

Panel 2

The Many Influences of Bourne

Allan Jalon: So we have a panel that will deal with Bourne's influence, both across subjects and across time. It was originally called "The Many Bournes," but it really has become "The Many Influences of Bourne." And one could obviously make a panel like this even larger. He dealt with education and reviewed literature, wrote about urban planning. But we're going to talk quite a bit about disability (his writing on disability), his influence on the essay as a literary form, and finally, the environment for a writer such as himself in the world of the Village, and writing for little magazines and what that entails for writers and editors, publishers. And then some of the most interesting people, actually, in the middle of the century who wouldn't have known him personally, but who felt the appeal of his memory and who were changed by it and passed it on in very, very interesting ways. And the panelists, if you could come up: Paul Miller, Nicole Wallack, and Barbara Probst Solomon.

And we're going to begin with Paul Longmore, who is coming to us with the help of Dave Coffen and the videoconferencing ability here. He'll be coming from San Francisco State University, and he's really probably the most distinguished writer about the history of disability in the United States. And he's thought long and hard, over years, about Bourne, and has been inspired by him. He's professor of history at San Francisco State University, and the author of *Why I Burned My Book and Other Essays on Disability*, which includes an essay—preliminary essay, one might say, or a strong, strong first assault on thinking about Bourne—and he's been eager to take the ideas in that essay a bit farther. And so we welcome him here today, and look forward to hearing from him. Hello, Paul.

Paul Longmore: Hi. Can you hear me? It's very good to be with you. I'm honored to get to be a part of this conference, though remotely. I wish I could be there with you, because I have benefited from reading the works of some of my colleagues in history who've written about Randolph Bourne.

What I want to try to do in the next few minutes is to answer a question that was posed forty years ago by the historian Christopher Lasch. When he wrote about Randolph Bourne, Lasch wondered how one might connect Bourne's experience of disability with history. I will use the word *handicap* because that's the word that Bourne preferred, that was the word that was becoming prominent and in primary usage in his lifetime. Christopher Lasch wondered how historians could connect Bourne's experience of handicap with history. Was it just a private and personal experience? Well, twenty years ago in the essay that Allan referred to, I suggested that the way to do that was by linking Bourne and his experience and his thought into the larger context of the history of disability. And I want to suggest two ways in which that can be done, and still needs to be done.

At the time I wrote that essay, there was very little writing on the history of disability. In the last decade a lot more has come out. And the work is particularly focused on the era of Bourne's lifetime, which historians of disability have come to explain as a moment of major transformation in Western societies in the definition of the meaning of handicap, the formulation of a modern ideology of handicap, and a transformation in how Western societies dealt with people with disabilities. Douglas Baynton, one of the leading historians in the emerging field of disability history, has

argued that disability in the modern era became a major category of social organization, policy formulation, and cultural signification. In other words, disability, Baynton argues, is not just a label put on groups of people with various kinds of medical conditions. Instead—and culturally more important—Baynton says, it's "the primary term in a fundamental binary opposition, normal versus disabled" or, to use the terms of Bourne's era, normal versus handicapped. Baynton calls it "a signifier for relations of power." The point Baynton is making is that disability, or handicap, has been central to modernity.

So in one essay that Doug Baynton wrote—a brilliant essay, I think—called "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," Baynton shows how ideas about disability figured centrally in three major American debates about citizenship: the citizenship of African Americans postslavery, women's suffrage, and immigration. And that essay, by the way, appears in the book I'd rather call your attention to than my *own* book, *Why I Burned My Book*. It's a collection of historical essays called *The New Disability History* that I coedited. Many of the essays in that book are extremely pertinent, I think, to understanding the era in which Randolph Bourne lived.

So the point I want to make here is that an ideology of handicap was a central component of the vast transformation that created the modern America Bourne was critically examining in his own work, in his writings. As a component of modernization, that transformation had a direct impact on him personally. Unfortunately, historians have left handicap or disability out of the story of the making of modern America. It needs to be incorporated in order for us to have a full understanding of what modernization and modernity involved. And, therefore, I think we need to rethink the role of handicap, not just in Bourne's personal life, but in his thought.

Now in various ways handicap—this ideology of handicap—entered into fields that Bourne was specifically concerned about and wrote about. He wrote about educational reform. This was an era in which special education was created, and children with many kinds of disabilities were removed from regular classrooms and regular schools and put into segregated settings—not necessarily so that they could get appropriate education and training, but so that they would not impede the education of "normal" children. Interestingly—I think, significantly—Bourne wrote about educational reform. That's one of the things he's most noted for. And yet he doesn't talk about this.

He wrote about immigration, as we all know, in some of the most important writings of the early twentieth century. Well, Doug Baynton has shown us that the immigration laws were becoming increasingly restrictive in the era of Bourne's lifetime, with the intent of excluding immigrants with handicaps, with disabilities. Bourne wrote about immigration, but he didn't write about that.

This was the era of eugenics. As far as I know Bourne never wrote about eugenics, yet—significantly, I think—eugenical ideas were in the atmosphere, in the context in which he lived, reinforcing prejudice against people with disabilities. I think it's particularly significant that in 1918, the year of Randolph Bourne's death, a pro-eugenics, pro-euthanasia motion picture was released by a doctor in Chicago named Dr. Harry Haiselden, who a year or so before had killed a disabled newborn baby boy. He made the film *The Black Stork* to not only justify what he had done, but to prop-

agate euthanasia of disabled newborns. In the story, a disabled newborn grows up to become a vicious and dangerous person, ultimately kills the doctor who let him live. The film is available from John Allen, a film preservation company in New Jersey. If you look at it you'll see that the character, the disabled character, in *The Black Stork* looks an awful lot like Randolph Bourne.

Now this whole historical context regarding education, immigration, eugenics—this, by the way, is also the era in which modern vocational rehabilitation was created—whether or not these things directly impinged upon Randolph Bourne, whether or not he directly spoke about them or wrote about them, they were part of the context of modernizing America in which he lived and worked and tried to create a life and a career, a writing career as a social and literary critic.

It's an interesting question to speculate about the presence of these issues of handicap, perhaps subtextually, in Bourne's most famous writings. But there's one essay, as I'm sure we all know—we just heard excerpts from it in the performance that just preceded me—the essay originally titled "The Handicapped," and I want to draw your attention to some features of that essay.

It hasn't been often remarked on that that essay actually exists in two versions. There's the original version that appeared in the *Atlantic* in 1911. It's entitled "The Handicapped." As Professor Miller will show us in a few minutes, even the title of that essay has often been misread and misremembered. There are two versions of the essay. That's the first one, "The Handicapped" in the *Atlantic*. The other version appeared in the book collecting Bourne's early essays from the *Atlantic*, the book entitled *Youth and Life*.

Bourne made some significant changes in that reprinting of the essay. For instance, he replaced the words *deformed* and *deformity* with the words *handicapped* and *handicap*. The words *deformed* and *deformity* don't appear anywhere in the revised essay.

"The Handicapped" was one of the earlier essays in the *Atlantic* series that he published. Interestingly, Bourne chose to place it last in the *Youth and Life* collection. Thus, it's the capstone and culminating essay of that book.

He also changed the title. The original title was "The Handicapped." He gave it a new title. He called it "A Philosophy of Handicap." I think that title is significant, because if you read through the revised version, it's less personal and less individual, more general and more analytical on a societal scale. He cut out a couple of interesting autobiographical passages that had appeared in the original essay. Now in one way that diminishes the essay, because those passages were very powerful in recounting his own experience of job discrimination. But I think those cuts were part of his attempt to make this essay, "A Philosophy of Handicap," more general about the social status, the social roles, and the social identities of handicapped people, people who experienced "handicap" in American society in that era. And that's one of the key shifts I want to note. The earlier essay seems to be talking about handicaps, personal experience of physical difference, although there's a great deal of psychological and sociological explanation in it. In the revised version, he seems to be shifting to a notion of handicap as a general social category and status.

What's more important still, in the revised essay—even more than in the original essay—as he explains the experience of handicap, it becomes both an impetus to critical social analysis and a basis for a radical alternative social philosophy. Ultimately, he's telling us in this essay that the experience of handicap is the foundation for a radical social perspective and philosophy. Let me read you a couple of passages, if I may, from the middle of the essay that reflect this kind of thinking. He writes:

If the handicapped youth is brought into harsh and direct touch with the real world, life proves a much more complex thing to him than to the ordinary man. Many of his inherited platitudes vanish at the first touch. Life appears to him as a grim struggle, where ability does not necessarily mean opportunity and success, nor piety sympathy, and where helplessness cannot count on assistance and kindly interest. Human affairs seem to be running on a wholly irrational plan, and success to be founded on chance as much as on anything. But if he can stand the first shock of disillusionment, he may find himself enormously interested in discovering how they actually do run, and he will want to burrow into the motives of men, and find the reasons for the crass inequalities and injustices of the world he sees around him. He has practically to construct anew a world of his own, and explain a great many things to himself that the ordinary person never dreams of finding unintelligible at all.

Now I think this is an extremely significant paragraph, because Bourne is indicating that his experience of handicap and his experience of prejudice and discrimination—and the experience of other people with handicaps of prejudice and discrimination that he has recounted before this paragraph—leads people or could lead people with handicaps, who experience “handicap,” to reflect on and examine the injustices of the world.

There's also here a questioning of inherited pieties and platitudes, a critical examination of conventional wisdom. I would suggest that it's this experience of his growing up as a person with handicap that leads Bourne into his embrace of the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey. In fact, this theme of questioning and rejecting conventional wisdom and taking a pragmatic and critical view of the world is a theme that runs throughout the *Youth and Life* essays. And I would suggest that it's here that Bourne tells us explicitly that that theme in his perspective, in his analysis, is grounded in the experience of handicap.

I want also to suggest that all the essays in *Youth and Life* can be read on more than one level because Bourne is a complicated thinker. Paul Rosenfeld, one of Bourne's colleagues at the journal *Seven Arts*, wrote in a reminiscence of Bourne of what he called “the gingerly *Atlantic Monthly* style with its mincingness of persons perpetually afeared of stepping on eggs.” I want to suggest that what Rosenfeld is pointing to is a way in which in all the other essays in this collection, Bourne was speaking by indirection about what was of most concern to him. I want to suggest that on one level, the essays can be read in many passages as autobiographical, and Bourne is talking about his own experience of handicap as the source of his rejection of inherited platitudes and his critical examination of them.

He goes on in the next paragraph in “A Philosophy of Handicap” to say this:

We are perhaps too prone to get our ideas and standards of worth from the successful, without reflecting that the interpretations of life which patriotic legend, copy-book philosophy, and the sayings of the wealthy give us, are pitifully inadequate for those who fall behind in the race. Surely there are enough people to whom the task of making a decent living and maintaining themselves and their families in their social class, or of winning and keeping the respect of their fellows, is a hard and bitter task, to make a philosophy gained through personal disability and failure as just and true a method of appraising the life around us as the cheap optimism of the ordinary professional man. And certainly a kindlier, for it has no shade of contempt or disparagement about it.

Then Bourne goes on after this to say that—having arrived at this view of things—he read the radical social philosophers, beginning with Henry George, and then built a philosophy out of the materials he got from them, which explains the inequities of society and, he says, offered him a vision for human betterment, and the possibility of him being a part of a transformation of society into a more just order.

Finally, he concludes this section of the essay with, "It is hard to tell just how much of this philosophy has been due to handicap." Now in the original essay, "The Handicapped," that sentence read, "It is hard to tell just how much of this philosophy has been due to my handicaps," handicaps plural. He changed that to "due to handicap." In other words, handicap has now in this new essay been transformed by Bourne, or elevated by Bourne, into a more general social category and social experience. It's a shift, I think, from a personal experience of physical difference or physical impairment and, as well, an experience of prejudicial reactions to that, to a more general level, "due to handicap." "If it is solely to that that I owe its existence"—it's a little bit hard to follow—"If it is solely to that," that is, to the experience of handicap, "that I owe its existence," that is, this radical philosophy, "the price has not been a heavy one to pay." In the original version he said, "If it is solely to my physical misfortunes that I owe its existence"—that is, the radical philosophy. Now that's another interesting and significant shift, I think. Again he's elevating his analysis from the personal to the social, and even political. He goes on, "[T]he price has not been a heavy one to pay. For it has given me something that I should not know how to be without. For, however gained, this radical philosophy has not only made the world intelligible and dynamic to me, but has furnished me with the strongest spiritual support." What I want to suggest here is that Bourne's groping toward an analysis of handicap as a modern social category is, if anything, as radical—if not more radical—than the other elements of his radical cultural and social criticism that have been analyzed so well by biographers and historians.

But Bourne had not yet fully developed his thinking along these lines, and the latter half of the essay is a reversion to an earlier way of thinking. It emphasizes his need to exercise his own will in order to transcend the limitations of his situation. Unfortunately, I don't believe Bourne, at least in writing, ever moved beyond these insights—which were really quite radical and extraordinary in that era—to suggest not just the significance of prejudice and discrimination in the experience of people who are handicapped or labeled as handicapped, but to suggest the possibility that handicap could become the basis of a social critique and a radical social philosophy and the ground of a vision of social transformation.

One other thing I want to point out before I conclude. In the latter part of the

essay, as was read to us just a few moments ago, Bourne gives some advice to handicapped individuals. Here's what he says in a couple of sentences I just pulled out of that latter part of the essay: "But one must have grown up to get this attitude, and that is best thing the handicapped man can do. . . . It will mean at least that he is out of the woods." Now listen to this: "Childhood has nothing to offer him, youth little more. They are things to be gotten through with as soon as possible. . . . So to all the handicapped and the unappreciated"—in the earlier version he said, "who are situated as I am"—"I would say 'Grow up as fast as you can.'"

Now this is an extraordinary set of statements in a book called *Youth and Life*, a book which has been read as Bourne speaking for a younger generation of American reformers and artists and critical thinkers. In the earlier essays, he is read as celebrating youth, as seeing youth as offering vital wellsprings that will help generate necessary changes and will preserve what's positive and of value in modernizing America. But here he seems to reverse himself completely. As a handicapped man, as a spokesman for "the handicapped"—those who experience handicap in this modern America—he's saying that youth has little to offer. This suggests a need to reread all these essays and see them as much more complicated than we may have understood them before.

I want to draw particular attention to the essay "The Life of Irony," which I think can be read as supplementary—complementary—to the essay "A Philosophy of Handicap." The whole notion of irony and the ironist sets forth a way of looking at the world, relating to the world, approaching the world, that was certainly Bourne's style, and I would argue grows out of this experience of handicap as he sets it forth in "A Philosophy of Handicap."

Thank you very much for your attention.

Allan Jalon: I'm going to introduce people as I ask them to speak. Paul, you're going to be staying with us, right?

Paul Longmore: I will, yes.

Allan Jalon: Before I go on I just had a question, and I guess I'll do this, I'll be sometimes, only occasionally, moderator. There's so many things I could only skim as I was studying Bourne in his world, and couldn't go into more deeply.

One aspect of the "Trans-National America" essay is his mention of Mary Antin. For those who don't know, Mary Antin was probably the most celebrated—in a way one of the most celebrated—writers of her time. She wrote a book called *The Promised Land*, which is a foundational document in the story of Jewish-American immigration. She came from Poland to the United States and wrote about it in a very personal way.

Antin was also an *Atlantic* writer, and apparently in her letters, which are now available, there is a story of a tortured relationship with Ellery Sedgwick. There were also multiversions of her work, and Sedgwick apparently tried to hammer them into a kind of, call it, assimilated, homogeneous blandness, and she fought back in a series of letters, arguing with him that he should let her become herself in her pieces.

And I'm wondering, do you sense perhaps in this change from one essay to another that there was a hidden hand of the all-powerful editor, that Sedgwick himself somehow was getting involved, and that these contrasts you're finding somehow reflect that kind of intervention?

Paul Longmore: I'm sorry, you're breaking up at the end there, but I got most of what you said.

Allan Jalon: Do you feel there was editorial intervention that . . .

Paul Longmore: I got that, thank you. I don't know what hand Sedgwick may have had in the editing of the essays for publication in the book, if any at all. We certainly know that Bourne constantly rewrote his own work and made many drafts of what he was writing. And I haven't had, unfortunately, the opportunity or the capacity to come to Columbia and go through the Bourne papers, which I would love to do.

I will say this, an intriguing possibility. John Belluso, whose play we just witnessed an excerpt from, told me that in going through the Bourne papers there at Columbia, he found that the original publication of "The Handicapped" in the *Atlantic* resulted in a good many letters being written to Bourne by people with disabilities from around the country who read the article. Now I haven't had a chance to read them, so this is just a guess. I just wonder if the result of that resonating with people with disabilities who read Bourne's essay may have prompted him to think at a more general level about his own experience, and may be the source of these changes, but I don't know. That's pure guesswork, not even a guess, it's just a question I'd love to try to answer.

Allan Jalon: Thanks very much.

We're going to move on now to Paul S. Miller. Paul comes to us by way of just a really lucky accident. I read about him in a book and just called up somebody I knew at the Equal Opportunity Commission and asked that somebody put the question to him by e-mail, just say, "Does the name Randolph Bourne mean anything to you?" And I got an e-mail back by that evening that said in fact that he'd been an inspiration to Paul. And of course I was happy to be able to invite him to come. He's a professor of law now at the University of Washington School of Law. He's former Commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, writes a great deal about disability policy, and many other subjects. And we're very happy to have him here today.

Paul S. Miller: Thank you, thank you very much. I'm really thrilled and flattered to have been asked to participate in this important conference. And the presentations this morning and Dr. Longmore's presentation, who I should have asked to go before rather than after, have all been really excellent and really thought-provoking, and I'm really looking forward to hearing my co-panelists and the other speakers this afternoon.

I want to thank the conference organizers for inviting me to participate, and especially I want to thank Allan Jalon and Simi Linton for their vision and their hard work and their efforts to bring me here today from the West Coast. I think it's critical that

in any examination of Randolph Bourne and his works the time is taken to reflect upon his disability, an aspect of Bourne that is central to understanding his life and his writings.

I'm pleased that my first talk of my new career as an academic rather than a political hack gives me the opportunity to reflect upon and examine Bourne, because he is an important disability-rights thinker, both because of what he said and when he said it. His ideas about disability, and oppression, and stigmatization are as contemporary today as they were radical when he wrote them. Moreover, he is unique because he wrote as a disabled person at a time when disabled people did not have a voice, and his was one of the earliest voices of our movement.

Now I have to admit that unlike the other speakers you have heard from today and you will continue to hear from, and you folks in the audience, I am no Bourne scholar—either way—no born scholar. In reading that I just got that; I thought that's brilliant, I'm brilliant. "I'm no born scholar." I've been a law professor for less than a month, but I've been a dwarf, a disabled person, and some would argue, an activist, for all my life. I connect with Bourne's writings on disability because his experience is familiar to me, and his reflections relevant, even though they were written nearly a hundred years ago or so.

While I approach his writings as a disabled man myself, I acknowledge that most Bourne scholars do not. I believe the challenge of Bourne scholarship is to understand him as a disabled writer, and I hope that conferences like this ignite interest in him and in his disability. I do not believe that one can separate Bourne's disability experience from any of his writing, regardless of the topic. It is central to how he understood the world. So it is from this perspective that I find myself standing before an audience of Bourne experts. It's intimidating, to say the least. I have the advantage, though, of approaching his work fresh and without any preconceived notions. It will be Randolph Bourne unplugged.

I titled my talk this afternoon, "Bourne of Two Worlds." I mean Bourne is just great for sort of generating titles like that. "Bourne of Two Worlds." This title reflects my understanding that Randolph Bourne influenced two worlds: turn-of-the-century America and our contemporary world. Just as his antiwar writings transcend his time and have relevance today, how he experienced his own disability provides insights into today's disability movement and today's experience of disability.

Bourne also struggled to live in two very different worlds: the world of his own disability, and the able-bodied world. I believe that to understand Bourne one must understand the disability experience, its culture, its history, its civil rights, structures, and Bourne's disability is the most formidable experience of his life, and I think its greatest influence on his work. In addition, to appreciate Bourne one needs to acknowledge the social and political and cultural context of being disabled in turn-of-the-century America. Bourne's world was hostile, repressive, and stifling for the vast majority of people with disabilities. Disabled people lacked access to educational opportunities and public accommodations. They were not accepted in a workplace. The eugenics movement which sought to eliminate people with disabilities was mainstream and socially acceptable. The institutionalization-of-disabled-people movement had begun; bias and alienation, oppression, and discrimination against people with disabilities were the norm, and this was Bourne's world.

However, Bourne was more fortunate than most people with disabilities in his time. He was part of the world of disability by virtue of his physical impairments and his appearance. He could not “pass,” as they say. But he was not exclusively of the world of the disabled. He was educated and integrated into the mainstream society. Although he faced discrimination, he wrote and rose to be a prominent published writer. He was a participant in the world around him, and he was not a shut-in. By becoming an articulate and visible voice in the marketplace of ideas, Bourne was unique regardless of whether he was disabled or able-bodied. But it was an especially extraordinary feat for a disabled person. Despite his prominence, his success, and his notoriety, he could never lose sight of his disability and its cultural and historical context. And others did not.

For example, a contemporary of Bourne's, the poet Amy Lowell, wrote of Bourne, “His writing shows that he is a cripple. Deformed body, deformed mind.” Being defined by his disability was probably very familiar to Bourne as it is familiar to many of us with disabilities. He was remarkable not only because he refused to be ignored within the world he lived in, but because he chose to write about disability in one of his first published essays. Bourne gave voice to an invisible experience and planted the seeds of the disability political movement.

Interestingly enough, Bourne was born eight years after Helen Keller. They were both publishing at exactly the same time, although Keller's work, Helen Keller's work, focused primarily on her personal experience with disability. It would be fascinating to know what Bourne thought of Helen Keller, her writings about her life and her growing up to be a mainstream phenomenon and celebrity for being disabled. And I'm not sure if there are any records of his thoughts—maybe in Box Seven that was lost by the library that we heard about this morning. Keller's identity, though, was that of a disabled person, whereas Bourne struggled to establish himself as a mainstream writer of radical ideas. He would have rejected the role of disabled icon.

I cannot speak specifically to the impact of Bourne's disability on his antiwar writing or his other work, but I know it is there. Just as one would not try to understand Martin Luther King's writings on poverty or class distinct from his race as an African American in apartheid America, one must strive to understand Bourne in the context of his experience as a disabled man. And I will leave it to others who are far more expert in the writings and essays of Bourne to analyze his work with an understanding of his disability. But in my brief, sort of get-up-to-speed on Bourne, I note that most biographers and students of Bourne comment upon his disability. However, I'm troubled by the lack of understanding of the disability experience and the assumptions that they make about his disability. I do not believe that one needs to be a person with a disability to understand the disabled writer. That is no more true than needing to be a woman to figure out a figure like Eleanor Roosevelt. Rather, I think it is important to understand his disability from a context devoid of stereotypes about disability, or certainly acknowledging one's own biases and assumptions about disability.

Over the years, many biographers have written about Bourne's disability in either freakish terms, horrific terms, or paternalistic terms. This creates an impediment to understanding his experience and thus his writings. Biographers writing in their own voice about Bourne have described him as grotesque-looking, as a physically damned man. One biographer wonders, “We cannot know whether being a hunch-

back with a disfigured face prevented Bourne from being as great as he might have been if he was unmarred." Another biographer writes, "Disfigured and hunchbacked, Bourne reacted to his disability not with bitterness or self-pity, but rather with an exuberant love for beauty and compassion for humanity that created in him a longing for a truly cosmopolitan society." And just recently a writer referred to Bourne, just very recently, as "a twisted face and hunched back." In fact his own alma mater, our host today, Columbia University—now that you fed me I can say this—our host today, on its Web site celebrating their remarkable alumni during their 250th anniversary, describes Bourne as being "mangled at birth." Columbia describes his work as "Bourne writing movingly of his disability." I hope that these biographers never have the chance to write about me, for I can only imagine what they might say about my condition. Such language creates a tremendous barrier between the writer and subject, and the assumptions contained in the language preclude the writer from understanding Bourne's experience and psyche. Bourne would have rejected such characterizations. In his essay on disability I think he struggles to come to terms with both the power of, and limitations of, such words to describe his experience.

Between the time his essay on disability was first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in September of 1911 and the time two years later, when he included it in his book *Youth and Life*, he changed much of the language describing disability, as Dr. Longmore has described. Moreover, throughout the essay he rejects any characterization of his life as being pitiful or tragic. I would argue that he does not write "movingly" of his disability, à la Kathy Lee Gifford. He writes candidly at times, politically at times, angrily at times, and personally at times.

"The Handicapped—By One of Them" is an extraordinary essay in many respects. It's wonderfully modern in terms of its ideas and its subject matter, as if it were written only recently. It was published when he was only 25 years old, and just emerging as a writer. And Bourne captures the four themes of the disability experience, and these themes continue to echo in contemporary disability culture today. "The Handicapped—By One of Them" was one of Bourne's first published essays, his inaugural piece defining himself for the world and his readers. Bourne could have easily never written about disability, and most readers might never have known that he was disabled. Bourne chose to start his career as a published writer on the subject of disability, but he chose not to continue writing about disability explicitly throughout his career. Thus his disability and the development of ideas about disability remain invisible to his readers after this essay, although I think, as does Dr. Longmore, disability remains a subtle subtext throughout all of his work. For example, I cannot read "Trans-National America" and his thoughts about multiculturalism and assimilation without knowing that Bourne's own disability experience lurks just beneath the surface. And I would encourage you to reread that essay from that perspective.

I would guess that throughout his life he struggled to understand his disability experience and his experience in the mainstream world. Maybe that is why he edited the language that he used in the essay in its initial publication to its inclusion in *Youth and Life*. When the essay was originally published in the *Atlantic*, it was published under the title, "The Handicapped—By One of Them," not "The Handicapped—By Randolph Bourne," or "The Handicapped—By One of Them" by Randolph Bourne, just "The Handicapped—By One of Them." In its original publication he does not sign

his name to the article. He tells the readers that it is an essay written by a handicapped person, but he does not identify himself under the title or at the end of the article. It is published anonymously. The article's only byline is "One of Them," and if it weren't for the opportunity to look at Paul Longmore's head throughout my presentation, you would see I have copies of the original *Atlantic Monthly* article, and where the author's name would be, it just simply says "By One of Them."

And in fact, if you go further, the 1911 index of titles for the *Atlantic Monthly*—the end of the year they publish an index of all of its articles—the index of titles lists the article as entitled, "The Handicapped" and as authored "By One of Them." The 1911 index of authors for the *Atlantic* lists "The Handicapped" as being by the author "Anonymous." The 1911 index, the same index, lists Bourne as only being the author of "The College: An Undergraduate View," both in the index of authors and in the index of titles. A review of the index of the *Atlantic Monthlys* for 1912 and 1913 identifies Bourne by name as the author for all of the other articles that he wrote and later published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in *Youth and Life* with the exception of "The Handicapped." An affirmative choice was made to publish the article in the *Atlantic Monthly* anonymously—a choice was made. The question is—and we've sort of begun that question—is whether the choice was given to Bourne and he decided not to publish the byline, whether that choice was made by Bourne himself, or by his editors at the *Atlantic Monthly*. And the story of Bourne's meeting with Ellery Sedgwick at the Century Club, which we saw acted out earlier, may in fact give us some insight as to the answer to that question, but as of right now I don't know that.

Bourne changes the title of "The Handicapped" to "A Philosophy of Handicap" when he republishes it in *Youth and Life*. By changing the title to "A Philosophy of Handicap," Bourne is no longer "one of them." He explicitly removes himself from the title and the context of the essay becomes less personal; the article now titled "A Philosophy of Handicap" is presented as a social philosophy, not a personal philosophy. In addition he eliminates three very personal sections from the essay in which he refers to "my personal appearance," "my own experience," and "my situation," so that is now no longer in the book-version of the essay which he publishes under his name.

There is very little written about the reaction to the essay, either by his intellectual contemporaries or his friends. I was not able to find any published review or comment upon the essay, and no doubt people who knew Bourne and knew of him were familiar with that essay. And I imagine that that reaction influenced his thinking on the subject and had an impact on his decision not to publish explicitly on the topic of disability again. And again Dr. Longmore talked about the response from the disability community.

Let me just end by sort of laying out a couple of themes that strike me about this essay. And again, it contains many of the themes and ideas that are at the core of the modern disability-rights movement. It's both personal and political. He writes of his individual experiences and reflections upon disability. In addition, he also writes more universally of society's stigma and alienation. It's wonderfully candid. He addresses the issue of pity and identifies it as oppressive. It understands that it's not hatred that alienates him from others, but pity, and he riles against the curse of low expectations for disabled people.

Bourne articulates that the disabled person's struggle to integrate, belong, and to overcome oppression is external, and these are the core values of disability activism today. He also writes of romantic relationships in the essay and throughout his letters with an agony that is familiar to many disabled people today. Bourne was not an activist on behalf of people with disabilities, or disability rights, yet he was involved in outsider causes, and I do not believe that that was an accident or coincidence.

Thank you.

Allan Jalon: Thank you very, very much, Professor Miller. That was a remarkable and wonderful talk.

We're a little bit behind in terms of time, and it's been a terrific panel and we want to extend the time a little bit, we're going to go to 3:30 for this panel, then take a very quick break of about ten or so minutes, and then start again at 3:45.

And even though I said that, before I go on, very quickly, I can't help but do it. This is a letter that came in response to "The Handicapped—By One of Them." It's from the collection at Columbia. I don't have the exact date, but the text appears in John Belusso's play, *The Body of Bourne*, and he used the actual letters that he found. There were many, apparently.

Dear Sir,
I'm probably one of a thousand other handicapped people who will either write to you or long to do so. I thank you for your words of hope and cheer, for showing us that there is a place in the world after all for such as we. I thank you not only for myself, as I am an old woman who is learning to bless my handicaps for the insight they are bringing into my life, but I also thank you on behalf of a younger brother who is now in darkness.

I have often wondered if authors of articles such as yours realize how their printed words reach into the depth of those who need to hear them, and so I have ventured to write you.

Sincerely yours, Another of Them

Next is somebody else who just got it really quickly and who just seemed to appear and have the right kind of interest and background. Nicole Wallack has a natural affinity for the essay, and it turned out had just completed a Ph.D. thesis on the American essay, specifically studying the essays that appeared in the Best American Essays series. She is associate director of Columbia's Undergraduate Writing Program, and with Joe Bizup, who runs the program, she has been working to include Bourne in an approach that involves teaching students at Columbia to write. To write essays, not to write term papers necessarily, but to learn how to be good writers. And she's going to talk somewhat about Bourne's influence on the essay overall, and I welcome you.

Nicole Wallack: Good afternoon.

I think Bourne is one of those figures that inspires wonderful and terrible puns, so bear with one more Bourne pun as the title of my talk. Pardon? I'm about to tell

you. The title of my talk is "The Bourne Modernity," and it's about Randolph Bourne at the turn of the essay.

I have two little epigraphs for us to sort of have rolling around in our minds as we think about Randolph Bourne today. The first from the contemporary essayist, William Gass, who tells us that "The hero of the essay is its author in the act of thinking things out, feeling and finding a way. It is a mind in the marvels and miseries of its makings, in the work of the imagination, the search for form." And the second comes from György Lukács, "On the Nature and Form of the Essay." "There are experiences," he writes, "which can not be expressed by any gesture and which long for expression. I mean intellectuality, conceptuality as sensed experience, as immediate reality, as spontaneous principle of existence."

Well I'm very grateful to have been invited to consider the relevance of Randolph Bourne's work on the development of the essay as a genre, although I, too, have just come to his work recently. I am not actually unique in having this gap in my expertise. Essay scholars as a whole have overlooked Bourne, in large part because we have not quite known what to make of the period in which he wrote. In this talk I hope to suggest ways to understand Bourne's work in the context of the essayists who predate and follow him, focusing especially on the writerly or authorial presence he constructs across the range of his essays.

To many essay scholars, the essay in America had stalled in its formal development mid-nineteenth century, and perhaps even earlier, with Emerson. Randolph Bourne wrote in that liminal space between the Victorian and modernist periods, which many essayists, famously, including Virginia Woolf, considered to be marked either by the decay or even the end of essay writing. Of course, as Robert Atwan and others have argued, it was not in fact the end of all essay writing, thank goodness, but the passing away of what had been called the genteel form of the familiar essay epitomized by Charles Lamb's essay "Elia." In England the new age of the essay was marked by the formal innovations visible in Virginia Woolf's work, in particular, even as early as her essays for the *Guardian* from 1904 and 1905. By *formal innovations*, I mean specifically the shifts in the ways that writers made visible in their aesthetic choices their relationships to their subject matter, to their readers, and to their own consciousness. In America, essayists also made such formal experiments, but because a writer such as Randolph Bourne did not live long enough to see or possibly to participate in the modernist revolution in essay, as I suspect he might have done, we are more likely to overlook his contributions to it.

Today I will argue that we can detect the effects of Randolph Bourne's historical placement and contributions to the genre's evolution in how he constructs his presence in his essays in response to his critical nearness to the subject matter he engages. I expect that others of my colleagues will continue to provide us with greater insight into how his conceptual preoccupations distinguish him as a twentieth-century thinker. My scholarship as a whole focuses on key aesthetic developments and how essayists since Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon have adapted the form to construct new cells, new presences on the page, and how contemporary practitioners of the form, both published writers and students in essay-writing classes, continue to draw on and extend those formal experiments of our predecessors.

This inquiry is particularly timely for me because on my desk in my office just across the way in Philosophy Hall sits a stack of such experiments awaiting assessment and response. As I think of them I can just hear Randolph Bourne dismissing them. "The youthful essayist," he wrote in the month before his death in 1918, "is afraid you will think he is unsophisticated, while the middle-aged doesn't much care if you do. The youthful essayist usually develops into a professional anecdotalist with an active mind that is harnessed up to no real thinking that can only stream off from itself a futile current of incident." This is a strange, even a disheartening sentiment to hear from Bourne, an essayist who never made it into sanguine middle age himself.

It's worth noting, however, that Bourne was writing about what he was calling the *light essay*. The youthful Bourne would have made a distinction between what he valued when composing even his earliest efforts in the *Columbia Monthly* and the values and habits of light essayists such as H. L. Mencken. These essayists, like Mencken, combined the utmost ferocity of conviction against the academic and puritanical with a pedantic fondness for the ragbag of facts, and so are hardly worth our attention.

In stark contrast, essayists such as John Dewey are actually nothing less than prophets for a new age. Bourne writes,

In showing the unity of democratic strivings, the social movement, the new educational ideals, the freer ethics, the popular revolt in politics, of all the aspects of modern restlessness, forward-looking personal and social life, and the applicability to all of scientific method with its hypotheses and bold experimentation, that Professor Dewey has been the first thinker to put moral and social goal a notch ahead. His philosophy has the great advantage of making nonsensical most of the writing and the thinking that has been done in the old terms.

As a student of Dewey's Randolph Bourne brought to his writing of essays a sense of their capacity to do significant ethical, political, and social work, revolutionary work in fact. "These are not burdens," he suggests, "of youthful writers, but rather of mature ones." And this view has significant implications for how he crafts his own presence in essays that vary in their seriousness, scope, and ambition. Bourne's dismissal of young essayists and their suitability for such ambitious reflective writing is not new, however.

Bourne recalls that old cliché about the essay which insists on its status as a middle-aged form. Presumably this is because it takes most of us until middle age either to collect a sufficient quantity of experiences on which we can ruminate at any depth or, more darkly, to have had the experience of feeling so distanced from parts of our lives as to make them seem as if they belong to someone else. This alienation then offers what we sometimes like to call *critical distance*.

I must admit that I no longer believe in critical distance, but I very much embrace the notion of a critical propinquity, the capacity to inquire into an issue or a problem or a truth by virtue of its hold on us, our intimacy with it, our stake in its outcome. It is this quality, the critical propinquity, that I see at work in Bourne's essays from 1910 to 1918, and which most intrigues me as a reader / writer and teacher of this

form. So in my talk today I want to look at a few examples of what that nearness does to Bourne's presence as a writer in three essays, "A War Diary," "Old Tyrannies," and "Suffrage and Josella." I'll argue that we can detect in Bourne's positioning of himself in relationship to his ostensible subject in the essay a formal tension between his nineteenth-century inheritances towards polemic and harbingers of the modernist essay.

In "A War Diary," we encounter Bourne in his most familiar and arguably his most powerful mode, nearer to his ideas, which call out of him a communal presence more than an individualistic one. "Old Tyrannies" finds Bourne alone with his regrets, and communicating closely with another dimension of his own consciousness in surprising ways. Finally in "Suffrage and Josella" we hear Bourne speaking both to himself and to a lost friend, but even in this moment of intimate recollection we can discern multiple consciousness at work in his essays.

I'd like to give a little historical context about key developments in the American essay that frame the brief period in which Bourne made his contributions. The movement from relying on rhetoric inheritances to embracing a state of confusion and experimentation is an arc that many essayists take as they find their own way of being in essay and discover how they can best be present on the page as thinkers. The genre itself, like all of its literary cousins, has gone through periods of stasis and dramatic change, and sometimes just within a few years.

In the American tradition of the form, notable shifts in the genre appeared with surprising regularity after the First World War. In the twenties, led by Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, and others, American essayists revealed the impact of modernism on their work, embracing what Adorno would later call the "essay's unmethodical method." The 1940s saw the reinterpretation of the so-called familiar, or personal, essay, in E. B. White's *One Man's Meat* columns from the *New Yorker*. In the 1950s James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* ushered in a new development in the aesthetics of politics of writing essays that witnessed and rendered visible Americans' struggles around race and sexuality. What Tom Wolfe would call the *new journalism* of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the notion of objective reporting, privileging the presence of the writer as a visible and active participant in the drama they would have previously simply reported.

I would not call Randolph Bourne's work *journalistic* in any real sense. That is, his primary goal, unlike an English predecessor such as William Hazlitt, or one of our contemporary writers like Joan Didion, was not to render in vivid detail the particulars of a scene of life. However, in such essays as "The Handicapped," "In a Schoolroom," or "What is Exploitation?" and in some of his portraits we seem him close the gap between thought and experience, engaging his critical nearness to a world and to people who complicate his own presence and inspire formal experimentation.

I want to identify what I mean by shifts in a writer's presence with a specific reference to Randolph Bourne's "A War Diary." The essay's title suggests the intimacy of a journal or the episodic focus of some kind of chronicle. In fact, of course, this essay is not quite either. Instead, it marks for Bourne and his readers a moment of reckoning in which he asks us to consider with him the implication of Americans, and potentially especially American writers, becoming adjusted, as he says, "com-

placently accepting or even misguidedly optimistic about the war's inevitability in the first place, and potentially its profit in the long run." The diary is not a private one, belonging to Bourne alone, but an historic one, which we readers sense Bourne writes not only for himself but for the myriad others whom he invokes in an ever-shifting and developing "we." For those of us raised reading essays in the later twentieth century, it is both familiar and strange to hear a writer so attached to his subject without ever leaving the first-person plural as we discern when he avers, "Our war is teaching us that patriotism is really a superfluous quality in war. We are learning that war does not need enthusiasm, doesn't need conviction, doesn't need hope to sustain it." Several places in this essay, across its non-enumerated subsections, this "we" become more specific and more abstract by turns. In the third section of the essay, Bourne needs to characterize this "we," as he's already identified a specific group as "other," namely "the liberals' who claim a realistic and pragmatic attitude in politics" In contrast, Bourne offers "those of us who knew a real inexorable when we saw one, and had learned from watching war what follows the loosing of a war technique, foresaw how quickly aims and purposes would be forgotten, and how flimsy would be any liberal control of events."

How did this group attain such prescience? Bourne tells us that it might have something to do with what intellectual company they kept. "It is only we now who can appreciate *The New Republic*—the organ of applied pragmatic realism—when it complains that the League of Peace (which we entered the war to guarantee) is more remote than it was eight months ago; or that our State Department has no diplomatic policy. . . ." Bourne aligns himself, though, not only with the intellectuals in this essay, but also materially with the more extensive group, "we" of the middle classes, who will, he predicts, be progressively poorer because of the costs of the war than we should have been.

Randolph Bourne achieves something startlingly subtle in this evolving "we." He can incorporate and speak for many dimensions of American life simultaneously, from within its class structure, and from within its intellectual culture. What is most curious in this essay is the purposeful way Bourne distances himself from a specific contingent of intellectuals among whom he could legitimately count himself, namely "the number of the more creative minds of the younger generation who are still irreconcilable towards the great national enterprise which the government has undertaken." These young men and women, Bourne assures us, are "in full possession of their minds, faculties, and virtue, who feel themselves profoundly alien to the work which is going on around them." In a paragraph that belies his distance from them, Bourne gets inside the consciousness of these young folk so as to make them more than abstractions to his readers. "They must not be confused with the disloyal or the pro-German. They have no grudge against the country, but their patriotism has broken down in an emergency. They want to see the carnage stopped and Europe decently constructed again. They want a democratic peace . . . They know the longer a war lasts the harder it is to make peace. They feel that the greatest obstacle to peace now is the lack of a powerful mediating neutral, which we might have been."

Bourne assumes a readership that has encountered such young people but not known what to make of them, perhaps even discounted them or felt suspicious of them. The body of evidence then which substantiates Bourne's claims cannot ever be found within the essay, but radically, only by engaging the world outside of it. In

this move as an essayist between these two consciousnesses he both recalls—likely to his dismay since he hated him—the reflective sermonic quality of Emerson's essays (as we see in "The American Scholar" or even in "On Experience," which depend on a stable sense of a reliably real world outside the text) but also anticipates the modernist project to render their experience of an increasingly unstable reality visible to readers through form. To whom do I belong? asks Bourne implicitly in his formal choices. For whom can I speak? Who do I hope or expect to be listening? In "A War Diary" there's only one moment of direct appeal to his readers, appropriately placed in his essay's penultimate paragraph, and he prefaces it, thereby ensuring we know who occupies which sides of this particular problem: "Our country will not suffer for our lack of patriotism, as long as it has that of our industrial masters. Meanwhile, those who have turned their thinking into war channels have abdicated their leadership for this younger generation. . . . Let us compel the war to break in on us, if it must, not go hospitably to meet it. Let us force it perceptibly to batter in our spiritual walls."

Bourne's appeal for this revolutionary, potentially sacrificial stance is clearly directed to this younger generation who can make of their moral and spiritual strength a citadel behind whose walls there is a promise not only of support for their ideals, but of what Bourne calls "a vividder consciousness of what we are seeking in American life." To promise such a change to the younger generation, of course, is perfectly calibrated to appeal to anyone who desires growth or change. It is also the mark of a modern thinker who is in search of a new way to see the world and to explain it to himself. In this sense "A War Diary" is perhaps a more intimate essay than it first appears, despite all the syntactic distance it creates between writer and subject.

Reading through "The Radical Will" I got stuck in the terrific strangeness of two shorter pieces, which I'll just speak about briefly, and which never saw publication, I don't believe, in Bourne's lifetime, "Old Tyrannies" and "Suffrage and Josella." If "A War Diary" demonstrates how critical nearness to an idea invited Bourne to imagine his consciousness as part of a larger or communal one, in "Old Tyrannies" we see Bourne's syntax begin to reflect more blatantly the tension between multiple dimensions of a self at war with one another. There is no hope in this essay, no light, and no possibility of companionship. "Old Tyrannies" is a cry of despair, a sickening of Bourne's habitually healthy skepticism to a sour and relentless cynicism. In this essay he both laments and punishes himself for having had the naïveté to believe over his lifetime that a person could make significant change in the world in any way at all. It is not the content of his diatribe that is most startling, however, but rather the radical revision and stance he takes in the middle of the essay, moving from a relentless accusatory "you" address to an invocation of a "we." In this shift, I would argue, we see the kind of uncertainty about the ability of a singular stable consciousness to shoulder what is in real terms an existential crisis.

Let us look more closely at Bourne's interlocutors in this essay. Here is how he begins: "When you come as an inhabitant to this earth, you do not have the pleasure of choosing your dwelling or your career. . . . You are a helpless victim of your parents coming together. There is denied you even the satisfaction of knowing that they created you in their own bungling fashion, after some manner of work of art, or what they imagined an adequate child should be." We needn't attempt to read anything into the psychological particulars of Bourne's sentiments here in order to

understand that the primary person he addresses is himself. Every sentence of his first paragraph accuses this interlocutor or his family of a terrible helplessness and credulity. More startling, however, is a momentary break into a profoundly disturbing image. "The last indignity perhaps is that of being born unconscious, like a drugged girl who wakes up naked in a bed, not knowing how she got there." This arresting simile, the only one of its kind in the essay, introduces us to a curiously frightening scene in Bourne's imagination, in comparison of being born naked and unknowing to the violence we might expect this girl has endured while being incapacitated. There is no comfort, no ease, for Bourne's interlocutor, and since it is uncharacteristic in his other work to display such brutality even to those with whom he disagrees most profoundly, we can only assume that he has reserved his worst accusations for himself, in the most intimate of writerly pronouns, not "I" but "you."

Bourne takes the reader in a very short space of only a few paragraphs from this scene of humiliation and bewilderment through a sort of perverse "Seven stages in the life of a man," at each stage coming not to a new awareness or any new strength of purpose or clarity of self, but more and more forceful resistance from the world around him. "As you grow older," Bourne warns, "you become stronger to manipulate the world. But just in proportion does the world become stronger to manipulate you. It is no longer susceptible to your scream or your smile. You must use less personal instruments. But that requires," he reminds himself, "subtlety and knowledge."

Two paragraphs later when he has cast this pall also over love, which, by the way, "ties you irrationally and too strongly first to your mother and your father, and then to people who have no real part with you," he takes his own advice, rhetorically speaking, and moves to pick up a less personal instrument in the form of a shift of address, without warning, to his habitual "we" that he uses when engaging ideas. In fact, the shift is intriguing primarily because it acts as a moment of profound revision, a starting again, in the essay. Bourne does not move forward very far regarding his concerns that "[t]he normal, or the common, relation between society and the individual in any society that we know of is that the individual scarcely exists." Instead this movement is both surprising and perhaps predictable because his personal instrument, the essay itself as he had begun it, could not do what he wanted it to do most. So he turns not this time to the safety of a collective pronoun, but in fact a newly acknowledged sense of its futility. Not only are we unremarkable and anonymous in this society, but even if we came into the world "equipped with weapons to assail it and make good some individual preference, we could not in our puny strength achieve anything against it." This essay is unique in Bourne for its profound pessimism surely, but we can see in the critical nearness he has to his own despair something like the semantic equivalent to a tightrope walk.

I want to just very briefly consider the presence of Bourne in his portrait "Suffrage and Josella," because it seems significant that as a writer he is most likely to show himself in the singular first person in these portraits and reviews, that is, at moments when he is in critical nearness to another actual person. In Josella we find it goes from his past, "Although Josella no longer speaks to me, there was a time when she was my very good friend." However, by the time of writing she is no longer a person to Bourne but a problem, as he reveals to us at the very end. "I interpret Josella when I am in a philosophic mood. She stands out as a sign of the pathology of women's votelessness. I remember her personal crimes and my heart

hardens. I think of her neurotic outbursts and I am cruel again." Even an admission of cruelty and anger is an admission of connection, and it brings out of Bourne confidences about his own character, as much about hers. What does he tell us about her? What does he feel is important for us to know beyond the sketch of her biography? It is the possibility that in Josella, lost friend, Bourne finds a way to explain feminism and suffrage to himself most of all. "If Josella is the worst prophet for feminism, she is the best argument for suffrage. If Josella had been voting for 15 years I think her feminism would not be the queer, distorted thing that it is. She would scarce have gotten her chance to develop all these complexes against man's oppressiveness."

Bourne never tells us in this portrait how it was that he and she fell out specifically, although he speculates that "it must've been after my protest against some particularly atrocious betrayal of a friend that I was excommunicated; protest made my feminism suspect." Here we see Bourne looking at himself through Josella's eyes, perhaps accurately. In the nearness to Josella and his desire to understand what keeps him wanting to think about her, Bourne's syntax "protest made my feminism suspect" is not just interpretative but also something more intimate, a leap into Josella's anger with her. This kind of imaginative leap is common in fiction of the period, but in the first decade of the twentieth century largely unheard of in essays. For Bourne, essay writing allowed closer access not merely to witness his companions, but to encounter them nearer than perhaps he allowed himself in life.

These kinds of experiments of inhabitation appear not only in the essayists who immediately followed Bourne. We can think of the most audacious example in Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, but also in many of our most prominent contemporary essayists, including William Gass, Susan Sontag, Richard Rodriguez, and Jamaica Kincaid.

I am glad to have begun this relationship with Bourne this year and in this way, responding to his essay with essay, the very task I set for my students these past four weeks. The possibility of essayists trying out new consciousness is what brings many professional writers to the form. I know that it is important to present students this form and its possibilities are serious ones.

As a teacher I want to offer what Randolph Bourne found out for himself as an undergraduate, that it is the genre of essay itself that enjoins us to dwell in and make something shareable in the interstices between our public and private lives and our myriad and ever-evolving presences. I believe, as I think Randolph Bourne did, that the essay is a genre in which we can track and experiment what kinds of selves are possible in an age of uncertainty and change. And I know those essays on my desk will reflect the satisfactions and struggles of their modern consciousness.

Thank you.

Allan Jalon: Thanks for that. That's really terrific. Okay, we have a slight question about time, and all of this is fascinating and I hope people will indulge me. I think that we're going to keep going. We're going to shorten the next. There are two components. It's a bit of a kaffeeklatsch really: two people who are familiar with two of the Bournians of the middle of the century, and we'll talk with them each for

ten minutes. They'll speak and there will not be discussion on this panel. I think that's probably the best way to do it. It's been so interesting that the discussion will take place in our minds and we'll take away a sense of response to everything here. So I want to ask Barbara Solomon to come up, and Mike Wreszin is up here. Mike is sort of a late addition to this, though he actually was in my mind for a long time for the panel. He is a biographer of Dwight Macdonald and edited a collection of his letters, and really is best suited to talk about Macdonald, his magazine *Politics*, and also Macdonald's career as a writer on culture.

Barbara Probst Solomon is the curator of what really is our sibling show, which is an exhibit at the Instituto Cervantes, at 211 East Forty-ninth Street, which just opened on October 6. And there was a marvelous article about Barbara in the *New York Times* on Friday looking at the history of the little-magazine movement, and particularly the role of women who edited them. She's the author of seven books, including prize-winning *Arriving Where We Started*, teaches at Sarah Lawrence, is a correspondent for *El Pais*, and has just recently announced and received the prestigious award Antonio de Sancha from Spain, and is a long-time figure in New York's literary scene. And she's going to talk about Dorothy Norman. I welcome you up here to do that. And tell us a little bit who Dorothy Norman was and why she's important.

Barbara Solomon: Thank you, Allan. Don't hesitate to tell me when ten minutes are up. Anyway, my notes have been sort of informal. I'm glad to be back at Columbia. Point of fact, first time I've been back. I actually graduated from the School of General Studies, and so I realize Columbia's one place I've never spoken.

First, I want to just mention a few things because Michael True brought up anarchism and the arts, and I think that he made a very good point. And I want to mention that in terms of literary anarchism, Felix Feneon—who was really the greatest art and literary critic of France at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, and in fact will be honored in the new opening of MoMA because there's a portrait of him by Signac—was an artistic anarchist, as was Jean Vigo, who was the great cinema director of *L'Atalante* and *Zéro de conduite* and therefore—and of course with my roots in Spain—anarchism is a profoundly literary and artistic tradition. I think it's important to perhaps bear that in mind.

Among the authors of a more contemporary time who wrote about Bourne is my friend Clancy Sigal, who wrote about him in *Going Away*, and he was one of Clancy's heroes. And I think that that is kind of important. And then there's a very little known fact which I went into in an essay in the *New Republic* some years ago about Hemingway's real manuscript for *The Garden of Eden* as distinguished from the hodgepodge that Scribner chose to publish, because his hero—and remember, this is the 1920s, I mean he wrote the book later, but it's about the 1920s in Europe. And if you remember that after all in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway of course wrote about the wound, World War I, his hero is a writer in this book, which people don't seem to recognize the significance of, called David Bourne. So you might want to see if you could get a hold of it [in] Kennedy Library, the real Hemingway manuscript of *The Garden of Eden*.

Those are just little asides. But I think as Bourne spreads his wings in many different directions, these are little things that don't seem to fit in but that are of importance.

Now I was asked to speak about Dorothy Norman. I have this exhibit, America—Meet Modernism, about the women of the little-magazine movement. I have to be a bit of a dissenter here, because Dorothy Norman was important, but she was not . . . after all, *Twice A Year* . . . let us say she rediscovered Bourne. *Twice A Year* was published from 1938 to 1948. Dorothy was born—I don't mean to make all these puns—but she was born in 1905, so figure she's young in her twenties in the early 1920s. And she is unlike the bohemian women who made *Poetry*, *Little Review*, even contributed to the *Dial*; those were real bohemians. I want to make this brief because this is where we're at now. I did say to Allan, seeing that I kind of came from—my parents would've been of that world, I wanted to make some of the connections of that world.

I find Dorothy Norman very interesting, very bright, very problematic. By that I mean she was Reform Jewish Philadelphia, and she at 19 met Edward Norman who was New York upper-crust Jewish, Rosenwald family, and she went out of her way to marry him. Now her family and his family made it very clear to her that, to put it bluntly, Edward Norman was a very disturbed person. This had nothing to do with social . . . they didn't think he could handle marriage, actually he couldn't. What I find difficult about Dorothy Norman—and we've got to be truthful here, we're not here just to say nice things—was that she was one of these people who wanted to do good in service to the very famous and the very rich. It's certain. And she didn't have a sense of humor about it. Let's—you know, we're gonna make this short. She marries him, she comes to New York, she writes very . . . you see, I wouldn't mind it if she'd be like a French person and say, "l'argent, enfin", you know, something like that, and say something witty, because I want to get across the idea that money and art, particularly in New York in a certain Jewish class, were far from unrelated. That's where they were different from the bohemians that went before.

I went to Dalton, my parents lived in Westport; it's a very familiar world to me, therefore I'm a little bit nonchalant about it. But in fact, Dorothy Norman, if she'd only said she was marrying for money or position, but she said, "His parents offered me pearls and I said, 'I disdain money.'" See that's where I get a little . . . I have trouble with her, you know, all this "Methinks the lady doth protest too much." But she was interested in civil rights, she was interested in many of these things.

Now, when, on the other . . . and of course she sort of . . . her big relationship was with Alfred Stieglitz. She was very helpful to the very talented. And yet about her antiwar stance . . . she comes of a much later generation. She . . . there's something very interesting, which is that in her original issues she, at the behest of Stieglitz and his friends (and this includes Waldo Frank and Van Wyck Brooks and that whole caravan), that whole sort of literary crowd that was not the expatriates but the one—Lewis Mumford—the ones who stayed here; Edward Dahlberg was her editor. She fired Edward Dahlberg because she found him too antiwar. My feeling is she also wished to be a poet and he was truly a poet. She was not that keen on bohemians, and Edward Dahlberg was. So if you look at her issues of *Twice A Year* they are fascinating, they are—she was wonderful about European exiles, Malraux, Silone, later on Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, she was. And she did a lot with civil liberties, and then eventually she wrote for Dorothy Schiff and for the *New York Post*. And I don't think it is . . . so this is really in my mind a later period, and that's why I say that this involves the Theater Guild. And there were many women connected to this world, talking about dance, the Theater Guild, and as these were kind

of—a lot of these people in New York were Jews—it was already bringing in a nonreligious, progressive education, it was bringing in all those factors.

And then, just want to read you a little something which is, if any of you know anything about Dorothy Norman, you know that she also—I can never pronounce anything—she got involved later on, after Stieglitz died, with Nehru, the ideas of Coomaraswamy, you know, the Indian ideas. And she was also very active in black rights. Richard Wright became her editor in Paris. So this was a world that combined what I'd call *high-tone* literary, not *bohemian* literary, high-tone literary, international things, antifascism, civil rights, rights for the blacks. And she did do—and she was an excellent photographer—I don't think she was that good a writer, because she had no psychological sense of herself—but she was an excellent photographer which she learned from Stieglitz.

And to give you the idea of the world she really lived in, this is in a piece I—I've written pieces on this in the *New Yorker*, but this one was in *Westport* magazine, and it's an interview I had with Tom Langner, who I grew up with, and that was a Theater Guild family. Now picture for a moment that Dorothy was fascinated by India, by black rights, by all these things, and let's look at the bohemian version of this. Tom Langner's aunt was the black sheepess of the family, Phyllis Langner. And she went off—this will give you the idea of the times—she actually went off with the Prince Coomaraswamy to India, whose relative was the one who was a curator at the Harvard . . .

Ten minutes? Okay, can I finish the sentence? Okay.

Then she went off with Walter White of the NAACP, etcetera, etcetera. What I'm trying to say is that these ideas, these mixtures of the aesthetic, of the this, the black rights, Europe, were in the air from the thirties through the post-war, and they're part of the general context of those times.

Allan Jalon: Thank you very much. To some people this might seem like a kind of salad of names and references and connections that somehow might not instantly connect with Bourne, but in fact these links do all add up, and in a remarkable way, because Dorothy Norman knew people who were close friends of Bourne's, and this is really a wonderful picture taken by Kevin Bacon who works at the Gotham Book Mart, and you can see what Dorothy Norman did; you can see her aesthetic at work. Nobody had been publishing Bourne at all. You can see on the front here there is Bourne's essay "War and the Intellectuals"; there is a letter that he wrote to Van Wyck Brooks; there is a remarkable piece by Theodore Dreiser about Bourne. And she was determined to get personal feeling and sensitivity into the pages of this publication, and here you can see, this is a long letter that Bourne had written, and she'd been able to sort of persuade the Bourne family in Princeton to give her the letters. And it is one of the most remarkable publications connecting culture and politics, very much in the Bournian sense. He was the guiding muse in many ways for that publication. And so I thank Barbara very, very much for giving us some sense about. . .

Very, very quickly moving on, very quickly. There was no way to do this really without bringing up some discussion of Dwight Macdonald. Many will know the name; some will not. He's one of the most remarkably mobile, penetrating, interesting,

uncategorizable in some ways—an independent thinker of the middle part of the twentieth century, and so maybe we'll just have a discussion. I'll do the journalistic thing a little bit. And this is Mike Wreszin who's written extensively about him. Just talk for a few minutes, if you could—just a few, very briefly—so people will know the name and know to start looking, what it is that Macdonald found appealing in Bourne, what you think he gained from Bourne, and what he did with him, and what he passed on from him.

Mike Wreszin: I'm not going to burden you, I guarantee you. This is too late, and I just was notified Saturday afternoon, and so I'm just going to go over this fast. I had a long quote to begin with that was written by Bourne; it's called "The Sociological Poet," and it's a description of New York City, and it's the most glowing description of how wonderful the city is; it brings everybody together, and it's just the diversity of it all, and the brilliance of the crowd, and so on and so forth. That's one area where Dwight and Bourne are not really together. Dwight was always complaining about the city. I once had a passage; I couldn't find it because it was just so recently, but he was riding on a bus and he was looking at the crowd on Fifth Avenue, and his only thing was "Jesus, what an inert lookin' bunch, they don't look like they're capable of thinking seriously or anything like that."

Now of course, as you know—anybody who's read "Trans-National America"—there's a lot in Bourne that defied that description in "The Sociological Poet" where he dumps all over the tawdry values of American society. And I think that's where they do have something in common. He talks about the garish, vulgar, primitive flow on Broadway, and so on. So they have this in common. But what Dwight always said about Bourne was that Bourne was his ancestor and his cultural hero. And I think what they had in common was cultural criticism, but cultural criticism that was invariably political. I have always argued that Dwight used what was known as cultural criticism in the fifties. Everybody thought he had abandoned his magazine, *Politics*, to engage in cultural criticism in the *New Yorker*, that he had used it as a substitute for [the] political.

For example, here is a description that Dwight once wrote:

United States won't or can't change its mass culture, movies, radio, sports, cult, comics, television, slick magazines, Americans have been made into a permanent adolescence by advertising, mass culture, uncritical herd-minded, pleasure-loving concerned about the trivias of materialistic living, scared of debts, sex, old age. Friendship is sending Christmas cards. Sex is the wet dream of the chromium-plated Hollywood glamour girls, the happy ending is *de rigueur* in Hollywood, but there's no such thing in real life, everybody's life has an unhappy ending, namely death. Anyway, we have become relaxed in a warm bath, perverted to attach high values to trivial things, like baseball or football, kids' games really, and we don't function when we get out into the big, cold world where poverty, the mere struggle for existence, is important, and where some of the people are grownups.

That's Dwight Macdonald, and that's the elitist aspect of Dwight Macdonald that is now contemporary, is often criticized. But he looked upon the tawdry culture of American society as leading to a kind of totalitarianism. And on this score he was indeed with that other side of Bourne who worried most about an American ethic and cultural diversity washed into, I quote Bourne, "into a tasteless, colorless fluid

of uniformity," as Bourne put it in his famous "Trans-National America," and we've heard all about that. So they were there then.

Now the other big issue, I think, is that they agreed on something which continues to be debatable. They agreed on what they thought was the role of an intellectual, and the role of an intellectual was to be an adversary—almost always—was never to side with the establishment, was always to be a critic of the establishment, a critic of the prevailing wisdom. This was the intellectual obligation. That is why the name of Bourne flits constantly through Dwight's magazine, *Politics*. Bourne for Macdonald was always relevant, and he was most relevant in wartime. *Politics* magazine constantly ran ads for Bourne's volume on the state, which it described as "an American classic." Macdonald wrote an extensive article on Bourne in the *Partisan Review* in the spring of 1939, which was entitled, "War and the Intellectuals, Act II." One of the quotes I should give you from Bourne is what he said, thinking about it for today.

Somebody was attacking him for negativism. He said, "In this time of extreme of rationalized lunacy that one sometimes feels the only adequate comment is a moan or a yawp. The old art of railing valued as high in the Elizabethan theater should be revived. We need specialists in abuse, technicians of vilification, expert mud-slingers." And that's what Dwight often was—expert, and literary as well.

Dwight Macdonald was also like Bourne as he mostly alienated against his fellow intellectuals who he felt had betrayed their role. And he quoted Bourne, he said, "The mask molds the face. You become what you do and say, you don't become what your reservations are." Dwight admired Bourne most for his uncompromising respect for the truth and his willingness to follow out, to the logical end, the consequences of his analysis. He insisted that Bourne was very much alive today in his life. Suffice it to say the New Left frequently expressed their indebtedness to Bourne, from Noam Chomsky to Stoughton Lynd to Todd Gitlin and Theodore Rozak; all spoke often of both Bourne and Macdonald together and saw them as comrades in arms. Both men depended basically on their own experience. Bourne wrote, "We may not know much, but we at least have the positive material of our human experience to interpret, that at least is assured us. And it is only when we try to interpret the world in terms of pure cognition, pure thought, we get into trouble. But our feelings and our appreciations and our values are really what count." Macdonald, in his "Root Is Man," a famous essay at the time, made the same observation: "Each man's values come from intuitions which are peculiar to himself, and yet also strike common chords that vibrate respondingly in other people's consciousness." This is what ethical teachers have always done; it's the only way we have ever learned anything essential about ethics or communicated our discoveries to others, and that's true also of Bourne.

Thank you very much.