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October 2021

We Review the  
Best of the Latest  
Books

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# October 2021

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## Biographies & Memoirs / Psychology

### **On the Spectrum: Autism, Faith, and the Gifts of Neurodiversity** by Daniel Bowman Jr. (Brazos Press)

*What's reflected in this book are signposts from an autistic poet who is a Christ follower, a progressive Episcopalian living in the Midwest, a husband and dad and teacher at a small liberal arts college.*

*This book ... is not a theology of disability soaked in scholarship or biblical hermeneutics; it is not a practical book with tips for helping autistic kids in Sunday school or worship services; it is not a Christian living book providing core 'messaging' associated with my 'brand.' It's a memoir in essays.*  
– from the book

Nearly everyone knows someone on the autism spectrum, whether it's a niece or nephew, a student in their classroom, a coworker, or a sibling, spouse, or child. One in 54 children has autism, according to the CDC, and autism is reported across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. Yet most of what people think they know about autism is wrong.

[On the Spectrum](#) debunks myths with a journey into the heart, mind, and life of an autistic Christian.

Author Daniel Bowman, Jr. is an author, poet, and associate professor of English at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, where he codirects the Making Literature Conference. He writes and speaks regularly on neurodiversity, including for the SBC's Facts & Trends website, *The Mighty*, *Ruminate* magazine, and at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). Bowman is editor in chief of *Relief: A Journal of Art & Faith*.

Bowman received an autism diagnosis at age thirty-five after experiencing crises in his personal and professional life. The diagnosis shed light on his experience in a new, life-giving way.

Rather than viewing autism as a deficiency, Bowman in [On the Spectrum](#) teaches readers – through stories of his heartbreaks and triumphs – authentic ways to love their neighbors as themselves, including their autistic neighbors who are fearfully and wonderfully, if differently, made.

*[On the Spectrum](#) rings with poetry, compassion, and wisdom, and it reveals so much about autistic experience. I felt nourished by the truths that Bowman tells and relieved to see them shared. This book may surprise you, and it will certainly inform you.* – Katherine May, author of *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*

*What a gift! I am so grateful to Bowman for searingly and beautifully sharing his own fearfully-and-wonderfully-made story and inviting all of us to a more full, more diverse, more compelling vision of the kingdom of God.* – Sarah Bessey, editor of *A Rhythm of Prayer*; author of *Jesus Feminist*  
*Bowman's memoir is a wise pathway to loving our neighbors in a neurodivergent world, one where 'those of us on the spectrum will always deal with loneliness and alienation.'* Bowman reminds us of the role of poetry and faith in guiding us toward God and ultimately in honoring the

*dignity of our shared humanity.* – Karen An-hwei Lee, author of *The Maze of Transparencies and Phyla of Joy*

*This is an illuminating, challenging, and deeply human book that we all need to read in order to truly embody solidarity. We need to read stories of neurodiversity from those who embody those stories best, and*

*Bowman's book is a great place to start the journey.* – Kaitlin B. Curtice, author of *Native*

*I can only imagine how many people will read Bowman's moving memoir and feel like someone finally sees them. But for neurotypical readers like me, Bowman invites us to see our neighbors afresh. This book itself is one of the gifts of neurodivergence, adding to this teeming, diverse creation in which God takes delight.* – James K. A. Smith, professor, Calvin University; editor in chief of *Image Journal*; author of *On the Road with Saint Augustine*

**On the Spectrum** debunks myths about autism with a realistic yet hope-filled deep dive into the heart, mind, and life of an autistic Christian. In the book, Bowman reveals new insights into autism, relationships, faith, and the gift of neurodiversity. The book is, in itself, one of the gifts of neurodivergence. <>

Children's / Ages 10 & up / Multimedia Kit / Fiction

**Harry Potter: Hogwarts Trunk Collectible Set** by Donald Lemke (Running Press, Hachette Book Group)

**Hogwarts Trunk Collectible Set** is a collectible replica of Harry Potter's Hogwarts trunk from the Harry Potter films including a keepsake box, wand-inspired pen, interactive journal, enamel pin, and Marauder's Map. This trunk is a keepsake box molded replica of Harry Potter's trunk used for the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry featuring a lock and deluxe finishes.

Designer/author Donald Lemke has penned more than 100 books featuring some of today's most popular characters, including Batman, Superman, Scooby-Doo, and Harry Potter.

**Hogwarts Trunk Collectible Set** is an officially licensed authentic Harry Potter collectible. This set includes a replica of Harry Potter's Hogwarts trunk measuring 12 inches long by 6-3/4 inches wide by 3-3/4 inches high, complete with a journal, Harry's wand-pen, a chocolate frog enamel pin, replicas of Harry Potter's Hogwarts acceptance letter, train ticket on the Hogwarts Express, Marauder's map, and ticket to a Quidditch match.

It is a full-color printed box modeled on the trunk seen in the Harry Potter films featuring two metal closing locks and handle, to transport anywhere.

Readers can record their own magical thoughts in the Hogwarts-themed journal, measuring 4-1/4 inches by 7 inches, complete with quotes, writing prompts, and photos from the films throughout.

In case readers need to be reminded, more than two decades ago, a young Harry Potter was whisked onto Platform 9¾ at King's Cross Station, and readers everywhere were swept along with him into a magical universe, created by J.K. Rowling. In the years since, the seven Harry Potter bestsellers have inspired eight blockbuster movies, an award-winning stage play, and, more recently, the start of the Fantastic Beasts five-film series. People of all ages have been enthralled by these extraordinary adventures, set within an expanding universe.

For today's growing worldwide fan community, and for generations to come, the Wizarding World welcomes everyone to explore more of this magical universe – past, present and future. The Wizarding World also provides fans with an instant, trusted kite-mark of quality and authenticity.

[Hogwarts Trunk Collectible Set](#) is ideal for fans of the Wizarding World. This one-of-a kind, deluxe, Wizarding World kit is a perfect gift or self-purchase for Potter fans and collectors. <>

## Cooking, Food & Wine / Indian / Vegetarian

### [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#): 200 traditional plant-based recipes by Mridula Baljekar (Lorenz Books)

India's vegetarian tradition has been refined over centuries; [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#) presents classic regional recipes, beautifully photographed throughout.

Vibrant vegetables in rich fragrant sauces; nutty lentils, beans and peas; and an incredible array of spices: in [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#) Mridula Baljekar presents dishes to warm the body and soothe the soul. And many of the dishes are also extremely healthy.

Drawing upon plant-based recipes from every region, this book explores the best of India's vegan and vegetarian cooking.

According to Baljekar, vegetarianism has long been a key feature of Indian cuisine, but veganism is also on the rise. The globally popular food of this large country offers so many combinations of tastes and aromas that it never becomes bland or predictable.

The beauty of Indian cooking is in its variety. Different areas and traditions have developed their own specialties, and recipes have been handed down through the generations, according to Baljekar.

Although many dishes are fiery with chilies, there are others that are mellow. Many of the most familiar regional dishes come from northern India. These include koftas, mild kormas and tandoori recipes. The cuisine of Northwest Province, which is now in Pakistan, does not use chilies excessively, so it is not too hot. But as one travels west, things heat up.

The most fiery spice blends, such as the famous vindaloo, originate from western India. The recipes of this region tend to favor the use of dairy products including yogurt and buttermilk, and the meals are typically accompanied by all kinds of unusual pickles. Coconuts are a favorite ingredient of eastern and southern India, and are used for making both sweet and savory dishes, including deliciously creamy sauces. As south Indian cuisine is predominantly vegetarian, there is no shortage of delectable meat-free recipes to choose from, which utilize nuts, beans, peas and lentils, making hearty and nutritious meals to appeal to vegetarians, vegans and meat-eaters alike.

According to Baljekar in [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#), Indian vegetarian and vegan cooking aims to produce a balanced, healthy and appetizing meal. A vegetarian diet consists of good-quality protein and high-fiber foods that contain all the essential vitamins and nutrients. A vegan diet follows the same principles except that no products of animals are eaten, including dairy, eggs and (usually) honey. Vegans can substitute non-dairy alternatives for most dairy ingredients, although dishes that feature eggs are harder to veganize.

Following a vegetarian or vegan diet does not have to mean limiting the body's intake of essential nutrients, because combining protein with vitamins and minerals is easy. Lentils, peas, beans and, for vegetarians, eggs and dairy items provide protein, and fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals. Rice is a good source of carbohydrate, which is also believed to steady blood sugar levels. Even the daily bread, chapati, is made of wholemeal flour, which has a high percentage of bran and wheatgerm, which contain both protein and fiber.

As told by Baljekar, traditionally, Indian dishes are not strictly categorized into appetizers and main courses. Several dishes are cooked and served at the same time and the diners simply help themselves to everything. It is, however, customary to start the meal with bread and follow with rice, both of which are the staples of an Indian vegetarian or vegan diet.

In the classic style, all the food is served on a thali platter traditionally made of stainless steel. Rice and bread are placed on the thali, along with small bowls containing various

curries, as well as inviting little side dishes, such as pickles, chutneys and salads flavored with fresh herbs, chilies or yogurt.

A meal will usually end with some fresh fruit, rather than elaborate or cooked desserts. Fruits can be served with real flair, however, and are often combined with other ingredients to create imaginative and exciting flavors.

Dairy-based desserts are also popular, especially variations of rice or almond puddings, particularly in winter when temperatures drop. Indian sweets tend to be quite rich so are more commonly served with tea and coffee as a snack, and as a treat at most festivals.

The recipes in [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#) are divided into regional chapters, and represent the best of the different vegetarian cuisines of India. Within each section are snacks and starters, main dishes and desserts. Also included is a variety of side dishes, salads, chutneys, relishes, breads, rice dishes and drinks.

All the recipes are vegetarian, and those that are vegan have a 'g' symbol at the bottom of the page. However, many of the vegetarian dishes can easily be adapted to be vegan by using an alternative ingredient where indicated.

The mouth-watering and inspirational recipes in [Indian Vegan & Vegetarian](#) are all visualized in beautiful full-color photographs, so much so that this cookbook is virtually a coffee-table book. <>

## History / Military

### **[Down the Warpath to the Cedars: Indians' First Battles in the Revolution](#)** by Mark R. Anderson (University of Oklahoma Press)

In May 1776 more than two hundred Indian warriors descended the St. Lawrence River to attack Continental forces at the Cedars, west of Montreal. In just three days' fighting, the Native Americans and their British and Canadian allies forced the American fort to surrender and ambushed a fatally delayed relief column.

In [Down the Warpath to the Cedars](#), author Mark R. Anderson flips the usual perspective on this early engagement and focuses on its Native participants – their motivations, battlefield conduct, and the event's impact in their world. In this way, Anderson's work establishes and explains Native Americans' centrality in the Revolutionary War's northern theater.

Anderson is an independent historian who specializes in the military history from the colonial period through the early republic.

Anderson's deftly written narrative encompasses decisive diplomatic encounters, political intrigue, and scenes of brutal violence but is rooted in deep archival research and ethnohistorical scholarship. [Down the Warpath to the Cedars](#) sheds new light on the alleged massacre and atrocities that other accounts typically focus on. At the same time, Anderson traces the aftermath for Indian captives and military hostages, as well as the political impact of the Cedars reaching all the way to the Declaration of Independence. The action at the Cedars emerges as a watershed moment, when Indian neutrality frayed to the point that hundreds of northern warriors entered the fight between crown and colonies.

The 1776 'Massacre' or Affair at the Cedars does not command much name recognition. Most Revolutionary War historians have evaluated this series of relatively small engagements west of Montreal through the lens of British-American conflict, treating it as an afterthought or sidenote. [Down the Warpath to the Cedars](#) explores these events in unprecedented detail but also ranges further afield to explore meaningful new historical ground.

The Cedars historiography has largely ignored the event's most important participants – the Indian nations that shaped the strategic situation and sent hundreds of men to both sides of the battle. When the story is expanded to incorporate the Haudenosaunee Iroquois Six Nations, Seven Nations of Canada, and Mississaugas, with their varied interests and objectives, it provides a significantly different, far more complex picture of northern affairs at the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

The Battle of the Cedars and the fall 1775 skirmishes in Canada that preceded it were the first Indian battles of the Revolutionary War; but military and Native American historians have collectively ignored, glossed over, or dismissed this detail as well. The July 1776 Cherokee battles, or the Saratoga campaign and Battle of Oriskany in 1777, provide common milestones for Indian military entry into the war.

When considering the campaign afresh and breaking free from historiographical currents, the Cedars serves as an informative case study, including the road to battle, events in the field, and the aftermath. Given that the Revolutionary War is commonly recognized as a 'catastrophe' for eastern Native nations, an event that 'devastated, divided, and transformed' them, a new understanding of the 'first Indian battles' is more than a trivial chronological revision. The Cedars shifts the initial focus north, incorporates the Seven Nations of Canada, emphasizes different interests among the key groups that gravitated toward the British or Continentals, and even sheds new light on the Declaration of Independence's charge regarding the king's efforts to employ 'merciless Indian savages.'

*[Down the Warpath to the Cedars](#) is a singular contribution to our understanding of the American Revolution, one that encompasses a multinational perspective on the neglected northern campaigns of 1775*

*and 1776 involving French Canadian, British, and American combatants, as well as an array of Native American nations.* – David L. Preston, author of *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution*

Anderson incorporates Native agency in this dramatic narrative. Adroitly interweaving the stories of diverse characters – chiefs, officials, agents, soldiers, and warriors – [Down the Warpath to the Cedars](#) produces a complex picture, and a definitive account of the Revolutionary War's first Indian battles, an account that significantly expands historical understanding of the northern theater of the American Revolution. <>

History / Military / Espionage

## **[The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors: Counterintelligence and the U.S. and Soviet Military Liaison Missions 1947–1990](#) by Aden Magee (Casemate Publishers)**

Thirty years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet and U.S. Military Liaison Missions are all but forgotten. Their operation was established by a post-WWII Allied occupation forces' agreement, and missions had relative freedom to travel and collect intelligence throughout East and West Germany from 1947 until 1990.

[The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors](#) addresses Cold War intelligence and counterintelligence in a manner that provides a broad historical perspective and then brings readers to a never-before documented artifact of Cold War history. The book details the intelligence/counterintelligence dynamic that was among the most emblematic of the Cold War. Ultimately, [The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors](#) addresses a saga that remains one of the true Cold War enigmas.

Author Aden Magee operated as the commander of a highly specialized Counterintelligence (CI) element in West Germany during the culminating decade of the Cold War, which enabled him to pull together an unprecedented story with broad historical context. He is a retired U.S. Army officer, CI Agent, and veteran of foreign wars. He has worked as a consultant to senior executives in the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) since his retirement from the Army in 2005.

The confusion of interrelated espionage and counterintelligence operations during the Cold War was a labyrinth of chess games played on multiple boards, in support of integrated battles supporting even larger fronts. Two little-known, interrelated games of chess within this 'wilderness of mirrors' involved the U.S. Military Liaison Mission (USMLM) based in West Germany, and the Soviet Military Liaison Mission (SMLM) based in East Germany – both of which operated 'behind enemy lines' for over four decades. Tasked

with legally spying on the enemy's military forces, these Military Liaison Missions were absolutely unique to the Cold War era, and their operations were among the most fitting microcosms of the battle for Europe, a vital component of the strategic Cold War landscape.

[\*\*The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors\*\*](#) recounts the evolution of the Military Liaison Missions, how they operated and how they interacted. Intelligence and counterintelligence expert Magee paints an intricate mosaic of Cold War intrigue, and brings to light many of the era's most interesting (and dirtiest) secrets. Based on declassified U.S. government documents and first-hand accounts provided by the exclusive few secret warriors who fought the enemy in the streets of Cold War Europe, it provides the missing pieces to many puzzles. In addition to the previously undocumented histories and insights regarding the competing Military Liaison Missions, [\*\*The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors\*\*](#) discloses the untold story of the highly sensitive and elite counterintelligence element established to counter perhaps the most sophisticated and enigmatic of Soviet threats.

From the historic perspective, there are many stories in the world of espionage and intrigue, intelligence and counterintelligence, and spy and counterspy, that will never be told. If not for [\*\*The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors\*\*](#), there would be more undocumented missions and operations to be lost in the sands of time. This book provides a small time capsule of Cold War history that would have been lost in the shadows of the decades after the close of the Cold War. This book provides a substantial historical backdrop to demonstrate how the MLM intelligence collection and counterintelligence dynamic evolved, leading to the climactic final years of the Cold War.

[\*\*The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors\*\*](#) is the first and only publication to address, in detail, the Soviet MLMs and the counterintelligence efforts focused against one in particular. And while this book focuses on the dynamics that drove and led to a counterintelligence capability that reached its zenith just as the threat decided to quit, it provides an interesting perspective regarding Cold War counterintelligence and the mindset that drove an almost compulsive mission focus. Therefore, there is much history that must be referenced and juxtaposed as it related to the U.S./Soviet dynamic ranging from the strategic level to the manner in which the grand game of chess played out with the pawns, rooks, and knights on the ground.

[\*\*The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors\*\*](#) is organized into three parts that logically build a historical analysis of the MLMs and examine their operations within the context of the larger national counterintelligence and intelligence strategies/frameworks of the opposing superpowers. Part I provides an unprecedented history of the MLMs, offering both a broad understanding of the historic evolution of the U.S. and Soviet MLMs, how their actions were related, and how they differed. This level of detail is necessary to

provide perspective as it applies to the deeper issues surrounding the SMLM-F enigma and the U.S. counterintelligence effort to unlock the mystery.

Part II focuses on the MLMs as microcosms of the larger strategic framework, and provides the lesser- and never-known details on the episodes that shaped the evolution of the MLMs. Based on volumes of previously classified documents, and first-hand accounts of the cold warriors who either operated in the MLMs or operated against the MLMs, this work is replete with information that has never before been published, and much of which dispels information previously accepted as facts.

In addition to the never-before-documented histories and insights regarding the competing MLMs, Part III brings the epic Cold War case study to a conclusion with the untold story of the highly sensitive and elite counterintelligence element established to counter perhaps the most sophisticated and enigmatic of Soviet threats.

*Meticulously researched and incisively written, Magee provides an unprecedented survey of the counterintelligence war between the US and the USSR from the strategic level down to the countrysides of West and East Germany where the MLMs operated. – James Stejskal, author of Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956–1990*

**The Cold War Wilderness of Mirrors** is an unprecedented historical time-capsule. From the counterintelligence and intelligence professional perspective, it is an absolute must-read. In addition to being a unique story, within a story, within another story, the book applies some of the most important and relevant counterintelligence and intelligence principles to the lesser-known, and many never-known, episodes recounted. Although now decades removed, the Cold War provided a wealth of lessons that are enduring. This book helps to complete the record by documenting many that would otherwise escape history by fading from human memory. <>

History / Military / World War II / Biographies & Memoirs

### **An Artilleryman in Stalingrad: A Soldier's Story at the Turning Point of World War II** by Wigand Wüster (Stackpole Books)

In August 1942, Wigand Wüster was a twenty-two-year-old officer in the German Wehrmacht. The short life expectancies of the Eastern Front made him a veteran commander even at that age. He led a battery in an artillery regiment as it approached Stalingrad for a World War II-defining clash with the Soviet Red Army. For Wüster, the preceding months had been marked by heat, dust, endless marches, and brief skirmishes with the enemy – but mostly by an ongoing battle with his bullying battalion commander. Stalingrad would change everything.

In [An Artilleryman in Stalingrad](#) Wüster provides a glimpse into the Eastern Front rarely seen before. With frankness, humor, and perception, Wüster takes readers from the heady days of the German 1942 summer offensive into the icy hell of Stalingrad's final hours – and finally into his Soviet captivity. Accounts of artillery on the Eastern Front are rare, and Wüster was an especially keen observer of the hell of Stalingrad.

[An Artilleryman in Stalingrad](#) has been supplemented with photos and maps by Jason Mark, who originally published it through his Australia-based company Leaping Horseman Books.

Wüster spent four years in Soviet captivity after World War II and then became a lawyer in Germany. He died in 2017 at age ninety-six.

In some memoirs, every soldier is a likeable fellow who is fearless in the face of the enemy and regarded as heroic by his peers; the unit operates flawlessly, officers are firm but fair and personal rivalries, petty jealousy and bastardization are virtually unknown. Jason Mark in the preface says it is refreshing to read Wüster's account; he pulls no punches. He tells it like he sees it: the petty victimization by his battalion commander; his distrust of certain soldiers: the unwillingness of his men to attack. This same openness also allows Wüster to express opinions about sensitive subjects that still haunt Germans today. Some may not agree with certain statements made throughout [An Artilleryman in Stalingrad](#) but they are conclusions that Wüster drew after a long life.

Wüster was proud to be an officer in the German army. He believed it was an honorable career path for a young man and knew that being in the service was not just about snappy uniforms and glittering parades: war was part and parcel of being a soldier. However, he was glad that his front-line duty was at the beginning of his career, rather than later on, when he might have been married and had children. As the prospect of victory in the east deteriorated, Wüster was still prepared to do his duty, come what may, and never shirk his responsibilities as an officer and a commander. The ultimate proof of this was his dogged determination to fly into the Stalingrad pocket in late December to rejoin his men, even though it would have been easy for him to remain outside.

Wüster's wit, intellect and rebellious spirit shine through in [An Artilleryman in Stalingrad](#). This brutally honest account gives readers a deep, rare and perceptive view into the Eastern Front. <>

## **Reign of Terror: How the 9/11 Era Destabilized America and Produced Trump** by Spencer Ackerman (Viking)

**Reign of Terror** is an examination of the profound impact that the War on Terror had in pushing American politics and society in an authoritarian direction.

For an entire generation, at home and abroad, the United States has waged an endless conflict known as the War on Terror. In addition to multiple ground wars, it has pioneered drone strikes and industrial-scale digital surveillance, as well as detaining people indefinitely and torturing them.

The author of **Reign of Terror** is Spencer Ackerman. For nearly the entire War on Terror, Ackerman has been a national-security correspondent for outlets like *The New Republic*, *WIRED*, *The Guardian* and currently *The Daily Beast*. He has reported from the frontlines of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay. He shared in the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service Journalism for Edward Snowden's NSA leaks to *The Guardian*, a series of stories that also yielded him other awards, including the Scripps Howard Foundation's 2014 Roy W. Howard Award for Public Service Reporting and the 2013 IRE medal for investigative reporting.

According to Ackerman, these conflicts have yielded neither peace nor victory, but they have transformed America. What began as the persecution of Muslims and immigrants has become a normalized, paranoid feature of American politics and security, expanding the possibilities for applying similar or worse measures against other targets at home. A politically divided country turned the War on Terror into a cultural and then tribal struggle, first on the ideological fringes and ultimately expanding to conquer the Republican Party, often with the timid acquiescence of the Democratic Party. Today's nativist resurgence walked through a door opened by the 9/11 era.

**Reign of Terror** shows how these policies created a foundation for American authoritarianism and, though it is not a book about Donald Trump, it provides a critical explanation of his rise to power and the sources of his political strength. It shows that Barack Obama squandered an opportunity to dismantle the War on Terror after killing Osama bin Laden. That mistake turned out to have been portentous. By the end of his tenure, the war metastasized into a broader and bitter culture struggle in search of a demagogue like Trump to lead it.

*Attempting the near impossible... Ackerman offers a book stuffed to the brim with details.... A deeper-than-headlines take.... This book does a masterful job communicating how nothing is as it seems. – Booklist, starred review*

One of the most illuminating books to come out of the Trump era. – New York Magazine

An impressive combination of diligence and verve, deploying Ackerman's deep stores of knowledge as a national security journalist to full effect. The result is a narrative of the last 20 years that is upsetting, discerning and brilliantly argued. – The New York Times

Ackerman displays a masterful command of facts. – The Guardian

A bracing chronicle of the war on terror and its corrosive effect on American democracy. – Jamelle Bouie, *The New York Times*

In the genre of books that seek to explain why we are in the mess we are in, [Reign of Terror](#) is a formidable entry. To those who want to portray Trump as wholly exceptional and discontinuous with the recent past, the book is an essential corrective. – The New Republic

[Reign of Terror](#) is at its strongest when Ackerman recalls some of the outrages-of-the-week of the past 20 years, which may have faded from memory but feel portentous in retrospect.... The book compellingly argues that, the protestations of neoconservative Never Trumpers notwithstanding, Trump's 'America First' doctrine was not a break from

Bush's 'freedom agenda'; it was its inevitable conclusion. – Slate

Ackerman delivers a tour-de-force about the transformation of the United States in the two decades since the September 11 attacks, that

thoroughly and comprehensively examines how the post-9/11 security state has engulfed society.... An essential work that encapsulates the trajectory of American politics in the first two decades of the 21st century,

and the lasting impact on everyday life. – Library Journal, starred review

Ackerman capably connects seemingly disparate elements without forcing issues so that readers will see how such matters as the Branch Davidian siege of 1993 helped fuel White supremacist movements

today.... An intelligent, persuasive book about events that are all too current. – Kirkus Reviews

Journalists are said to write the first draft of history and Spencer Ackerman has been one of the most important reporters in exposing the horrors,

abuses and wars as they unfolded in the post-9/11 world. In [Reign of Terror](#), Ackerman weaves together his groundbreaking reporting with a searing analysis of the consequences of waging borderless, global wars

abroad and assaulting civil liberties at home. – Jeremy Scahill, author of *Blackwater* and *Dirty Wars*

America started the war on terrorism twenty years ago. It wound up at war with itself. [Reign of Terror](#) shows how the nation went down that road to hell. You've never read a book like it. – Tim Weiner, Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winning author of *Legacy of Ashes*

*Ackerman rivetingly shows how America's response to the 9/11 attacks turned presidents into kings, institutionalized cruelty, exacerbated racism, and made a continual state of terror the hallmark of our political culture. [Reign of Terror](#) is a profoundly valuable contribution to the historical record – and, let us hope, the opening chapter of a long-overdue national reckoning. – Rick Perlstein, author of Reaganland and Nixonland*

A union of journalism and intellectual history, [Reign of Terror](#) is a pathbreaking and definitive book with the power to transform how America understands its national security policies and their catastrophic impact on its civic life. <>

Home & Garden / Crafts & Hobbies / Outdoors & Nature / Gardening

**[Garden Allies](#): The Insects, Birds, and Other Animals That Keep Your Garden Beautiful and Thriving** by Frederique Lavoipierre, with illustrations by Craig Latker (Timber Press)

*When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe. – John Muir*

The birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects that inhabit yards and gardens are overwhelmingly on our side – they are not enemies, but instead, allies. They pollinate the flowers and vegetable crops, and they keep pests in check. In [Garden Allies](#), Frédérique Lavoipierre shares portraits of these creatures, describing their life cycles and showing how they keep the garden's ecology in balance. Also included is information on how to nurture and welcome these valuable creatures into the garden. With pen-and-ink drawings by Craig Latker, [Garden Allies](#) invites readers to make friends with the creatures that fill their gardens – the reward is a renewed sense of nature's beauty and a garden humming with life.

Lavoipierre, the former director of education at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and author of *Garden Allies*, a ten-year series of articles published in *Pacific Horticulture Magazine*, currently works as a consultant and serves on the editorial advisory group for the American Public Gardens Association.

Lavoipierre says that the majority of garden allies are insects, so much of [Garden Allies](#) is about them, but the book explores many other garden organisms. Each essay can be read as a stand-alone, but it helps to begin at the beginning, as new terms are introduced as the book progresses. The essays flow from one to the next. Some feature

one small ally group, while others are much broader in treatment. Each finishes with a brief summary of pertinent facts and taxonomic information.

*Explains how your garden can be a thriving, balanced community that gives more to your landscape than it takes. – Douglas W. Tallamy, author of *The Nature of Oaks*, *Nature's Best Hope* and *Bringing Nature Home**

*Gardeners will walk away from this spirited advice finding creepy crawlers at least a bit more charming. – Publishers Weekly*

**[Garden Allies](#)** introduces and engages readers about the many phenomenal organisms – from soil-dwelling microorganisms to beetles, bees, bacteria, and bats – who are our natural allies in the garden. In demystifying these fabulous creatures, Lavoipierre inspires us as gardeners to stop, look, listen, learn, and put away the toxic chemicals. – Jennifer Jewell, creator and host of *Cultivating Place*, author of *The Earth in Her Hands*

*An excellent resource for any gardener willing to press pause before turning to the pesticide. – Booklist*

*A useful and interesting read for rookie, armchair, and experienced gardeners. Easy to read front to back or section by section, and information can be applied to any region of the United States. – Kirkus*

With beautiful drawings, **[Garden Allies](#)** presents fascinating portraits of the creatures that live in readers' gardens including helpful information on how to nurture and welcome these creatures, inviting readers to make friends with them. <>

Law / International

### **[Fighting for Justice](#): Common Law and Civil Law Judges: Threats and Challenges** edited by Elizabeth Gibson-Morgan (**International Law Series**: University of Wales Press)

The rule of law faces serious challenges in our time. Some governments threaten deliberately to break the law, while others jeopardize the independence of justice by subjecting it to unrelenting pressure from both the state executive and the media. **[Fighting for Justice](#)** contributes to restoring trust in judges as custodians of the law through a comparison between civil and common law systems. It offers a rare opportunity to gather the expertise of eminent judges and legal authorities from five different countries, providing a unique insight into their practices amid a challenging moment for democracies all over the world.

Editor Elizabeth Gibson-Morgan is professor of law and languages at the University of Poitiers and at the Bordeaux Law School. She is a visiting senior research fellow at King's College, London. The book has 13 contributors.

According to Gibson-Morgan in the introduction, justice is a universal value and a shared aspiration of civil and common law countries. That is most certainly the case for the five established democracies covered in [Fighting for Justice](#). Yet, the perceptions and expectations regarding those who deliver justice – judges – tend to vary from one of these five countries to another, influenced by a specific national legal history and culture. The common law is generally defined as a 'judge-made' law where judges – such as in England and Wales – are involved in a creative process through their power of setting binding precedent, whereas civil law judges – as in France or Spain – are expected to be no other than the 'mouth of the law' within clearly defined competences in the name of the principle of separation of powers, essential to judicial independence.

[Fighting for Justice](#) considers the current threats to the role of the judiciary from four major thematic standpoints, independence, diversity, access and reform. It considers five countries, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Denmark and Canada and does so through a comparative viewpoint. Four are members of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, starting with the United Kingdom at the origin of the common law and the very first country to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights as early as 1951.

Judicial independence – and its corollary, impartiality – is a common requirement for the nation states that have ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, whether they belong to the civil law or the common law legal system.

Among these four countries, three are civil law countries – Denmark, France and Spain. As for the last, Canada – a common law country with the exception of Quebec – (although it is a non-member state), it has been an Observer State since 1996. Their judges are guided by the common principles that all the members share, having officially committed themselves to respect and promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The interpretation of the Court of Human Rights of the European Convention has provided the Council of Europe member states with essential guidelines defining common standards while leaving a margin of appreciation of the Convention to national courts and a common source of lawbringing civil law and common law countries closer.

By section, the chapters of [Fighting for Justice](#) are briefly described below.

**I. Judicial Independence.** 'However independent we must be, we are servants of the community,' Lord Judge declared about his role as a judge. In **chapter 1**, Lord Judge, a former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales – well known for his expertise on judicial

review – points out the importance of judicial independence in every sense of the term. He writes that 'judges must be fair-minded and independent of mind', reflecting the two main requirements of section 6(1) of the ECHR. Not only does he show the need for the institutional independence of the judiciary from the potential interference of either the executive or the legislative, but also for judges' 'independence of mind', in other words impartiality.

Early in [Fighting for Justice](#) a historical perspective is provided by Professor Victor Bailey in the **second chapter** entitled 'A Customary Scale of Punishment: Judicial Sentencing in England and Wales'. He offers an insight into the practice of the law and sentencing in the Victorian era. He focuses on a particular aspect of the independence of judges, their independence in sentencing, part of the essence of being a judge. He raises a highly topical question: that of 'concerns over divergences in sentencing practice' and therefore the need to introduce more uniformity in sentencing practice while taking into account the individualization of the sentence so important in French law for example.

In the **third chapter**, entitled 'National Perceptions of Judges and Lawyers in the UK', Matthias Kelly QC, SC uses his own experience as a lawyer who has practiced the law in different countries including in the Republic of Ireland and in North America. He provides a multinational comparative perspective. It is at the same time an interdisciplinary one, as Kelly has practiced both as a lawyer and as a Recorder or part-time judge. His chapter covers the main themes that are developed in more detail by the other contributors, starting with judicial independence, but also judicial diversity. One of the key questions Matthias Kelly raises is how to guarantee an independent recruitment process while avoiding any form of corporatism detrimental to judicial diversity. Much importance in his chapter is given to judicial independence, which it is essential to protect throughout a judge's time in judicial office.

Ana Maria Neira Pena and David Soto Diaz, two Law Lecturers at the University of A Coruna in Spain in their cowritten chapter, **chapter 4**, discuss the key importance given by the Spanish constitution of 1978 to the principle of judges' independence. They show that the legal safeguards provided by the Spanish Constitution in its Title VI entirely devoted to the judiciary protects judges' independence – at least institutionally – from any infringement from the other branches of power. Although Spain is still officially a monarchy – the monarch's role is mainly ceremonial – the Constitution explicitly states in its Title VI, article 117.1 that 'justice emanates from the people' and that it is delivered by 'independent irremovable, liable judges, subject only to the rule of law'.

**II. Judicial Diversity.** Peter Gjertler in **chapter 5** of [Fighting for Justice](#) shows that there are still efforts to be made to achieve a broader representation of civil society within the judiciary. Denmark, a constitutional monarchy like the British monarchy, joined the European Economic Community at the same time as the UK, but unlike the latter –

except for Greenland, the first country to have left the European Union – Denmark remains a key EU member state. The Danish constitution, exceptionally rigid, or well entrenched, provides Danish judges with highly effective legal safeguards in terms of separation of powers (section 62) and judicial independence (section 64). Thus section 62 states that 'the administration of justice shall always remain independent from the executive'. In addition, Danish judges, like French judges, are protected from arbitrary removal by their status as civil servants under the provisions of section 34 of Denmark's Civil Service Law.

Professor Morin in the **sixth chapter**, devoted to Canada, and more precisely the case of Quebec, widely covers the general common theme of judicial independence. Nonetheless, he sheds new light on the sensitive question of judicial diversity. Indeed, far from limiting his analysis to the key question of the necessity of a more gender-balanced diversity, he deals with the 'importance of taking into account indigenous people' (native Canadians) and, more broadly 'visible minority and cultural/ ethnic communities'. In addition, he also approaches the issue of judicial diversity in terms of the specific legal and linguistic requirements in an officially bilingual country.

**III. Access to Justice.** In the **seventh chapter** of [Fighting for Justice](#) Geraldine Gadbin-George draws on her own experience as a lawyer in England and Wales, but also as a judge in France, to discuss the critical issue of access to justice. This is a key prerequisite to securing people a fair trial under the provisions of article 6(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights. She focuses on the threats to this fundamental right with drastic cuts in legal aid in England and Wales – and to a lesser extent in France – following the controversial Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO) recently under review.

Judge Jarman's chapter, **chapter 8**, for its part on the laws and judges of Wales, is both about judicial independence and the accessibility of justice. Yet he discusses those key themes from a different perspective, the Welsh perspective. Wales is a nation with a strong sense of identity based on a long linguistic and legal tradition – law and the language being two fundamental pillars of Welsh identity. So, the question of accessibility of justice is raised not only in financial and technical terms but also political, reflecting Wales's own specific needs and challenges. Beyond the question of the accessibility of Welsh law, Judge Jarman also discusses the key question of how to face growing divergences between different types of law since the advent of Welsh devolution and the rapid expansion of specifically Welsh legislation.

**IV. Judicial Training Reform.** The eighth and ninth chapters deal with another kind of challenge in two very different nations involving the future – the challenge and responsibility of training judges 'or delivering judicial education', as Benoit Chamouard calls it, taking into account judges' specific needs and type of work.

In **chapter 9**, entitled 'The Status and Influence of Judges of France and of Common Law Jurisdictions: Recruitment, Training and Reform', Winston Roddick QC provides a Welsh perspective – different from, and complementary to that of Judge Jarman – based on his unique experience as the first Counsel General for Wales (1998–2003), then as Police Commissioner for North Wales (2012–16). This chapter is also based on a (British) comparative approach between France on the one hand, England and Wales on the other. In this chapter, [Fighting for Justice](#)'s dominant theme of judicial independence is again examined, but Winston Roddick focuses on the importance of the independence of the Bar – as a key requirement for guaranteeing the independence of judges in the prolongation of a significant practice of the law as a barrister or what Winston Roddick calls 'a self-selection process', as opposed to the French-style career judiciary.

In his final chapter, **chapter 10**, Benoit Chamouard, a French judge and Deputy President of the French Judicial Training College (ENM), adopts a European perspective, widening the discussion of judicial independence to the European and international levels. He argues that 'only a properly trained judiciary will have the ability and strength to act independently and impartially' along the lines of the European Convention on Human Rights. In his concluding remarks he rightly insists on the importance of asserting common values in spite of the significant divergences between common law and civil law countries. Thus Chamouard, in the final chapter, provides a unique perspective from someone who has a long practice of the law as a judge and who can reflect on it with some hindsight.

*This impressive collection of essays is an important reminder of the pressures to which the rule of law is subject. The expert contributors, speaking from a wide range of different perspectives, demonstrate how these challenges can be overcome and, in the process, provide valuable insights into how judges and justice work. – Lord Lloyd-Jones, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom*

*This collection of essays is a timely analysis of the centrality of an independent judiciary to a democracy. It offers a powerful insight into the pressures as they arise in Canada, Denmark, England, France, Spain and Wales, and a cross-jurisdictional approach to issues such as diversity, political neutrality and training. – Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales 2013–17*

[Fighting for Justice](#) is an accessible account from international judges on contemporary challenges to the rule of law. Far from being a highly technical debate between experts, however, the book is accessible to a public audience, raising important contemporary legal issues that concern all those who share an aspiration to justice. <>

## **Legal Research: How to Find & Understand the Law,** **19<sup>th</sup> edition** by Editors of Nolo (Nolo)

If readers are new to legal research, they might be apprehensive about finding, understanding, and applying the law. Whether they are in a law library or at a computer, it's common to feel like one is searching for a needle in a haystack. After all, there are many different research resources and places to look.

This book asks readers whether they have legal questions at home, at work, or as part of law-related course work. **Legal Research, 19<sup>th</sup> edition**, provides everything readers need, laying out easy-to-follow research methods that will help them find the right answers. They find out how to:

- Locate and understand statutes, regulations, and cases.
- Make sure their research is 100% up to date.
- Organize their research results into a memorandum of law for use at school, at work, or in court.

**Legal Research** is written by Nolo's editorial department. This department includes more than a dozen legal editors and full-time legal researchers, who collectively have more than 150 plus years' experience turning legal jargon into plain English. Most of these editors gave up careers as practicing lawyers in favor of furthering Nolo's mission: Getting legal information into the hands of the people who really need it.

Completely updated for the **19<sup>th</sup> edition**, **Legal Research** shows readers how to find statutes, cases, background information, and answers to specific legal questions online. Even more important, they are guided to the most reliable and user-friendly sites, so they won't drown in information flood.

Lots of examples and easy-to-understand instructions teach readers how to master all the basic legal research tools, including:

- Online search engines.
- Reliable free legal websites.
- Legal encyclopedias, periodicals, and treatises.
- Annotated legal codes and statutes.
- Published reports of state and federal court cases.
- Case digests and Shepard's Citations.
- The best legal blogs.

Fortunately, legal research isn't as difficult as it might seem, and with the help of **Legal Research**, readers can find everything they need. Not only do the editors help readers navigate the legal research process, but the book also covers:

- The basics of the law, so readers understand what they are looking at.

- Where to find legal resources, so they know where to start.
- How to frame the legal issue, so they approach the research efficiently.
- How to find and use legal resources like statutes, cases, and secondary sources that explain the law.
- How to validate their research results and ensure they are using current law.
- How to organize their research and put it to use.

*Getting around the law library can be easy – if you just know where to look – and [Legal Research](#) is the place to begin. – Library Journal*

*The 16th updated edition of [Legal Research: How to Find & Understand the Law](#) tells how to locate key laws and cases either online or in a law library, how to draft legal memoranda, and how to make the most of the Web and a legal library to locate statutes, cases, background information and answers to specific legal issues. Chapters offer keys to organization, 'shepardizing', prioritizing, using indexes, and analyzing the effect of a case on your particular issue: in short, it outlines the basics of an attorney's research and judgment process and will help users save hundreds of dollars in attorney fees just by doing some of the legal legwork that anyone can do. Very highly recommended! – The Midwest Book Review*

*The simplest, most concise and articulate description of the legal research process available. – Tom Holm, Director of Lawyering Skills Clinical Program UCLA School of Law*

[Legal Research, 19<sup>th</sup> edition](#), helps readers take the law into their own hands. When it comes to finding what they need, if it's out there, Nolo editors will help them find it. <>

Learning / Foreign Language / English / Reading

## [Learning Words from Reading: A Cognitive Model of Word-Meaning Inference, 1st edition](#) by Megumi Hamada (Bloomsbury Academic)

Developing literacy skills is essential for English language learners.

An increasingly popular approach to second and foreign language education, [Learning Words from Reading](#) focuses on incidental learning: how students learn words from reading. Despite its popularity, some researchers have questioned this theory that students can learn new words by inferring meanings based on a text they are reading. So, why does the incidental method not work for some students? What are the conditions for naturalistic learning to occur? What do students need to be able to do while reading in order to learn words successfully?

Tackling these questions head-on, this book provides researchers and educators with a

more specific account of the processes behind the seemingly naturalistic method. Clarifying the connection between reading and word learning processes, Megumi Hamada in [Learning Words from Reading](#) proposes a new model, the Cognitive Model of Word-Meaning Inference, to describe how people obtain and use word-form and contextual information for learning words and the pedagogical applications of this.

Hamada is Professor of English in the TESOL and Linguistics programs at Ball State University.

Hamada says that just like most language learners, she experienced the difficulty of learning words. Her formal L2 instruction in English started in the seventh grade in Japan. There were some words that her teachers provided explicit instruction for, but as she moved up to higher grades, classroom instruction never mentioned individual words. Vocabulary was something that they as students had to work on by themselves. There was a book of words that appeared in standardized tests, and they tried to learn them all. She remembers she started learning (or memorizing) the letter 'a' section in the book, using various self-learning techniques, such as reciting them, writing down the words and their L1 translations many times, and quizzing herself (covering up the L1 translations and seeing if she could say the meanings). Of course, it was extremely hard to learn all of the words in the book, and she never finished going over all of them. When she began her research career in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition, she wanted to find a way to help ease the burden of vocabulary learning.

One of the difficulties of word learning is that there are so many words that one has to learn in order to be able to use a language to an adequate degree. Some estimates say as many as 8,000–9,000 word families are necessary for comprehending authentic material. Incidental word learning, the focus of the first half of [Learning Words from Reading](#), is assumed to help alleviate the burden of learning so many words. For example, one can learn new words from reading novels or magazines for the purpose of reading, not for the purpose of word learning. However, there are concerns about whether incidental word learning is a method that benefits all students, despite studies suggesting its effectiveness.

[Learning Words from Reading](#) aims to advance the understanding of incidental word learning from reading by introducing relevant theories and models in the psycholinguistics of reading. [Learning Words from Reading](#) consists of two parts. The first part, "What Do We Know about Incidental Word Learning from Reading?" provides a summary of the studies on the topic of vocabulary and reading, mainly from the applied linguistics field. The second part, "How Do We Obtain Information from Reading and Use It for Word-Meaning Inference?" describes the theories and findings from the psycholinguistics field, including word recognition, sentence processing, and reading comprehension, and proposes the model, the Cognitive Model of Word-Meaning Inference, which illustrates how the meanings of words encountered during reading are

learned (or inferred). As cross-linguistic transfer affects reading processes, the second part of [Learning Words from Reading](#) also addresses possible cross-linguistic transfer in word-meaning inference.

*This book effectively draws together key theories and empirical findings from various disciplines to clearly describe the processes involved in incidental learning of second language vocabulary from reading.* –

Rachael C. Hulme, Research Fellow, Aston University, UK

*Hamada addresses a fundamental issue in L2 reading: How we Learn Words from Reading. She carefully reviews and categorizes the large and growing research on types of L1-L2 transfer effects (linguistic and contextual) and uses these findings to develop a coherent model of second-language word recognition and word learning: The Cognitive Model of Word-Meaning Inference.* – William Grabe, Emeritus Regents

Professor of Applied Linguistics, Northern Arizona University

*Taking an interdisciplinary approach to research synthesis, Megumi Hamada explores incidental vocabulary learning from multiple perspectives, including linguistics, reading, and psychology. The book will serve as an insightful and valuable resource for students, teachers, and scholars in second language acquisition and language education.* –

Keiko Koda, Professor of second language acquisition and Japanese, Carnegie Mellon University

*This book provides a valuable resource on reading and vocabulary learning. It provides a succinct overview of the theoretical and empirical literature on incidental word learning and also covers the processes involved in inferring word meaning from reading. The book is laudable for its quality and clarity of presentation.* – Hossein Nassaji, Professor of Applied Linguistics, University of Victoria

A significant new contribution to research in the field, [Learning Words from Reading](#) provides a cognitive perspective on how students learn new words from reading in a second or foreign language. The book may lead either directly or indirectly to the improvement of vocabulary learning and teaching approaches. <>

## Literature & Fiction

**[Breathe: A Novel](#)** by Joyce Carol Oates (ECCO, Harper Collins Publishers)

*Joyce Carol Oates... is simply the most consistently inventive, brilliant, curious, and creative writer going, as far as I'm concerned.* – Gillian Flynn

*Oates's unblinking curiosity about human nature is one of the great artistic forces of our time. – Nation*

*A writer of extraordinary strengths ... she has dealt consistently with what is probably the great American theme – the quest for the creation of the self.... Her great subject, naturally, is love. – Guardian*

*A master of sharp dialogue and vibrant descriptions, Oates casts a powerful spell. – People*

*How blessed we are to have Oates as a novelist in our chaotic, confusing times. – Star Tribune*

**Breathe** is a novel of love and loss from bestselling and prizewinning author Joyce Carol Oates.

Oates is a recipient of the National Medal of Humanities, the National Book Critics Circle Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Book Award, and the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in Short Fiction, and has been several times nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. She is the Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University and has been a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters since 1978.

In **Breathe**, amid a starkly beautiful but uncanny landscape in New Mexico, a married couple from Cambridge takes residency at a distinguished academic institute. When the husband is stricken with a mysterious illness, misdiagnosed at first, their lives are uprooted and husband and wife each embarks upon a nightmare journey. At thirty-seven, Michaela faces the terrifying prospect of widowhood – and the loss of Gerard, whose identity has greatly shaped her own.

In vividly depicted scenes of escalating suspense, Michaela in **Breathe** cares desperately for Gerard in his final days as she comes to realize that her love for her husband, however fierce and selfless, is not enough to save him and that his death is beyond her comprehension. A love that refuses to be surrendered at death – is this the blessing of a unique married love, or a curse that must be exorcized?

*Gut-wrenching and devoid of sentimentality.... Recommended. – Library Journal*

*Powerful.... Fecund with fear and anguish, and driven by raw, breathless narration, this hallucinatory tale will not disappoint. Oates is on a roll. – Publishers Weekly, starred review*

Part intimately detailed love story, part horror story rooted in real life, **Breathe** is an exploration of hauntedness rooted in the domesticity of marital love, as well as our determination both to be faithful to the beloved and to survive the trauma of loss. <>

**The Trojan Women: A Comic** by Euripides, illustrations by Rosanna Bruno, text by Anne Carson (New Directions)

**The Trojan Women** is a book collaboration between the artist Rosanna Bruno and the poet Anne Carson, based on Euripides's famous tragedy. Carson was born in Canada and teaches ancient Greek for a living. Bruno is a visual artist who makes paintings, comics and bad puns. She is author of *The Slanted Life of Emily Dickinson*.

**The Trojan Women** is a new comic-book version of Euripides's classic *The Trojan Women*, which follows the fates of Hekabe, Andromache, and Cassandra after Troy has been sacked and all its men killed. This collaboration between the visual artist Bruno and the poet and classicist Carson attempts to give a genuine representation of how human beings are affected by warfare. Therefore, all the characters take the form of animals (except Cassandra, whose mind is in another world).

*What do you get when you cross Euripides' classic tragedy, the artistic stylings of Rosanna Bruno, and the poetic touch of Anne Carson? This book! Here's what we know: Troy has been ravaged. Everyone is depicted as an animal (except Cassandra, who is another planet, which actually makes complete sense when you think about it). Need I say more? – Lithub*

*Anne Carson is a daring, learned, unsettling writer. – Susan Sontag*

*Set in post-war Troy, this wrenching comics-poetry update of Euripides' tragic play by poet Carson and artist Bruno embodies feminine narratives with wry lyricism. Bruno's black-and-white illustrations literalize poetic metaphors to whimsical effect. Yet the cleverness and agility of this graphic work amplify its tragedies.... Even the infamous Helen, a shape-shifter who appears as a silver fox and a mirror, must defend her life to her husband, the king Menelaos, after Hekabe wants her 'sentenced to death out of her own mouth' for her apparent complicity in the downfall of Troy.... Accompanied by a chorus of cows and dogs, Hekabe mourns the death of a final heir (drawn as a sapling) and says, 'We can't go on/ we go on.' Such is the story of war and genocide throughout history, and in Carson and Bruno's expert hands, it strikes as powerfully contemporary. – Publishers Weekly, starred review*

*Bruno's illustration works wonderfully with Carson's text, making [for] a beautiful, affecting translation. – Women's Review of Books*

*Carson and Bruno have risen to an unusual challenge. Their medium's conventions could have flattened distinctive literary qualities, but their*

book instead refocuses our attention on Euripides' styles. The format highlights this play's outstanding quality, praised by Sidney as 'sweet violence'. That phrase was borrowed by Terry Eagleton to entitle his own book on the tragic (2002), in which he said that tragedy can only survive as a twenty-first-century art form if it is metaphysically open, aesthetically beautiful and unflinching in its depiction of suffering. All three criteria are fulfilled by this innovative version of Trojan Women. – Edith Hall, *Times Literary Supplement*

Even at its best, the poetic mainstream we call the lyric tradition can run the risk of appearing po-faced. So it's a joy to come across a mistress of the art taking rumbustious pleasure in revisiting the matter of poetry itself. Anne Carson's new version of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, with artist and cartoonist Rosanna Bruno, is resolutely subtitled *A Comic*; and a graphic novel is exactly what it is. But of course the words are Carson's – simultaneously straight-talking and experimental. – Fiona Sampson, *The Guardian*

In their new collaborative comic-book adaptation of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, poet and classicist Anne Carson and artist Rosanna Bruno lean into the irrationality, the volatility of translation. Bizarre, haunting, and hallucinatory illustrations by Bruno render the tragedy's characters as animals (dogs, cats, crows, cows) and inanimate objects (a cracked poplar tree, "some sort of gearbox, clutch or coupling mechanism"). What results is a gnarly, perfectly inscrutable dreamscape of Euripides' tragedy. – Lily Houston Smith, Vol. 1 *Brooklyn*

Anne Carson teamed up with Rosanna Bruno for this irreverent rendering of Euripides's tragedy following the fates of the titular women – here represented as animals – in the wake of the sack of Troy. – *Globe and Mail*  
Bruno's monochromatic drawings depict characters as animals and everyday objects, accompanied by a weary chorus of dogs and cows. This gives phantasmagoric shape to Carson's characteristically uncategorizable translation. Carson preserves some of the ancient Greek text's inscrutability, but also imbues it with contemporary immediacy: Poseidon enters making allusions to James Baldwin, and Hekabe, brooding about the role of Helen in the city's downfall, calls her the 'why and fucking wherefore of it all.' – *New Yorker*

A great tragedy as well as an odd and terrific piece of work. Instead of actors on a stage, we have Bruno's dogs and cows (the captive Trojan women), a surging sea (Poseidon), a pair of overalls (Athena), a poplar and sapling (Hektor's wife Andromache and their son Astyanax), Helen alternately as a silver fox and a hand mirror, and Menelaos as "some sort of gearbox clutch or coupling mechanism." I wouldn't have believed

*these images would work if I hadn't seen them interacting with Carson's swift, bold communication of Euripides's words and spirit. For me, Bruno's strange, crude, and somehow completely evocative images do what acting can't. – Bob Blaisdell, Los Angeles Review of Books*

[The Trojan Women](#) is an amazing graphic novel, impossible to describe, having to be seen to be believed. <>

## Public Policy / Gun Violence / Activism

### **[When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough: A Shooting Survivor's Journey into the Realities of Gun Violence](#)** by Taylor S. Schumann (InterVarsity Press)

Taylor Schumann never thought she'd be a victim of gun violence. But one spring day a man with a shotgun walked into her workplace and opened fire on her. While she survived, she was left with permanent wounds, both visible and invisible.

Schumann is a survivor of the April 2013 shooting at a college in Christiansburg, Virginia. She is a writer and activist whose writing has appeared in *Christianity Today*, *Sojourners*, and *Fathom*.

In [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#), Schumann invites readers to see what it means to be a survivor after the news vehicles drive away and the media moves on. Healing is slow and complicated. As she suffered through surgeries, grueling rehabilitation, and counseling to repair the physical injuries and emotional trauma, she came face to face with the deep and lasting impact of gun violence. As she began grappling with the realities, Schumann experienced another painful truth: Christians have largely been absent from this issue. As she explains, gun violence undercuts God's vision of abundant life and community – and the silence of the church rings loudly in the ears of survivors and families of victims. Schumann in [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#) weaves her own story of survival and recovery into a larger conversation about gun violence in the country.

*Compulsively readable, [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#) presents a practical guide to changing our minds about guns. The view into the continued difficulty of Schumann's life as a gun violence survivor gives readers reasons and permission to reexamine our views on guns. She has laid out hopeful, doable action that can follow our collective knee-jerk instinct to give thoughts and prayers. As Schumann suggests, prayer can actually be the beginning of our work and not the end. – Hayley Morgan, author of Preach to Yourself*

*I don't say this lightly: this is a book that will change minds. Taylor's personal story is heartbreaking and compelling, but it is her passion for justice, her well-researched arguments, and her empathy for different perspectives that make this book so powerful. I am confident that [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#) will inspire many people, but I am even more confident that it will guide and inform real conversations that we desperately need to have in our families, churches, and communities. – Kaitlyn Schiess, author of *The Liturgy of Politics**

*[When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#) is an urgent, thoughtful, and painful book. It hurts to see the realities of gun violence laid bare before us. And yet Schumann, by looking at both the personal and systemic impacts of gun violence, does what seems impossible. She models for us the prophetic work of allowing suffering and statistics to change our hearts and minds toward real action regarding gun violence in the United States. I wish this book wasn't so achingly necessary, but since it is, I will be encouraging everyone to read it. May our prayers for peace be turned into real laws that protect the most vulnerable among us. – D. L. Mayfield, activist and author of *The Myth of the American Dream: Reflections on Affluence, Autonomy, Safety, and Power**

*It's hard to think of a more polarizing topic than gun control, but [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#) reminds us that before we talk policy, we need to listen to people's stories. As a shooting survivor, Taylor Schumann invites us into her story before inviting us to consider broader policy issues and the responsibility of Christians to address the well-being of our neighbors. The result is a poignant and clarifying book that will help facilitate a much-needed conversation. – Kristin Kobes Du Mez, author of *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation**

*This book is a rallying cry for a culture that has simply not cared enough to tackle the problem of gun violence. Taylor Schumann invites us into her pain, then guides us toward thoughtful consideration and practical, long-haul action. Vulnerably told, packed with both data and empathy, our list of excuses ends within these pages. – Shannan Martin, author of *The Ministry of Ordinary Places* and *Falling Free**

*In [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#), Taylor Schumann tells a story and makes an argument. With wisdom and heart, Taylor not only unpacks the scourge of gun violence in America but provides a model for Christians who ought to be moved by experience and compassion into the public square to advocate for the common good. – Michael Wear,*

founder of Public Square Strategies and author of *Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House About the Future of Faith in America*

*I'm hard pressed to think of a timelier or more important book for this moment in American history than Taylor Schumann's [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#). Taylor generously offers us an inside look at her searingly raw experiences as a gunshot survivor, which she then masterfully threads into a practical and fact-driven conversation about the challenges and realities of the gun violence crisis today. Schumann's story is captivating, her writing style is engaging, and her insights showcase a depth of unique expertise that only a survivor can bring. Readers will come away not only with facts and figures but with a wealth of practical applications, calling each of us to do our part in addressing the gun violence epidemic. – Stephanie Tait, author of *The View from Rock Bottom**

With compassion and honesty, Schumann shares her own incredible story of survival in [When Thoughts and Prayers Aren't Enough](#). She encourages readers to reconsider their own engagement with the issue and to join her in envisioning a more hopeful, safer future for the nation. <>

## Religion & Spirituality / Self-Help

### [Ponder: Contemplative Bible Study –Year C](#) by Mahri

Leonard-Fleckman (Liturgical Press)

[Ponder: Contemplative Bible Study](#) accompanies all hearers and preachers of the Word as they pray with and ponder the Sunday readings throughout the liturgical year.

Author Mahri Leonard-Fleckman is an assistant professor of Hebrew Bible in the Religious Studies Department at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. She is the co-author of *The Book of Ruth* in the Wisdom Commentary Series, and the author of *The House of David: Between Political Formation and Literary Revision*.

The Bible study on which [Ponder](#) is based takes place at St. John's Catholic Church, a mid-nineteenth-century parish that is known historically as the 'mother church' of Worcester in central Massachusetts. It is a flourishing, gritty, downtown parish that draws a rich and diverse mix of people. There is a simple, drop-in, lectionary-based study that regularly gathers five to fifteen people. Leonard-Fleckman provides a handout with the readings for the upcoming Sunday and some corresponding notes. Together, they pray with and then discuss one of the readings, sometimes two, then offer up communal prayers and go on their way.

To truly understand **Ponder** and the flexibility it offers to individuals or groups, Leonard-Fleckman invites readers to use their liturgical imagination. The format on the pages is simple. The simplicity of the format allows for freedom and independence of prayer and study. First, she provides the entirety of Sunday's readings so that participants have easy access to the texts without having to consult additional Bibles or *missalettes*. Only the psalm is missing, not because it is less important, but for issues of space.

Under each reading are her commentary notes. These notes provide some basic background and information about the readings. The goal is not to lead readers into viewing the texts a certain way, but to invite readers into their own deep knowledge of the texts, a kind of full-bodied understanding. Therefore, the notes are streamlined to create minimal mental clutter. They include historical and literary context, discussions of translation choices from the Hebrew or Greek (sometimes Aramaic), the broader contexts from the surrounding passages and books, and references to other Sunday readings.

Finally, she includes a section called 'ponder' that provides possible connections, essential ideas, or ongoing questions to consider from the texts. She says she placed these last so as not to overly influence participants at the outset of the study. This section, connected with the commentary notes below each reading, may be particularly helpful for those who lead the Bible study or are preparing to preach.

Together, the readings, notes, and 'ponderings' provide a valuable yet simple tool for ongoing prayer and study. They also create a sort of Sunday *missalette* that some of the Bible study members take into the pews on Sunday for continued prayer and thoughtful preparation.

This Bible study is, first and foremost, a practice in gaining intimacy with God through intimacy with sacred texts. Through prayer and study of Scripture, then, the goal of **Ponder** is that each person knows, deeply and profoundly, that the Scriptures are 'nourishment' which 'enlightens' minds, 'strengthens' wills, and 'fires hearts ... with the love of God.'

*A biblical scholar accepts an invitation to lead a weekly study of the Sunday Scriptures in an active and gritty downtown parish. Mahri Leonard-Fleckman is the 'expert' but, as it turns out, so are the diverse participants from the neighborhood who share the Word of God and their lives with one another. **Ponder: Contemplative Bible Study** is the fruit of these encounters. This is a terrific resource for preachers and catechists, as well as for personally reflecting on and praying with the Sunday Scriptures. – Jude Siciliano, OP, Preacher and editor, PreacherExchange.com*

*This volume of **Ponder** captures the heart of Pope Francis' exhortation that missionary disciples should contemplate their communities as well as the*

*Scriptures in searching for how God is speaking today. Biblical scholar Mahri Leonard-Fleckman provides valuable background and context as well as a process that promotes communal and personal reflection on the Lectionary readings for **Year C. Ponder** is a marvelous resource not only for preachers and Bible study groups but for all who long to be nourished by the Word of life. – Mary Catherine Hilker, OP, Professor of Theology, University of Notre Dame, author of *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination**

*Lectio divina as a form of individual and communal prayer with the Scriptures has grown in popularity. This book will help those who wish to combine prayer based on the Sunday Scriptures with some study of the texts. Both prayer groups and individuals will welcome this book as they center their prayer on the Scriptures. – The Bible Today*

*Catholic laity have not always felt they had permission to interpret biblical texts. In **Ponder**, Mahri Leonard-Fleckman does better than grant permission: she empowers. Joining traditional Catholic spiritual practices of lectio divina and Ignatian contemplation with the fruits of modern critical biblical scholarship, Leonard-Fleckman equips readers with background knowledge and practical tools for their own deep engagement with the readings proclaimed at Mass each Sunday. Through contemplative practice grounded in dialogue and community, she invites readers to engage the scriptures with mind and heart, curiosity and compassion. – Anthea Portier-Young, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Duke Divinity School*

*Here is an outstanding resource for studying the Sunday lectionary and, more importantly, for learning how to pray with the lectionary. – Frank J. Matera, Professor Emeritus, The Catholic University of America*

**Ponder: Contemplative Bible Study** guides readers through the **Year C** lectionary. Everything needed for a rich experience of *lectio divina* and biblical exploration is provided: the full text of the Sunday readings, concise commentary, engaging reflections, and clear guidance on how to use this resource alone or with a group. Many readers will find this Bible study life-giving; they will especially enjoy the pondering. And it bridges serious scholarship with personal prayer and a community of faith. <>

### **Colonialism and Modern Social Theory, 1<sup>st</sup> edition** by Gurminder K. Bhambra & John Holmwood (Polity Press)

Modern society emerged in the context of European colonialism and empire. So, too, did a distinctively modern social theory, laying the basis for most social theorizing ever since. Yet colonialism and empire are absent from the conceptual understandings of modern society, which are organized instead around ideas of nation state and capitalist economy.

Gurminder K. Bhambra and John Holmwood in **Colonialism and Modern Social Theory** address this absence by examining the role of colonialism in the development of modern society and the legacies it has bequeathed.

Bhambra is Professor of Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies at the University of Sussex. Holmwood is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Nottingham.

**Colonialism and Modern Social Theory** discusses modern social theory in the context of the history of European colonialism and the construction of the United States as a nation with a 'manifest destiny' across the continent. The dominant accounts of modernity, which encompass ideas of liberty, democracy, and progress, are strongly determined by these events. Colonialism is largely absent from these understandings, yet it haunts everyday life in the self-defined centers of modernity. It forms the unacknowledged context of the 'migrant crisis' in Europe and of populist resentment and rejections of multiculturalism.

Beginning with a consideration of the role of colonialism and empire in the formation of social theory from Hobbes to Hegel, the authors go on to focus on the work of Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Du Bois. As well as unpicking critical omissions and misrepresentations, the chapters discuss the places where colonialism is acknowledged and discussed – albeit inadequately – by these founding figures; and readers come to see what this fresh rereading has to offer and why it matters.

**Colonialism and Modern Social Theory** seeks to identify the social structural basis of the newly articulated identity politics and to understand how such a basis has been omitted from contemporary sociology as a consequence of the conceptual frameworks bequeathed in the development of modern social theory. In none of the writers who make up the usual canon of modern social theory is there a discussion of race as central to the social structures of modernity. Bhambra and Holmwood trace this absence to a failure to account for the centrality of colonialism and empire within the modern world.

As they explain in the introduction to [Colonialism and Modern Social Theory](#), the focus is self-consciously on European social theory and on European and US colonialism. In this sense, the book has a paradoxical quality. It answers recent appeals to 'decolonize' the curriculum by insisting on the need for a full acknowledgement of the nature of colonialism and its determining role in the construction of the modern world, including its 'metropolitan centers'. In doing so, the book does not claim that modern social theory has become irrelevant. While the concepts of sociology and social theory have been represented as universal, they embody particular experiences and epistemological claims. This limitation is an opportunity for reconstruction, to be achieved by taking the colonial context into account and by learning from others. This process is the same, both inside and outside the academy.

*This is a remarkably powerful book that supplies an eloquent, well-reasoned, and thorough account of how colonialism and empire are absent from sociology's current jurisdiction. Written by two outstanding sociologists, it is a nuanced and pertinent critique of the classical canon in modern social theory and an invitation to decolonize it. – Sari Hanafi, American University of Beirut and President of the International Sociological Association*

*Bhambra and Holmwood analyse incisively how the elided colonial context of modern social theory has shaped and limited its purview, and that of western sociology. They provide a timely, provocative optic for engaging the unanticipated ethnoracial nationalist backlash to multicultural democracy. – Robert J. Antonio, University of Kansas*

[Colonialism and Modern Social Theory](#) is a timely, inspiring and insightful book providing a nuanced critique of current social theory. It argues for a reconstruction of social theory that should lead to a better understanding of contemporary social thought, its limitations, and its wider possibilities. <>

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