

**Q U A R T E R L Y**  
**P R E S S R E V I E W**  
FOR ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

SPRING 2013



**Travelogue** 2  
A Journey to Labrador by *John Gimlette*

**Memoir** 6  
A Somali in London by *Nadifa Mohamed*

**Digital** 9  
Shrinking Ads by *Derek Thompson*

**Feature** 11  
What Makes Us Happy by *Joshua Wolf Shenk*

**Essay** 28  
Judaeo-Christianity by *Geza Vermes*

**Side by Side** 35  
One Out of Many Egy a sok közül  
by *V. S. Naipaul* fordította *Tárnok Attila*

QUARTERLY PRESS REVIEW is an electronic magazine consisting of texts found in the public domain abridged for educational purposes.

Back issues: <http://pressreview.atw.hu>

Correspondence: [tarisz@hotmail.com](mailto:tarisz@hotmail.com)

## A Journey to Labrador

by *John Gimlette*

Labrador, as Newfoundlanders so often told me, is just a waste of space.

To the older generation, it had been the hard, outer rim of their fishery, but – with the fish gone – it was difficult to imagine it being anything at all. No one could remember much about it except the rock and mollyfudge, and the flat-faced natives who could smell their way up the coast. To the younger generation, it was even more skeletal than their own hungry island. There was no work up north, no future and no need to go there.

Many Newfoundlanders I met excused their ignorance of Labrador by assuming it was just demented. As well as stories of bugs and intractable natives there were also tales about strange mythological creatures like the ferocious (but as yet unseen) Ungava grizzly – and about settlers so genetically interwoven that they were now little more than half-wits scratching around on the rocks.

‘Why go there?’ people said, ‘the place is empty.’

I had booked my passage from Newfoundland to Labrador some weeks before, in St. John’s. ‘It should be clear by the end of July,’ said the clerk, ‘but there’s over five hundred bergs headin’ this way. Big ones too, like two hundred thousand tons.’

It was an uncomfortable thought, a ferry down Iceberg Alley.

‘I hope that she can find her way around them,’ I said, foolishly.

‘Better than the last one ...’ tutted the man behind me.

She went down in the ice ...’ said another.

I managed a feeble smile. ‘Anything else I should know about?’

There were plenty of suggestions from the queue.

‘This time of year the stouts and flies are big as buzzards ...“... and I heard there’s a polar bear headin’ down the shore ...“... You want to take care if you’re out in the tucks ...’

‘... hungry enough to eat the arse off a flying duck!’ The clerk steered us back to the question of tickets. ‘Do you want a shared cabin, or a single?’

I hesitated. What if the other fellers want to drink their way up the coast? ‘What d’you mean?’ said the man behind, ‘What U?’

On the map, Labrador looked like an unfinished version of Newfoundland. It covered an area bigger than the British Isles – about the size of Italy– and yet there were only thirty-one communities, all but a handful barnacled to the shore. With only thirty thousand people to fill out this coast, it was perhaps the scrawniest land in the world. There were no railways or bridges and only two short roads. In the far north, human intervention had always been so sporadic that, when the Nazis set up a weather station here in 1943, it was not discovered for another thirty-seven years.

It was not hard to see why mankind had shrunk away from Labrador. Although it sat at the same latitude as Scotland, its coast was frozen solid for six months a year. Then the storms would roll in, grinding and splitting their way along the shore. Little could survive such a mauling, especially trees. In fact, along this entire thousand-mile, wind-cracked, ice-chiselled, bear-infested coastline there was barely a twig to be had. God built the world in six days, say Canadians, and on the seventh he pelted Labrador with rocks. Here is the geological frontline in the Atlantic’s

attempts to reduce America to pea-gravel, and no place for a twiglet.

Unsurprisingly, there were few Newfoundlanders on the ferry.

The saloon deck was a Noah's Ark of Labradorians, every variant assembled. There were Celts two-by-two, pairs of blondes, pairs of Indians, a brace of hunters and thick, hot knots of Inuit and icemen. Often there were combinations of reds and Celts and, often, these were the most beautiful people of all, the *metis*. It was almost as if a long-lost race of antiques had been rescued from The Deluge; people coloured mahogany, lamp-black and gilt. They even looked like survivors, dug-in behind stockades of boxes and barrels, bullets, bits of engine, and Wiener sausages, or 'weanies'. Occasionally little Labradorians wriggled free and were hauled back with long-lost reproof.

'Pearl, knock off *tarmintin*!'

'... and, stop that tissin' or I'll *trim* yer!'

The sensation that I was among intriguing species continued as I made my way down through the ship. Because the *MV Bond* had been hastily converted from a railway carrier, both elegance and daylight had been lost along the way. One layer down, it was vaguely rabbitly but, by the lower deck, I was among the deeply subterranean. To begin with all I could make out were growls and bristly outlines but, as I burrowed on, I found my cabin. It was already being picked over by two ferrety Québécois. The older one said they were scrap-dealers, and had bloody eyes and a nose for a carcass.

'Nice, isn't it?' I said awkwardly, 'Good clean sheets.'

The scrapmen looked uncertain, their noses wrinkling at such cleanliness. Then they scurried off back to the truck-deck, to sleep with their rust. To my relief I never saw them again. I think if I had had to cosy along with those two carnivores, it would have been me drinking away the next twenty-four hours to Cartwright.

As it was, the night would be only mildly disturbed. The fourth occupant of the cabin was an old Canadian soldier called Joe, who snored like a kitten.

Soon we were out in 'Iceberg Alley', riding among the great towers of ice that had ripped themselves off the flanks of Greenland. Each was its own world, twenty times the weight of our ship, and each had its own frozen aura, the air stiff and raw as the *Bond* crept by. It is said that if they ever found the sea bed, they would rip it up, leaving a trench as deep as a house. Icebergs, I decided, were almost too much to comprehend. I spent the morning peering up into the peaks, clipped with cold and disbelief.

Every year some three thousand of these exorbitant powder-blue stacks come cracking and groaning down the Labrador Sea. There were seldom fewer than five in view. Perhaps one in ten would reach St. John's, and then drift on, into the Atlantic. In their two years of wandering there would be moments of serenity and then, with a boom like naval guns, ten thousand tons of ice might shear away. The giant, unbalanced by the loss of a cheek, would totter for a moment and then throw itself face-down into the sea.

Let no one think that an iceberg is just a lump of cold water. Here were exquisite crowns, hands, cathedrals and pyramids. Sometimes they were shot with streaks of ultramarine, or they lit up the sea like jade. By day they tormented the horizon with fancy mirages: mushrooms and hammers and Dalí's ears. By night they glowed like planets. The Labradorians never came out to watch them. They had their own language for the ice, which often reflected their anxieties: *slob*, *blocky*, *quarr*, *growlers* and *blue drop*.

Perhaps they were right to be anxious. I asked the ship's master, Captain Stuckless, about our prospects. 'Unsinkable,' he said.

Hadn't the Titanic been 'unsinkable'?

So she was – until she lost her belly to Labrador ice.

Half-way up the Labrador coast, I had to change ships.

The Northern Ranger was smaller than the Bond, better suited to wriggling through the islands and 'tickles'. For the outporters this made it a local bus, and for outsiders a cruise. But being glamorous was never going to be easy for the ferry; she had a crane on the front, and, below decks, she was so uniformly plastic that she would have looked exactly the same even upside-down. There had been few concessions to luxury: some snarly televisions, a painting by an Inuk and poached salmon for tea. In every other respect, the Labradorians would have recognised the ship as their own, with its staunch temperance, and plates of Klik (spam) and chips.

Like the Bond, there was still scope for camping. Most of the bodies in the lounge were Metis picked up along the way but there were a few New Agers from Ontario. They were a curious lot. Mostly in their forties, they all seemed to be running away from something relatively innocuous: in-laws, Toronto, antiperspirants or a teaching post. These fugitive Canadians always seemed deeply intense, even over the details – like their feet.

I felt more at home with the Americans, in the cabins. It horrifies me the ease with which I like the elderly and Americans. Being both, my new friends knew exactly when to be serious, and had no truck with bare feet. They were insatiably curious, and had names as uncomplicated as a day in the garden: Bud, Spike, Rose, Iris, Frosty, Pete and Doug. We often shared a furtive bottle of wine together. Here were lives which ought to have been intense but which were oddly self-assured. Bud had been at Dachau on the day of its liberation; Spike had a ranch the size of Wales; and Iris had leukaemia. The trouble with being American (it has always

seemed to me) is that it is so time-consuming you are not allowed out till you creak.

They loved the Labrador Sea. Some were on a second or third voyage. Only one of them missed the point: it was Conchita, Spike's fourth wife. 'There eez nothing here,' she sobbed, 'but rocks.'

For most of the time the passage north was eerily calm. Sometimes the surface was creased only by dolphins and potheads; at other times it was washed in mist. One moment we might be hooting along through a labyrinth of ice, when the next it would vanish in a deep white sleep and we would wake to find ourselves amongst rocks and stilted sheds. But it was invariably serene – 'hardly a flobber' (as the crew would say). This was not what I had expected. What had happened to the Swells? Sir Joseph Banks, the naturalist, would remember his 1766 Labrador cruise as 'one continual puke'.

Only once did the seas rise up like mountains of coal, and smash over the decks. It happened to be at the moment of the crew's cabaret, and the singer turned to chalk. Through waves of nausea she belted out her songs – ballads of whalers and 'salt-water cowboys' and cod cooked in maggoty butter. In the final rousing choruses, of course, the hero always drowned.

Throughout that voyage we stopped at around twenty outports, and at the huge old RAF station at Goose Bay. Whenever we docked I climbed up, through the settlement. Some were so deeply embedded in the flanks of Labrador that they had ended up in forests. But most were out on the ocean, nailed down to a knob of rock. I always enjoyed these places and their strange, Old World inhabitants. They said things like 'Hearken!', and still sold cough syrup at the inn. I often came across men with whiskers like Prince Albert, and even their names were redolent of the age of sail: Alpheus, Julius and Job. Life, they told me, was as

bloody and rhythmical as ever: seals in the spring, fish all summer, turrs in the autumn and caribou in winter.

Dependence on a surly ocean had left the outporters fatalistic but they seldom grumbled. Whenever they did I wrote it down: 'You can't go out at night for the freekin' bears'; or 'The wolves just ate my dog'.

It took almost a week to reach my final destination of Hopedale. It was an odd place to end up, this outport menaced by sledge dogs. Or perhaps I should say they defined it. There were dog-teams all the way along the beach from the port – dogs on the promontories, dogs in the scrub and dogs on the outskirts. There were then a few dogless, dirt roads of cabins and sheds before I found myself back out on the rocks and among the dogs again. Although it was possible to enjoy a moment without teeth and hackles, there was no avoiding the noise. Every snarl and growl, every scratch and every chink of chain was caught in the cliffs as it tried to seep harmlessly into the wilderness, and was amplified and boomed back across the town. Along with all its grunts and whispers, Hopedale was a cage of captured barks.

It is hard to forget those few days in Hopedale. As the hotel was full, I stayed with the wreckage of a family on the hill. It was social housing, and smelt of unspecific effort, although no one worked. Madge was a short, oily woman, half-Inuit and unsure of the rest. She said she had two teenagers somewhere, and waved me into a bedroom that was acridly male. She had the only other bedroom, across the kitchen. There was little furniture, just a couch, a poem to a dead baby and some ashtrays full of stubs and bullets. 'We doan have no phone,' she said, 'dey took it away.'

Family life – if there had ever been one – had long since lost its shape. No one ever spoke and there was no sense of time. The lethargy was compelling – like a clock whose hands keep sliding backwards. Madge ate a saucepan of pork and margarine in the

morning and then nothing until her sweet tea at night. She always gulped it down so she would not have to share it with her children. There was no curiosity for either me or them, and no one slept. The boy returned every day at dawn and watched a horror film. His name was Garn, and so were all his teeth. He despised his mother because she was dirty.

There was also a daughter – a fat, unhappy girl called Daze. She called in only when she was sure the others were out. I suspect she was looking for money. Although she was cunning, she said she was always attempting suicide and was often raped. She made out a powerful case for municipal neurosis. Everyone's weird here, she said.

I tried my best to avoid Daze after this, which meant avoiding the fiat. It was now a powerful force repelling four people in opposite directions, all for different reasons. Even out in the town I was not safe. Daze often found me, and would stare right into my eyes and beyond, as if she expected to find me there, with her grimy mother.

'Ye like her?' she would snarl.

'Well, I...'

'Ye doan know 'er. De only reason she's stayin' here is for de booze, and 'cos she gets to go with de guys from de hydro.'

Looking back, this doesn't shock me anymore, and nor am I particularly surprised. If you travel to the wilder places in the world, there is bound to come a point when even the humans are feral. And that's all that had happened: I'd found the end of Iceberg Alley. ♦

## A Somali in London

by *Nadifa Mohamed*

I set foot on British soil, or tarmac to be precise, on a frozen February day in 1986. Perched atop my sister's hip at the top of the steps leading down from the Aeroflot plane, I took one sharp breath before a missed step left us both tumbling down to the icy surface. Bruised and offended I decided that this wasn't the place for me. Months later, ensconced in a Victorian terrace in Tooting, my mind still perceived threats everywhere: in the creepy power lines that criss-crossed the street, in the curious gas-smell that emanated from the cold walls, but most of all in the cat that watched us interminably from the windowsill of the flat across the street.

It was a source of anxiety not just to me but to my nine year-old sister and fourteen year-old brother. We formed an investigative panel and decided that the cat was no humble feline but a spy, just like the secret policemen in Somalia, but spoke English and reported our daily activities back to its owner. I became English by osmosis; a new sense of humour, altered manners, an alternative history filtering through my old skin. The memories of booted men stomping into our bungalow at night and looking for our eldest brother had left us suspicious and untrusting, but England and the house on that street coupled with that cat exacerbated our paranoia. With a three-inch afro and sweatpants under my school skirt to keep out the chill, I marched to the prison-like schoolhouse every morning as sullenly as a

convict joining a chain gang. On the green mat at Mrs Moore's feet I responded to laughter from bullies with a stern look and a finger drawn menacingly across my throat like a blade, a move copied from the Indian films I had enjoyed in Somalia. All I needed were a pair of aviator sunglasses and a gold medallion and I could have been filmstar Amitabh Bachchan. Slowly, slowly I learned to speak and read English, the script falling into place from Sunday mornings spent piecing together subtitles on the televised drama 'Mahabharata'. It was full of moustachioed Indian *rajās* on horseback and simpering *ranis* in distress; a story two thousand years old but familiar and nostalgic to me.

Soon the 'Mahabharata' was ousted from my heart by *Home and Away*, Roald Dahl, Benny Hill, *Top of the Pops*. I became English by osmosis; a new sense of humour, altered manners, an alternative history filtering through my old skin. Eventually that skin came to appear a cocoon, tight and paper-thin, the passage of time affecting small change after change until I appeared another person altogether; long-legged, bleary-eyed and confused. Do butterflies and moths suffer this perplexity? This 'how did I get here?' and 'who am I?' crisis? They seem to just beat their wings twice and then take to the air. I felt weighed down, burdened, not so much by what I did have but what I didn't, a dearth that I couldn't describe. I sought shelter under my father's shadow, a former sailor who believes himself a citizen of the world and thinks the term 'global warming' is an internationalist greeting. He has visited more than a hundred countries and has an amalgam of accents to show for it. If anyone knew what it meant to belong everywhere and nowhere it was him. He described arriving in 1947, sailing into Port Talbot, Wales on a prison ship that had just delivered Jewish refugees caught trying to enter Palestine illegally to detention centres in Germany, and being inducted into a peripatetic world of sailors, boarding houses,

casual acquaintances and long waits at Naval offices for the next ship to come in.

Somalis had started arriving in England in the mid-nineteenth century, most employed as stokers on steamships but others stowing away inside cargo ships. These pioneers had established communities in Hull, Cardiff, South Shields, Liverpool and London's East End. It was in Hull that my father met Mahmoud Mattan, another northern Somali eking out a living in the flattened post-war economy. Mahmoud had married a Welsh girl and had three sons, putting down roots unlike the other Somalis who intended to return home with suitcases full of cash. The soil was hard though, hostile and acidic, and instead of finding opportunity, Mahmoud was forced to live apart from his family and eventually accused of the murder of a jeweller. He was executed in Cardiff in 1952. It took his widow, Laura, another fifty years to prove his innocence and have his remains removed from the prison cemetery. This story of love and hate got under my skin and I pursued it in libraries, in museums in Cardiff, in day centres for old sailors in Butetown where men who had once drifted from one corner of the world to another seemed welded into plastic armchairs, their legs either wasted or tight and swollen with fluid, their eyes leaky and rimmed with sea-blue rings. Mahmoud's story was a mere footnote in their long, adventurous lives; his distinguishing features, manners, idiosyncrasies scrubbed from their memories. 'What is there to say?' my father exclaimed. 'He wore a trilby hat and moustache, worked for a time in a slate foundry, enjoyed a flutter on the horses. He was an ordinary man.' An ordinary man with an extraordinary fate.

Investigating Mahmoud's life sparked something in me, a sense that my story was just a page within an old epic. Here – a sepia photograph from 1904 of Somalis in white robes living in an ersatz traditional village in a park in Bradford in one of the

travelling 'human zoos' popular a hundred years ago, the same individuals appear in a newspaper article a while later, having thrown off their robes and taken their employers to court for breach of contract. There – Somali Dockers fighting alongside Irish, Jewish and British anti-fascists in the Battle of Cable Street against Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts, one Somali boy exultantly telling journalists after the scuffle, 'we got them good, didn't we?' The strangest document I found was the autobiography of a sailor, Ibrahim Ismail, written in 1928, he dictated his story to his Belgian host in an anarchist's commune in the Cotswolds and vividly describes the 1919 'race riots' in Cardiff that left most of his countrymen in prison or on remand. He also discusses less dramatic events such as the winter's night when the sky was as 'black as ink' and 'a cold wind was raging' when he missed the bus from Stroud and was forced to trudge many miles home in the rain meditating on his state as 'an outcast, an African ... who could not ask for shelter.' Shortly after the autobiography was written Ismail left Britain and disappeared, never to be heard from again by his anarchist friends. These ghostly, restless men left traces so slight that every generation that followed them felt as if they were the first.

In the Sixties, students and civil servants from the newly created Republic of Somalia joined the sailors, their paths rarely crossing apart from at the Somali embassy in London's Portland Square, where after renouncing his British citizenship my father collected his new passport and planned a permanent return to his birthplace. New arrivals such as my maternal uncles, educated men who lived affluent lives back home, enjoyed much better conditions than their predecessors, renting flats in West London and working comfortable office jobs. They wore a uniform of sharp suits and thick-rimmed glasses, and met with other African intellectuals in cafes to argue over how the post-colonial world

could be remade for the better. My father retired from the merchant navy and set up a support group for the refugees pouring first into London and then Leicester, Birmingham and Sheffield. The numbers arriving became so great that Somalis stopped hurriedly exchanging details whenever their paths crossed – we had once befriended a Somali Olympic athlete after my father spotted his typically Somali face in a crowded, central London street – and the once inclusive community fragmented into clan divisions. Neither the past, the present or the future seemed easy to talk about, it was at this moment when it became apparent that there would be no return to our former home – that I must have become unmoored, drifting spiritually from one place to another and then back again.

The quiet men who arrived on our doorstep with nothing more than a plastic bag of possessions ate insatiably and slept for days but said nothing about what they had seen. Brutal news broadcasts filled in the blanks: crying infants with crepe-like skin, overflowing feeding centres, General Aideed in a Panama hat and sunglasses, American marines in wetsuits storming Jezira beach. My own time in England linked those earlier migrations to the exodus that followed the disintegration of the Somali state. Trudging to the phone box, I would stand beside my mother as she pummelled one pound coins into the slot and waited to be connected to her mother in an Ethiopian refugee camp, it was loyalty to my grandmother and all the others we had left behind that stopped me feeling truly British. Despite having just fragments of memories of my old life in Somalia and my mother tongue literally being a language I only used with my mother I stubbornly refused to think of myself as anything but a Somali living in Britain. This was and is a common feeling within the diaspora; we have one foot in Somalia and one foot in the country we are living, but while I was forced to navigate through a new

culture, Somali children brought up now in places such as Bethnal Green, Shepherd's Bush and Wembley might only study and socialise with other Somalis and Muslims. The desire that Somali sailors had to discover the world has been replaced by a fearful, insular attitude and a demand for conformity within the community. As Somalia has fragmented and reached an uneasy peace my need to claim solidarity with it has decreased, visits to my hometown of Hargeisa always highlight my foreignness; I cannot bear camel's milk, I leave gatherings to read a book, I play punk music loudly and don't know what to do when a Sultan pays a visit but my life in England is not something I will apologise for.

But similarly my roots in Somalia are not something I can forget.

Twenty-six years after arriving here and I am as close as I will ever be to being British, three generations of my family have lived here and if my life ever plays before my eyes it will be squirrels in parks, grimy underground carriages, brooding bus drivers, iron-gated schools, rotund lollipop ladies and men in tight t-shirts with a pint of beer in their hands that I will see. ♦



## The Incredible Shrinking Ad

by *Derek Thompson*

On July 1, 1941, baseball fans watching the Brooklyn Dodgers game on WNBT witnessed a breakthrough in marketing. For 10 long seconds, before the first pitch, their black-and-white screens showed a fixed image of a clock, superimposed on a map of the United States. A voice-over, from the watchmaker Bulova, intoned: “America runs on Bulova time.” It was the first official TV advertisement in U.S. history. And it was pretty lousy.

As anyone who watched the Super Bowl knows, TV advertising has evolved from frozen images and voice-overs to stories so entertaining that we occasionally shush each other in order to hear them. But the first ads on TV weren’t even TV ads. They were a mashup of radio and print hallmarks – a slice of audio, a single image – served to an audience that was shifting to television.

The history of affordable news and entertainment in America is, in many respects, a chronicle of advertising’s successful shifts from one medium to the next. After the Civil War, the coincident rise of cities and department-store advertising budgets pushed newspaper circulations skyward. Radio achieved its cultural peak in the 1930s and ’40s, not long after “national advertising came into its own as a corporate entity,” says the American-culture historian Jackson Lears. Television’s deep insinuation into our culture might never have happened without a second 20th-century advertising renaissance, centered on the boxes in our living rooms.

“We’re in the midst of something similar today with our phones,” Lears told me recently. “Advertising must come to terms with a new technology.” Now, in the opening innings of the mobile revolution, about half of American adults own a smartphone. But if television was once known as the “small screen,” smartphones are the smallest, allowing mere inches of marketing space. From an advertiser’s perspective, this has proved problematic. Mobile ads are generally ineffective today, and the ad rates companies are willing to pay are minuscule. Mobile platforms, from phones to tablets, now command one-tenth of our media attention, but only one one-hundredth of total ad spending. That represents a \$20 billion gap, and an unmistakable message for tech companies: either the mobile-ad revolution is coming, or our attention has finally escaped to a space where effective advertising cannot follow.

This may seem like good news – many ads, after all, are annoying and intrusive. But it could have unpleasant side effects. The mobile-ad drought, for instance, fundamentally threatens the two biggest businesses built on the back of digital advertising: Google and Facebook. (In a strange twist, it is Apple’s invention, the iPhone, that put them at risk.)

Plenty of apps and companies, including Pandora and Twitter, make much of their revenue from mobile advertising. But ads account for more than 90 percent of revenue at Google and more than 80 percent at Facebook, and as users migrate from desktops and laptops to mobile devices, only a small fraction of these companies’ ad revenues are moving with them. The same problem applies to many of the other companies that have been providing free content and services on the Web as it has developed. For the next 10 years, as mobile penetration screams past 60 percent, 70 percent, 80 percent, this will be the trillion-dollar question: How

do you build a thriving business selling ads on a four-inch screen – and what happens if you can't?

Most mobile ads today are either banner ads – little rectangles clinging to an edge of your screen – or disruptive “interstitials” that pop up and require you to click on them or close them. In other words, they are lousy desktop ads, shoehorned into your smartphone.

This deficit of imagination stems, in part, from a deficit of information. Despite the notion that smartphones incessantly track where we are and what we're doing, mobile-advertising systems are in fact generally worse than desktop browsers at targeting customers or learning how they respond to ads. “Mobile advertising has been in the dark ages,” says Gokul Rajaram, Facebook's director of product management for ads. Most mobile programs lack the desktop's sophisticated user-tracking technology, such as cookies that collect information and help serve relevant ads on Web pages.

Further, he says, conversion rates – the percentage of people who take action after seeing an ad – are devilishly difficult to measure. A persuasive mobile promotion for, say, Best Buy, may be more likely to make us visit a brick-and-mortar store, or BestBuy.com on our computers, than to make us enter our credit-card information on a mobile touch pad. As long as phones are primarily research devices rather than digital wallets, mobile ads will appear less valuable to advertisers than they really are.

The most fundamental challenge is that advertising is still an old-fashioned game of “look here!” – and on a four-inch screen, there isn't much to look at. Across platforms, ad rates on a per-person basis correlate with display size. TV ads are the most expensive. Then come full-page ads in printed newspapers and magazines. Then banner ads on your desktop. And finally, way, way down at the bottom of the list, are the little rectangles on

your smartphone. Ad rates per mobile viewer are, on average, five times lower than those per desktop viewer and, by one estimate, some 10 times lower than those per print-magazine reader.

Jason Spero, Google's head of mobile advertising, approaches the mobile-ad puzzle more like a behavioral economist than a marketing executive or an accountant. He thinks about moods, intents, and incentives, and how they change when people step outside their house and navigate the world with a phone.

“We're not too concerned about cost per click now,” he told me, although a recent analyst report estimated that Google makes an average of just 51 cents when you click a search ad from your phone, less than half of what it makes when you do the same from your laptop. “We're worried about getting the experience right. One in three mobile queries for us has a local intent. People are trying to solve a problem called lunch. Or they're shopping and want to look something up. Or they want a locksmith right away.”

Those are three totally different contexts, Spero pointed out, and Google wants to respond to them with distinct types of ads. For example, “click to call” buttons, which allow users to dial the advertiser from their phone in seconds, work for travel agencies and insurance companies, where the first interaction might naturally involve a phone call. But what about for local businesses like dry cleaners? “People don't call dry cleaners, they just walk in, so that ad should be a map.”

Hyperlinked phone numbers and pins on maps barely scratch the surface of mobile capabilities. But with the advent of location-based services, we are starting to see the germ of a bigger, if perhaps creepier, idea – ads that talk to you and know you personally. Imagine you introduce a friend to your favorite coffee shop. You both point your phones toward a bar code displayed at the counter. You receive a loyalist's deal on your phone – 10 per-

cent off anything – while your friend gets a onetime coupon on coffee, because the ad knows that it's morning. This is the promise of place-based advertising, and companies like Scanbuy are working to introduce it everywhere.

“One of the biggest problems with mobile advertising is that it's not interactive, it's just a passive ad,” said Scanbuy CEO Mike Wehrs. “We can make it a full interactive engagement: ‘Thank you for scanning. Do you want to watch a video? Are you interested in sellers nearby? Would you like to order it online?’”

“I think mobile advertising is going to be more lucrative than Web,” said Marc Andreessen, the tech entrepreneur and investor, during an interview in New York City in December. He described a smartphone that knows you, your money, your habits, your wants: “The targeting is going to be amazing [and] more valuable.” He paused, and added, “These formats don't exist yet. They have to be invented.”

You should hope that Andreessen is right. Even more than newspaper, radio, or TV, all of which are supported by subscribers or subsidies in addition to ads, the emerging generation of news and entertainment – begun on the Web, and now migrating fast to our smartphones – relies on advertising. The fact that most of our iPhone distractions are free makes us forget that businesspeople built them.

By 2015, a projected 2 billion people worldwide will own smartphones. If the 100-year history of advertising tells us anything, it's that advertisers shift to new technologies more slowly than audiences, but eventually, they get there. In 1941, a Brooklyn baseball fan might have wondered whether radio ads would ever work on television. He couldn't have known the answer. We do now. ♦

## What Makes Us Happy?

by *Joshua Wolf Shenk*

Is there a formula – some mix of love, work, and psychological adaptation – for a good life? For 72 years, researchers at Harvard have been examining this question, following 268 men who entered college in the late 1930s through war, career, marriage and divorce, parenthood and grandparenthood, and old age. Here, for the first time, a journalist gains access to the archive of one of the most comprehensive longitudinal studies in history. Its contents, as much literature as science, offer profound insight into the human condition – and into the brilliant, complex mind of the study's longtime director, George Vaillant.

### Case No. 218

*How's this for the good life? You're rich, and you made the dough yourself. You're well into your 80s, and have spent hardly a day in the hospital. Your wife had a cancer scare, but she's recovered and by your side, just as she's been for more than 60 years. Asked to rate the marriage on a scale of 1 to 9, where 1 is perfectly miserable and 9 is perfectly happy, you circle the highest number. You've got two good kids, grandkids too. A survey asks you: “If you had your life to live over again, what problem, if any, would you have sought help for and to whom would you have gone?” “Probably I am fooling myself,” you write, “but I don't think I would want to change anything.” If only we could take what you've done, reduce it to a set of rules, and apply it systematically.*

*Right?*

**Case No. 47**

*You literally fell down drunk and died. Not quite what the study had in mind.*

Last fall, I spent about a month in the file room of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, hoping to learn the secrets of the good life. The project is one of the longest-running – and probably the most exhaustive – longitudinal studies of mental and physical well-being in history. Begun in 1937 as a study of healthy, well-adjusted Harvard sophomores (all male), it has followed its subjects for more than 70 years.

From their days of bull sessions in Cambridge to their active duty in World War II, through marriages and divorces, professional advancement and collapse – and now well into retirement – the men have submitted to regular medical exams, taken psychological tests, returned questionnaires, and sat for interviews. The files holding the data are as thick as unabridged dictionaries. They sit in a wall of locked cabinets in an office suite behind Fenway Park in Boston, in a plain room with beige carpeting and fluorescent lights that is littered with the detritus of many decades of social-scientific inquiry: a pile of enormous spreadsheet data books; a 1970s-era typewriter; a Macintosh PowerBook, circa 1993. All that's missing are the IBM punch cards used to analyze the data in the early days.

For 42 years, the psychiatrist George Vaillant has been the chief curator of these lives, the chief investigator of their experiences, and the chief analyst of their lessons. His own life has been so woven into the study – and the study has become such a creature of his mind – that neither can be understood without the other. As Vaillant nears retirement (he's now 74), and the study survivors approach death – the roughly half still living

are in their late 80s – it's a good time to examine both, and to do so, I was granted unprecedented access to case files ordinarily restricted to researchers.

As a young man, Vaillant fell in love with the longitudinal method of research, which tracks relatively small samples over long periods of time (as in Michael Apted's *Seven Up!* documentaries). In 1961, as a psychiatric resident at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Vaillant found himself intrigued by two patients with manic depression who had 25 years earlier been diagnosed as incurable schizophrenics. Vaillant asked around for other cases of remitted schizophrenia and pulled their charts. "These records hadn't been assembled to do research," Vaillant told me recently, "but it was contemporary, real-time information, with none of the errors you get from memory or the distortions you get when you narrate history from the vantage of the present." In 1967, after similar work following up on heroin addicts, he discovered the Harvard Study, and his jaw dropped. "To be able to study lives in such depth, over so many decades," he said, "it was like looking through the Mount Palomar telescope," then the most powerful in the world. Soon after he began to work with the material, he found himself talking about the project to his psychoanalyst. Showing him the key that opened the study cabinets, Vaillant said, "I have the key to Fort Knox."

Such bravado had defined the study from the start. Arlie Bock – a brusque, no-nonsense physician who grew up in Iowa and took over the health services at Harvard University in the 1930s – conceived the project with his patron, the department-store magnate W. T. Grant. Writing in September 1938, Bock declared that medical research paid too much attention to sick people; that dividing the body up into symptoms and diseases – and viewing it through the lenses of a hundred micro-specialties – could never shed light on the urgent question of how, on the

whole, to live well. His study would draw on undergraduates who could “paddle their own canoe,” Bock said, and it would “attempt to analyze the forces that have produced normal young men.” He defined normal as “that combination of sentiments and physiological factors which in toto is commonly interpreted as successful living.”

Bock assembled a team that spanned medicine, physiology, anthropology, psychiatry, psychology, and social work, and was advised by such luminaries as the psychiatrist Adolf Meyer and the psychologist Henry Murray. Combing through health data, academic records, and recommendations from the Harvard dean, they chose 268 students – mostly from the classes of 1942, '43, and '44 – and measured them from every conceivable angle and with every available scientific tool.

Exhaustive medical exams noted everything from major organ function, to the measure of lactic acid after five minutes on a treadmill, to the size of the “lip seam” and the hanging length of the scrotum. Using a new test called the electroencephalograph, the study measured the electrical activity in the brain, and sought to deduce character from the squiggles. During a home visit, a social worker took not only a boy’s history – when he stopped wetting his bed, how he learned about sex – but also extensive medical and social histories on his parents and extended family. The boys interpreted Rorschach inkblots, submitted handwriting samples for analysis, and talked extensively with psychiatrists. They stripped naked so that every dimension of their bodies could be measured for “anthropometric” analysis, a kind of whole-body phrenology based on the premise that stock character types could be seen from body proportions.

Inveighing against medicine’s tendency to think small and specialized, Bock made big promises. He told the *Harvard Crimson* in 1942 that his study of successful men was pitched at easing

“the disharmony of the world at large.” One early Grant Study document compared its prospects to the accomplishments of Socrates, Galileo, and Pasteur. But in fact the study staff remained bound by their respective disciplines and by the kinds of narrow topics that yield academic journal papers. Titles from the study’s early years included “Resting-Pulse and Blood-Pressure Values in Relation to Physical Fitness in Young Men”; “Instruction Time in Certain Multiple Choice Tests”; and “Notes on Usage of Male Personal Names.” Perhaps the height of the study’s usefulness in its early days was to lend its methods to the military, for officer selection in World War II.

Most longitudinal studies die on the vine because funders expect results quickly. W. T. Grant was no exception. He held on for about a decade – allowing the staff to keep sending detailed annual questionnaires to the men, hold regular case conferences, and publish a flurry of papers and several books – before he stopped sending checks. By the late 1940s, the Rockefeller Foundation took an interest, funding a research anthropologist named Margaret Lantis, who visited every man she could track down (which was all but a few). But by the mid-1950s, the study was on life support. The staff, including Clark Heath, who had managed the study for Bock, scattered, and the project fell into the care of a lone Harvard Health Services psychologist, Charles McArthur. He kept it limping along – surveys dwindled to once every two years – in part by asking questions about smoking habits and cigarette-brand preferences, a nod to a new study patron, Philip Morris. One survey asked, “If you never smoked, why didn’t you?”

It was a far cry from Galileo.

But as Vaillant points out, longitudinal studies, like wines, improve with age. And as the Grant Study men entered middle age – they spent their 40s in the 1960s – many achieved dramatic

success. Four members of the sample ran for the U.S. Senate. One served in a presidential Cabinet, and one was president. There was a best-selling novelist (not, Vaillant has revealed, Norman Mailer, Harvard class of '43). But hidden amid the shimmering successes were darker hues. As early as 1948, 20 members of the group displayed severe psychiatric difficulties. By age 50, almost a third of the men had at one time or another met Vaillant's criteria for mental illness. Underneath the tweed jackets of these Harvard elites beat troubled hearts. Arlie Bock didn't get it. "They were normal when I picked them," he told Vaillant in the 1960s. "It must have been the psychiatrists who screwed them up."

#### **Case No. 141**

*What happened to you?*

*You grew up in a kind of fairy tale, in a big-city brownstone with 11 rooms and three baths. Your father practiced medicine and made a mint. When you were a college sophomore, you described him as thoughtful, funny, and patient. "Once in awhile his children get his goat," you wrote, "but he never gets sore without a cause." Your mother painted and served on prominent boards. You called her "artistic" and civic-minded.*

*As a child, you played all the sports, were good to your two sisters, and loved church. You and some other boys from Sunday school – it met at your house – used to study the families in your neighborhood, choosing one every year to present with Christmas baskets. When the garbageman's wife found out you had polio, she cried. But you recovered fully, that was your way. "I could discover no problems of importance," the study's social worker concluded after seeing your family. "The atmosphere of the home is one of happiness and harmony."*

*At Harvard, you continued to shine. "Perhaps more than any other boy who has been in the Grant Study," the staff noted about you, "the following participant exemplifies the qualities of a superior personality: stability, intelligence, good judgment, health, high purpose, and ideals." Basically, they*

*were in a swoon. They described you as especially likely to achieve "both external and internal satisfactions." And you seemed well on your way. After a stint in the Air Force – "the whole thing was like a game," you said – you studied for work in a helping profession. "Our lives are like the talents in the parable of the three stewards," you wrote. "It is something that has been given to us for the time being and we have the opportunity and privilege of doing our best with this precious gift."*

*And then what happened? You married, and took a posting overseas. You started smoking and drinking. In 1951 – you were 31 – you wrote, "I think the most important element that has emerged in my own psychic picture is a fuller realization of my own hostilities. In early years I used to pride myself on not having any. This was probably because they were too deeply buried and I unwilling and afraid to face them." By your mid-30s, you had basically dropped out of sight. You stopped returning questionnaires. "Please, please ... let us hear from you," Dr. Vaillant wrote you in 1967. You wrote to say you'd come see him in Cambridge, and that you'd return the last survey, but the next thing the study heard of you, you had died of a sudden disease.*

*Dr. Vaillant tracked down your therapist. You seemed unable to grow up, the therapist said. You had an affair with a girl he considered psychotic. You looked steadily more disheveled. You had come to see your father as overpowering and distant, your mother as overbearing. She made you feel like a black sheep in your illustrious family. Your parents had split up, it turns out.*

*In your last days, you "could not settle down," a friend told Dr. Vaillant. You "just sort of wandered," sometimes offering ad hoc therapy groups, often sitting in peace protests. You broke out spontaneously into Greek and Latin poetry. You lived on a houseboat. You smoked dope. But you still had a beautiful sense of humor. "One of the most perplexing and charming people I have ever met in my life," your friend said. Your obituary made you sound like a hell of a man – a war hero, a peace activist, a baseball fan.*

In all Vaillant's literature – and, by agreement, in this essay, too –

the Grant Study men remain anonymous. (Even the numbers on the case studies have been changed.) A handful have publicly identified themselves – including Ben Bradlee, the longtime editor of *The Washington Post*, who opened his memoir, *A Good Life*, with his first trip to the study office. John F. Kennedy was a Grant Study man, too, though his files were long ago withdrawn from the study office and sealed until 2040. Ironically, it was the notation of that seal in the archive that allowed me to confirm JFK's involvement, which has not been recognized publicly before now.

Of course, Kennedy – the heir to ruthless, ambitious privilege; the philanderer of “Camelot”; the paragon of casual wit and physical vigor who, backstage, suffered from debilitating illness – is no one's idea of “normal.” And that's the point. The study began in the spirit of laying lives out on a microscope slide. But it turned out that the lives were too big, too weird, too full of subtleties and contradictions to fit any easy conception of “successful living.” Arlie Bock had gone looking for binary conclusions – yeses and nos, dos and don'ts. But the enduring lessons would be paradoxical, not only on the substance of the men's lives (the most inspiring triumphs were often studies in hardship) but also with respect to method: if it was to come to life, this clever-sharp science project would need the rounding influence of storytelling.

In George Vaillant, the Grant Study found its storyteller, and in the Grant Study, Vaillant found a set of data, and a series of texts, suited to his peculiar gifts. A tall man, with a gravelly voice, steel-gray hair, and eyes that can radiate great joy and deep sadness, Vaillant blends the regal bearing of his old-money ancestors, the emotional directness of his psychiatric colleagues, and a genial absentmindedness. (A colleague recalls one day in the 1980s when Vaillant came to the office in his slippers.)

As with many of the men he came to study, Vaillant's gifts and talents were shaped by his needs and pains. Born in 1934, Vaillant grew up in what he described to me as “blessed circumstances” – living “during the Great Depression with a nurse, a maid, and a cook, but without anybody having so much money that you stared in dismay at the newspapers” as stock prices sagged. And his parents had a storybook romance. They met in Mexico City, where she was the daughter of a prominent expatriate American banker and he was a hotshot archaeologist working on pre-Columbian Aztec digs. When George was 2, he says, his father “gave up being Indiana Jones and became a suit,” first as a curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City and then as the director of the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He was an accomplished man who, his son says, showed little trace of doubt or depression. But one Sunday afternoon in 1945, at home in Devon, Pennsylvania, George Clapp Vaillant, then 44, went out into the yard after a nap. His wife found him by the pool, a revolver next to him and a fatal wound through the mouth. His elder son and namesake, the last to see his father alive, was 10 years old.

Immediately, a curtain of silence fell around the tragedy. “In WASP fashion,” Vaillant says, “it was handled with ‘Let's get this put away as quickly as possible.’” His mother, Suzannah Beck Vaillant, picked up the children and took them to Arizona. “We never saw our house again,” says Henry Vaillant, George's younger brother. “We never attended the memorial service. It was just kind of a complete cutoff.”

A few years later, their father's 25th-reunion book, hardbound in red cloth, arrived in the mail from Harvard College. George spent days with it, spellbound by the photographs and words that showed college students morphing, over the course of a few

paragraphs, into 47-year-olds. The seed of interest in longitudinal research had been planted; it germinated decades later in Vaillant's psychiatric residency and then in the ultimate vein of data he discovered at Harvard. It was 1967, and the Grant Study men were beginning to return for their 25th college reunions. Vaillant was 33. He would spend the rest of his career – and expects to spend the rest of his life – following these men.

The range of his training and the complexity of his own character proved to be crucial to his research. After Harvard College (where he wrote for the *Lampoon*, the humor magazine, and studied history and literature), Harvard Medical School, and a residency at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, Vaillant studied at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, which he calls a “temple” to Freud's ideas. He learned the orthodoxy, which included a literary approach to human lives, bringing theory to bear through deep reading of individual cases. But he also had training in the rigors of data-driven experimental science, including a two-year fellowship at a Skinnerian laboratory, where he studied neurotransmitter levels in pigeons and monkeys. There he learned to use the behaviorist B. F. Skinner's “cumulative behavioral recorder,” which collapses behaviors across minutes, hours, or days onto a chart to be inspected in a single sitting.

The undertones of psychoanalysis are tragic; Freud dismissed the very idea of “normality” as “an ideal fiction” and famously remarked that he hoped to transform “hysterical misery into common unhappiness.” The spirit of modern social science, by contrast, draws on a brash optimism that the secrets to life can be laid bare. Vaillant is an optimist marinated in tragedy, not just in his life experience, but in his taste. Above his desk hangs a letter from a group of his medical residents to their successors, advising them to prepare for Vaillant's “obscure literary references” by reading Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, Arthur Miller's

*Death of a Salesman*, and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Vaillant loves Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, too, and the cartoons of the dark humorist Charles Addams, like the one where several Christmas carolers sing merrily at the Addams family doorstep, while Morticia, Lurch, and Gomez stand on the roof, ready to tip a vat of hot oil on their heads. When his children were small, Vaillant would read them a poem about a tribe of happy-go-lucky bears, who lived in a kind of Eden until a tribe of mangier, smarter bears came along and enslaved them. “I would weep at this story,” remembers his daughter Anne Vaillant. “Dad thought it was funny, and I think somehow it was helpful to him that I had such feelings about it. There was this sort of, ‘This is the way life is.’”

Yet, even as he takes pleasure in poking holes in an innocent idealism, Vaillant says his hopeful temperament is best summed up by the story of a father who on Christmas Eve puts into one son's stocking a fine gold watch, and into another son's, a pile of horse manure. The next morning, the first boy comes to his father and says glumly, “Dad, I just don't know what I'll do with this watch. It's so fragile. It could break.” The other boy runs to him and says, “Daddy! Daddy! Santa left me a pony, if only I can just find it!”

The story gets to the heart of Vaillant's angle on the Grant Study. His central question is not how much or how little trouble these men met, but rather precisely how – and to what effect – they responded to that trouble. His main interpretive lens has been the psychoanalytic metaphor of “adaptations,” or unconscious responses to pain, conflict, or uncertainty. Formalized by Anna Freud on the basis of her father's work, adaptations (also called “defense mechanisms”) are unconscious thoughts and behaviors that you could say either shape or distort – depending on whether you approve or disapprove – a person's reality.



Vaillant explains defenses as the mental equivalent of a basic biological process. When we cut ourselves, for example, our blood clots – a swift and involuntary response that maintains homeostasis. Similarly, when we encounter a challenge large or small – a mother’s death or a broken shoelace – our defenses float us through the emotional swamp. And just as clotting can save us from bleeding to death – or plug a coronary artery and lead to a heart attack – defenses can spell our redemption or ruin. Vaillant’s taxonomy ranks defenses from worst to best, in four categories.

At the bottom of the pile are the unhealthiest, or “psychotic,” adaptations – like paranoia, hallucination, or megalomania – which, while they can serve to make reality tolerable for the person employing them, seem crazy to anyone else. One level up are the “immature” adaptations, which include acting out, passive aggression, hypochondria, projection, and fantasy. These aren’t as isolating as psychotic adaptations, but they impede intimacy. “Neurotic” defenses are common in “normal” people. These include intellectualization (mutating the primal stuff of life into objects of formal thought); dissociation (intense, often brief, removal from one’s feelings); and repression, which, Vaillant says, can involve “seemingly inexplicable naïveté, memory lapse, or failure to acknowledge input from a selected sense organ.” The healthiest, or “mature,” adaptations include altruism, humor, anticipation (looking ahead and planning for future discomfort), suppression (a conscious decision to postpone attention to an impulse or conflict, to be addressed in good time), and sublimation (finding outlets for feelings, like putting aggression into sport, or lust into courtship).

In contrast to Anna Freud, who located the origins of defenses in the sexual conflicts of a child, Vaillant sees adaptations as arising organically from the pain of experience and playing out through the whole lifespan. Take his comparison of

two Grant Study men, whom he named “David Goodhart” and “Carlton Tarrytown” in his first book on the study, *Adaptation to Life*, published in 1977. Both men grew up fearful and lonely. Goodhart was raised in a blue-collar family, had a bigoted, alcoholic father, and a mother he described as “very nervous, irritable, anxious, and a worrier.” Tarrytown was richer, and was raised in a wealthy suburb, but he also had an alcoholic father, and his mother was so depressed that he feared she would commit suicide. Goodhart went on to become a national leader on civil-rights issues – a master, Vaillant argued, of the “mature” defenses of sublimation and altruism. By his late 40s, staff researchers using independent ratings put Goodhart in the top fifth of the Grant Study in psychological adjustment. Tarrytown, meanwhile, was in the bottom fifth. A doctor who left a regular practice to work for the state, a three-time divorcé who anesthetized his pain with alcohol and sedatives, Tarrytown was, Vaillant said, a user of dissociation and projection – “neurotic” and “immature” defenses, respectively. After a relapse into drug abuse, Tarrytown killed himself at 53. Goodhart lived to 70. Though Vaillant says that the “dashing major” of midlife became a stolid and portly brigadier general, Goodhart’s obituaries still celebrated a hero of civil rights.

Most psychology preoccupies itself with mapping the heavens of health in sharp contrast to the underworld of illness. “Social anxiety disorder” is distinguished from shyness. Depression is defined as errors in cognition. Vaillant’s work, in contrast, creates a refreshing conversation about health and illness as weather patterns in a common space. “Much of what is labeled mental illness,” Vaillant writes, “simply reflects our ‘unwise’ deployment of defense mechanisms. If we use defenses well, we are deemed mentally healthy, conscientious, funny, creative, and altruistic. If we use them badly, the psychiatrist diagnoses us ill,

our neighbors label us unpleasant, and society brands us immoral.”

This perspective is shaped by a long-term view. Whereas clinicians focus on treating a problem at any given time, Vaillant is more like a biographer, looking to make sense of a whole life – or, to take an even broader view, like an anthropologist or naturalist looking to capture an era. The good news, he argues, is that diseases – and people, too – have a “natural history.” After all, many of the “psychotic” adaptations are common in toddlers, and the “immature” adaptations are essential in later childhood, and they often fade with maturity. As adolescents, the Grant Study men were twice as likely to use immature defenses as mature ones, but in middle life they were four times as likely to use mature defenses – and the progress continued into old age. When they were between 50 and 75, Vaillant found, altruism and humor grew more prevalent, while all the immature defenses grew more rare.

This means that a glimpse of any one moment in a life can be deeply misleading. A man at 20 who appears the model of altruism may turn out to be a kind of emotional prodigy – or he may be ducking the kind of engagement with reality that his peers are both moving toward and defending against. And, on the other extreme, a man at 20 who appears impossibly wounded may turn out to be gestating toward maturity.

Such was the case, Vaillant argues, with “Dr. Godfrey Minot Camille,” a poetic and troubled young man who spent so much time at the Harvard infirmary complaining of vague symptoms that a college physician declared, “This boy is becoming a regular psychoneurotic.” He’d grown up in a frigid environment – he ate his meals alone until age 6 – and spoke of his desolation with heartbreaking clarity. A member of the study staff advised him: “When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hold on.” He replied: “But the knot was tied so long ago, and I have

been hanging on tight for such a long time.” After graduating from medical school, he attempted suicide.

With the help of psychotherapy and with the passage of time, his hypochondria eased and he began to show “displacement,” the strategy of shifting preoccupations from a painful source to more neutral ground. When his sister died, he sent her autopsy report to the Grant Study office, with a cool note saying that he expected it would be “an item of news.” He reported another family death this way: “I received an inheritance from my mother.”

For Camille, such detached neutrality seemed to herald progress. At 35, he spent 14 months in a hospital for an infection and had what he described as a spiritual awakening. “Someone with a capital ‘S’ cared about me,” he wrote. Afterward, he bloomed as a psychiatrist, channeling his own needs into service. He said he liked the “distant closeness” of psychotherapy – and liked getting paid for it. As a child, he had fantasized about being a minister or physician. “Finally, at age forty, wish became behavior,” Vaillant wrote.

In his 2002 book, *Aging Well*, Vaillant returned to this man’s story, this time calling him “Ted Merton” to emphasize his spiritual development. (The men in Vaillant’s books always have florid pseudonyms – Horace Lamb, Frederick Lion, Bill Loman, etc.) In several vignettes in the book, Vaillant presents Merton as an exemplar of how mature adaptations are a real-life alchemy, a way of turning the dross of emotional crises, pain, and deprivation into the gold of human connection, accomplishment, and creativity. “Such mechanisms are analogous to the involuntary grace by which an oyster, coping with an irritating grain of sand, creates a pearl,” he writes. “Humans, too, when confronted with irritants, engage in unconscious but often creative behavior.”

But “creative” doesn’t equate to ease. At ages 55 and 60, Merton had severe depressions. In the first instance he was

hospitalized. The second instance coincided with his second divorce, and “he lost not only his wife, his savings, and his job, but even his network of professional colleagues.” Going forth into the breach of life can deepen meaning, but also deepen wounds.

### Case No. 158

*An attractive, amiable boy from a working-class background, you struck the study staff as happy, stable, and sociable. “My general impression is that this boy will be normal and well-adjusted – rather dynamic and positive,” the psychiatrist reported.*

*After college, you got an advanced degree and began to climb the rungs in your profession. You married a terrific girl, and you two played piano together for fun. You eventually had five kids. Asked about your work in education, you said, “What I am doing is not work; it is fun. I know what real work is like.” Asked at age 25 whether you had “any personal problems or emotional conflicts (including sexual),” you answered, “No ... As Plato or some of your psychiatrists might say, I am at present just ‘riding the wave.’” You come across in your files as smart, sensible, and hard-working. “This man has always kept a pleasant face turned toward the world,” Dr. Heath noted after a visit from you in 1949. From your questionnaire that year, he got “a hint ... that everything has not been satisfactory” at your job. But you had no complaints. After interviewing you at your 25th reunion, Dr. Vaillant described you as a “solid guy.”*

*Two years later, at 49, you were running a major institution. The strain showed immediately. Asked for a brief job description, you wrote: “RESPONSIBLE (BLAMED) FOR EVERYTHING.” You added, “No matter what I do ... I am wrong ... We are just ducks in a shooting gallery. Any duck will do.” On top of your job troubles, your mother had a stroke, and your wife developed cancer. Three years after you started the job, you resigned before you could be fired. You were 52, and you never worked again. (You kept afloat with income from stock in a company you’d done work for, and a pension.)*

*Seven years later, Dr. Vaillant spoke with you: “He continued to obsess ... about his resignation,” he wrote. Four years later, you returned to the subject “in an obsessional way.” Four years later still: “It seemed as if all time had stopped” for you when you resigned. “At times I wondered if there was anybody home,” Dr. Vaillant wrote. Your first wife had died, and you treated your second wife “like a familiar old shoe,” he said.*

*But you called yourself happy. When you were 74, the questionnaire asked: “Have you ever felt so down in the dumps that nothing could cheer you up?” and gave the options “All of the time, some of the time, none of the time.” You circled “None of the time.” “Have you felt calm and peaceful?” You circled “All of the time.” Two years later, the study asked: “Many people hope to become wiser as they grow older. Would you give an example of a bit of wisdom you acquired and how you came by it?” You wrote that, after having polio and diphtheria in childhood, “I never gave up hope that I could compete again. Never expect you will fail. Don’t cry, if you do.”*

What allows people to work, and love, as they grow old? By the time the Grant Study men had entered retirement, Vaillant, who had then been following them for a quarter century, had identified seven major factors that predict healthy aging, both physically and psychologically.

Employing mature adaptations was one. The others were education, stable marriage, not smoking, not abusing alcohol, some exercise, and healthy weight. Of the 106 Harvard men who had five or six of these factors in their favor at age 50, half ended up at 80 as what Vaillant called “happy-well” and only 7.5 percent as “sad-sick.” Meanwhile, of the men who had three or fewer of the health factors at age 50, none ended up “happy-well” at 80. Even if they had been in adequate physical shape at 50, the men who had three or fewer protective factors were three times as likely to be dead at 80 as those with four or more factors.

What factors don’t matter? Vaillant identified some surprises.

Cholesterol levels at age 50 have nothing to do with health in old age. While social ease correlates highly with good psychosocial adjustment in college and early adulthood, its significance diminishes over time. The predictive importance of childhood temperament also diminishes over time: shy, anxious kids tend to do poorly in young adulthood, but by age 70, are just as likely as the outgoing kids to be “happy-well.” Vaillant sums up: “If you follow lives long enough, the risk factors for healthy life adjustment change. There is an age to watch your cholesterol and an age to ignore it.”

The study has yielded some additional subtle surprises. Regular exercise in college predicted late-life mental health better than it did physical health. And depression turned out to be a major drain on physical health: of the men who were diagnosed with depression by age 50, more than 70 percent had died or were chronically ill by 63. More broadly, pessimists seemed to suffer physically in comparison with optimists, perhaps because they’re less likely to connect with others or care for themselves.

More than 80 percent of the Grant Study men served in World War II, a fact that allowed Vaillant to study the effect of combat. The men who survived heavy fighting developed more chronic physical illnesses and died sooner than those who saw little or no combat, he found. And “severity of trauma is the best predictor of who is likely to develop PTSD.” (This may sound obvious, but it countered the claim that post-traumatic stress disorder was just the manifestation of preexisting troubles.) He also found that personality traits assigned by the psychiatrists in the initial interviews largely predicted who would become Democrats (descriptions included “sensitive,” “cultural,” and “introspective”) and Republicans (“pragmatic” and “organized”).

Again and again, Vaillant has returned to his major preoccupations. One is alcoholism, which he found is probably

the horse, and not the cart, of pathology. “People often say, ‘That poor man. His wife left him and he’s taken to drink,’” Vaillant says. “But when you look closely, you see that he’s begun to drink, and that has helped drive his wife away.” The horrors of drink so preoccupied Vaillant that he devoted a stand-alone study to it: *The Natural History of Alcoholism*.

Vaillant’s other main interest is the power of relationships. “It is social aptitude,” he writes, “not intellectual brilliance or parental social class, that leads to successful aging.” Warm connections are necessary – and if not found in a mother or father, they can come from siblings, uncles, friends, mentors. The men’s relationships at age 47, he found, predicted late-life adjustment better than any other variable, except defenses. Good sibling relationships seem especially powerful: 93 percent of the men who were thriving at age 65 had been close to a brother or sister when younger. In an interview in the March 2008 newsletter to the Grant Study subjects, Vaillant was asked, “What have you learned from the Grant Study men?” Vaillant’s response: “That the only thing that really matters in life are your relationships to other people.”

The authority of these findings stems in large part from the rarity of the source. Few longitudinal studies survive in good health for whole lifetimes, because funding runs dry and the participants drift away. Vaillant managed, drawing on federal grants and private gifts, to finance surveys every two years, physicals every five years, and interviews every 15 years. The original study social worker, Lewis Gregory Davies, helped him goad the subjects to stay in touch, but it wasn’t a hard sell. The Grant Study men saw themselves as part of an elite club.

Vaillant also dramatically expanded his scope by taking over a defunct study of juvenile delinquents in inner-city Boston, run by the criminologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. Launched in 1939, the study had a control group of nondelinquent boys who

grew up in similar circumstances – children of poor, mostly foreign-born parents, about half of whom lived in a home without a tub or a shower. In the 1970s, Vaillant and his staff tracked down most of these nondelinquent boys – it took years – so that today the Harvard Study of Adult Development consists of two cohorts, the “Grant men” and the “Glueck men.” Vaillant also arranged to interview a group of women from the legendary Stanford Terman study, which in the 1920s began to follow a group of high-IQ kids in California.

In contrast to the Grant data, the Glueck study data suggested that industriousness in childhood – as indicated by such things as whether the boys had part-time jobs, took on chores, or joined school clubs or sports teams – predicted adult mental health better than any other factor, including family cohesion and warm maternal relationships. “What we do,” Vaillant concluded, “affects how we feel just as much as how we feel affects what we do.”

Interestingly, while the Glueck men were 50 percent more likely to become dependent on alcohol than the Harvard men, the ones who did were more than twice as likely to eventually get sober. “The difference has nothing to do with treatment, intelligence, self-care, or having something to lose,” Vaillant told *Harvard Magazine*. “It does have to do with hitting the bottom. Someone sleeping under the elevated-train tracks can at some point recognize that he’s an alcoholic, but the guy getting stewed every night at a private club may not.”

But Vaillant has largely played down the distinctions among the samples. For example, while he allows that, in mortality rates, the inner-city men at age 68 to 70 resembled the Terman and Harvard cohorts at 78 to 80, he says that most of the difference can be explained by less education, more obesity, and greater abuse of alcohol and cigarettes. “When these four variables were

controlled,” he writes, “their much lower parental social class, IQ, and current income were not important.” But of course those are awfully significant variables to “control.” Vaillant points out that at age 70, the inner-city men who graduated from college were just as healthy as the Harvard men. But only 29 Glueck men did finish college – about 6 percent of the sample.

Having survived so many eras, the Grant Study is a palimpsest of the modern history of medicine and psychology, each respective era’s methods and preoccupations inscribed atop the preceding ones. In the 1930s, Arlie Bock’s work was influenced by the movement called “constitutional medicine,” which started as a holistic reaction to the minimalism engendered by Pasteur and germ theory. Charles McArthur, who picked up the study in the mid-1950s, was principally interested in matching people to suitable careers through psychological testing – perfect for the Man in the Gray Flannel Suit era. Vaillant’s use of statistical technique to justify psychoanalytic claims reflected the mode of late-1960s academic psychiatry, and his work caught on in the 1970s as part of a trend emphasizing adult development. Gail Sheehy’s 1976 best seller, *Passages*, drew on the Grant Study, as well as on the research of Daniel Levinson, who went on to publish *The Seasons of a Man’s Life*. (Sheehy was sued for alleged plagiarism by another academic, Roger Gould, who later published his own take on adult development in *Transformations*; Gould’s case was settled out of court.)

As Freud was displaced by biological psychiatry and cognitive psychology – and the massive data sets and double-blind trials that became the industry standard – Vaillant’s work risked obsolescence. But in the late 1990s, a tide called “positive psychology” came in, and lifted his boat. Driven by a savvy, brilliant psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania named Martin Seligman, the movement to create a scientific study of the

good life has spread wildly through academia and popular culture (dozens of books, a cover story in *Time*, attention from Oprah, etc.).

Vaillant became a kind of godfather to the field, and a champion of its message that psychology can improve ordinary lives, not just treat disease. But in many ways, his role in the movement is as provocateur. Last October, I watched him give a lecture to Seligman's graduate students on the power of positive emotions – awe, love, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, joy, hope, and trust (or faith). “The happiness books say, ‘Try happiness. You’ll like it a lot more than misery’ – which is perfectly true,” he told them. But why, he asked, do people tell psychologists they’d cross the street to avoid someone who had given them a compliment the previous day?

In fact, Vaillant went on, positive emotions make us more vulnerable than negative ones. One reason is that they’re future-oriented. Fear and sadness have immediate payoffs – protecting us from attack or attracting resources at times of distress. Gratitude and joy, over time, will yield better health and deeper connections – but in the short term actually put us at risk. That’s because, while negative emotions tend to be insulating, positive emotions expose us to the common elements of rejection and heartbreak.

To illustrate his point, he told a story about one of his “prize” Grant Study men, a doctor and well-loved husband. “On his 70th birthday,” Vaillant said, “when he retired from the faculty of medicine, his wife got hold of his patient list and secretly wrote to many of his longest-running patients, ‘Would you write a letter of appreciation?’ And back came 100 single-spaced, desperately loving letters – often with pictures attached. And she put them in a lovely presentation box covered with Thai silk, and gave it to him.” Eight years later, Vaillant interviewed the man, who proudly pulled the box down from his shelf. “George, I don’t

know what you’re going to make of this,” the man said, as he began to cry, “but I’ve never read it.” “It’s very hard,” Vaillant said, “for most of us to tolerate being loved.”

Vaillant brings a healthy dose of subtlety to a field that sometimes seems to glide past it. The bookstore shelves are lined with titles that have an almost messianic tone, as in *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment*. But what does it mean, really, to be happier? For 30 years, Denmark has topped international happiness surveys. But Danes are hardly a sanguine bunch. Ask an American how it’s going, and you will usually hear “Really good.” Ask a Dane, and you will hear “Det kunne være værre (It could be worse).” “Danes have consistently low (and indubitably realistic) expectations for the year to come,” a team of Danish scholars concluded. “Year after year they are pleasantly surprised to find that not everything is getting more rotten in the state of Denmark.”

Of course, happiness scientists have come up with all kinds of straightforward, and actionable, findings: that money does little to make us happier once our basic needs are met; that marriage and faith lead to happiness (or it could be that happy people are more likely to be married and spiritual); that temperamental “set points” for happiness – a predisposition to stay at a certain level of happiness – account for a large, but not overwhelming, percentage of our well-being. (Fifty percent, says Sonja Lyubomirsky in *The How of Happiness*. Circumstances account for 10 percent, and the other 40 percent is within our control.) But why do countries with the highest self-reports of subjective well-being also yield the most suicides? How is it that children are often found to be a source of “negative affect” (sadness, anger) – yet people identify children as their greatest source of pleasure?

The questions are unresolved, in large part because of method. The psychologist Ed Diener, at the University of Illinois,

has helped lay the empirical foundation for positive psychology, drawing most recently on data from the Gallup World Poll, which interviewed a representative sample of 360,000 people from 145 countries. “You can say a lot of general things from these data that you could never say before,” Diener says. “But many of them are relatively shallow. People who go to church report more joy. But if you ask why, we don’t know. George has these small samples – and they’re Harvard men, my goodness, not so generalizable. Yet he has deep data, and he brings so many things together at once.”

Seligman describes Diener as the “engineer” of positive psychology, “trying to do better, more replicable, more transparent science.” Vaillant and his work, though, remind Seligman of the roots of psychology – the study of the soul. “To practice scientific psychology is to have as few premises as you can, to account for as much of the soul as you can get away with,” Seligman says. “Everyone in positive psychology who seeks to explain the mysteries of the psyche wants deeper stuff. George is the poet of this movement. He makes us aware that we’re yearning for deeper stuff.”

When Vaillant told me he was going to speak to Seligman’s class, he said his message would be from William Blake: “Joy and woe are woven fine.” Earlier in his career, he would use such occasions to demonstrate, with stories and data, the bright side of pain – how adaptations can allow us to turn dross into gold. Now he articulates the dark side of pleasure and connection – or, at least, the way that our most profound yearnings can arise from our most basic fears.

### **Case No. 218, continued**

*On first glance, you are the study’s exemplar. In Dr. Vaillant’s “decathlon” of mental health – 10 measures, taken at various points between ages 18 and*

*80, including personality stability at ages 21 and 29, and social supports at 70 – you have ranked in the top 10 of the Grant Study men the entire way through, one of only three men to have done so.*

*What’s your secret? Is it your steely resolve? After a major accident in college, you returned to campus in a back brace, but you looked healthy. You had a kind of emotional steel, too. When you were 13, your mother ran off with your father’s best friend. And though your parents reunited two years later, a pall of disquiet hung over your three-room apartment when the social worker came for her visit. But you said your parents’ divorce was “just like in the movies,” and that you someday “would like to have some marital difficulties” of your own.*

*After the war – during which you worked on a major weapons system – and graduate school, you married, and your bond with your wife only deepened over time. Indeed, while your mother remains a haunting presence in your surveys – eventually diagnosed with manic depression, she was often hospitalized and received many courses of shock therapy – the warmth of your relationship with your wife and kids, and fond memories of your maternal grandfather, seemed to sustain you.*

*Yet your file shows a quiet, but persistent, questioning about a path not taken. As a sophomore in college, you emphasized how much money you wanted to make, but also wondered whether you’d be better off in medicine. After the war, you said you were “too tense & high strung” and had less interest in money than before. At 33, you said, “If I had to do it all over again I am positive I would have gone into medicine – but it’s a little late.” At 44, you sold your business and talked about teaching high school. You regretted that (according to a study staff member’s notes) you’d “made no real contribution to humanity.” At 74, you said again that if you could do it over again, you would go into medicine. In fact, you said, your father had urged you to do it, to avoid the Army. “That annoyed me,” you said, and so you went another way.*

*There is something unreachable in your file. “Probably I am fooling myself,” you wrote in 1987, at age 63, “but I don’t think I would want to*

*change anything.” How can we know if you’re fooling yourself? How can even you know? According to Dr. Vaillant’s model of adaptations, the very way we deal with reality is by distorting it – and we do this unconsciously. When we start pulling at this thread, an awfully big spool of thoughts and questions begins to unravel onto the floor.*

*You never seemed to pull the thread. When the study asked you to indicate “some of the fundamental beliefs, concepts, philosophy of life or articles of faith which help carry you along or tide you over rough spots,” you wrote: “Hard to answer since I am really not too introspective. However, I have an overriding sense (or philosophy) that it’s all a big nothing – or ‘chasing after wind’ as it says in Ecclesiastes & therefore, at least up to the present, nothing has caused me too much grief.”*

#### **Case No. 47, continued**

*You are the study’s antihero, its jester, its subversive philosopher. From the first pages of your file, you practically explode with personality. In the social worker’s office, you laughed uproariously, slapping your arm against your chair. He “seems to be thoroughly delighted with the family idiosyncrasies,” Lewis Gregory, the original staff social worker, wrote. “He has a delightful, spontaneous sense of humor ... [a] bubbling, effervescent quality.” “My family considers it a great joke that I am a ‘normal boy,’” you wrote. “‘Good God!’”*

*You ducked the war, as a conscientious objector. “I’ve answered a great many questions,” you wrote in your 1946 survey. “Now I’d like to ask you people a couple of questions. By what standards of reason are you calling people ‘adjusted’ these days? Happy? Contented? Hopeful? If people have adjusted to a society that seems hell-bent on destroying itself in the next couple of decades, just what does that prove about the people?”*

*You got married young, and did odd jobs – including a stint as a guinea pig in a hospital study on shipwreck survival. You said that you were fascinated by the “nuts” on the psychiatric ward, and you wondered whether you could escape the “WASP cocoon.” You worked in public relations and*

*had three kids.*

*You said you wanted to be a writer, but that looked like a distant dream. You started drinking. In college, you had said you were the life of the party without alcohol. By 1948, you were drinking sherry. In 1951, you reported that you regularly took a few drinks. By 1964, you wrote, “Well, I eat too much, smoke too much, drink too much liquor and coffee, get too little exercise, and I’ve got to do something about all these things. On the other hand,” you wrote, “I’ve never been more productive, and I’m a little wary of rocking the boat right now by going on a clean living kick ... I’m about as adjusted and effective as the average Fine Upstanding Neurotic can hope to be.”*

*After a divorce, and a move across the country, and a second marriage – you left her for a mistress who later left you – you came out of the closet. And you began to publish and write full-time. The Grant Study got some of your best work. When a questionnaire asked what ideas carried you through rough spots, you wrote, “It’s important to care and to try, even though the effects of one’s caring and trying may be absurd, futile, or so woven into the future as to be undetectable.” Asked what effect the Grant Study had on you, you wrote, “Just one more little token that I am God’s Elect. And I really don’t need any such tokens, thank you.”*

*In the early 1970s, Dr. Vaillant came to see you in your small apartment, with an old couch, an old-fashioned typewriter, a sink full of dishes, and a Harvard-insignia chair in the corner. Ever the conscientious objector, you asked for his definition of “normality.” You said you loved *The Sorrow and the Pity* and that, in the movie, the sort of men the Grant Study prized fought on the side of the Nazis, “whereas the crooks and the homosexuals were all in the resistance.” You told Dr. Vaillant he should read Joseph Heller on the unrelieved tragedy of conventionally successful businessmen.*

*Your “mental status was paradoxical,” Dr. Vaillant wrote in his notes. You were clearly depressed, he observed, and yet full of joy and vitality. “He could have been a resistance leader,” Dr. Vaillant wrote. “He really did seem*



free about himself.” Intrigued, and puzzled, he sent you a portion of his manuscript-in-progress, wanting your thoughts. “The data’s fantastic,” you replied. “The methodology you are using is highly sophisticated. But the end judgments, the final assessments, seem simplistic.”

“I mean, I can imagine some poor bastard who’s fulfilled all your criteria for successful adaptation to life, ... upon retirement to some aged enclave near Tampa just staring out over the ocean waiting for the next attack of chest pain, and wondering what he’s missed all his life. What’s the difference between a guy who at his final conscious moments before death has a nostalgic grin on his face as if to say, ‘Boy, I sure squeezed that lemon’ and the other man who fights for every last breath in an effort to turn back time to some nagging unfinished business?”

You went on to a very productive career, and became an important figure in the gay-rights movement. You softened toward your parents and children, and made peace with your ex-wife. You took long walks. And you kept drinking. After a day in your “collar,” you said, you let the dog loose.

“If you had your life to live over again,” the study asked you in 1981, “what problem, if any, would you have sought help for and to whom would you have gone?” “I’ve come to believe that ‘help’ is for the most part useless and destructive,” you answered. “Can you imagine Arlie Bock – God bless his soul – trying to help me work out my problems? ... Or Clark Heath? The poor old boys would have headed for the hills! The ‘helping professions’ are in general camp-followers of the dominant culture, just like the clergy, and the psychiatrists. (I except Freud and Vaillant.)”

Around this time, Dr. Vaillant wrote about you: “The debate continues in my mind, whether he is going to be the exception and be able to break all the rules of mental health and alcoholism or whether the Greek fates will destroy him. Only time will tell.” Dr. Vaillant urged you to go to AA. You died at age 64, when you fell down the stairs of your apartment building. The autopsy found high levels of alcohol in your blood.

In *Adaptation to Life*, where you appeared as “Alan Poe,” Vaillant had admired your altruism and sublimation, and your eloquence, but worried

you were “stalked by death, suicide and skid row.” You had written in retort, “Of course, the prognosis of death is a pretty sure bet ... Hell, I could be dead by the time you get this letter. But if I am, let it be published ... that – especially in the last five years – I sure squeezed that lemon!”

Can the good life be accounted for with a set of rules? Can we even say who has a “good life” in any broad way? At times, Vaillant wears his lab coat and lays out his findings matter-of-factly. (“As a means of uncovering truth,” he wrote in *Adaptation to Life*, “the experimental method is superior to intuition.”) More often, he speaks from a literary and philosophical perspective. (In the same chapter, he wrote of the men, “Their lives were too human for science, too beautiful for numbers, too sad for diagnosis and too immortal for bound journals.) In one of my early conversations with him, he described the study files as hundreds of Brothers Karamazovs. Later, after taking a stab at answering several Big Questions I had asked him – Do people change? What does the study teach us about the good life? – he said to me, “Why don’t you tell me when you have time to come up to Boston and read one of these Russian novels?”

Indeed, the lives themselves – dramatic, pathetic, inspiring, exhausting – resonate on a frequency that no data set could tune to. The physical material – wispy sheets from carbon copies; ink from fountain pens – has a texture. You can hear the men’s voices, not only in their answers, but in their silences, as they stride through time both personal (masturbation reports give way to reports on children; career plans give way to retirement plans) and historical (did they vote for Dewey or Truman?; “What do you think about today’s student protesters, drug users, hippies, etc.?”). Secrets come out. One man did not acknowledge to himself until he reached his late 70s that he was gay. With this level of intimacy and depth, the lives do become worthy of Tolstoy or

Dostoyevsky.

George Vaillant has not been just the principal reader of these novels. To a large extent, he is the author. He framed most of the questions; he conducted most of the interviews, which exist, not in recordings or transcripts, but only in his notes and interpretations. To explain the study, I needed to understand him, and how the themes from his life circled back to inform his work (and vice versa).

Strenuous defenses, I came to see, are no mere academic theme for Vaillant, who has molded his life story like so much clay. Consider the story of his father's suicide and his own delight in going through the 25th-reunion book as a 13-year-old. When I asked Vaillant if the experience of paging through the book had been tinged with sadness, he said, "It was fascinating," and went on to describe his awe and wonder at longitudinal studies. If he were observing his own case, Vaillant himself would probably call this "reaction formation" – responding to anxiety (pain at grasping a father's violent departure) with an opposite tendency (joy at watching men, quite like him, develop through time).

But Vaillant's sister, Joanna Settle, described their father's death as the "North Star" essential for navigating her brother's story. Henry Vaillant, George's brother, agreed. "Since that time," he said, "it was as if George wanted to do two things. He wanted to surpass our father, and he also wanted to find out who our father was."

Considering the Harvard study through the lens of Vaillant's adaptations, one wonders whether he looked to do both at once. Henry Vaillant says that their father was depressed and drinking heavily at the time of his suicide; afterward, he says, his mother propagated the "heroic myth" that their father – who had worked for the U.S. Embassy in wartime Peru and, at the time of his death, was set to join the Office of War Information – was a war

casualty, undone by the pressure. Does this help explain George Vaillant's deep interest in alcoholism, and in the psychological impact of combat?

"I sometimes wondered if another motivation for the study of these lives," says Henry Vaillant, was "to learn how to live his own life right. As if by interviewing all these very successful people, he would get the knack. And of course in many ways, he has the knack."

Indeed, Vaillant's work is widely read and cited; he travels the world speaking to adoring audiences ("the leisure of the theoried class," he calls it); his colleagues and students marvel at his capacity for empathy and connection. "George sees the best in people," Martin Seligman says, "and he brings out the best in people."

I saw this firsthand in Vaillant's work with H'Sien Hayward, a second-year doctoral student in psychology at Harvard with a penetrating analytical mind and a big heart. Hayward has been paraplegic and bound to a wheelchair since a car accident at 16. She studies "post-traumatic growth," the surprising beneficial changes that many people experience after pain or injury. She approached Vaillant on a lark – she never thought someone so famous would have time to advise her. She was shocked, she told me, to see that he insisted on talking about her ideas – and about the pains and hopes that gave rise to them. "The only way to keep it is to give it away," he told her, articulating and enacting the essence of altruism.

The experience, Hayward said, was "transformative." Frustrated by academic politics when she came to work with him, she told me, "I felt like a little bird with a broken wing, and he lifted me back up and mended me and made me fall back in love with behavioral science – using science to understand humans and all of their complexity." Hayward came to consider Vaillant as

“the embodiment of healthy aging – mentally, emotionally, and everything. He’s the person we’d all hope to end up to be.”

But Vaillant’s closest friends and family tell a very different story, of a man plagued by distance and strife in his relationships. “George is someone who holds things in,” says the psychiatrist James Barrett Jr., his oldest friend. “I don’t think he has many confidants. I would call George someone who has a problem with intimacy.”

Nowhere has Vaillant been more powerful and articulate than in describing the importance of intimacy and love. And nowhere has he struggled more deeply in his life. He had four children with his first wife, whom he divorced in 1970 after 15 years of marriage. He quickly got married again, to a young woman he had met while speaking in Australia. She came to the United States to help raise Vaillant’s children, including an autistic son. She and Vaillant also had a child of their own. During this time, his daughter Anne says, “he was jet-setting around the world and she was holding down the roof at home.”

But in the early 1990s, Vaillant left his second wife for a colleague at the study. After five tumultuous years, he and his third wife split, and he returned (“with his tail between his legs,” his brother says) to his second wife.

This protracted drama stirred up resentments on all sides – in the women involved, for obvious reasons, but among Vaillant’s children, too. “There was a civil war in the family,” Anne Vaillant says, “and everyone suffered.” And although she says there has been some “détente,” four of Vaillant’s five children have gone long periods without speaking to him. Vaillant himself describes his family as akin to King Lear’s, and himself as “a disconnected, narcissistic father.” It struck me that the kingdom has more than an ordinary share of woes.

Vaillant’s own work provides an uncanny description of his

strengths and struggles. “On the bright side,” he has written, “reaction formation allows us to care for someone else when we wish to be cared for ourselves.” But in intimate relationships, he continued, the defense “rarely leads to happiness for either party.”

Yet Vaillant seems largely unaware of the way his defenses apply to his own case – even though he is aware of being unaware; he regularly told me that he would not be a good source of information about his own life, because of distortion. The Harvard data illustrate this phenomenon well. In 1946, for example, 34 percent of the Grant Study men who had served in World War II reported having come under enemy fire, and 25 percent said they had killed an enemy. In 1988, the first number climbed to 40 percent – and the second fell to about 14 percent. “As is well known,” Vaillant concluded, “with the passage of years, old wars become more adventurous and less dangerous.”

Distortions can clearly serve a protective function. In a test involving a set of pictures, older people tend to remember fewer distressing images (like snakes) and more pleasant ones (like Ferris wheels) than younger people. By giving a profound shape to aging, this tendency can make for a softer, rounder old age, but also a deluded one. One brilliant woman from the Stanford Terman study had been pre-med in college; when she was 30, a vocational survey identified medicine as the field most suitable for her. But her ambitions were squashed by gender bias and the Great Depression, and she ended up a housewife. How, the study staff asked her at age 78, had she managed the gap between her potential and her achievement? “I never knew I had any potential,” she answered. Had she ever thought of being a doctor? Never, she said.

At age 50, one Grant Study man declared, “God is dead and man is very much alive and has a wonderful future.” He had stopped going to church, he said, when he arrived at Harvard. But

as a sophomore, he had reported going to mass four times a week. When Vaillant sent this – and several similar vignettes – to the man for his approval to publish them, the man wrote back, “George, you must have sent these to the wrong person.” Vaillant writes, “He could not believe that his college persona could have ever been him. Maturation makes liars of us all.”

When we discussed his marriages, Vaillant asked me to report simply that he had been married to his present wife for 40 years, which struck me not as a calculated deception but as a deeply worn habit of thought. Indeed, a few years ago, Anne told me, her father was looking over pictures of her wedding, and came across a picture of his third wife. He stood there puzzled for a time, and then finally asked Anne: “Who is that woman?” “I began to worry that he’d begun to have Alzheimer’s,” Anne says. “But I actually don’t think it’s an organic thing. I think it’s self-protection.” This is what Vaillant calls “repression,” and he’s been using it for a long time. “When I was younger, he would forget everything,” Anne says. “It was almost like he had his brain erased.”

Vaillant has passed along day-to-day management of the study to his colleague Robert Waldinger, a researcher and a psychoanalyst. As has always been necessary, Waldinger has kept this 72-year-old ship in the water by paying homage to the dominant model of health. Today, that means taking MRIs of the Grant and Glueck men, collecting DNA swabs – and asking for volunteers to donate their brains to the study. (Meanwhile, recent efficacy studies have restored some luster to psychoanalytic ideas, so the project still encompasses a range of approaches.)

Though Vaillant spends half the year in Australia, his wife’s native land, he is still deeply involved in the study, retains his title as co-director, and operates out of the study’s office when he’s in Boston. He also works the phones to keep track of the men’s lives – and their deaths. “I’m trying to reach [name deleted],” I

overheard him say one day on the phone from the study’s office. He spoke loudly; I gathered the call was overseas. “Oh. I see,” he said after a pause. “Do you know of what cause?”

Recently, I asked Vaillant what happened when the men died. “I just got an e-mail this morning from one of the men’s sons,” he said, “that his father died this January. He would have been 89.” I asked him how it felt. He paused, and then said, “The answer to your question is not a pretty one – which is that when someone dies, I finally know what happened to them. And they go in a tidy place in the computer, and they are properly stuffed, and I’ve done my duty by them. Every now and then, there’s a sense of grief, and the sense of losing someone, but it’s usually pretty clinical. I’m usually callous with regard to death, from my father dying suddenly and unexpectedly.” He added, “I’m not a model of adult development.”

Vaillant’s confession reminded me of a poignant lesson from his work – that seeing a defense is easier than changing it. Only with patience and tenderness might a person surrender his barbed armor for a softer shield. Perhaps in this, I thought, lies the key to the good life – not rules to follow, nor problems to avoid, but an engaged humility, an earnest acceptance of life’s pains and promises. In his efforts to manifest this spirit, George Vaillant is, if not a model, then certainly a practiced guide. For all his love of science and its conclusions, he returns to stories and their questions. When I asked him if there was a death that had affected him, he mentioned Case No. 47 – “Alan Poe” – an inspiring, tragic man, who left many lessons and many mysteries, who earnestly sought to “squeeze that lemon.” ♦

## Judaeo-Christianity

by Geza Vermes

The combined expression "Jewish Christian", made up of two seemingly contradictory concepts, must strike readers not specially trained in theology or religious history as an oxymoron. For how can someone simultaneously be a follower of both Moses and Jesus? Yet at the beginning of the Christian movement, in the first hundred years of the post-Jesus era, encounters with Jewish Christians distinguishable from Gentile Christians were a daily occurrence both in the Holy Land and in the diaspora.

To understand the genesis of these notions, the first point to note is that during his days of preaching, Jesus of Nazareth addressed only Jews, "the lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 10:5; 15:24). His disciples were even expressly instructed not to approach Gentiles or Samaritans (Mt 10:5). On the few occasions that Jesus ventured beyond the boundaries of his homeland, he never proclaimed his gospel to pagans, nor did his disciples do so during his lifetime. The mission of the 11 apostles to "all the nations" (Mt 28:19) is a "post-Resurrection" idea. It appears to be of Pauline inspiration and is nowhere found in the Gospels apart from the spurious longer ending of Mark (Mk 16:15), which is missing from all the older manuscripts. Jesus's own perspective was exclusively Jewish; he was concerned only with Jews.

Indeed, we learn from the Acts of the Apostles that the primitive community of Jesus followers consisted of 120 Jewish persons, including the 11 apostles and the mother and brothers of

Jesus (Acts 1:14-5). This is incidentally the last reference to Mary in the New Testament, although there are further allusions to the male siblings of Jesus in the Acts and in Paul. James, "the brother of the Lord" as Paul refers to him, is presented as the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:19; Gal 1:19) and according to another Pauline passage, the married brothers of Jesus also acted as missionaries of the Gospel (1 Cor 9:5).

On the feast of Pentecost that followed the crucifixion, Peter and the rest of the apostles were metamorphosed under the influence of the divine Spirit from a group of gutless fugitives into born-again champions of the faith in Jesus, the risen Messiah, and their charismatic proclamation to the Jerusalem crowds instantaneously increased the original nucleus of 120 Jesus followers by 3,000 new Jewish converts. All they were asked to do was to believe in Peter's teaching about Jesus and be baptised in his name.

The individual members of the Jerusalem Jesus party did not call themselves by any specific name, but their religious movement was known as "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 24:14), short for "the Way of God". Only at a later date, after the establishment of a community in Antioch in northern Syria, do we encounter in the Acts of the Apostles 11:26 the specific designation *Christianoi* ("Christians" or Messianists), applied to the members of that particular church.

How did the original Judaeo-Christians of Jerusalem compare to their Jewish neighbours? In some essential ways they did not differ from them at all. The Judaeo-Christians considered themselves Jews and their outward behaviour and dietary customs were Jewish. In fact, they faithfully observed all the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law. In particular, the apostles and their followers continued to frequent the religious centre of Judaism, the Temple of Jerusalem, for private and public worship, and it

was there that they performed charismatic healings (Acts 3:1-10; 5:12, 20, 25, 42). According to the Acts, the entire Jesus party assembled for prayer in the sanctuary every day (Acts 2:46). Even Paul, the chief opponent of the obligatory performance of Jewish customs in his churches, turned out to be a temple-goer on his occasional visits to Jerusalem. He once fell into a trance in the course of his prayer in the House of God (Acts 22:17) and on a later occasion he underwent the prescribed purification rituals before commissioning the priests to offer sacrifice on his behalf (Acts 21:24-6).

In addition to their attachment to the Law of Moses, including worship in the Temple, the religious practice of the first Jewish Christians also included the "breaking of the bread" (Acts 2:46). This breaking of the bread was not a purely symbolical cultic act, but a real meal. It had the double purpose of feeding the participants and symbolically uniting them with one another as well as with their Master Jesus, and with God. The frequency of the rite is not immediately specified, but the initial impression is that it took place daily, not unlike the sacred dinner of the fully initiated Essenes, described by the Jewish writers Philo, Flavius Josephus and the Community Rule of the Dead Sea Scrolls. "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous heart" (Acts 2:46). On the other hand, according to Acts 20:7, Paul in Troas broke the bread on the first day of the week, and the Didache, the earliest Christian treatise (late first century CE), also orders that the bread should be broken and thanksgiving (Eucharist) performed each Sunday (Did. 14:1).

Another distinguishing mark of the Jerusalem Jewish Christians was religious communism. "No one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32). They were not formally obliged to divest

themselves of their property and goods, as was the case with the Essenes, but there was strong moral pressure and not to do so would have been judged improper.

So prior to the admission of Gentile candidates, the affiliates of the Jesus party appeared to ordinary people in Jerusalem as representatives of a Jewish sect. They reminded them of the Essenes, who were comparable in number, and exhibited similar customs such as the daily solemn meal and life from a common kitty. Indeed, the followers of Jesus were referred to in the late Fifties of the first century as the "sect [*hairesis*] of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5, 14) and in later patristic literature the Judaeo-Christians were designated as the Ebionites or "the Poor". The Church Fathers, who counted the Ebionites as heretics, sarcastically (and mistakenly) interpreted the title as pointing to the poverty of the Ebionites' beliefs. If the final sentence of the Jesus notice of Josephus is accepted as genuine then the Palestinian Jewish-Christian community still existed in the Holy Land after the war against Rome in 66-73/4 CE. The Testimonium Flavianum (*Jewish Antiquities* 18. 63-4) in fact speaks of them as a tribe (*phylon*) of the Jewish nation. In his turn, the church historian Eusebius (260-339 CE) reports that up to the war of Bar Kokhba (132-5 CE) all the 13 bishops of Jerusalem, starting with James, the brother of Jesus, came from the "circumcision" (*Ecclesiastical History* 4. 3, 5).

The author of the Acts of the Apostles identifies the big demographic watershed regarding the composition of the Jesus movement. I do not allude here to the admission, despite Jesus's earlier prohibition, of the Samaritans into the church by Peter and John (Acts 8:16-7), for the Samaritans were Jews, inhabitants of the former northern kingdom of Israel, notwithstanding their differences from the Judaeans in religious traditions (they worshipped on Mount Gerizim and not in Jerusalem and their

Bible was restricted to the Law of Moses, without the Prophets and the Writings). Nor was the baptism of an Ethiopian official, the finance minister of Queen Candace (Acts 8:26-38), by the deacon Philip against the accepted rules, because he was already a Jewish proselyte.

The revolution started around 40 CE with the admission into the church of the family of the Roman centurion Cornelius in Caesarea, and later that of the Gentile members of the mixed Jewish-Greek church in Antioch, not forgetting the many pagan converts of Paul in Syria, Asia Minor and Greece. With them the Jewish monopoly in the new movement came to an end and Jewish and Gentile Christianity was born.

The Cornelius episode (Acts 10), in which the Pentecost-like ecstasy affecting the Roman centurion and his entourage persuaded the astonished Peter to baptise them without further ado, seems to have been an exceptional event; no further conversion of a Gentile is recorded in the Holy Land anywhere in the New Testament.

It was in the Syrian city of Antioch in the late 40s CE that the novelty set in. Emigré members of the Jerusalem church were joined there by Gentiles evangelised and baptised by Judaeo-Christians originating from Cyprus and Cyrene. The mother church of Jerusalem dispatched Barnabas to run the new mixed community, and Barnabas hurried to Tarsus in Cilicia to persuade his friend Saul/Paul, already a believer in Christ, to join him in looking after the new church. The Jewish and the Gentile Christians of Antioch coexisted happily and ate together. When visiting the community, Peter willingly participated in their common meals. However, when some extra-zealous representatives of the Jerusalem church headed by James the brother of Jesus, members of the so-called "circumcision party", arrived in Antioch, their disapproving attitude compelled all the

Jewish Christians, including even Peter and Barnabas, but with the notable exception of Paul, to discontinue their table fellowship with the brethren of Greek stock (Acts 11:2). As a result, union, fraternity and harmony in the new mixed church was abolished. The outraged Paul confronted Peter and publicly called him a hypocrite (Gal 2:11-4), creating the first major row in Christendom.

After Paul's first successful missionary journey to Asia Minor, the entry of pagans into the Jesus fellowship became a particularly acute issue. A council of the apostles, attended by Paul and Barnabas, was convened in Jerusalem, at which James the brother of the Lord, the head of the mother community, overruled the demands of the extremist members of his congregation and proposed a compromise solution (Acts 15:19-21). Gentiles wishing to join the church would be exempted from the full rigour of the Law of Moses, including circumcision, and would merely be required to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from the consumption of blood, from eating non-ritually slaughtered meat, and from certain sex acts judged particularly odious by Jews.

These rules were necessarily intended for Gentile converts in the diaspora. In Jerusalem different conditions prevailed, for Gentile Christians could not join their Judaeo-Christian co-religionists in the Temple as non-Jews were prohibited under threat of instant death to set foot in the area of the holy precinct reserved for Jews.

The Jerusalem council of the apostles marked the beginning of the separate development of Jewish and Gentile Christianity. They both agreed on some essentials and ardently expected the impending second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Paul himself insisted that it would happen in his own lifetime (1 Thess 4:15-7). But in other respects they saw things differently. The original

Judaean-Christian baptism, a rite of purification, and the breaking of the bread, a solemn communal meal, were transformed in the Gentile church under the influence of Paul. The former developed into a mystical participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and the latter became a sacramental reiteration of the Last Supper. The perceived differences soon led to animosity and to an increasing anti-Jewish animus in the Gentile church.

Among the oldest Christian writings, two in particular offer a splendid insight into the divergences between the two branches of the Jesus followers. The 16 chapters of the Didache, or Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles, probably composed in Palestine or Syria, is our last major Jewish Christian document preserved in full, and the Epistle of Barnabas is one of the earliest expressions of Gentile Christianity, filled with anti-Jewish strictures.

The existence of the Didache was known as long ago as the fourth century. Eusebius mentions it. However, the full Greek text was first published by Philotheos Bryennios in 1883 from an 11th-century manuscript identified by him ten years earlier. It contains no identifiable chronological pointers, but is generally assigned to the second half of the first century CE, thus probably antedating some of the writings of the New Testament.

Its religious programme is built on the essential summary of the Mosaic Law, the love of God and of the neighbour, to which is added the so-called "golden rule" in its negative Jewish form, "Whatever you do not want to happen to you, do not do to another" (Did. 1.2), instead of the positive Gospel version, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them" (Mt. 7:12; Lk 6:31). The lifestyle recommended is that of the primitive Jerusalem community described in the Acts, including religious communism: "Share all things with your brother and do not say that anything is your own" (Did. 4.8). The Didache seems

to recommend the observance of the entire Mosaic Law or at least as much of it as is possible (Did. 6.2).

Baptism is presented as an ablution, a purification rite, and aspersion may be substituted for immersion if no pools or rivers are available. Communal prayer entailed the recitation of "Our Father" thrice daily and the thanksgiving meal (Eucharist) was celebrated on the Lord's Day (Sunday) (Did. 14:1). It was a real dinner as well as the symbol of spiritual food. It also had an eschatological ingredient, signifying the reunification of the dispersed members of the church, and ended with the Aramaic cry, "Maranatha" (Come, our Lord!). No allusion is made in Pauline fashion to the Lord's Supper.

Teaching authority in the Didache lay in the hands of itinerant prophets, whom we know also from the Acts of the Apostles 11:27-8. They were supplemented by bishops and deacons. However, these were not appointed by the successors of the apostles, as became the rule in the Gentile churches, but democratically elected by the community.

Perhaps the most significant element of the doctrine handed down in the Didache concerns its understanding of Jesus. This primitive Judaean-Christian writing contains none of the theological ideas of Paul about the redeeming Christ or of John's divine Word or Logos. Jesus is never called the "Son of God". Astonishingly, this expression is found only once in the Didache where it is the self-designation of the Antichrist, "the seducer of the world" (Did. 16.4). The only title assigned to Jesus in the Judaean-Christian Didache is the Greek term *pais*, which means either servant or child. However, as Jesus shares this designation in relation to God with King David (Did. 9.2; see also Acts 4:25), it is clear that it must be rendered as God's "Servant". If so, the Didache uses only the lowliest Christological qualification about Jesus.



In short, the Jesus of the Didache is essentially the great eschatological teacher, who is expected to reappear soon to gather together and transfer the dispersed members of his church to the Kingdom of God. The Pauline-Johannine ideas of atonement and redemption are nowhere visible in this earliest record of Judaeo-Christian life. While handed down by Jewish teachers to Jewish listeners, the image of Jesus remained close to the earliest tradition underlying the Synoptic Gospels, and the Christian congregation of the Didache resembled the Jerusalem church portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles.

The switch in the perception of Jesus from charismatic prophet to superhuman being coincided with a geographical and religious change, when the Christian preaching of the Gospel moved from the Galilean-Judaeian Jewish culture to the pagan surroundings of the Graeco-Roman world. At the same time, under the influence of Paul's organising genius, the church acquired a hierarchical structure governed by bishops with the assistance of presbyters and deacons. The disappearance of the Jewish input opened the way to a galloping "gentilisation" and consequent de-judaisation and anti-judaisation of nascent Christianity, as may be detected from a glance at the Epistle of Barnabas.

This letter – falsely attributed to Barnabas, the companion of Paul – is the work of a Gentile-Christian author, probably from Alexandria. It was most likely written in the 120s CE and almost made its way into the sacred books. It is included in the oldest New Testament codex, the fourth-century Sinaiticus, but was finally declared non-canonical by the church. A reference to the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem definitely dates it after 70 CE, but the absence of any allusion to the second Jewish war against Rome suggests that the epistle was written before 135 CE. It is a hybrid work, in which moral instructions (Barn. 18-21)

based on a Jewish tractate on the way of light and the way of darkness, attested to also in the Didache 1-5, and ultimately in the first-century BCE Community Rule among the Dead Sea Scrolls, is preceded by a lengthy anti-Jewish diatribe (Barn. 1-17). The author depicts two quarrelling parties designated simply as "we" and "they", the first representing the Christians and the second the Jews, and the dispute is founded on the Greek Old Testament, which both factions consider their own property.

The aim of Barnabas is to instruct his readers in "perfect knowledge" (*gnosis*) by revealing to them the true meaning of the essential biblical notions of Covenant, Temple, sacrifice, circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws. He insists that the Jews are mistaken in taking the institutions and precepts of the Old Testament in the literal sense; they are to be interpreted allegorically in conformity with the exegesis in vogue in Alexandria. In fact, the laws of Moses have been spiritualised in the new law revealed by Jesus (Barn. 2.5). Sacrifice should not amount to cultic slaughter, but demand a broken heart, nor is forgiveness of sin obtained through the killing of animals, but through the mystical sprinkling of the blood of Christ (Barn. 5. 1-6). The ideas of Paul, ignored by the author of the Didache, are in the forefront of Barnabas's thought. According to him, those endowed with *gnosis* know that the grace of the true circumcision of the heart is dispensed, not by the mutilation of the flesh, but by means of the cross of Jesus (Barn. 9. 3-7).

For Barnabas and his Gentile Christian followers, the covenant between God and the Jews was a sham; it was never ratified. When, bringing down the Law from Sinai, Moses saw that the Jews were engaged in the worship of the golden calf, he smashed into pieces the two stone tablets inscribed by God's hand, and thus rendered the Jewish covenant null and void. It had to be replaced by the covenant sealed by the redemptive blood of

the "beloved Jesus" in the heart of the Christians (Barn. 4. 6-8; 14. 1-7).

Barnabas's portrait of Jesus is considerably more advanced than the Didache's "Servant" of God. He calls Jesus "the Son" or "the Son of God" no less than a dozen times. This "Son of God" had existed since all eternity and was active before the creation of the world. It was to this pre-existent Jesus that at the time of "the foundation of the world" God addressed the words, "Let us make man according to our image and likeness" (Barn. 5.5; 6.12). The quasi-divine character of Jesus is implied when Barnabas explains that the Son of God took on a human body because without such a disguise no one would have been able to look at him and stay alive (Barn. 5. 9-10). The ultimate purpose of the descent of "the Lord of the entire world" among men was to enable himself to suffer "in order to destroy death and show that there is resurrection" (Barn. 5. 5-6). We are in, and perhaps slightly beyond, the Pauline-Johannine vision of Christ and his work of salvation.

The type of outlook represented by the Didache has no place in the religious vision of Barnabas. The parting of the ways between Jewish and Gentile Christianity is manifest already at this stage and the Epistle of Barnabas marks the start of the future doctrinal evolution of the church on exclusively Gentile lines. Half a century after Barnabas, for the bishop of Sardis, Melito, the Jews are judged guilty of deicide: "God has been murdered ... by the right hand of Israel" (Paschal Homily 96). Jewish Christianity makes no sense any longer.

The Didache is the last flowering of Judaeo-Christianity. In the second century, and especially after the suppression of the second revolt of the Jews by Hadrian in 135 CE, its decline began. The story is well documented in Edwin K. Broadhead's recent study, *Jewish Ways of Following Jesus* (Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen,

2010). In the mid-second century, Justin Martyr (executed in 165 CE) proudly noted in his *First Apology* that in his day non-Jews largely outnumbered the Jewish members of the church.

Thereafter, Judaeo-Christianity, the elder sister, sticking to the observance of the Mosaic precepts and combining it with a primitive type of faith in Jesus, progressively became a fringe phenomenon. For a while some Jewish Christians went on believing in a miraculously conceived Christ, but the remainder, while accepting the messianic status of Jesus, maintained that he was the normal son of Joseph and Mary, the charismatic teacher and prophet of biblical tradition. They had the unpleasant experience of falling between two stools, or as St Jerome's sharp pen puts it in a letter to St Augustine: "While they wish to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither Jews, nor Christians." They progressively vanished, either rejoining the Jewish fold or being absorbed in the Gentile church.

Gentile Christianity, on the other hand, having survived two centuries of persecution by the state, triumphed in the fourth century to become the official religion of the Roman Empire. In the Nicene Creed, drawn up at the Council of Nicaea in 325, it proclaimed Jesus "consubstantial with the Father" – a far cry from the "Servant of God" of the Judaeo-Christian Didache. ♦

*Side by...*

## One Out of Many

by *V. S. Naipaul*

I AM NOW AN AMERICAN CITIZEN and I live in Washington, capital of the world. Many people, both here and in India, will feel that I have done well. But.

I was so happy in Bombay. I was respected, I had a certain position. I worked for an important man. The highest in the land came to our bachelor chambers and enjoyed my food and showered compliments on me. I also had my friends. We met in the evenings on the pavement below the gallery of our chambers. Some of us, like the tailor's bearer and myself, were domestics who lived in the street. The others were people who came to that bit of pavement to sleep. Respectable people; we didn't encourage riff-raff.

In the evenings it was cool. There were few passers-by and, apart from an occasional double-decker bus or taxi, little traffic. The pavement was swept and sprinkled, bedding brought out from daytime hiding-places, little oil-lamps lit. While the folk upstairs chattered and laughed, on the pavement we read newspapers, played cards, told stories and smoked. The clay pipe passed from friend to friend; we became drowsy. Except of course during the monsoon, I preferred to sleep on the pavement with my friends, although in our chambers a whole cupboard below the staircase was reserved for my personal use.

It was good after a healthy night in the open to rise before the sun and before the sweepers came. Sometimes I saw the Street

*...by side*

## Egy a sok közül

fordította *Tárnok Attila*

WASHINGTONBAN, A VILÁG FŐVÁROSÁBAN élek, és már amerikai állampolgár vagyok. Sokan, itt is és Indiában is talán úgy érezhetik, megtettem, ami tőlem telt. Igenám, de ...

Bombayban mérhetetlenül boldog voltam. Megbecsülésnek örvendtem, tudtam, hol a helyem a társadalomban, egy fontos ember alkalmazásában álltam. Előkelő személyiségek látogatták meg munkaadóm agglegény lakását, élvezték főztömet és elárastottak dicséretükkel. Barátaim is voltak, esténként a szobák erkélye alatti járdarészen találkoztunk. Néhányan, mint a szabóinas vagy jómagam, alkalmazásban álltunk, de az utcán laktunk. Mások csak aludni jöttek a járdának arra a részére. Tisztességes társaság voltunk, szélhámossal nem keveredett közénk.

Hűvösek voltak az esték, alig járt gyalogos az utcán és eltekintve egy-egy taxitól vagy emeletes busztól szinte semmi forgalom. Miután a járdát felsöpörték és végigspriccelték, előhoztuk a takarókat a nappali rejtkehelyekről, és apró olajmécseket gyűjtöttünk. Amíg az emberek az emeleten beszélgettek és nevetgéltek, mi lent a járdán újságot olvastunk, kártyáztunk, dohányoztunk és történeteket meséltünk egymásnak. Az agyagpipa körbejárt, és mi lassanként könnyű álomba merültünk. A monszun idejét kivéve szerettem a járdán aludni, barátaim között, jóllehet fönn az emeleten, a lépcsőhajlatban egy teljes szekrény állt a rendelkezésemre.

A járdán kellemes érzéssel ébredtem a friss éjszakák után,

lights go off. Bedding was rolled up; no one spoke much; and soon my friends were hurrying in silent competition to secluded lanes and alleys and open lots to relieve themselves. I was spared this competition; in our chambers I had facilities.

Afterwards for half an hour or so I was free simply to stroll. I liked walking beside the Arabian Sea, waiting for the sun to come up. Then the city and the ocean gleamed like gold. Alas for those morning walks, that sudden ocean dazzle, the moist salt breeze on my face, the flap of my shirt, that first cup of hot sweet tea from a stall, the taste of the first leaf-cigarette.

Observe the workings of fate. The respect and security I enjoyed were due to the importance of my employer. It was this very importance which now all at once destroyed the pattern of my life.

My employer was seconded by his firm to Government service and was posted to Washington. I was happy for his sake but frightened for mine. He was to be away for some years and there was nobody in Bombay he could second me to. Soon, therefore, I was to be out of a job and out of the chambers. For many years I had considered my life as settled. I had served my apprenticeship, known my hard times. I didn't feel I could start again. I despaired. Was there a job for me in Bombay? I saw myself having to return to my village in the hills, to my wife and children there, not just for a holiday but for good. I saw myself again becoming a porter during the tourist season, racing after the buses as they arrived at the station and shouting with forty or fifty others for luggage. Indian luggage, not this lightweight American stuff! Heavy metal trunks!

I could have cried. It was no longer the sort of life for which I was fitted. I had grown soft in Bombay and I was no longer young. I had acquired possessions, I was used to the privacy of my cupboard. I had become a city man, used to certain comforts.

napkelte előtt, mielőtt az utcaseprők munkába álltak. Néha még égtek az utcalámpák, amikor én már ébren voltam. Felcsavartuk a takarókat, reggel nem sokat beszélgettünk. Barátaim nemsokára elhagyott utcák és üres foghíjtelkek felé siettek, hogy könnyítsenek magukon. Nekem nem kellett ebben a versenyben részt vennem, használhattam a lakás fenti mosdóját.

Ezután vagy félórán át, amíg nem volt rám szükség, szabadon sétálgathattam. Leginkább az öbölben szerettem kószálni, ott vártam meg a napfelkeltét. Ilyenkor a város és az óceán aranyban tündökölt. Ó, azok a reggeli séták, az óceán vakító víztükre, a sós pára fuallata az arcomon, ó, ahogy a szél az ingembe kap, az az első pohár forró édes tea egy árusnál, az első dohánylevél íze!

Figyelemre méltó a sors munkálkodása. A megbecsülés és a biztonság, amit élveztem, munkáltatóm érdemeinek volt köszönhető. De éppen ezek az érdemek döntötték hirtelen romba addig megszokott életrendemet.

Munkaadómat cége, a kormány megbízásából, Washingtonba helyezte át. Örültem a szerencséjének, de aggódtam saját sorsom miatt. Megbízata évekre szól, és engem Bombayban nem tudott senkihez sem elszerződteni. Aggasztott, hogy rövidesen elveszthetem a munkámat és a lakás adta körülményekből fakadó előnyöket. Már évek óta úgy tekintettem saját életemre, mint aki révbe ért. Megfizettem már a tanulópénzt: voltak korábban gyötrelmes éveim. Mostanra már nem éreztem magam képesnek arra, hogy mindent előlről kezdjek. Elkeseredés lett úrrá rajtam. Akad-e még hely számomra Bombayban? Féltem, hogy vissza kell térnem a falumba, a hegyek közé, feleségemhez és gyerekeimhez, és nem csupán a szabadságom idejére, hanem végleg. Láttam magam, amint újra hordár vagyok a turistaszegzon idején, láttam magam loholni a buszok után az állomáson, s ahogy negyven-ötven társammal kiabálva igyekszem engedélyt nyerni a

My employer said, 'Washington is not Bombay! Santosh. Washington is expensive. Even if I was able to raise your fare, you wouldn't be able to live over there in anything like your present style.'

But to be barefoot in the hills, after Bombay! The shock, the disgrace! I couldn't face my friends. I stopped sleeping on the pavement and spent as much of my free time as possible in my cupboard among my possessions, as among things which were soon to be taken from me.

My employer said, 'Santosh, my heart bleeds for you.'

I said, 'Sahib, if I look a little concerned it is only because I worry about you. You have always been fussy, and I don't see how you will manage in Washington.'

'It won't be easy. But it's the principle. Does the representative of a poor country like ours travel about with his cook? Will that create a good impression?'

'You will always do what is right, sahib.'

He went silent.

After some days he said, 'There's not only the expense, Santosh. There's the question of foreign exchange. Our rupee isn't what it was.'

'I understand, sahib. Duty is duty.'

A fortnight later, when I had almost given up hope, he said, 'Santosh, I have consulted Government. You will accompany me. Government has sanctioned, will arrange accommodation. But not expenses. You will get your passport and your P form. But I want you to think, Santosh. Washington is not Bombay.'

I went down to the pavement that night with my bedding.

I said, blowing down my shirt, 'Bombay gets hotter and hotter.'

'Do you know what you are doing?' the tailor's bearer said. 'Will the Americans smoke with you? Will they Sit and talk with

csomagok cipelésére. Azok indiai csomagok ám, nehéz fémládák, nem ilyen könnyű amerikai bőröndök.

Sírni tudtam volna. Azt az életformát már nem bírnám erővel. Bombayban elpuhultam és nem is vagyok már éppen fiatal. Személyes tárgyakra tettem szert, hozzászoktam, hogy egy szekrény a rendelkezésemre áll, városi ember lett belőlem, megszoktam bizonyos kényelmeket.

Munkaadóm így szólt hozzám:

– Washington nem Bombay, Santosh. Washington drága város. Még ha képes lennék is kifizetni az útiköltségedet, ott nem élhetnél úgy, ahogyan itt.

De megint járjak mezítláb a hegyek közt!? Megalázó, rettentés! Nem tudnék a barátaim szemébe nézni. Ettől kezdve nem aludtam többé a járdán, és egyre több időt töltöttem a szekrényben, holmijaim közt, amelyektől nemsokára meg kell válnom.

Munkaadóm azt mondta:

– Santosh, vérzik érted a szívem.

Erre így szóltam:

– Szahib, ha aggódni látsz, az csupán azért van, mert érted aggodom. Mindig kényesen ügyeltél az étkezésekre, nem is tudom, hogy fogsz boldogulni Washintonban.

– Nem lesz könnyű, de ez elvi kérdés. Egy szegény ország képviselője, mint én, nem utazgathat a szakácsával. Nem keltene jó benyomást.

– Te mindig helyesen döntesz, szahib.

Elhallgatott.

Néhány nappal később így szólt:

– Nem csak a költségek számítanak, Santosh. A valutaváltás is kérdéses. A rúpia már nem olyan erős.

– Én megértem, szahib. Te tudod, mi a kötelességed.

Két hét elteltével, amikor már majdnem feladtam a reményt, így szólt:

you in the evenings? Will they hold you by the hand and walk with you beside the ocean?’

It pleased me that he was jealous. My last days in Bombay were very happy. ♦



– Santosh, megbeszéltem a hivatallal: velem jöhetsz. Hozzájárultak, hogy állják a szállásod költségeit, de azon felül semmit. Beszerezhetjük az útlevelet és a szükséges nyomtatványokat. Gondolkozz el a dolgon, Santosh! Washington nem Bombay.

Aznap éjjel lementem a járdára a takarómmal.

Az ingem alá fűjtam és így szóltam:

– Bombay egyre melegebb.

– Te tudod, mit csinálsz – jegyezte meg a szabóinas. – Gondolod, hogy az amerikaiak majd pipáznak veled, hogy elücsörögnek veled esténként beszélgetésbe merülve? Segítenek-e, ha majd rászorulsz, és sétálnak-e veled az óceánparton?

Jólesett, hogy irigykedik. Az utolsó napjaim Bombayban boldogságban teltek. ♦