

ESSAY by TERRY ATKINSON

FROM ONE CIVIL WAR TO ANOTHER – TIME TRAVELLERS TO THE COLD WAR

TWO CIVIL WARS: AMERICAN 1861- 65, RUSSIAN 1919 - 21

(1) THE SOVIET JUGGERNAUT FROM STALINGRAD TO BERLIN, THE DESERT WAR, THE AMERICANS IN EUROPE, DIGITAL HISTORY WRITING AND REWRITING WORKS (68 drawings)

(2) THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, DIGITAL HISTORY WRITING AND REWRITING WORKS (Ongoing)

INTRODUCTION

From these two events, the American Civil War (hereafter ACW) in the middle of the nineteenth century and the Russian Civil War (hereafter RCW) at the beginning of the twentieth century, emerged the United States and the Soviet Union, the two superpowers of the twentieth century. By the close of World War 2 (hereafter WW2) the two superpowers' hegemonic positions became both visible and palpable. From that point on these two political configurations dominated the quality, tempo and culture of the life of my generation in Britain (and many other communities throughout the world) up until 1990. Since this latter date, within a different economic, political and, to some extent, cultural context, the Americans have enjoyed a considerable hegemonic advantage over their old rivals, now titled the Russian Federation. But the old reflexes remain. I was never more clearly reminded of this than by Obama's remark that any alleged rival to the United States was 'not even close'; or by Putin's reclamation of the Crimea – the ceding of Crimea by the Khrushchev administration to the old Ukrainian SSR in 1954 I remember clearly, for example. Regardless of how long it takes China and India to threaten Obama's stratospheric boast and self-regard, these two sets of work, whilst they do, if only a little, speculate about the future via its references to certain technological contributions and intrusions into cultural habits, it is concerned more with looking back and attempting to give some kind of cultural representation of the impact of the Soviet – US encounter during the twentieth century, on the lives of those I knew and know, and, not least, upon my own life. In short, the works concerned with the ongoing outcomes of the ACW/RCW are an attempt to represent and trace and, hopefully, analyse to some extent, the historical roots of the imprint of the encounter of the two superpowers on the lives of my generation. Hence, I guess, in the end, these two sets of work are explicitly autobiographical insofar as they are imaginings of the impact of the Cold War into my own experience and upon the readings of my own life looking back on the Cold War encounter, not least the impact of Cold War ideology on the formations and subject choices of my own practice. What is perhaps perhaps less contentious than my autobiographical interpretations of the impact of the event, is that the Cold War was an unavoidable prism through which all the generations between, say, 1948 and the 1990s not infrequently viewed their own lives and potential deaths. These works do not to attempt to depict/describe, for example, the shockingly and chilling visual emerging record throughout the forties, fifties and sixties of the burns on both the dead and especially the surviving people of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. I have little doubt about the widely disturbing

effect of these images upon the public imagination, via, at that time, the newly accessible TV medium and the established transmission of cinema newsreels. I am even more certain of their dismaying effect upon my teenage views of the Cold War. I have vivid memories of these horrors as they were increasingly portrayed, seemingly a kind of slow but persistent drip-drip of these images throughout my teenage and early twenties. It was through the parallel developing and increasingly striking lucidity of the visual media, which development seemed eerily synchronized with the now visually revealed ferocity of the longer-term effects of the two nuclear events. Goya's images in the *Caprichos* seem to almost be, at best, a macabre party in comparison to the grisly lurid malformations on the bodies of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims. By the late fifties and early sixties such malformations were beginning to be transmitted with increasingly startling visual clarity and finesse through the accelerating technological sophistication of the filmic and photographic media, then transmitting them to the publics of the world. And increasing spoken and written access, via radio and the newspapers, was a no less startling supplement and input, especially of the more 'silent' visual record of the longer term effects of radiation poisoning upon the Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims.

The SOVIET JUGGERNAUT WORKS

The works using the subject of the Soviet attack on the Wermacht, (Stalingrad, East Prussia, Berlin for example) do not depict or represent in any direct visual way the event of the Russian Civil War itself, but rather attempt to interpolate the outcome of that civil war in the events of the Soviet-German encounter in WW2. The occupation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union towards the close of WW2 did, in a fairly direct sense, partially fulfill an aspiration that the Bolsheviks had, and hoped for, in respect of their ambitions in 1919-21 to export the Revolution to a wider theatre throughout Europe. Very few of the motifs and figures in this set of works are from the period of the Russian Civil War itself. Drawings of the busts of Marx, Engels and Lenin (the background image of no 5), for example, can be said to be motifs used in the Russian Civil War since such images were trophy-like icons throughout the Bolshevik and Soviet period after 1918. Such figures and motifs were widely disseminated right up to the end of the Soviet Union. Not least as outriders of the propaganda campaign attempting to consummate some of the earlier Bolshevik aspirations of the twenties for communist expansion into the states of Eastern Europe that were realized later and attained by the Soviet war effort in the years 1941-45. Of course, from the later twenties onwards right up to the mid-fifties, inevitably the image of Stalin was added to the triumvirate. Ironically, and to some extent dismally, the image of Trotsky was not only removed from the visual cavalcade, but the corporeal body was removed from the Soviet state in the mid-twenties and after August 1940 removed from the surface of the planet. These drawings also attempt to cast a wider net insofar as some of them depict events from the American presence (especially its air power) in Europe in WW2, and also certain aspects of the British Eighth Army campaign in the North African desert in the early forties. Not least its use of imperial troops and the presence of cultural figures both in that campaign itself (no 7, Keith Douglas the war poet of the desert campaign who was later killed in Normandy shortly after D-Day) and wider cultural agendas of the British WW2 war effort (no 25, Frank Phillips, the BBC newsreader). All these are aspects partly resting on my memories of WW2 and events related to WW2 that I discovered in the decades from the forties onwards – all contributing to what I characterize below as the works 'dwelling in retrospect,' this idea culled directly from Emily Dickinson's work (and life for that matter!)

This set of drawings, like the ACW works, embraces many genres, not the least of which is the genre of still life. Consider no 23, *Still Life – the Soviets capture a package*. This drawing is of a single object, a German ration package inscribed with the words 'fleisch

extract.’ The English translation is ‘meat extract.’ I took the meaning to have a conspicuous resonance with the Nazi organization of the final solution, the aim of extracting, transporting and eliminating the corporeal bodies of entire racial populations (Jews, Roma and Slavs for example) and a kind of savagely ironic take on the fantasy of Aryan superiority. It also had for me a kind of reverse appropriateness insofar as I take it to be applicable too to the ferocious draconian Stalinist reflex against a number of Soviet populations, not least the treatment of the Soviet Union’s own returning POWs during and after WW2. But the main target of this attempted irony is the Nazi behavior in Eastern Europe during WW2. The atrocious and remorseless Nazi assault on the flesh of the Poles was another event demonstrating their contempt for those populations they considered inferior. Many of the other still life drawings are an attempt to historically frame the role of and relation between trophy-ism, souvenir-ism, revenge and triumphalism.

The ACW WORKS

The ACW works rest entirely on other people’s memories and records. Clearly being the age I was, I was born in 1939, then on the grounds of both age and geography it was extremely unlikely that I could have witnessed first hand the Red Army reducing Berlin or the Royal Tank Corps’ emplacements in Normandy when Keith Douglas was killed. But I do have memories, some of them indubitable others less reliable, of the war as it was experienced and received in South Yorkshire where I lived during that period. The ACW finished in 1865, so, obviously, in this sense, my statements comprised by the ACW works rest directly and solely on historical interpretations of other people’s memories and analysis. Once at an exhibition of my World War 1 works in Derry in the early eighties, I was importuned by a WW1 veteran to respond to his question, how could I paint about WW1 when I was not there? I am afraid my response may appear something of a cheap shot, since I answered the veteran with the indisputable assertion that, for example, Grunewald was not at the Crucifixion, nor was Picasso at Guernica, even though Picasso was alive at the time of Guernica. etc. I have made quite a number of series of works that all ‘dwell in retrospect.’ Whilst, in some respects, I have ever since regretted my response in that encounter with the WW1 veteran, nevertheless there is, I think, an indisputable truth underlying my answer. Existential presence is no necessary condition for producing history painting (work) – good or bad. Like the RCW half a century after the close of the ACW, the ACW does seem to be a kind of foundational event in making the world my generation and its successors were born into and have lived through. It is strange to think now of the possibility of the United States being two nations. But whilst the unification the ACW ensured the integral and, in the end, dominating constitutional achievement of the abolishment of slavery, it clearly did not eliminate racism, either north or south. That Reconstruction failed, and failed dolorously, triggered some of the most momentous events in the US witnessed by my generation during the twentieth century. And repercussions from the failure of Reconstruction after the ACW are an ongoing confrontational circumstance in current US society. White supremacist sentiment was pretty clearly demonstrated at Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, and a prominent contributory event to the confrontation was that the endeavor that provoked the display of proto-Nazism aimed to remove statues of Robert E Lee and Thomas Stonewall Jackson from public spaces, the claim of the people wishing for their removal being that both these historical figures were racists.

War is well established as a subject depicted in art. The term ‘history-painting’ used here is intended to acknowledge, admittedly opaquely, that the term currently can embrace a much more expanded and extended range of materials and techniques than simply paint and painting. And it is intended to also limn the history of this event in which the range of

materials used to make art was expanded, especially throughout the first three quarters of the twentieth century. This particular expansion of materials was a significant part and token of the alleged progressive character of modern art. The category 'history painting' (perhaps a more appropriate term in the light of twentieth century modern art might be 'history work' and, I guess in some ways, I prefer this latter term)) encompasses many examples of works that, in one way or another, depict/refer to war. However, in the context of these two sets of works, this set of remarks sticks with the term 'history painting' since up to the present all the works produced thus far, in both series, can, without too much strain, be characterized as drawings or paintings. Thus, in this respect, the works rest pretty securely within traditional techniques of the practice of art. Whilst I do not wish to over proselytize this notion of 'expanded range of materials', I do think it appropriate to acknowledge this characteristic of twentieth century art practice. The use of and input into Cold War ideology of, on the one hand, of American modern art and, on the other of Soviet Socialist Realism I have attempted to explicitly index in the *Hat Maps*. These works, for example, using coloured photocopies of Pollock's *Full Fathom Five* and Johns' *Flag* and *White Flag* as ground, are an attempt to suggest that there is a relation between the events of nineteenth and twentieth century war and the alleged grandiosity and consequent inflationary status granted to modern art via its Western model of the artist as a self confirming centre of truth. And, I contend, a significant influence on this Western model of the contemporary artist was the ideological pressure of the Cold War. All these works ACW, Studies 35, 45 and 47 (*Hat-maps 1, 3 and 4*), endeavour to stand in a quasi Cold War contrast to the Soviet Socialist Realist ground of Study 40 (*Hat-Map 2*).

Consider their full titles.

American Civil War: Study 35

Hat-map 1: Civil War hats on a ground of Full Fathom Five with Cody marked. Wyoming achieved statehood in 1890. (1) Confederate forage cap (2) New York Hawkins Zouave fez (3) Union cavalry hat (4) Confederate homespun forage cap (5) Union officer cap (6) Union Iron Brigade hat (7) Union forage cap (8) Plain Union officer cap (9) Customised blue forage cap (Iowa?)

American Civil War: Study 40

Hat-map 2: Postcard from one civil war to another. Civil War hats on a ground of a sketch for the Greeting of the First Cosmonaut, Yuri, Gagarin, on his Return to Earth, with Klushino marked.

(1) Red Army Budenovka 1919 (2) Union forage cap 1864 (3) Red Army Budenovka 1919 (4) Union slouch hat 1864 (5) Confederate Butternut Special 1864 (6) White Army Cossack hat (7) Red Army Budenovka 1919 (8) Time-travelling head of Yoda, intruding on both histories as a representative of the Hollywood celluloid digital rewriting and alleged populist talisman of history in general.

American Civil War: Study 45

Hat-map 3: Civil War hats on a ground of White Flag with Augusta marked. Georgia seceded January 19 1861, and was the fifth state to secede. (1) Union bespoke sorta Hardee hat (2) Confederate butternut forage cap (3) Union mid-blue forage cap.

American Civil War: Study 47

Hat-map 4: Rash or epidemic of civil war hats on modernist ground of Flag with Augusta marked. Once again an image of Yoda intrudes as a populist representative of Hollywood celluloid digital history writing and rewriting.

TIME TRAVELLERS

Using the device of the time travellers is an attempt to grant to offer up some kind of role to considerations to both past art (art history) and future art in these two sets of work. The figures culled from art's past (from Goya's *Caprichos*) and culled also from some of Western culture's more recent past, more recent manifestations (figures from *E.T.* and *Star Wars*) are proposed as cyphers of both a train of continuity in art practice itself (say, from Goya to the digital present). And, equally, an attempt to hint at the massive current cultural investment in the ongoing celluloid and digital impact (with the historical percussion of Hollywood particularly hinted at) upon how we re-read our past(s) and imagine our futures. The representation of the time-traveller in these works is also an attempt to reckon with the incursion of this expansion of the technological resources of current art practice (say Hollywood's investment in animation) into the events and outcomes of future art practice. If there is a paradox here, it perhaps lies in the securely traditional art practices of drawing and painting through which these works have been realized. And, to repeat and reiterate, through these, how we imagine our futures, both 'realistic' and fantastic. The bluntness of the device of introducing time travellers into many of the scenarios constituting these two sets of work seemed to me to be also freighted with some kind of recognition of the ongoing effects and patterns of twentieth century art practice, not least what seem to me to be the excessive claims of progress now uncritically inscribed into the concept of the avant-garde. In the following way: the deploying of the device of the time travellers in these works is a kind of confirmation for me that these are works that dwell in retrospect. And this latter term, culled from Emily Dickinson's poetic lexicon via Brenda Wineapple, sites and hints at a powerful poetic personality, in say 1862, imbedded in and alloyed with the formidable arena of New England abolitionism during the period of the ACW. [1] The model of Dickinson's practice itself has often, more especially since the mid-eighties, acted as a kind of warning antidote to, and I hope reigned in, my own weakness in the face of the attraction what I consider the excesses of some other more recent models of art practice, say the blatant PR aspects of the practices of the likes of Duchamp and Warhol. Piggy backing on both Goya and 'Hollywood' digitalized/celluloid figures, has, I think and hope, offered a bit of historical width to these works. But, whether or not successful, the historical play around these figures has been fun without, I hope again, significantly weakening the attempt at historical gravitas. There is another poet's work

The use of the device of the time traveller is also an attempt to shift the metaphors around, in the sense of their being a kind of contradistinction to the works in the series that are more straightforwardly depictions/portraits. I first used an image of *ET* having family relatives in the mid-eighties in a very small pastel drawing, now mounted in a sketchbook comprised of a lot of small drawings /sketches from that period and similarly arranged. (2) Dickinson's stern New England environment as an arena for her poetry and 'her anti-auction of the mind' stance are one pole of influence on these *Soviet Juggernaut* and ACW works. At another pole of influence (I do think of my practice as being stuck with a number of shifting poles) is the example of another poet's, Arthur Rimbaud's, breakneck and equally bold intrusion into art practice. *A Season in Hell* and *The Drunken Boat*, for example, are two poems that have stubbornly imbedded into the way I have thought about my art practice since the mid-seventies.

[1] Brenda Wineapple, *White Heat: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson & Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, Anchor Books New York, 2009, p 104. Brenda Wineapple, rightly, uses the phrase 'lived in retrospect' since she is referring to a person, I chose the word 'dwell' in preference to 'lived', since to claim of inanimate works that the works 'lived in retrospect' seems to me here with these works to claim a little too much, and to invite the accusation of being immodest.

[2] *ET's Cousin*, a pretty freely rendered example of an imagined *ET* relative. Perhaps it is obvious that in the matter of likenesses of *ET*'s relatives, it is very nearly a tabula rasa. The supposed likeness of a member of 'species' of which we have no history of the genetic and physiological patterns, details and likeness, no evolutionary history of the species depicted, as we have in the case of, say, a Titian or David portrait allows all kinds of visual liberties in respect of depicting such 'beings.' This lack of historical detail allows any amount of phantasmagorical speculation. HISTORY BOOK A, ← 1988 -→, 59 drawings/photocopies of different sizes (some drawn on page/some mounted) cover size 21.8 x15.5. This theme laid dormant throughout the 1900s and 2000s. I returned to thinking more about it in 2015 as an instrumentation for especially the figure of a time traveller. For me such speculative figures slid easily into the arena of the figures in Goya's *Caprichos*.

TITLES

From the earliest days of my practice titles have always preoccupied me as an integral part of articulating the image of the work – fervent enough at times to turn a title into more a text than a title. The first time I remember it becoming an event of real public exchange in my practice was a discussion I had for the first large scale WW1 work I made in late 1962. The exchange was with John Bowstead, Roger Jeffs and Bernard Jennings (when we were all at the Slade School in London, the four individuals formed the group *Fine-Artz* a few months later) in very early 1963. As I recall, after quite a long discussion *Postcard from Ypres* was the title we settled upon, which title, again if I recall correctly, John Bowstead came up with. [3] Four or five years later, this notion of expanding the title literally turned into texts which themselves were given titles. Many of the works were constituted entirely as texts. Some of the most interesting discussion I have had concerning the relation between text and image and text as work was with Michael Baldwin during the exchange we contributed in developing the ideas and work of *Art & Language* in the years 1966 to 1973. The act of granting the title/text integral status into the work, the idea of text/title as title and its intrusion as an integral part of the work, I would argue was confirmed by what I think I learned whilst working within both groups. The longer titles in these two sets of work, RCW and ACW, not infrequently explicitly refer to figures, events, incidents taking place away from the picture itself, they are, so to write, off-picture or off-image. All these kinds of titling devices I have used, at one time or another, since the late seventies.

FORAGING

This section is partially constituted of quotes from some of the books that have fed and resourced my interest in the two civil wars, many read and reread over especially the last three decades. The title FORAGE is meant both in its verb form, to forage, to go foraging, and in its noun form, where forage is used to name and distinguish the results of foraging. This way of working I believe to have been characteristic of how I have made my practice over the last sixty years. As I guess with many artists, books, that is, reading, has provided an abundant source throughout my practice supplying the procedures and configuration of the visual/textual form of many of the representations I have made. But, equally, I have foraged amongst many thousands of photographs over the years, and the advent of digital media has made access to such libraries infinitely easier. To state what many people will regard as the blindingly obvious, how significant this output is will be measured by either the quality or lack of quality in the work itself. Nevertheless, such obviousness is perhaps worth reflecting upon further given the fact that scrutiny of the concept of 'quality' still remains a far from uncontroversial debate. Also, it is perhaps worth pointing out that the claim I am making here

for the input of my reading sources into the character and quality of the work does not singularly refer to the ACW/RCW works. I am claiming it has been and continues to be characteristic way I make the practice. Take for example, my citing of the quote (3) [below] from Quentin Skinner's book *From Humanism to Hobbes*, more particularly from his essay *Hobbes and the Humanist Frontispiece*. This book itself has no direct connection to either the ACW or RCW, but it did seem to me to strike close as a precedent to an artist harbouring ambition to represent political ideas in her or his practice. The idea of visually representing and supplementing political ideas and issues has preoccupied and, I guess, intrigued me for decades. It does seem to be a recurrent theme throughout the entire span of the practice. Hence, more recently, for example, no writer has reflected this theme with more resonance upon my practice than when Skinner is discussing Hobbes in this context, not least in *Leviathan* itself. Skinner's work I have only closely attended to during the last couple of years but it one of the latest intrusions into my practice I have welcomed as both viewfinder and range finder.

Goya's figures from the *Caprichos* I have respected and pondered for much of the last sixty years during which I have attempted to make a germane art practice. I have foraged across and from large chunks of both his oeuvre and interpretations of it throughout those decades. If any artist's work approaches a kind of haunting of my practice, it is his work. Goya's work is a long time spectre laying across my practice since my early years at the Slade School in the first years of the sixties. Insofar as such matters of influence can be detected, then I guess this is as near explicitly attested to as it can be thus far, in these two sets of work, the *ACW* works and the *Soviet Juggernaut etc* works. Hence Goya's work's influence on the sixty-year ongoing event of my practice seems to me to have had an input at least equal in effect to the works of the likes of Russell, Wittgenstein, Darwin, Chomsky, Rimbaud and Dickinson herself.

FORAGE

(1) At the ceremony of signing the decoration I met Field-Marshal Montgomery for the first time. During the war I had closely followed the actions of British troops under his command. In 1940 the British Expeditionary Corps had sustained a disastrous setback at Dunkirk. Later, British troops under Montgomery's command had smashed the German corps under General Rommel at El Alamein. During the Normandy landing Montgomery had ably commanded the Allied forces and their advance to the banks of the Seine. Montgomery was above medium height, very agile, soldierly, trim and created an impression of a lively and intelligent man. He began to talk about the operations at El Alamein and at Stalingrad. In his view the two operations were of equal significance. I did not want to belittle the merits of the British troops, but still I had to explain to him that the El Alamein operation was carried out on an army scale, while at Stalingrad the operation engaged a group of fronts and it had a vast strategic importance- it resulted in the rout of a major enemy force in the area of the Volga and Don rivers and later, in the North Caucasus. It was an operation that actually marked a radical turning-point in the war and ensured the retreat of the German forces from our country
(*The Memoirs of Marshall Zhukov*, Delacorte Press, 1971, p 661)

(2) But Congress would have none of that. During the short session that transpired on March 4 fistfights flared in both Houses, southern members shouted threats of recession, and no territorial legislation could command a majority. In the House, northern congressmen reaffirmed the Wilmot Proviso, drafted a territorial bill for California, that excluded slavery, passed a resolution calling for abolition of the slave trade within the District of Columbia, and even considered a bill to abolish slavery itself in the capital. These actions enraged southerners, who used their power in the Senate to quash them all.
(*The Battle Cry of Freedom*, James M McPherson, Penguin Books, 1990 p 65)

(3) ... his (Hobbes') enduring interest in the visual representation of his political ideas, and his consequent inclusion of emblematic frontispieces in his works of civil science as well as in his translations of classical

texts... add pathos to logos.

(From *Humanism to Hobbes: Studies in Rhetoric and Politics*, Quentin Skinner, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p 222)

(4) None pursued invisibility as strictly as Dickinson. The soul selects its own society, then shuts the door. 'Noteless' behind that door she's immured against celebrity: 'I could not bear to live – aloud -/The Racket shamed me so –'

(*Lives like Loaded Guns*, Lyndall Gordon, 2010, p 82)

(5) But generally, Lincoln discussed slavery as an abstraction, a violation of basic principles of self-determination and equality, not as a living institution that rested on day-to-day violence.

(*The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*, Eric Foner, W W Norton & Company, London and New York, 2011 p85)

(6) The counter-offensive was planned for the first week in December before German units could dig in for the winter, as they had done around Leningrad. Entirely unknown to the enemy, the Stavka had been holding in reserve no less than twelve armies for just such a strike. Some had been deployed in November to hold the front line before Moscow. While these divisions were expected to fight to the very limit, fifty-eight new divisions were held behind the front, some of them withdrawn from eastern Russia, to strengthen the counter-stroke. When the Soviet spy Richard Sorge confirmed that Japan was preparing to move southward against Britain and the United States further divisions were transferred from the eastern frontier. These were the tough fresh-faced "Siberian boys" that so many Muscovites recalled in the street of the capital that December. The recruitment and training of whole new armies took the German command entirely by surprise. It was not the tough winter conditions that halted the German army but the remarkable revival of Soviet military manpower after the terrible maulings of the summer and autumn.

(*Russia's War 1941-45*, Richard Overy, 1999 p 118)

(7) In his final message to Congress on December 3 1860, James Buchanan surprised some of his southern allies with a firm denial of the right to secession ... If secession was legitimate, warned the president, the Union became "a rope of sand" and "our thirty three states may resolve themselves into as many petty, jarring and hostile republics ... By such a dread catastrophe the hopes of the friends of freedom throughout the world would be destroyed ... Our example for more than eighty years would not only be lost, but it would be quoted as a conclusive proof that man is unfit for self-government."

(McPherson, opus citus, p 246)

(8) In London, Henry Adams cheered the Union triumph, but also saw in it an ominous portent:

About a week ago [the British] saw that their whole wooden navy was useless ... These are great times ... man has mounted science, and is now run away with ... Before many centuries more ... science may have the existence of mankind in its power and the human race commit suicide by blowing up the world.

(*The Civil War*, Geoffrey Ward with Ric Burns and Ken Burns, Vintage Books, 1994 p 93)

(9) Jefferson Davis denounced the seizure as beneath the dignity even of "barbarians." Britain was no less outraged. "Captain Wilkes is an ideal Yankee," said the London *Times*. "Swagger and ferocity built on a foundation of vulgarity and cowardice, these are his characteristics ... the most prominent marks by which his countrymen are known all over the world." "You may stand for this," the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, told his cabinet, "but I'm damned if I will." He demanded the immediate release of the two Confederates, and backed his threat by dispatching eleven thousand troops to Canada, ready for action.

Charles Darwin wrote Asa Grey, an American friend and fellow scientist: "When you receive this we may be at war, and we two be bound, as good patriots, to hate each other. How curious it is to see two countries, just like two angry and silly men, taking so opposite a view of the same transaction." (Ward, Burns and Burns, opus citus, p 70.)

(10) This was a fantasy scenario. In reality, Higginson - Colonel Higginson, as he became in the Civil War - was a man of principle, and, if not her match, an attentive friend to Dickinson, as biographer Brenda Wineapple has shown in a reassessment of the relationship that rightly refuses to see Higginson off as the blunderer he has appeared. He was a high-minded man who fought for the rights of the disenfranchised freed slaves and women. He backed women's suffrage and education ... As a militant abolitionist he was to lead a regiment of nine hundred freed slaves in an assault on Jacksonville in Florida: the first South Carolina Volunteers, the first federally authorized regiment of former slaves. He bore out Mr Dickinson's (Emily's father) anti-slavery

politics - more, in fact, than Mr Dickinson's son who, like many men that were drafted, paid another man to take his place in the Union army.
(Gordon, opus citus p 147)

(11) [Palmerston] had returned to office at the head of a motley collection of Whigs, Liberals, Peelites and Radicals. With the inclusion of Thomas Milner Gibson and Charles Villiers among his ministers he had hoped to attract Radical support, for the former had sat for Manchester along with Bright until 1857 and the latter had been prominent in the free trade movement. W. E. Gladstone, a Peelite, also joined the cabinet, as chancellor of the exchequer, and his advocacy of free trade, the repeal of the remaining "taxes on knowledge," and cheap, efficient government, endeared him to the Cobdenites. Yet nothing short of the implementation of their policies could guarantee their allegiance to a government led by a man they considered a dangerous anachronism, and few acts were more certain to antagonize them than interference in the affairs of the American Republic.
(*Britain and the War for the Union, Vol. 1*, Brian Jenkins, McGill-Queens University Press, 1974, pp 85-86)

(12) If it is possible for there to exist a regime which, being in need of defence, has the right to demand this defence from the working masses, this regime can only be a regime of rule by the working masses themselves. Despite the mistakes made by the latter, despite the roughness of their regime, despite the fact that it has ridden too harshly over the hides of certain intellectual gentry – despite all that, the Soviet regime has the right to develop. It will consolidate itself: but for that it needs an army. And that army we will create.
(*The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky, Vol.1: 1918*, translated and annotated by Brian Pearce, New Park Publications, London, 1979, p 145)

(13) The longer the American struggle went on the more severe the strains on Britain's neutrality. The heart of her problem remained the blockade, which was run by many a British vessel carrying supplies and munitions for the confederacy. What was more, London and Liverpool underwriters willingly insured the blockade runners. If the government of the United States found this irritating, even more provoking was the fitting out in British yards of vessels of war for the Confederate navy. Not surprisingly, this conduct did not measure up to the Union's standard of neutrality. Charles Francis Adams, for one, was satisfied that the South was obtaining from Britain nearly all the aid she needed to protract the war.
(Jenkins, opus citus, pp 262-63)

(14) The actors in this drama are collective (peasants, soldiers, workers, cultural communities) and individual, at all levels. No leader acts alone, but some have a decisive impact on events. In this case, the role of Lenin and Trotsky is hard to underestimate. Nothing was inevitable about the outcome of these years of bloodshed and strife. Many decisions mattered. The presence of key players – a Lenin or a Trotsky – is nevertheless not enough to explain the collapse of one civilization and the birth of another. The revolution and civil wars that enveloped the Romanov domains were part of the grand sweep of the World War, but also a product of cultural and institutional patterns rooted in the Imperial Russian past. Their legacy persists in today's Russia, even after the Soviet Union's demise in 1991.
(*Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War 1914-21*, Laura Engelstein, Oxford University Press, 2016 p xxvi)

(15) In respect of the destruction of the Wermacht WW2:
Deaths/missing inflicted by the Red Army (the Eastern Front) 2,124,352
Deaths/missing inflicted by the Western Allies in North Africa/Western Europe 157,523
(figures drawn from *Wikipedia: German casualties in WW2*)

(16) Hitler's insistence that the *fest Plätze* be held and his refusal to allow any withdrawal meant that huge German forces were trapped, just as the Russians intended. Army Group Centre had been destroyed in a huge 'cauldron' battle – Kesselschlact. Some seventeen divisions had been annihilated and another fifty were down to half strength – the equivalent of losing forty two divisions. Army Group Centre's destruction was sealed on 20th July, the very day that a group of German officers, appalled by Hitler's handling of the war and realizing they were going to lose, attempted to kill the Fuhrer in the Stauffenberg bomb plot. It failed and the conspirators were rounded up and died horribly. The attempt on Hitler's life made him even more paranoid, and almost certainly played into the Russian's hands for the remaining period of the war.
(*Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War*, Chris Bellamy, Pan Military Classics, London, 2007, p 615)

(17) Like Kemper, Garnett had his five regiments – from the right, 8th, 18th, 19th, 28th and 56th Virginia - deployed in a single line, two ranks deep. That was also the formation employed in Armistead's brigade, marching some 80 yards to the rear. Armistead's regiments, right to left, were the 14th, 9th, 53rd, 57th, and 38th Virginia. Lew Armistead would lead his brigade on foot, as ordered. General Pickett and staff, all mounted, took their position at the center of the division between the two lines. Out ahead was the divisional skirmish line.
(*Gettysburg*, Stephen W Sears, First Mariner Books, Boston/New York, 2004, p 416)

(18) Emily Dickinson is renowned as a poet preoccupied with death. Yet curiously any relationship between her work and the Civil War was long rejected by most literary critics even though she wrote almost half her oeuvre, at the rate of four poems a week, during those years. Dickinson has been portrayed as a recluse, closeted from the real world and its tribulations. But her work is filled with language of battle – the very vocabulary of war that she would have encountered in the four newspapers regularly delivered to the Dickinson house. Campaigns, cannons, rifle balls, bullets, artillery, soldiers, ammunition, flags, bayonets, cavalry, drums and trumpets are recurrent images in her poetry.

During the second year of the war Dickinson began a correspondence that would prove one of the most important of her life, with a man she came to call her "preceptor," Thomas Wentworth Higginson. She had inaugurated the exchange in response to an essay he published about aspiring writers in the *Atlantic Monthly* of April, 1862. But Higginson was more than a man of letters. Long an abolitionist, he accepted command of a regiment of black soldiers and early in 1863 departed for South Carolina. Although she would not actually meet him until 1870, Dickinson feared the grief his loss in battle would bring. "Could you, with honor, avoid death, I entreat you sir –It would bereave your Gnome."

(*This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War*, Drew Gilpin Faust, Alfred A Knopf, New York 2008, pp 204-5)

(19) How far is it to Heaven?
As far as death this way –
Of river or of ridge beyond
Was no discovery

How far is it to Hell?
As far as death this way –
How far left hand the Sepulchre
Defies Topography

(*The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H Johnson, Faber and Faber, London and Boston, 1984 edition, poem 929, pp 436-37)

(20) Yet, constitutional questions, once raised, had a logical priority and often seemed to become psychologically compulsive for men in public life. Even Douglas [Steven Douglas] in the end would succumb to the pressure and write a long tedious article defending the constitutionality of popular sovereignty. Furthermore the progressive constitutionalization of the debate tended to make popular sovereignty seem absurd. For, even if the territorial inhabitants were indeed the persons best qualified to choose between slavery and antislavery as a matter of practical local considerations, they were undoubtedly little qualified to decide questions of high constitutionality for the nation. The next inference was soon reached – that Congress should transfer the vexed issue, not to the territorial legislatures, but to the federal judiciary.

(*Slavery, Law, & Politics: The Dredd Scott Case in Historical Perspective*, Don E Fehrenbacher, OUP, 1981, p 71)

(21) One strenuous objector was there, however, in the person of John Buford, a tough Kentucky born regular with a fondness for hard fighting and the skill to back it up. And though Hill was strictly correct in saying that the only bluecoats now in Gettysburg were cavalry, Buford's two brigades were formidable in their own right, being equipped with the new seven-shot Spencer carbine, which enabled a hardy trooper to get off twenty rounds a minute, as compared to his muzzle-loading adversary, who would be doing well to get off four in the same span. Moreover, in addition to having five times the firepower of any equal number of opponents, these two brigades were outriders for the infantry wing under Reynolds, whose own corps was camped tonight within six miles of the town, while those under Howard and Sickles were close behind him.

(*The Civil War: A Narrative 2 Fredericksburg to Meridian*, Shelby Foote, Pimlico, London, 1994 p 465)

(22) Stalin wanted Berlin surrounded as rapidly as possible with a cordon sanitaire. This meant the urgent occupation of all the territory up to the Elbe which had been allocated as part of the future Soviet zone. Konev's armies not involved in the attack on Berlin or the fight against the Ninth or Twelfth Armies were pushed westward. The Elbe was reached during the course of the 24 and 25 April at numerous points other than Torgau. Units of the 5th Guards Army, the 32nd Guards Rifle Corps commanded by General Rodmitsev of Stalingrad fame and the 4th Guards Tank Corps also reached the river. General Baranov's 1st Guards Cavalry Corps went one further. At the special request of Stalin's cavalry chum Marshall Semyony Budenny, Konev had given him a special task. Soviet intelligence had heard that the stallions of the Soviet Union's most important stud farm in the northern Caucasus, shipped back to Germany in 1942, were held west of the Elbe near Riesa. The Guards Cavalry crossed the river, located them and drove them back. It could have been a border raid across the Rio Grande.

(*Berlin: The Downfall 1945*, Antony Beevor, Viking, London, 2002, p 307)

(23) Publication – is the Auction
Of the Mind of Man –
Poverty – be justifying
For so foul a thing

Possibly – but We – would rather
From our Garret go
White – unto the White Creator –
Than invest – Our Snow –

Thought belonging to Him who gave it –
Then – to Him Who bear
Its Corporeal illustration – Sell
The Royal Air –

In the Parcel – Be the Merchant
Of the Heavenly Grace –
But reduce no Human Spirit
To disgrace of Price

[*The Complete poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H Johnson, Faber and Faber, London and Boston, 1984 edition, poem709, pp 348-49) [*]

[*] The above poem struck me with great effect in the early eighties and has stayed with me, not least because it interposed itself into a quest I had been engaged in for some years; a quest to seek out an antidote to what, by that time, I considered the egregious theatrical careerism of the likes of Marcel Duchamp ('the Auction of the Mind.'). The quest became more concentrated after I agreed to be presenter of a BBC/Open University TV film on Duchamp in the early eighties. I was already uneasy about the text I had written when the BBC film crew and myself arrived in Philadelphia where the film was made. I became more disenchanted still when the director Tony Coe, at a late point in the proceedings, edited my text, the excuse being offered was that it needed to be shorter (which may have been true), but the fact that the editing was largely a matter of removing the parts that were most critical of Duchamp's practice. Duchamp's PR stunt laden career seems to have acted as a model to which a number of artists who became famous aspired to imitate in the last half of the twentieth century. To a perilous extent I am in danger of being hoist on my own petard here. Contra my admiration and praise for Dickinson's strictures against and persistent attempt to avoid the 'Auction of the Mind of Man', this essay as you read it, you surely cannot help but note, is published in this public catalogue. There is always the risk of auctioning your ideas whenever you promote them in a public forum, such risks seem to me to be par for the course. But ideas restricted to completely private soliloquy run the danger of becoming quietist. It is a conundrum that Dickinson's powerful poetry has webbed my practice in for a long time, especially the last twenty years. No such conundrum seems to have emerged in my evaluation of Rimbaud's work. I have already hinted earlier in these remarks, that Rimbaud's reckless and volatile life style seems to have been a significant contributor to the power of his poetry.

I have interpreted the Dickinson poem above as cogently articulating close to the Northern motives in fighting the Civil War. There appears to me to be a fierce critique of a lot of white investment crafted into it – 'White Creator,' 'invest – Our Snow' and the final two lines seem to me to be addressed pretty directly to the act of selling slaves – in this sense to myself I call the poem to myself the Anti- Nathan Bedford Forest canticle. If I have read her book accurately, Brenda Wineapple (see reference above and then p 152) sees the same pathway as I do, but widens the base and allows that the poem may equally harbour at the same time, a concern with the

matter that Dickinson keep possession of her poetry., that the terrain in which she makes her poetry is to be protected.

