheme to abolish national identity, but rather a means of preserving each of its hybrid terms in the American setting: the "mother country" nationalism of the immigrant and the cosmopolitan idea of the new American nation. It's too abrasive a vision for philosophes like Paine, but it is also too nationalist a vision for Richard Delgado, bell hooks, and other hard-line multiculturalists who deem the idea of an American nation, however cosmopolitan in conception, a hopelessly corrupt, compromised, and exploitive enterprise.

Bourne also parts company with the multiculturalist movement via his frequent recourse to sharp aesthetic and cultural judgment, something that I'm sure will be taken up in other panels today. But I do think it bears noting that Bourne in no way regarded these issues as distinct from his understanding of civic nationalism. And here's—I'm going to quote approvingly the passage that Professor Hansen suggest-

ed was grounds for sort of downplaying or, not downplaying, but being troubled by Bourne's alleged condescension.

Bourne's pronounced rejection of English-American conservatism in ethnic matters was of a piece with another Bournian crusade, the revolt against a genteel tradition in American letters. Bourne doesn't prize diversity as an endpoint in cultural debate, or a sine qua non in business or university administration, as is often the pattern today; rather he argues that distinct nationalist cultures furnished the content of cultural democracy, as opposed to its procedural channels. And here I'm going to quote: Bourne decries the tendency of "the cultural nuclei that serve as building blocks in trans-nationalism to leech into torpid blandness at the fringes." The erosion of nationalist culture tends, he writes, "to create hordes of men and women without a spiritual country, cultural outlaws without taste, without standards but those of the mob." Inhabitants of this cultural fringe, he argues, make for "detached fragments of peoples, the flotsam and jetsam of American life, the downward undertow of our civilization with its leering cheapness and falseness of taste in spiritual outlook. The absence of mind and sincere feeling which we see our slovenly towns, our vapid moving pictures, our popular novels, and in the vacuous faces of the crowds on the city street."

And I just also want to parenthetically note that this discussion of nuclei infringes in my reading of "Trans-National America" isn't . . . the nuclei is not this fixed frontier-worshipping American nation. The nuclei, as I understand it, are the individual nationalist cultures that immigrants have adherence to and drift away into this obvious, what Bourne depicts as a very countryless, spiritually homeless, mass culture.

Indeed too much of American life is taken up with what Bourne calls "the detritus of culture," composed of nationalist colonies that "merge but do not fuse." Contemporary debates over multiculturalism shy away from these questions, or rather consign them by default to the snide and studied vacuities of the cultural Right. But I would suggest the strain of Bourne's vision of cultural nationalism is right for renewed discussion in today's America, given as it is to its own bouts of historical global Messianism and militarism.

One other neglected theme in "Trans-National America" is Bourne's fond hope that "the contribution of America will be an intellectual internationalism," possessed of a sympathy that, and I found tremendous irony in these words, "will unite and not divide."

With our next presidential election just a fortnight away, I don't think I need to belabor what a bitter mockery those words have become, nor do I need to belabor the urgency of reclaiming the beloved community Bourne described in "Trans-National America" in all its dynamic and abrasive fullness.

Thank you.

Christopher Phelps: During that last very nice talk, I was thinking about the phrase that "Journalism is the first draft of history." I'm beginning to think that perhaps we can dispense with historians altogether. And I am very grateful to the prior panelists to have been invited here, and I think that Allan Jalon had some sort of a cosmic moment when he put me on the panel, because I have here not one but two

of my most important mentors. It's probably going to pain Casey to know that twenty years ago this fall, I believe it was, that I first took a class in American intellectual history from him at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and then in that class read Bourne for the first time, and Dwight Macdonald, and was hooked and decided that I needed of course to become an intellectual historian, and slowly moved from Bourne to another student of John Dewey, Sidney Hook, another left-wing pragmatist, and realized in the course of reading this wonderful book *John Dewey and American Democracy* that I had to go study with Robert Westbrook at the University of Rochester. So we come full circle for me personally here.

My talk is called "This Wildest Radicalism."

"At twenty-five," wrote Bourne in 1913, "I find myself full of the wildest radicalism, and look with dismay at my childhood friends who are already settled down, and have achieved babies and responsibilities." Bourne's refusal to reconcile himself to convention or existing society, his impassioned espousal of a "wildest radicalism," only deepened during the seven remaining years of his life. As he steadfastly opposed an immensely destructive war whose futility had not yet registered in Americans' minds, and which most other American intellectuals embraced unreservedly, Bourne's alienation from the established classes became ever more pronounced, as did his longings for radical social transformation. "War is the health of the State," that famous declaration, meant, in Bourne's words, that "We can not crusade against war without crusading implicitly against the State," for "they are inseparably and functionally joined." Nevertheless, Bourne's radicalism has often been interpreted as cultural, not political. In the 1940s, Louis Filler wrote that Bourne was "emphatically not political-minded in the strictest sense of the word" but one whose "concern was with the American psyche and its moral and cultural manifestations." Attempts to view Bourne as a cultural as opposed to a political thinker have been issued in many idioms since—most recently, the postmodern.

Bourne was a moral and cultural radical, to be sure. In the bohemian moment of intellectual production centered on little magazines, he and his circle inveighed against sterility in education, the embalmed canon of a "genteel tradition" in letters, and the puritanical and Calvinistic strictures of Victorian culture. Bourne characterized himself as a "literary radical," and his affection for Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau resonated in the cadences of his prose. Despondent about American shallowness, complacency, and conformity, he touted, in his most heartfelt personal expressions, "youth" and "life" as vital resources for the regeneration of democracy.

But Bourne advocated the "wildest radicalism" in political, social, and economic matters, as well. The manifestly cultural features of Bourne's writing and politics should not be used to obscure his deliberate political engagement. Even in a period when the initiative lay with the proponents of change—liberal progressive reformers, woman suffrage activists, middle-class peace advocates, the Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs, Bourne came to occupy the most left-lying vantage point imaginable, a revolutionary and socialist politics centered upon the mobilization and liberation of labor, culminating in the abolition of state and class.

As an undergraduate at Columbia, Bourne was active in the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. His prize-winning senior essay "The Doctrine of the Rights of Man as Formulated by Thomas Paine" hailed "modern dynamic Socialism" with its "applied

scientific ethics" of social justice and economic democracy. In his graduate studies in 1912 to 1913, Bourne turned to the faculty of political science with a major in sociology at Columbia, after concluding that history and philosophy were "intellectual arenas of which the literary professors seemed scandalously ignorant." For that year, Bourne roomed with Harry Chase, who like Bourne had arrived at college late, in his case because of years spent as business editor of the *Daily People*, organ of Daniel De Leon's Socialist Labor Party.

Before *transnational* became a cardinal cultural concept in Bourne's writing, it characterized his own political development, for his European travels of 1913 to 1914 helped him refine his socialist understanding. Bourne was to have become a delegate to the international socialist congress in Vienna in 1914, but the storm clouds of the coming First World War upset the plan. In England, he met Fabian gradualists and enjoyed talking with them, though he found their confidence inadequate to a world he thought was changing all too slowly. He professed that he would welcome "any aggressive blow, any sign of impatience with the salvation of our society by our self-appointed leaders of church and state." Seeing the rigidities of the British class structure, he wrote, had "immensely strengthened my radicalism." In Italy, Bourne was stirred by a three-day general strike. "The overwhelming expression of social solidarity displayed . . . made one realize that here were radical classes that had the courage of their convictions."

Bourne's sympathy for revolutionary approaches and syndicalism resulted in his support back home for the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary trade union movement comprised primarily of unskilled immigrant workers, the most lowly, despised, feared American organization of its time. Bourne attended the Madison Square Garden pageant orchestrated by John Reed and others in support of the Paterson strikers, and Columbia professor Carl Van Doren recalled Bourne reciting his poem "Sabotage" before the Columbia literary society, which thought it no fit subject for a poem.

Bourne identified with the exploited and oppressed not as a result of sentimentality but of direct experience arising from his physical disability and work history. Bourne struggled from an early age against the stigma of the handicapped, a process that he later credited as the well-spring of his "profound sympathy for all who are despised and ignored in the world." Accepted by Princeton upon graduation from high school in 1903, Bourne instead was compelled to work for six years. His first job was for a manufacturer of perforated music rolls for player pianos who slashed Bourne's piece-rate wages once he became skilled. When that business failed, Bourne spent two long unsuccessful years in New York without secure employment, spurned for his looks, barely eking out a living by giving music lessons in what he later called "the repeated failure even to obtain a chance to fail, the realization that those at home can ill afford to have you idle, the growing dread of encountering people."

No wonder that Bourne was unusually sensitive to the exploitation and alienation of labor and to the desperation and shame of the unemployed. Bourne condemned Columbia University for the poor wages it paid its scrubwomen, but for him better wages, while necessary, were insufficient, because exploitation was inherent in class relations. He witnessed "with my own eyes in Scranton and Gary and Pittsburgh the way workers live, not in crises of industrial war but in brimming times of peace." He

characterized antitrust initiatives as "absurd" because corporate rule would not be affected by liberal reform. Common ownership and a stateless society, he held, were necessary to disposing of surplus value justly. "As long . . . as the employer is entrenched in property rights with the armed state behind him, the power will be his, and the class that does the diverting will not be labor."

It is often said that Bourne's radicalism was not precisely Marxist. It is more accurate to say that his radicalism was syncretic and heterodox and drew freely upon revolutionary socialist theory, just as it was sustained by left-wing Deweyan pragmatism and Whitmanesque democracy. By the end of the First World War, when Bourne was isolated and hounded and penniless, practically the only hope and inspiration he drew was from the newborn revolution in Russia. Critics of the First World War, he wrote, "are skeptical of this war professedly for political democracy, because at home they have seen so little democracy where industrial slaves are rampant. They see the inspiring struggle in the international class-struggle, not in the struggles of imperialist nations. To Russia, the socialist state, not to America who has taken a place on old ground, do they look for realization of their ideal."

Bourne's radicalism was unorthodox and iconoclastic, as one might imagine in someone whose course of radical study started with Henry George. One of his most important insights came when defining the relationship of intellectuals to social movements. In warning against an "intellectual radicalism . . . afraid to be itself," Bourne insisted on uncompromisingly critical thought. "Intellectual radicalism should not mean repeating stale dogmas of Marxism. It should not mean 'the study of socialism,'" he wrote. "It had better mean a restless, controversial criticism of current ideas, and a hammering out of some clear-sighted philosophy that shall be this pillar of fire."

In the course of this rousing exposition of the value of relentless intellectual independence and ardent commitment to labor and socialism, Bourne drew, however, a disconcerting conclusion. "The only way by which middle-class radicalism can serve is by being fiercely and concentratedly intellectual," he wrote. "The labor movement in this country needs a philosophy, a literature, a constructive socialist analysis and criticism of industrial relations . . . Labor will scarcely do this thinking for itself.

"Labor will scarcely do this thinking for itself." Bourne's unconscious replication here of class society's bifurcation of labor and thought, so at odds with the rest of his oeuvre, carried no small danger of elitism. Bourne was right that intellectuals should reject dogma, be ready to quarrel, ask uncomfortable questions, remain ever open to new experiences, and never suspend their critical faculties, but his celebration of intellectual malcontents was marred, not enhanced, by this condescension toward the very underdog classes whose cause he considered his own. Bourne, despite his admiration for the "revolutionary proletariat," failed here to consider the accumulated insights of rank-and-file workers as one of the experiences to which intellectuals must remain open.

On the whole, however, Bourne's imagination was profoundly democratic, seeking renewal from below. This permitted him, in his unfinished essay on "The State," to distinguish between three principal political agents: the people, or nation or country, first; the innocuous and routine government, second; and finally the State, a militaristic, repressive, belligerent, coercive instrument of the ruling class. The State

thwarted the country or people, in Bourne's view, although he identified insightful, a "herd instinct" of state worship rooted in the very same "gregarious impulse" that inspires social solidarity.

Bringing left-wing socialism back into focus in Bourne interpretation can enhance even our understanding of his cultural projects. It is, for example, fruitful to read "Trans-National America" and its ideal of a "weaving back and forth, with the other lands of many threads of all sizes and colors" as an echo of longstanding socialist ideals of internationalism forsaken in Europe's rush to war. Despite its disappointing failure to address race, and here I will fall on the side of Lehmann in the great struggle, the essay's ringing salute to cosmopolitan democracy as the antidote to bigotry makes it now seem not only a celebration of American heterogeneity but a model for imagining alternatives to conflicts the world over, between Russians and Chechens, Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, Sudanese Muslims and black Africans, French citizens and Arab immigrants, or Germans and Turks, for example.

Likewise, Bourne's criticism of the university was not solely on educational grounds (the dry lecture system, elevation of sports over scholarship, the lifeless, dead canon) or even narrowly political grounds, such as Columbia's dismissal of two professors critical of the First World War. Bourne's objection was systemic, an antipathy to capitalism's distortion of learning. Bourne was one of the first to object to the transformation of the university into "a private commercial corporation" producing "the academic commodity" under the control of trustees drawn from the ruling class. His "ideal solution" was public ownership of the universities "with control vested in the 'guild' of professors."

Even his famous war essays were illuminated by a socialist vision, as when, in "A Moral Equivalent for Universal Military Service" in 1916, an essay, by the way, that shows Bourne's strong debt to James, Bourne proposed instead of a draft that young Americans perform public services in health, conservation, agriculture, regulatory inspection, and child-rearing as a social alternative to military "preparedness." Here, incidentally, as in his educational theory, we can see that it is an error to claim Bourne for anarchism or libertarianism. Notwithstanding his urge to overthrow the state, he very often suggested policy solutions to be carried out by the government. Now I say that, by the way, with deep respect for anarchists who have often kept Bourne's memory alive. In fact, to supplement what Casey said about various left-wing interpretations of Bourne over the years, I brought from my own files this anarchist paper from 1969. "War is the health of the state," it says, with a peace symbol imposed over Nazi, Stalin, Mao, I mean the whole works. Anyone who wants to see this afterward, I'd be glad to share it.

The point of all of this that I'm saying is not that there's a political side of Bourne that ought to be emphasized [but] it is that his thought can not be compartmentalized, literary here, political there. Bourne's lyricism and social philosophy place him in a tradition of political writers including W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, George Orwell, Czeslaw Milosc, and Vaclav Havel, who would not have wanted their political contributions belittled or their stylistic virtuosity constricted to overly narrow classifications of "cultural radicalism."

Both the Greenwich Village atmosphere of youthful experimentation and revolt and the worldwide workers' rebellion were implicit in Bourne's refusal to put his finger to

the wind before speaking fresh and vital truths. Idealism, aestheticism, feminism, friendship, music, reading, and impassioned discussion were for Bourne social ideals, as reflected in his judgment that all great art was ethical, mixed up in religion and politics. When we recapture the Bourne who emphasized "social consciousness," "human progress," and "the bringing of a fuller, richer life to more people on this earth," as against "that poisonous counsel of timidity and distrust of human ideals which pours out in steady stream from reactionary press and pulpit," then we will have gone some way toward ensuring that the ghost of Bourne still giggles down our streets.