Mind, Modernity, Madness,
or how Anglomania causes Anomie, Delusion and Deception

Robert Prins, The Netherlands (May 25, 2018)

ABSTRACT

Although Liah Greenfeld's book *Mind, Modernity, Madness* (2013) received harsh reviews, none of the reviewers exposed Greenfeld's deceptive use of sources. This article also raises the question whether Greenfeld violated the *Code of Ethics* in her transdisciplinary excursions. Greenfeld systematically ignores literature of specialists and it seems clear that she did not take the required reasonable steps to ensure competence in disciplines she enters as a layperson. Obviously falling well short of academic standards, her book was nonetheless published by Harvard University Press and lavishly praised in reviews by Thomas Cushman and Karen A. Cerulo. They are all invited to respond. A broader debate on the practice of reviewing seems welcome.

When it takes a dilettante to spot a charlatan there is cause to pause and ponder.¹ This article, therefore, seeks to spark a broader debate on the current practice of reviewing. Do short reviews actually suffice? A reviewer who knows that he shall have to fit his criticism on a few pages will probably not be motivated to dig deeper in a book that already on the surface provides more than enough material for a 40-page review.² This might well be the reason why even the most negative reviews did not do enough justice to Greenfeld's *Mind, Modernity, Madness: The*

1 I do not claim any expertise, I am not a scholar and I want to be clear about the fact that I have a bachelor's degree in history, nothing more. Precisely because I am not a scholar, I have been generous with quotations. For the same reason a footnote citation system seemed more appropriate than parenthetical referencing. Readers get all the information on the same page instead of having to work back and forth. robertprins@protonmail.com

2 In a review of Liah Greenfeld's first book Raymond Pearson wrote: "To most historians, the objections to what the cover blurb calls 'this historically oriented work in sociology' are so numerous as to positively jostle for attention. Only a selection of complaints can be accommodated within the confines of this review." Raymond Pearson, "Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. By Liah Greenfeld," *Journal of Modern History* 67:4 (1995), 903-904.

Impact of Culture on Human Experience (2013).³ As far as I can tell, no reviewer noticed the fact that Greenfeld is deceptive in her use of sources.⁴ There is a clear pattern of misrepresentation that constitutes a serious breach of ethical standards. The extent to which Greenfeld purposely misrepresented her sources in all of the examples that will follow is, however, a question only she can fully answer. Greenfeld is invited to do so.

It is clear that the reviewing process went off the rails in the manuscript phase. Andrew Scull “was at a loss to understand how it had appeared under the imprint of a major university press”, and rightly so.⁵ Greenfeld's book falls well short of the standard of any serious publisher, let alone Harvard University Press. HUP has some explaining to do. With the publication of this book, they not only damaged their own reputation, but that of scholarship in general as well. How was it possible that this book could pass muster? HUP is invited to respond.

Although HUP reaps the benefits of the not-for-profit status granted to university presses, it has a clear economic motive to publish an ever growing torrent of books. But one can only wonder what the motives or reasons were behind the astoundingly positive reviews Greenfeld's book received. Thomas Cushman did criticize some portions of the book, but he nonetheless hailed Greenfeld as “one of the most accomplished living heirs to the tradition of grand sociological theorizing about modernity and its discontents.”⁶ According to Cushman it is in the historical section of Greenfeld's book that her arguments are strongest and her thesis the most compelling.⁷ This is a remarkable judgment, for it can be easily established that this “strongest section” is particularly poor and the most misleading. How did Cushman arrive at his

3 Ann Goldberg, “Greenfeld, Liah. *Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience*,” *British Journal of Sociology* 65:3 (2014) 581-583; Dusan Kecmanovic, “Liah Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*,” *Nations and Nationalism* 20:2 (2014), 378-379. Andrew Scull, “The Impact of Culture on Human Experience - Liah Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*” *European Journal of Sociology* 56:3 (2015), 479-482.

4 This is reason enough to contemplate whether the relatively new digital format of journals could and should offer the opportunity for longer reviews. Although many, if not most, journals have made the transition to digital formats, few seem to have paused to ask the question how they can make the most of this transition.

5 Andrew Scull, “The Impact of Culture on Human Experience,” 482.

6 Thomas Cushman, “Review Symposium on Liah Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience*,” *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 2:1 (2015) 58.

7 Cushman, “Review Symposium on Liah Greenfeld,” 60.

conclusion? He is invited to respond.

Karen A. Cerulo reviewed Greenfeld's book for the *American Journal of Sociology*. Cerulo is better qualified than most to offer a sound judgment on the book and one would also expect her to be exceptionally motivated. She served as a vice-president of the Eastern Sociological Society and won this organization's Merit Award in 2013. The ESS is “dedicated to promoting excellence in sociological scholarship and instruction”.⁸ This mission is in part carried out by the journal *Sociological Forum*, the flagship of ESS, of which Cerulo is the current editor. In the case of Greenfeld, Cerulo's dedication to the mission must have temporarily lapsed, for with her review she promoted not excellence but quackery. Cerulo lavishly praised Greenfeld and even called the book “impeccably researched.”⁹ Yet a careful glance at the endnotes should have been enough to become aware of Greenfeld's notable neglect of secondary literature. Not in the least alarmed by this, Cerulo, like Cushman, judged the historical chapters to be particularly impressive. Contrary to Cushman, she had a hard time identifying any weakness at all, but she managed to name one small fault.¹⁰ Cerulo had less difficulty spotting “a host of testable propositions that should be enthusiastically pursued by sociologists of culture and politics.”¹¹ Here Cerulo was perhaps solely dedicated to the instruction part of the mission of ESS, for she clearly never tested the propositions herself. Cerulo is invited to respond.

This reviewer is well aware of the gravity of the charge leveled against Greenfeld. The exceptional nature of it justifies the unusual length of this belated review of sorts: the burden of proof evidently weighs heavier. Besides providing examples of gross misrepresentation of sources, this review draws attention to Greenfeld's unhappy marriage between her overexuberant imagination and her choice for an astonishingly scarce selection of sources, which appears to be

8 <http://www.essnet.org/> (accessed June 6, 2019).

9 Karen A. Cerulo, “Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience, by Liah Greenfeld,” *American Journal of Sociology* 119:5 1527.

10 Hesitantly Cerulo writes that Greenfeld “seems to ignore a strong sociological tradition” in the cultural study of the mind. Cerulo, “Mind, Modernity, Madness,” 1528.

11 Cerulo, “Mind, Modernity, Madness,” 1528.

rooted in her puzzling theory of history. This marriage was destined to fail anyway, but it certainly does not help when the imagination is unfaithful to the sources. It seems evident that Greenfeld did not take the required reasonable steps to ensure competence in areas she enters as a layperson, but whether Greenfeld violated the *Code of Ethics* is a matter for the American Sociological Association to decide.¹²

Greenfeld's thesis on madness in a nutshell

As the last part of a trilogy, *Mind, Modernity, Madness* necessarily builds on the earlier two books.¹³ Nationalism is understood as a “form of consciousness, an essentially secular view of reality, whose socio-political component rests on the principles of fundamental equality of membership in a community and popular sovereignty.”¹⁴ It first arose in sixteenth-century England, and because of the inherent competitiveness of the national consciousness it sparked the development of modern science and capitalism. In short, nationalism paved the road to modernity. After England showed the way, France, Russia, Germany and the United States of America, all very much impressed by the English example, got inspired to create their own version of nationalism and that in turn paved four other roads to modernity. But there is a downside to modernization. Secular modern culture created the possibility for individuals to develop their own personal identity, but at the same time this freedom, experienced in a society

12 Under Ethical Standards 1. Professional and Scientific Standards we find: “Sociologists (...) rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge; act with honesty and integrity; and avoid untrue, deceptive, or undocumented statements in undertaking work-related functions or activities.”; under 2. Competence: “(a) Sociologists conduct research, teach, practice, and provide service only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience. (b) Sociologists conduct research, teach, practice, and provide service in new areas or involving new techniques only after they have taken reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work in these areas. (c) Sociologists who engage in research, teaching, practice, or service maintain awareness of current scientific and professional information in their fields of activity and undertake continuing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use.” <http://www.asanet.org/membership/code-ethics> (accessed June 6, 2019).

13 Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Liah Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

14 Liah Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2013) 2.

characterized by upward social mobility, put new pressures on individuals that proved too much for some. Greenfeld discovered that the spread of madness showed the same pattern as the spread of nationalism, and when she researched the matter all the evidence led to the same conclusion: madness is caused by nationalism; madness first arose in England; then, in a causal relation with the births of national consciousness in the other countries, madness spread internationally.

For reasons of space we shall have to ignore most of her historical observations about most of the five countries. England is the seminal case and the shining example. As such England is essential for Greenfeld's grand theory. If we are able to remove this foundational building block her whole theory will collapse. We shall focus on Greenfeld's use of historical linguistics, which in the case of England provides the bread and butter of her argument. It is here in particular that Greenfeld offers, as Karen A. Cerulo observed, a host of testable propositions.¹⁵ For some reason Cerulo did not follow up on her own suggestion, but we are happy to do so. All that is required to test the crucial propositions is access to the Internet, basic academic skills, less than a half an hour of spare time, and a bit of dedication, of course. But before we do so, we first take a look at how Greenfeld positions herself in relation to existing bodies of literature.

Psychiatry

Greenfeld argues that madness is caused by nationalism, and she likes to stress that her argument will appear “quite controversial” given the “undisputed authority of the biological paradigm” in psychiatry.¹⁶ Her observation is based on one single article in *The New York Review of Books*. This periodical is certainly worth reading, but one review, albeit on three books, is altogether a flimsy foundation for such a general statement. Referring to the three books, Greenfeld writes (and partly quotes from the review): “each of them, despite differences in emphasis, 'subscribes

¹⁵ Cerulo, “Mind, Modernity, Madness: The Impact of Culture on Human Experience, by Liah Greenfeld,” 1528.

¹⁶ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 6.

to the popular theory that mental illness is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain.”¹⁷ The titles are mentioned in the endnote, and immediately the question arises: do those titles not strongly suggest that the books are critical about the current state of psychiatry?¹⁸ When we turn to the review itself to solve this riddle, we come across what the reviewer actually wrote: "none of the three authors subscribes to the popular theory that mental illness is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain".¹⁹ It is not just that Greenfeld somehow missed one crucial word that turns the meaning of this single sentence on its head. No, she has managed to miss the purport of the whole review.

Greenfeld could accuse us of hairsplitting. The three books might indeed be critical of the popular theory in psychiatry, but does this not confirm her broader point? Here it would have helped Greenfeld if she had actually read a book or two on a topic she engages in as a layperson. The idea that only biological factors are acknowledged in psychiatry is nonsense. Greenfeld's impeccable research could have led her to the appropriately called handbook *Essential Psychiatry*, where she could have read a chapter with the telling title “Social and cultural determinants of mental health” from which she would have learned that the consensus is far more nuanced than she would like her readers to believe.²⁰ Even the *American Psychiatric Association*, contrary to popular perception, is clear that psychiatry is still in the dark about the exact causes of mental disorders and the APA acknowledges the importance of “environmental factors”.²¹ This is not to suggest that all is well in psychiatry. Daniel Carlat, author of one of the

17 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 5.

18 They are: Irving Kirsch, *Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding the Antidepressant Myth*; Robert Whitaker, *Anatomy of an Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America*; Daniel Carlat, *Unhinged: The Trouble with Psychiatry – A Doctor's Revelations About a Profession in Crisis*.

19 Marcia Angell, “The Epidemic of Mental Illness: Why?” *The New York Review of Books* June 23 (2011). <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2011/06/23/epidemic-mental-illness-why/> (accessed June 6, 2019).

20 The authors write: “The chapter must be interpreted in light of the consensus that most psychiatric disorders are multifactorial in origin.” Vikram Patel, Alan J. Flisher and Alex Cohen, “Social and cultural determinants of mental health.” in: Robin M. Murray, Kenneth S. Kendler, Peter McGuffin, Simon Wessely, David J. Castle. ed., *Essential Psychiatry* (4th edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 419.

21 Ronald W. Pies, “Nuances, Narratives, and the 'Chemical Imbalance' Debate.” *Psychiatric Times* 31:4 (2014). <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/couch-crisis/nuances-narratives-and-chemical-imbalance-debate> (accessed June 6, 2019)

three reviewed books, is hardly alone in his characterization of psychiatry as a “profession in crisis”.²² But instead of acknowledging those current debates and critically engaging in them, Greenfeld ignores them completely. She misrepresents the field and this offers her the opportunity to present herself as a lone heroic paradigm provoking scientist.

Evolution Theory

Greenfeld does not seek to demonstrate that madness is a social construction. She explicitly states that the biological reality of schizophrenia and manic-depression cannot be denied.²³ In order to convince her readers that nationalism as a cultural phenomenon is the cause of (biologically real) madness, Greenfeld feels compelled to solve the mind-body problem first. Here her urge to appear original borders on the delusional. Greenfeld is convinced that she is the first person to ever attempt a scientific study of the mind.²⁴ That this was not just a slip of her pen becomes clear when Greenfeld later on not only confirms her conviction, but actually concludes that this first attempt ever was an immediate success: “Now that we have cleared the major obstacle on the way to our investigation—the universal claim among scientists that the mind is not a scientific subject and any pronouncements about it must be considered pure speculation—and escaped the epistemological vice in which our thinking has been held for 2,500 years, let us analyze our empirical evidence and see what, in fact, the mind—or the soul—is.”²⁵ If true, Greenfeld will undoubtedly figure prominently in every future book on the history of philosophy and of the social sciences. But for reasons that remain mysterious, she decided to present this

22 The introduction of DSM-5 proved very controversial and put a spotlight on psychiatry, but the issues are longstanding. For talk of crisis see for instance: Richard Smith, “Psychiatry in Crisis?” <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2016/07/04/richard-smith-psychiatry-in-crisis/> (May 6, 2018).; S. Nassir Ghaemi argues that not only biomedical reductionism but also the alternative model is in decay. S. Nassir Ghaemi, *The Rise and Fall of the Biopsychosocial Model: Reconciling Art and Science in Psychiatry* (Baltimore MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 2012).

23 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 1.

24 Greenfeld writes: “the obvious reason for the lack of any attempt of an empirical, scientific study of the mind—what we are going to attempt here—is the attitude of scientific skepticism (the wariness of belief, characteristic of science)”. Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 37.

25 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 59.

historic shift of a 2,500 years old paradigm as a mere appetizer to her main course. As usual with appetizers, the one offered by Greenfeld is light and does not satisfy.

Greenfeld finds the key to the solution of the age old mind-body problem in evolution theory. She immediately makes clear that her grasp is confident. Many people might *believe* in evolution theory, she states, but a scientific understanding of this theory is quite something else – which is true of course. There are, Greenfeld likes to stress, “very few people” who understand Darwin's theory. We learn that Daniel Dennet is certainly not one of them, but Greenfeld, we are to understand, of course is.²⁶ It is amusing to see how the self-assured Greenfeld is not aware of the irony here. The difference between believe and scientific understanding, Greenfeld lectures, is that the latter progresses. Yet in this very passage Greenfeld speaks interchangeably of “evolution theory” and “Darwin's theory” as if evolutionary science has not made any substantial progress since Darwin. This, again, is not just an example of careless use of words.

Greenfeld might modestly remark: “The individual is privileged to be invited as a junior coauthor, when culture is ready for a breakthrough. Very often, an appearance of an idea that strikes everyone as obvious after it appears is delayed precisely because culture is not ready before. My arguments, therefore, necessarily build upon the contribution of generations of thinkers”; but these flattering words ring hollow due to her deafening silence on the contributions of these generations of thinkers.²⁷ Impeccable research would have given Greenfeld the (probably unbearable) insight that she is hardly alone in her heroic attempt to incorporate culture in evolution theory.²⁸ True, she does acknowledge a book by Terrence W. Deacon, but the manner is revealing. Greenfeld disagrees with Deacon, we learn in an endnote. How exactly? Instead of

26 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 57.

27 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 30-31.

28 For instance: Merlin Donald, *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition*. Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Andrew Lock and Charles R. Peters ed., *The Handbook of Human Symbolic Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Bradd Shore, *Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the Problem of Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999); Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb, *Evolution in Four dimensions: Genetic, Epigenetic, Behavioral, and Symbolic Variation in the History of Life*. Cambridge MA. MIT Press, 2005).

weighing Deacon's argument and demonstrating why her view on the matter is more convincing, Greenfeld bluntly tells her readers that they can figure the differences out themselves. She is kind enough to refer to the relevant chapters.²⁹

There is another book that is mentioned in Greenfeld's groundbreaking contribution to evolution theory. “The biological species of *Homo sapiens*”, Greenfeld writes, “had completely evolved—brain, larynx, and all—more than 100,000 years before the mind made its first appearance among its members.” To lend authority to this statement, Greenfeld uses an endnote to refer to a book by the renowned biologist Ernst Mayr. Very suggestively, Greenfeld immediately goes on to explain what this observation, derived from Mayr, signifies: “This means that it was not caused by the organic combination that made it possible, but was the result of a most improbable accident—the transformation (a complete change in character) of one of its elements. When this transformation occurred, the emergent phenomenon of the mind was in place, and, being autonomous—self-regulating, self-sustaining, self-generating, and self-transforming (like life)—it caused itself.”³⁰ It is one thing to say that there is a period in history from which we can begin to discern the *homo sapiens* (although this issue is of course not without healthy controversy). It is quite something else to say that the *homo sapiens* “had completely evolved” at some point in time – that, rather, is complete nonsense, we are still evolving. It is also hard to believe that Greenfeld's suggestive “this means” does any justice to what Mayr actually meant. So we checked the reference, and here is what Mayr wrote a few pages below the ones referred to by Greenfeld: “Mind and consciousness do not form a demarcation between man and 'the animals'. The human mind seems to have been the ultimate product of a concatenation of numerous miniemergences, in both our primate and hominid ancestors. There simply was no instantaneous emergence.”³¹ This means that Greenfeld turned

29 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 633n2.

30 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 62.

31 Ernst Mayr, *This is Biology: The Science of the Living World* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1997) 241.

her source on its head yet again.

History of Psychiatry

Greenfeld's strong desire to appear original and provocative is also evident in her presentation, if we can call it that, of recent historiography on madness and psychiatry. Greenfeld would like her readers to believe that the prevailing idea among anthropologists, sociologists and historians who concern themselves with the topic is that madness is “a largely invented problem, a modern 'discursive artifact’”.³² All those scientists and scholars are supposedly still under the spell of Michel Foucault and they, contrary to Greenfeld, deny the biological reality of madness.³³

A year before Greenfeld's book appeared, Andrew Scull was plain about his position on madness: “Its manifestations, its meanings, its consequences, are most certainly deeply affected by the social and cultural context within which it surfaces and is contained. But it is emphatically not something created by social labels, save in a purely tautological sense. Nor, in the final analysis, is it simply a social construct. Such romantic illusions will not inform the discussion that follows here.”³⁴ Around 1997, Edward Shorter acknowledged that far too many fantastical works on the social construction of illness have appeared and remained unchallenged, but he, like Scull, makes his position emphatically clear. Shorter considers it absurd to describe psychiatry as mere labeling.³⁵ Scull and Shorter are considerable names in the field. Shorter is nonetheless completely ignored by Greenfeld, and she refers to Scull in an endnote just once.

Roy Porter is not shunned by Greenfeld, she even pays him a compliment by calling him a leading historian on the subject. Greenfeld refers to Porter when she discusses George Cheyne's *The English Malady* (1733). Porter edited a new edition of this famous book and he wrote a

32 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 16.

33 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 21, 344.

34 Andrew Scull, *Madness: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 2-3.

35 Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997) 54, 59.

preface and introduction to accompany it. Greenfeld pays the compliment if only to be able to immediately contradict this leading voice. According to her Porter found Cheyne guilty of engaging in social construction.³⁶ Porter does indeed write that the English malady became a fashionable disease, but it is difficult to identify the parts of Porter's introduction that read like an accusation. It is perhaps telling that Greenfeld fails to identify the page where Porter supposedly spoke his verdict.³⁷

Being labeled both a leading historian on the subject and a social constructivist, we are safe to assume that Porter, in Greenfeld's estimation, is voicing the prevailing view that madness is “strictly analogous to the equally false 'social constructions' of witchcraft and possession of other cultures”.³⁸ Here too it would have helped Greenfeld if she had actually read some books. In a work that most would consider required reading, but absent in Greenfeld's book, Porter makes his position on madness clear: “Should the historian view it as an organic disease, rather like smallpox or plague? Or should it be treated as a social label, akin to ‘heretic’, ‘witch’ or ‘subversive’? For practical purposes, in my view, the history of madness stands between histories of subjects such as plague or death and (on the other hand) histories of witchcraft. It must treat insanity, like heart-failure or buboes, as a physical fact; but it needs to interpret it, like witchcraft or possession, principally as a socially-constructed fact.”³⁹ This position is quite a bit more nuanced than Greenfeld deceptively suggests. Porter goes on to say that even such certain phenomena as death are encrusted with language, culture and history. Those layers of meaning change over time and place and are as such a legitimate subject for a historian to study – as Philippe Ariès has famously done. In line with her reasoning, Greenfeld would conclude from

36 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 404.

37 Greenfeld refers to page ii (Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness* 651n9). But Porter's preface, followed by his introduction, only starts at page vii. There is another page ii, but this one is part of the preface written by Cheyne himself. George Cheyne, *The English Malady* (1733), Roy Porter ed., (London: Routledge, 1991).

38 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 16.

39 Roy Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (London: The Athlone Press, 1987) 15.

this that Porter and Ariès deny the biological reality of death.

Contrary to Greenfeld's suggestion that historians are still captivated by Foucault, Nancy Tomes already discerned a “post-Foucaultian generation of historians” in 1987.⁴⁰ On the new directions in the history of psychiatry, Tomes writes: “Scanning this abundance of new work, one is immediately struck by its distinctive tone. The sweeping generalizations and ideological certainties of earlier histories have been replaced by a sober devotion to careful research and interpretative caution.”⁴¹ In this regard we can agree, with her propensity for sweeping statements and her contempt for sober devotion to careful research and interpretative caution, Greenfeld does indeed break with the most important trend in the historiography of psychiatry of the past decades. This becomes all the more clear when we arrive at the core of her historical argument.

Historical Linguistics

Before we come to some of the keywords that are designated and analyzed by Greenfeld and presented as empirical proofs to lend support to her central argument, we shall first take a look at her periodization of modern English. For Greenfeld the *Promptorium Parvulorum* of 1499 is “the last medieval English-Latin dictionary”.⁴² The radical and quick transformation of English culture and society sparked by the birth of a national consciousness led to a dramatic and swift modernization of the English language in the sixteenth century and was “under way by its third decade, at the latest”. We are not a little surprised to even find a *terminus ante quem* of sorts in Greenfeld's periodization of modern English! It is worth quoting her at length, not only to get a taste of her propensity for sweeping generalizations, but also to set her view up for comparison. Greenfeld writes:

40 Nancy Tomes, “The Anatomy of Madness: New Directions in the History of Psychiatry,” *Social Studies of Science* 17:2 (1987) 358.

41 Tomes, “The Anatomy of Madness,” 359.

42 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 316.

What we know as modern English—one, and not the earliest one, of modern vernaculars—is, in fact, the lingua franca of modernity. It encoded the new view of reality, enabling everyone who spoke it to experience life in the new way. Henceforth translation from English changed the nature of experience in communities of other languages as well. Modern reality thus arrived in the rest of the world as translation from English. This process of the “modernization” of English language, thinking, and experience was complete by 1600, certainly by 1610, when the King James Version of the English Bible was published. From that point on speakers (and writers) of English communicate with us directly, we share the same understanding, live in the same world, our fundamental values (by which I, obviously, do not mean political ideologies, but rather conceptions of man-in-universe and the meaning of human life) are the same.⁴³

Greenfeld's use of the word *certainly* is certainly revealing. Not only does it strongly suggest reification of periods in her history of the English language, but, moreover, her emphatic addition “certainly by 1610” stresses the singular importance of the sixteenth century for Greenfeld's grand theory. She seems to be well aware of her task to show that the modernization of English is a sixteenth-century process, if she fails she can wave her grand theory goodbye. With this in mind, we are eager to find how her periodization bears out compared to the conventions of proper linguists. Two quotations suffice. They too are worth quoting in length, we point out in advance, because both linguists use the same criterion as Greenfeld: the familiarity of the language. In his cultural history of the English language, Gerry Knowles observes:

In fact language historians sometimes identify the period from Caxton (1476 [RP]) to the death of Shakespeare in 1616 as a separate period, *early Modern English*. Texts written in this earlier period have for the modern reader a certain strangeness and unfamiliarity about them. It is not so much in the words themselves – although these will have unfamiliar spellings and will be used in unfamiliar senses – nor is it in the grammar. It is in the way people express themselves, and how they take for granted that texts should be constructed. After 1660, words are still used in unfamiliar senses and still have unfamiliar

43 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 313.

spellings, but the texts as a whole are much more straightforward for the modern reader and easier to understand. It can be concluded that the revolutionary decades were an important period of linguistic transition.⁴⁴

Knowles' position is more or less shared by Roger Lass, the editor of the third volume of *The Cambridge History of the English Language*. Here we find a different year, but speaking of periodization Lass warns the reader not to make “an essentialist mistake to attribute too much importance to them, and take the categories themselves as ‘real’.” This warning notwithstanding, history can't possibly be done without periodization, so he continues:

Still, there is broad agreement, linked to certain large-scale linguistic features, and dates of a sort: by around 1500 we are out of Middle and into Early Modern; by around 1700 we are into Modern English, i.e. 'our own language' – if in a rather different form from any now written or spoken. To use a crude but telling criterion, Spenser and Shakespeare need a lot of lexical glossing and syntactic explication for the non-specialist modern reader, but considerably less than Chaucer or Langland; Addison and Swift do only marginally, and Dr Johnson perhaps not at all, or no more than Jane Austen or Dickens.⁴⁵

The Cambridge History of the English Language is undeniably an authoritative source and being a handbook it seeks to be representative of the field. So we can safely conclude that Greenfeld's periodization of modern English is idiosyncratic indeed. This is not to say that Greenfeld ought to submit to the consensus view, but neither should she feel free to ignore the field completely. The latter she does and with serious consequences. Had she sought a conversation with a specialist or with a librarian with knowledge in this area and who could have taught her the basics on historical dictionaries, she could have saved herself from embarrassing mistakes that ruin her life's work.

44 Gerry Knowles, *A Cultural History of the English Language* (4th edition, London: Arnold 1997) 92.

45 Roger Lass, “Introduction” in: Roger Lass ed., *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, vol. III 1474 – 1776. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 9.

Mind

According to Greenfeld, a radical new secularized image of man emerged at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This happened in England, needless to say, and for quite a while it can be discerned in England only, because, as always with Greenfeld, nationalism provides the key and this was discovered by other countries only much later. One keyword that signals this radical new secularized image of man is the word *mind*. Greenfeld is clear to point out that *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot* (1538) treats *mind* as a near synonym of *soul*, but: “The two words were only near synonyms, because the mind clearly belonged to, and originated with, man, while the 'soul,' figuring prominently in the religious services, did not allow one to lose sight of its connection to God.”⁴⁶ Because of its clear secularized connotations, we are to believe that this word could not possibly have emerged within the medieval worldview. To test her hypothesis, Greenfeld turned to the aforementioned dictionary *Promptorium Parvulorum* (1499), where she was unable to find the word *mind*.

What Greenfeld failed to do, however, is to ask whether there might be other dictionaries from the same period. Greenfeld overlooked the *Catholicon Anglicum* (ca. 1475), a dictionary that can be consulted online thanks to the praiseworthy open access project of the University of Toronto called *Lexicons of Early Modern English*. By now it should come as no surprise that *mind* does appear in the *Catholicon Anglicum* (ca. 1475).⁴⁷ It becomes a bit more embarrassing for Greenfeld when we make use of another laudable initiative. This time we are grateful to have open access to the *Middle English Dictionary*, which is provided by the University of Michigan. With this dictionary we are able to search through more than three million citation slips covering the period 1100 to 1500. It proves a treasure trove: there are numerous examples of *mind* (in varying spellings of course) and, to be sure, numerous definitions. Under 1a we find *mind*

⁴⁶ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 316.

⁴⁷ There is not a specific URL of the search results. The following page already has *Catholicon Anglicum* selected. Enter *mind*. <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/21/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

defined as “the human mind as the seat or instrument of memory, thought, reason, will, imagination, emotion, etc.”⁴⁸ The first instance of the word in this particular meaning dates back to around 1350. To make matters worse for Greenfeld, our search in *Promptorium Parvulorum* (1499) refutes her: we find “bringe to mynde” and “haue in mynde”.⁴⁹

Ambition and Related Words

Greenfeld goes on to show how the radical new worldview, brought about by the birth of nationalism, expressed itself in a complex of related words surrounding the “superemotion” ambition. They are: aspire, aspiration, achieve, achievement, achiever, betterance, success, etc..⁵⁰ These words were either neologisms or their meaning changed remarkably. It might well be the case that *aspire* is a new word from around 1450, and that *aspiration* is used in a new meaning from ca. 1600 onwards, but it is a bit of a stretch to conclude from this that the new meaning points to a new emotion. The verb *achieve* is older, as Greenfeld acknowledges, but: “The verb ‘to achieve’ acquired a new meaning of gaining dignity (status)—or a symbol of dignity—by effort”.⁵¹ This is surely exaggerated. The *Middle English Dictionary* defines the verb “acheven” as, among others, “to be successful (in sth.), succeed (in doing sth.)”; “To obtain (love, honor, wisdom, worldly good, etc.); to attain to (reason), acquire (reasonableness)” and the word is used as such from at least ca. 1390 onwards.⁵²

The word *successful* and the verb *succeed*, we just saw, are of course used by the modern scholars who contributed to the *Middle English Dictionary*. Up to 1500 the verb *succeed* always had a meaning in the range of *to come after*. Greenfeld is right when she explains that this verb

48 With the *Middle English Dictionary* it is possible to provide a link with the search results.

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED27806/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

49 The following page already has *Promptorium Parvulorum* selected. Enter mind. <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/26/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

50 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 318.

51 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 318.

52 There under 2. https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED357/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

acquired a new meaning, but what she has to say about *success* is difficult to maintain. According to Greenfeld *success* was originally a “neutral term meaning any outcome of an attempt”, but it was “reconceptualized as equivalent to only 'good success’”.⁵³ This, again, is a gross exaggeration. This change of meaning is indeed noticeable over the centuries. If we consult a modern *Oxford Dictionary*, we learn that the first meaning is positive and the second meaning (“The good or bad outcome of an undertaking”) is considered archaic.⁵⁴ But this second neutral meaning wasn't considered archaic in Samuel Johnson's famous *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). Here, about a century and a half after the end of Greenfeld's crucial period, we learn that Johnson thought it necessary to explain that *success* without any epithet is *commonly* taken for good success.⁵⁵ Johnson's “commonly” undermines Greenfeld's “only” and it is save to say that the change of meaning wasn't as swift and dramatic as Greenfeld feels compelled to argue.

According to Greenfeld, the new words and the dramatic change of meanings “reflect the newly realized possibilities and scope of human creativity and, in particular, the individual’s ability to make oneself.”⁵⁶ But this wasn't all that new. Besides the fact that Greenfeld doesn't seem to be aware of the Italian Renaissance, which apparently did not bother Cushman or Cerulo very much, Greenfeld failed to spot a chance to test her hypothesis. Greenfeld refers to Francis Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning*, but she did not realize that *advancement* suggests that the verb *advance* was already in use. The *Middle English Dictionary* defines the verb *avauncen* as, among others: “to go forward, prosper, succeed”; “to help oneself, improve oneself, further one's own well-being”; “enhance (dignity), increase (income)”; “to promote (sb.) in rank or status”.⁵⁷

53 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 318.

54 <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/success> (accessed June 6, 2019).

55 “The termination of any affair happy or unhappy. Success without any epithet is commonly taken for good success.”; Johnson's dictionary is already selected. Enter success and scroll down for the entry *success*. <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/1345/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

56 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 318.

57 https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED3110/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2018).

The verb was already known as such in the fourteenth century.

There are other verbs that Greenfeld overlooked, for example *further* (“advance in rank or dignity”), but by now Greenfeld's analysis of this complex of words is sufficiently discredited. With the objections in mind, it is worthwhile to quote Greenfeld at length once more. Here she makes the far-reaching implications of her semantic theory emphatically clear (and bear in mind, Cushman and Cerulo found this section particularly convincing):

It should be stressed that the new vocabulary emerged together with the new experience. It was created in order to capture it, and thus reflected and constructed it at the same time. This means that people did not aspire before, did not achieve anything, did not better themselves, and did not succeed. I am not saying that they created different “discursive artifacts,” finding themselves in the same situations, living through the same emotions, but representing them differently, calling them different names. No. A vast new area was annexed to meaningful (i.e., human) life, a new existential dimension, and modern English both mirrored and was an instrument of its formation. What we are witnessing in tracing these concepts to their sixteenth-century beginnings is the emergence of entirely new semantic space—new areas of meaning and experience—semantic space that is central to our lives today.⁵⁸

As to the “super-emotion” ambition, we can point out that classicists, who are generally well aware of the challenges of translation, do not seem to have serious reservations about translating the Greek *philotimia* (overlooked by Greenfeld) with ambition. They shall probably be the first to acknowledge that *philotimia*, with its many shades of meaning, differs significantly from modern ambition, because ancient Greek society was significantly different. But it seems safe to assume that few if any classicists or ancient historians will agree with Greenfeld's idea of ambition being a radically new modern emotion first experienced by the English. We find *philotimia* (among others) translated as *ambition* without annotation in authoritative collections

58 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 318.

of the complete works of Plato and Aristotle.⁵⁹ Ambition was indeed important in the competitive culture of the ancient Greeks, and it could be argued that precisely because of its prevalence a counter-balance was sought in the well-known Greek warnings against hubris. Xenophon, perhaps responding to Plato's negative judgment in *The Republic*, discusses *philotimia* in his *Cyropaedia*.⁶⁰ We find a man of petty ambition (*mikrophilotimia*) among Theophrastus' thirty stock characters.⁶¹ And *philotimia* is an important theme in Plutarch.⁶²

Ramsay Macmullen, a scholar who, contrary to Greenfeld, proved many times that provocative books grounded in solid scholarship can indeed be written, stresses the importance of this concept as follows: “*Philotimia*: No word understood to its depth goes further to explain the Greco-Roman achievement.”⁶³ Peter Brown, no epithet required, took notice of Macmullen and went on to designate the era of the Antonines as “An Age of Ambition”.⁶⁴ In a more recent book Brown observes: “This was a social system that put a premium on upward social mobility. Like a similar, vast, and protocol-ridden organization (the British Navy in the days of Scott of the Antarctic), late Roman society was structured in such a way that 'Ambition was not an option ... but a necessity.’”⁶⁵ This poses a serious challenge to Greenfeld's argument. The radical novelty of upward social mobility is an essential feature of her theory of nationalism and her aetiology of madness.⁶⁶ Blinded by her love for England, she is simply unable to see this phenomenon

59 John M. Cooper ed., *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997); Jonathan Barnes ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

60 Josh Vandiver, “Xenophon contra Plato: Citizen Motivation and Socratic Biography.” *Polis: The Journal for Ancient Greek Political Thought* 31:1 (2014) 74-102.

61 In the Loeb Classic Library edition of Theophrastus' *Characters*, chapter XXI bears the title “Petty Pride”, but this chapter is called “The Man of Petty Ambition” in: James Diggle, *Theophrastus, Characters: Edited with Introduction, translation and commentary*. Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

62 G. Roskam, M. De Pourcq, and L. Van der Stockt. ed., *The Lash of Ambition: Plutarch, Imperial Greek Literature and the Dynamics of Philotimia*. Collection d'Études Classiques 25 (Leuven: Peeters 2012).

63 Ramsay Macmullen, *Roman Social Relations, 50 B.C. to A.D. 284* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974) 125.

64 Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 1978). “An Age of Ambition” is the title of the second chapter.

65 Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the west, 350 – 550* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 25.

66 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 49-50, 136, 142, 275.

existing before sixteenth-century England – if she cared to look at all.

Happiness

Greenfeld lists happiness among the new emotions first experienced by the English of the sixteenth century.⁶⁷ We take a short break from our dictionaries and shall focus on one sentence of Greenfeld: “After considering the early Christian concept of 'happiness' (which was nothing of the sort) an historian is apt to jump straight into the eighteenth century and its belief in “the pursuit of happiness” as one’s inalienable right.”⁶⁸ We find here another example of one of Greenfeld's bad habits we have encountered far too many times before. The historian who is apt to jump is identified in an endnote as Darrin M. McMahon. I happen to know his work, and McMahon, being a historian of ideas who is explicitly interested in the *longue durée*, is not much of a jumper. If an article in *The New York Review of Books* already posed too much of a challenge, it should perhaps come as no surprise that Greenfeld never actually read this voluminous book. The introduction, though, should have been enough to have cured Greenfeld from her impression. One may be forgiven to wonder out loud if Greenfeld even succeeded in finishing the content page! Greenfeld has a clear interest in secularization, she explicitly designates secularism as one of three principles of nationalism.⁶⁹ Yet the title of the third chapter of McMahon's book apparently failed to arouse her interest. In this chapter, called “From Heaven to Earth”, the Renaissance and the seventeenth century take center stage.

Greenfeld must have jumped over the third chapter, but we will not. On Greenfeld's beloved England McMahon writes: “I have singled out this blessed isle in part because it was unique in the history of happiness, producing as the strange offspring of English Protestantism, English science, and the English revolution an unprecedented ethic of earthly content. The same

⁶⁷ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 3.

⁶⁸ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 340.

⁶⁹ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 5

country that had served as corpse for Robert Burton's anatomy of melancholy – a land that would later breed a distinctive form of sadness known simply as the “English malady” – may be said to have given birth to modern happiness.”⁷⁰ McMahon is the first to recognize that the forces that shaped the modern notion of happiness were already well under way outside England. Equally challenging for Greenfeld and her fixation on the miraculous sixteenth century, McMahon considers modern happiness to be a child of the seventeenth century. Perhaps this is why Greenfeld is apt to trump up a jump with which she viciously suggests a great deficiency in McMahon's history of happiness.

Madness

We arrive at the heart of the argument. “In the sixteenth century”, Greenfeld writes, “a new form of mental disease appeared in England. We know that it was new, because none of the many existing terms for mental disorders seemed sufficient to capture it and a new word—in fact, an entire vocabulary charting a new semantic field— was created to do so. It was called, most famously, 'madness' and was essentially different from all the numerous forms of mental distress known before.” A few sentences further, Greenfeld goes on to say: “The most common synonym of “madness” was indeed “lunacy” (another new word)”.⁷¹ We shall be mercifully short about it. We are not able to find examples of *lunacy* in *the Middle English Dictionary*, but we do come across the word *lunatik*, defined as: “One subject to recurrent attacks of madness, believed to be due to the varying phases of the moon; a madman; (b) the mental affliction, lunacy”. The examples date back to the years between ca. 1400 – 1425.⁷² *Madness* too was already used long before Greenfeld's miraculous sixteenth century. The word is defined by the *Middle English*

70 Darrin M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006) 195.

71 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 346.

72 https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26339/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

Dictionary as: “(a) Insanity, dementia; (b) excessive passion, rash or irrational conduct; wickedness; (c) foolishness”, and the first instance is from around 1398.⁷³ There is also the word *madshipe*, defined as among others “insanity’, “irrational conduct”, “absurdity in thought”, and as such the word was already used around 1230.⁷⁴ A five minute query has buried Greenfeld's main thesis: “These diseases are the *explanans*, the effect, and nationalism is the *explanandum*, the cause.”⁷⁵ With her professed preference for *logic* and *logical*, clearly some of her favorite words, Greenfeld should not have any hesitation to recognize that an explanation in which the effect precedes the cause is untenable.

We do, however, still want to draw attention to Greenfeld's solution to the challenge posed by Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621, revised many times in the years thereafter). Here we clearly see what drastic step Greenfeld has to take to keep hold of her theory. Greenfeld can't possibly ignore this immensely famous and influential book (her usual tactic), but neither can she incorporate Burton into her theory, because Burton, as Greenfeld herself observes: “sometimes subsumed madness, in this case equated with mania, under melancholy, but more often equated the two terms, 'melancholy' and 'madness,' and thus found examples of the latter throughout history.”⁷⁶ After a remarkable long exposition of Burton's ideas, Greenfeld rather suddenly attempts to explain this considerable challenge away: “The quickening understanding of madness towards which Timothy Bright was edging in his analytical *Treatise* and the clarity achieved by Shakespeare in his dramatic studies of it were lost, drowned in the torrent of Burton's relentless erudition. And with this lasting blessing psychiatry, born though not yet christened, was sent on its long way towards the ever-increasing misinterpretation of the

73 https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26452/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

74 https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26455/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

75 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 2.

76 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 394.

devastating disease it was called into being to cure.”⁷⁷ Even though Greenfeld is second to none in her proficiency with a Procrustean axe, she is unable to fit Burton on her bed. A mediocre scholar would have long since given up on his or her theory, but not Greenfeld. For Greenfeld only one conclusion seems possible: not her theory is wrong, no, history took a wrong turn since Burton.

Her preference for logical analysis notwithstanding, Greenfeld does not seem to realize that her solution is at odds with her semantic theory. If it is true, as Greenfeld likes to believe, that the birth of a national consciousness gave rise to a dramatic and radical shift in the English culture, causing a whole range of new emotions that required new words or dramatic shifts in meaning to enable people to communicate about the new experiences, and this radical new world is, according to Greenfeld, the modern world we still live in, then the question arises how the old-fashioned book of Burton could have been such an immense success. Within Greenfeld's theory one would expect Burton's book to have fallen on deaf ears.

Nation

We cannot possibly ignore Greenfeld's absolute favorite concept. Her whole oeuvre, indeed our whole modern world, evolved around nationalism. We learn from Greenfeld that *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot* (1538) is the first to define the word *nation*.⁷⁸ Within her semantic theory the suggestion is clear: as a new word it must express a radical new idea. But Greenfeld seems to have worded her observation rather cleverly, for it might well be the case that Thomas Elyot was the first to *define* the word. The older *Catholicon Anglicum* and the *Promptorium Parvulorum* are English-Latin dictionaries and as such they do not define, but *translate* words. Building on earlier work, Greenfeld has not much to say about this particular new concept in her book on madness, so we turned to her first book on nationalism, and there she is plain enough for us to

⁷⁷ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 401.

⁷⁸ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 317.

attempt a refutation.

Referring to *country*, *commonwealth*, *empire*, and *nation*, Greenfeld writes: “None of these crucial words appears in the 1499 edition of *Promptorium Parvulorum* (first compiled in 1440).”⁷⁹ However, in *Catholicon Anglicum*, again ignored by Greenfeld, *empyre* does in fact appear and in this dictionary we also find *a cuntrye* (translated as *patria*). More revealing, because it outright contradicts Greenfeld, is the appearance of *cuntre* in *Promptorium Parvulorum*.⁸⁰ In *Catholicon Anglicum* we find Greenfeld's keyword of keywords, here spelled as *nacione*.⁸¹ And contrary to what Greenfeld states the word can in fact be found in *Promptorium Parvulorum*, here written as *nacyon*.⁸² This is hardly a surprise given that the word was already in use for more than a century. In the *Middle English Dictionary* we find at least 30 examples from 1350 onwards, and we find these under *nation* defined as: “A nation, people; a race of people; a political country, nationality; ~ and lede, nations and peoples; of english ~, of English nationality; (b) in pl.: country; (c) fellow countrymen,”⁸³ For the attentive reader now wondering if this has potentially reanimated Greenfeld's main thesis, we can point out that the use of *madshipe* is at least a century older than the use of *nation*, so we are still left with an explanation in which the effect precedes the cause.

Greenfeld's analysis of *nation* is not just a failure because she does not know how to use historical dictionaries. She could have prevented this embarrassment, were it not for her chosen ignorance of obligatory literature on the subject. Although Greenfeld referred to the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* in her first book, she ignores the equally monumental *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* in the two other volumes of her trilogy. The relevant seventh volume of this

79 Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 31.

80 Enter *country*: <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/26/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

81 Enter *nation*: <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/21/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

82 Enter *nation*: <https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicons/26/details#search> (accessed June 6, 2019).

83 https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED29003/track?counter=1&search_id=1109494 (accessed June 6, 2019).

massive lexicon appeared in the same year as her first book (that this work is not mentioned in her first book is of course not the issue here) and with her interest in historical semantics, you would expect Greenfeld to take note of the 288-page lemma “Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse”. She is at least aware of the lexicon, it appears once in her second book *The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth* (2001). But her indifference is illustrated by the fact that the mention is part of a quotation (perhaps telling too are the many misspellings).⁸⁴ This lemma should be of particular concern to Greenfeld, because it poses a challenge to her theory of nationalism. Karl Ferdinand Werner, the author responsible for the part of the lemma that deals with the Middle Ages, makes it clear that the concept of nation already had an affective meaning in the Middle Ages.⁸⁵ This important revisionist interpretation was put forward a year earlier in book by Thomas Eichenberger that is also ignored by Greenfeld.⁸⁶

Even a meager diet of English-language literature on nationalism should have urged Greenfeld to chew the cud. Since Greenfeld did not exactly devour literature on psychiatry, philosophy of mind, evolution theory and historical linguistics, you would expect plenty of

84 In a long endnote, where she declares that her view on the emergence of Dutch nationalism at the end of the 18th century is in agreement with most recent Dutch scholarship on the issue, Greenfeld writes: “Some often cited works include N. C. F. van Sas, ‘Vaderlansliefde, nationalisme en vaderlands gevoel in Nederland, 1770–1813,’ *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 102 (1989), 471–495, whose author declares: ‘I count myself among those who view the emergence of nationalism as a product of the last decades of the eighteenth century which arose in Koselleck’s *Sattelzeit* [Reinhart Koselleck, “Einleitung,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1972), pp. xiii–xxvii].” Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism*, 493. However, it is not “Vaderlansliefde”, but vaderlandsliefde; not “vaterlands”, but vaderlands; switching to German, Koselleck’s famous designation is not “*Sattelzeit*”, but *Sattelzeit*; and the project evolves around *Grundbegriffe* not “*Grudbegriffe*”. Greenfeld conveniently overlooked the single most important recent publication on Dutch national identity, a multi-authored work that was inspired by the German example of *Begriffsgeschichte* and edited by a name already familiar to her. Several contributions in this collection provide enough material to doubt Greenfeld’s view on the matter. N.C.F. van Sas ed., *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999).

85 “Dem ‘natio’-Begriff kam, neben seinen rechtlichen und damit auch politischen Implikationen dank seiner individuellen Ausprägung eine affektive Bedeutung zu, die sich in der Koppelung an die ‘patria’ bestätigte und verstärkte, da auch dieser Begriff mehr auf die innere und persönliche Bindung des einzelnen an das persönliche ‘Vaterland’ abhebt als z.B. ‘regnum’ oder ‘gens’. Geburt und Heimat werden, wie das fortlebende antike Motiv des Todes für das Vaterland, durch die Jahrhunderte mit der ‘Nation’ verbunden bleiben, die letztlich Gruppensolidarität und Anderssein gegenüber Fremden am stärksten zum Ausdruck brachte.” Karl Ferdinand Werner, “Volk, Nation, III-V” in: Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck ed. *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 7. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1992) 223.

86 Thomas Eichenberger, *Patria: Studien zur Bedeutung des Wortes im Mittelalter, 6.-12. Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1991).

appetite left for important new books on the subject that is the central theme of her academic career. But, remarkably enough, Greenfeld even failed to digest literature on her favorite nation. There has been a notable surge of literature on English national identity in the Middle Ages, but nowhere does Greenfeld show awareness of the challenge posed by these books.⁸⁷ An article by Patrick Wormald even appeared in the *Journal of Historical Sociology*, which should be required reading for Greenfeld.⁸⁸ Nor did an important collection of essays on the nation in European history urge Greenfeld to reconsider her theory.⁸⁹ Refusing to consume enough fiber for the past eighteen years, it is no wonder that Greenfeld failed to produce solid scholarship. That Greenfeld doesn't really have a stomach for reading even when it comes to nationalism is illustrated by her recent introduction to the subject. There is clearly nothing "advanced" about the insulting one page bibliography that ignores most of the usual suspects.⁹⁰ Again, the point is not that Greenfeld should readily submit to these new developments in the historiography of nationalism. She should, however, assess the implications of these developments for her own theory and persuade her readers why her viewpoint is still more convincing. For all her bold and provocative statements, in this most basic aspect of scholarship Greenfeld clearly lacks courage.

87 Among others: Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300* (2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997); R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000).

88 Patrick Wormald, "Engla Lond: the making of an allegiance," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994) 1–24.

89 Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer ed., *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

90 Liah Greenfeld, *Advanced Introduction to Nationalism* (Edward Elgar, Cheltenham UK. and Northampton MA. 2016).

*Greenfeld's Sonderweg*⁹¹

The negligence of historiography is all the more surprising in light of a rare confession of self-doubt we come across in Greenfeld's first book: "I was bewildered by the complexity of historical evidence and periodically discouraged by the sheer quantity of the material. At times I despaired of my ability not to sin against and yet make sense of it, and questioned the feasibility of historical sociology (either as historical or as sociology)."⁹² However sincere this confession may be, it is evident already in her first book that this self-doubt did not motivate Greenfeld to rely on a secure foundation of secondary literature. Nor was Greenfeld curious to find out how actual historians judged her ability to make sense of her sources without committing sins and eager to learn from their criticism.

Sin she did. Raymond Pearson criticized Greenfeld's first book, because she "shows scant respect for secondary literature" and rightly judged her approach to be "Procrustean". Referring to Greenfeld's confession of doubt Pearson writes: "In this one regard, historians would generally endorse her judgment."⁹³ Andre Wakefield had similar concerns in a review of Greenfeld's second book. He remarked, also referring to the first book: "The two books also share many shortcomings: a lack of respect for historiography, a penchant for building broad generalizations out of meager anecdotal evidence, and a tendency to lodge historical 'examples' in a prefabricated schematic model."⁹⁴ It is truly remarkable that the harsh reviews of historians did not have any impact on Greenfeld's confidence in her historical method and interpretations. In

91 For reasons of space France, Russia and the U.S. are ignored in this review. As to France, we do want to point out one thing. Writing about *ennui* Greenfeld claims that the word was very rare in the seventeenth century and its meaning vague. According to Greenfeld: "neither Jean Nicot's *Thresor de la langue françoise* of 1606, nor—more important—the first, 1694, edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* include it" (Greenfeld 2013, 418). But Greenfeld fails to appreciate the fact that in older dictionaries spellings may vary. In both dictionaries we find *ennuy*. This time I thank The Project for American and French Research on the Treasury of the French Language for open access. <https://dvlf.uchicago.edu/mot/ennuy> (accessed June 6, 2019).

92 Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 26.

93 Pearson, "Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. By Liah Greenfeld," 904-905.

94 Andrew Wakefield, "The Spirit of Capitalism: Nationalism and Economic Growth. By Liah Greenfeld." *Journal of Modern History* 75:4 (2003) 927.

the last book of the trilogy Greenfeld simply states: “Most of the book does not rely on interpretations of other scholars. The historical discussion is based mainly on primary materials, and the ideas are original.”⁹⁵ With this conscious choice Greenfeld was destined to repeat the sins she committed in her first book. This becomes painfully clear particularly in the case of Germany.

Greenfeld's confidence in her analysis of German history was apparently not shaken by the fact that such a prominent historian as Fritz Stern judged the German section in her first book to be “particularly weak”.⁹⁶ Or that John Breuilly, a notable scholar of nationalism and a specialist in Germany history, thought it was a “very crude rehash of the idea that the ravings of some German romantics in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries laid the foundation for all the evils to come.”⁹⁷ Indeed, Greenfeld offered a very unsophisticated version of the *Sonderwegsthese* in a period when even the most sophisticated ones were already heavily under fire.⁹⁸ Whether Greenfeld completely missed this noisy and seemingly inescapable controversy or judged it to be irrelevant, either way is hard to justify.

Even eighteen years later Greenfeld has the audacity to rehash her crude rehash without any attention to developments of the past fifty years or so. Greenfeld simply presents as an established fact the long since outdated idea that German (proto-)Romanticism was about “opposing the values and symbols of the Enlightenment (the rational individual, reason in general, learning, conventions, civilization, France as the most enlightened and civilized society,

95 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 29.

96 Fritz Stern, “Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity. By Liah Greenfeld.” *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (1993) 203. Stern's concludes that: “The author's reach is far greater than her grasp”. This rings all the more true for the final volume of her trilogy in which Greenfeld adds psychiatry, philosophy of mind and evolution theory to her transdisciplinary transgressions.

97 John Breuilly, “Liah Greenfeld. Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity.” *The International History Review* 16:2 (1994) 428.

98 Not hindered by knowledge nor by shame Greenfeld writes: “Germany was ready for the Holocaust from the moment German national identity existed.” Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 384. On the *Sonderwegsthese*: Jürgen Kocka, “German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German *Sonderweg*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 23:3 (1988) 3-16; Steven E. Aschheim, “Nazism, Normalcy and the German *Sonderweg*” in: Jonathan Frankel ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. IV *The Jews and the European Crisis, 1914 - 1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 276-292.

and everything French)".⁹⁹ Although Anglo-American scholarship has been a bit slow in recognizing this, perhaps due to the influence of Isaiah Berlin, by now it seems to have accepted that Romanticism is a child of the Enlightenment.¹⁰⁰ Rebellious towards his parent in some respects, there are nonetheless clear and important family resemblances that refute the simplistic idea of a dichotomy that Greenfeld stubbornly defends.¹⁰¹ Such a crucial figure as Johann Gottfried Herder, seen by Greenfeld as a representative of the Counter-Enlightenment, is now understood in a whole different light. But here too Greenfeld has exempted herself from weighing the implications of this sheer "revolution in scholarship".¹⁰²

Another defining feature of German historiography in the last decades of the 20th century, and an outgrowth of the *Sonderweg* debate, was a renewed interest in the German *Bürger*. In typical German fashion grand projects of monumental scale were initiated to thoroughly investigate the German *Bürger* and related concepts such as *Bürgerlichkeit*, *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, and the *Bildungsbürger*.¹⁰³ Even though the *Bildungsbürger* are of central concern

99 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 480.

100 Isaiah Berlin is well-known for his ideas on a Counter-Enlightenment, particularly in his *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (1976). Earlier he wrote the lemma "Counter-Enlightenment" in Philip P. Wiener ed., *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (1974). Even a friend and former student (Robert Wokler) expressed his embarrassment of Berlin's crude conception of both the Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment. Berlin's version of the Counter-Enlightenment (although without mention of his name) is also discredited in an authoritative handbook. Robert Wokler, "Berlin's Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment" in: Joseph Mali and Robert Wokler ed. *Isaiah Berlin's Counter-Enlightenment* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society vol. 93 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society 2003) 13-32; Wolfgang Pross, "Naturalism, anthropology, and culture." in: Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler ed., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

101 For instance Azade Seyhan: "Romanticism has often been viewed as a critique of Enlightenment modernity and a paradigm shift that problematised the entire conceptual framework of the age. However, in the German context, Romanticism cannot be seen as a movement that reacted to and replaced the German Enlightenment. Rather, the intellectual thrust of the Romantic movement in Germany arose from the critical practice instituted by the Enlightenment itself." Or Frederick Beiser: "Since the 1970s many scholars have insisted on reconsidering this relationship, and they have shed valuable light on some of its complexities. A consensus has been building that the old antithesis is no longer tenable and that the relationship between *Frühromantik* and *Aufklärung* is indeed ambivalent and complex." Azade Seyhan, "What is Romanticism, and where did it come from?" in: Nicholas Saul ed., *The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 8; Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative: The Concept of Early German Romanticism* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2003) 45.

102 John H. Zammito, Karl Menges and Ernest A. Menze. "Johann Gottfried Herder Revisited: The Revolution in Scholarship in the Last Quarter Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71:4 (2010) 661-684.

103 For an English-language review of this surge of German-language literature: Jonathan Sperber, "Bürger, Bürgertum, Bürgerlichkeit, Bürgerliche Gesellschaft: Studies of the German (Upper) Middle Class and Its Sociocultural World," *The Journal of Modern History* 69:2 (1997) 271-297.

in Greenfeld's analysis of German history, precisely zero of these new works appear in Greenfeld's book.¹⁰⁴ The reason for this absence becomes clear when she casually confesses: "I have already described the situation of *Bildungsbürgertum* in detail elsewhere in this trilogy and, since nothing changed in eighteenth-century Germany in the eighteen years which have elapsed between the time I did so and now, can only repeat here some of what I wrote then."¹⁰⁵ This is one of the most startling sentences in her whole book (which is quite a feat). I literally had to reread the sentence because I could not believe my eyes. Only then it dawned on me that Greenfeld here explicitly confirms what her theory and practice of history already seemed to imply.

Greenfeld's Puzzling Theory of History

According to Greenfeld, history falls squarely within science and one of her aims is to show that "historical phenomena, while being different in kind, lend themselves no less than biological and physical phenomena (which are also different in kind from each other) to empirical and logical analysis, which, like such analysis in other areas of study, can lead to the accumulation of objective knowledge."¹⁰⁶ But what is missing in both her theory and practice of history is awareness of the hermeneutical dimension.¹⁰⁷ This lack might very well explain why she is able to write that she only has to repeat her description of the *Bildungsbürger*, "since nothing changed in eighteenth-century Germany in the eighteen years" that have passed between the first and third book of her trilogy. For Greenfeld the history of the *Bildungsbürger* is a puzzle she already solved with "logical analysis" and the solution to the puzzle is "objective knowledge" which naturally remained the same after eighteen years. This view of history might also explain why

104 To mention only the most striking example that Greenfeld ignores in her trilogy: Werner Conze and Jürgen Kocka ed., *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1985–1992).

105 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 476–477.

106 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 2.

107 Max Weber, supposedly an important guide for Greenfeld, was of course well aware of this dimension in his *verstehende Soziologie*.

Greenfeld doesn't have any trouble ignoring historiographical developments. Historians will either come up with the same solution to the puzzle or with a wrong one and in both cases reading their literature will not make Greenfeld any wiser on the subject.

Greenfeld's indifference to hermeneutics is all the more surprising in light of one of her central aims: "The purpose of this book is to make evident that culture is an empirical reality of the first order in human life—that it, in the most profound sense of the word makes us human and defines human experience."¹⁰⁸ If this is indeed her purpose, then you would expect Greenfeld to be particularly interested in cultural context, yet attention to this is strikingly absent in her book. Here too Greenfeld doesn't seem to be aware of major trends in scholarship. Context became somewhat of a buzzword in the humanities, due to Clifford Geertz' ideas on "thick description", the influence of scholars associated with the Cambridge School on intellectual history, the history of political thought and history of philosophy, and the rise of New Historicism in literary theory.¹⁰⁹ Greenfeld will have none of it. With great ease historical figures such as Herder, Hamann and Marx, among others, are put on her Procrustean couch and are diagnosed as manic-depressed or neurotic (others as schizophrenics) without any careful attention to the context of their life and work. Greenfeld clearly has no taste for the genre of biography, which she categorically ignores.¹¹⁰ Nowhere does she show a sincere interest in history. It is there only to fit her theory instead of the other way around. If we in turn lay Greenfeld on a couch, this primacy of theory is even revealed by a Freudian slip. Greenfeld may think she has published an article in "*Theory and History*", but just as her primacy, the title of the prestigious journal is in the wrong order.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ However fruitful this fashion was and continues to be, it should not be forgotten that context has been part and parcel of philology and history for centuries. James Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Humanities* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).

¹¹⁰ In all fairness, Greenfeld occasionally refers to sources. In the case of J.M.R. Lenz she writes that Lenz "is confidently diagnosed today on Wikipedia as paranoid schizophrenic." Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 480-481.

¹¹¹ Greenfeld writes: "Also see my review of Talmon in *Theory and History*, 32:3 (October 1993), 339-349." Greenfeld, *The Spirit of Capitalism*, 504n29.

Marx, and Madness Indeed

We end this review with a look at Greenfeld's interpretation of Karl Marx's *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844*. Although Greenfeld is “done” with Marx and does not intend to revisit and develop her groundbreaking analysis in future work, she is not shy about the great significance of her revisionist reading: “it is clear”, she assuredly asserts, “that those who are not done with him, whether as social theorists or as political actors, will now have to take the connection between madness and his doctrine into account.”¹¹² Telling scholars that your interpretation of Marx is required reading is audacious enough, even if it is an example of impeccable research and sound reasoning. But flowing from the pen of an author who herself doesn't feel obliged in the slightest to show customarily respect for relevant secondary literature, this enjoinder is, quite frankly, completely absurd. Nonetheless, we happily respond to this call of duty.

There is another reason to cast an eye on Greenfeld's analysis of Marx. We have seen how Greenfeld entered a variety of disciplines as a layperson and saw how her disregard for relevant literature from specialists led to dramatic and self-destructive results. Since Marx is a canonical figure in the history of sociology and in political science, it is obvious that Greenfeld now enters more familiar territory, she is after all Professor of Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology at Boston University. This gives us a good opportunity to observe Greenfeld in her natural habitat and to see how she carries out her work in a discipline in which she is a praised and prize-winning practitioner. Yet even here her imagination isn't restrained by even the most basic knowledge of Marx – a fact, by the way, not noticed by Cushman or Cerulo.

According to Greenfeld there is consensus among Marx scholars that Marx's concept of alienation was inspired by Hegel, and apparently Hegel alone.¹¹³ But Greenfeld is not at all

¹¹² Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 618.

¹¹³ Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 455.

convinced by this reading. Preoccupation with Hegel cannot explain Marx's remarkable turn to psychology nor his stated aim to develop a naturalistic science of man. Moreover, as Greenfeld notes, Marx's discussion of Hegel at the end of his *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* can almost be considered “afterthoughts” and the fact that Marx never finished his intended *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* confirms that Hegel was not the driving force behind Marx's concept of alienation. Something else must have caught his attention quite dramatically. But, Greenfeld asks: “If it was not the argument with Hegel Marx was engaging in, if Hegel was not the inspiration behind his concept of alienation, who and what was he responding to?”¹¹⁴

Marx was no stranger to mental affliction, Greenfeld assures us, and although she is the first to acknowledge that there is no proof of Marx's affliction ever approaching a clinical condition, she does not doubt that contemporary French psychiatrists (*aliénists*) would have classified Marx as a neurotic.¹¹⁵ It is also quite evident to Greenfeld that Marx must have encountered the ideas of the *aliénists* when he was in Paris, because at that time their work was the talk of the town. So could perhaps the *aliénists* have inspired Marx's concept of alienation? After showing how Marx's idea of alienation is strikingly similar to our modern notion of schizophrenia,¹¹⁶ Greenfeld concludes, albeit tentatively:

“[T]he history of industry and the established objective existence of industry,” writes Marx in the fragment on communism, “are the open book of man's essential powers, the exposure to the senses of human psychology. . . . A psychology for which this, the part of history most contemporary and accessible to sense, remains a closed book, cannot become a genuine, comprehensive and real science.” This sounds like a direct answer to Baillarger's editorial introduction to the first volume of *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*: really, the status of psychology as science could not have been a bone of contention between Marx and Hegel. Thus, the discussion of alienation in 1844 manuscripts could at least as sensibly be interpreted as an attempt to deal with the phenomenon of mental

114 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 455.

115 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 453.

116 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 456.

alienation (and neurosis) as putting Hegel onto his feet. The experience of madness, and the desire to account for it, could be at the root of Marx's intellectual project, and the Marxist doctrine.¹¹⁷

If Marx was suddenly inspired by ideas of the *aliénists*, and if his *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* should accordingly be interpreted in light of his turn to psychology, then this raises the simple question why the *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* bear the very title they have. It is also rather surprising that Marx never mentioned the *aliénists* in subsequent work. Greenfeld is well aware of these challenges, she raises them herself, and she attempts to explain them away as follows. First, Marx was banned from Paris before he could translate and revise his *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskript* for a French audience. Second, both German thought in general as Marx's in particular made a drastic turn around this time.¹¹⁸

To begin with the second, for Greenfeld it is clear that the *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* are a contribution to German romantic thought, but this tradition was already moribund by the time the manuscripts were written. It was in this very period (1843–1844), Greenfeld continues, that Wilhelm Griesinger published two articles in the *Archiv für physiologische Heilkunde* which delivered a death-blow to German romantic psychiatry. So, the suggestion is (Greenfeld is not explicit here), Marx's contribution to romantic psychiatry fell on deaf ears. From a historical point of view (i.e. having knowledge of the further development of German psychiatry in the decades after the 1840s) German psychiatry can indeed be seen entering a new era with Griesinger. But the implied idea that Marx somehow knew these articles and that he immediately realized what their impact would be seems very far-fetched. Greenfeld is committing a historian's fallacy here.

Where Greenfeld is aware that she has to explain why Marx never went on to write about his pivotal discovery of the *aliénists*, she failed to ask what Marx actually did write after the

117 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 458.

118 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 458-459.

Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte. These works should also be taken into account in a thorough and compelling explanation. After the *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* and before Marx was banned from Paris, Marx wrote *Die Heilige Familie* together with Friedrich Engels. About this work David McLellan, the well-known Marx scholar and biographer, remarks: “It might seem odd that, just at the time when Marx freed himself from the influence of his former Young Hegelian colleagues and uncovered fields of enquiry that seemed to him to be more fruitful, he should spend time writing a large book of this kind.”¹¹⁹ Marx, contrary to what Greenfeld suggests, had apparently plenty of time to translate and revise his *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* specifically for a French audience, but he chose to write *Die Heilige Familie*. A book, by the way, that many Marx scholars consider a rather juvenile work that should not be taken all too serious, because of its baroque rhetoric and its many puns and pranks.¹²⁰ Georg Jung, an admirer of Marx, clearly thought the book was a waste of time and in a letter to Marx he urged him to get on with important work.¹²¹ If Greenfeld finds it very significant that Marx never finished his intended *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie*, then it should speak volumes to her that he preferred to write a *Kritik der kritischen Kritik*, as the subtitle of *Die Heilige Familie* goes, over a book about his important and consequential discovery of the *aliénists*.

Greenfeld's rather mysterious question and her perplexing answer shall probably surprise most and might amuse many who have actually carefully read Marx's *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, for Marx himself isn't particularly arcane about his source of inspiration. On a page to which Greenfeld herself even refers, Marx writes: “It is only with *Feuerbach* that positive, humanistic and naturalistic criticism begins. The less noise they make,

119 David McLellan, *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (London: Macmillan, 1969) 46.

120 Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism I, The Founders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) 147; Jon Elster, *An Introduction to Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) 7; Peter Singer, *Marx: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 39.

121 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2016) 187.

the more certain, profound, widespread and enduring is the effect of *Feuerbach's* writings, the only writings since Hegel's *Phänomenologie* and *Logik* to contain a real theoretical revolution.”¹²² What might remain arcane to readers who are not proficient in German is the question why Feuerbach's name is italicized, while Hegel's is not. Although *The Marx-Engels Reader* is annotated here and there, in this case no explanation is provided. Feuerbach literary means *brook of fire*, so the italics might well hint at wordplay, a habit not unknown to Marx. This leaves the reader with the strong suggestion that Feuerbach meant nothing less than a baptism of fire or a purgatory to Marx.¹²³

Marx's naturalistic science of man is in Greenfeld's exotic reading, as we saw, a direct answer to Baillarger's very first introduction to the *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*. Greenfeld finds her interpretation at least as sensible as the consensus view, but if she truly believes this one can only question her sense. On the very same page from which Greenfeld quotes, Marx rather answers directly to Feuerbach, for he writes: “Sense-perception (see Feuerbach) must be the basis of all science.”¹²⁴ Marx's frequent use of *essence* and *essential* on these pages more than just refer to the title of Feuerbach's famous book *Das Wesen des Christentums* (*The Essence of Christianity*). Marx attempts to do for political economy what Feuerbach, by inverting Hegel, had done for theology. That Feuerbach, besides Hegel, had a great influence on Marx's thought and in particular on his concept of alienation is generally accepted by Marx scholars. But for mysterious reasons, Greenfeld does not seem to be aware of the importance of Feuerbach even though this is considered basic knowledge. Every novice in the study of Marx's thought will

122 Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” in: Robert C. Tucker ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd edition. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) 68.

123 This reading finds some support in Marx' use of the word “cult” in the following remark he made after he had reread *Die Heilige Familie* years later: “I was pleasantly surprised to find that we do not need to be ashamed of our work, although the cult of Feuerbach strikes me as very amusing.” (Marx quoted in: McLellan 1973, 135). His sheer adoration for Feuerbach troubled Marx well before this retrospective remark and probably already in the process of writing *Die Heilige Familie*, for right after this book, Marx penned down his famous *Thesen über Feuerbach* (1845) in which he sought to distance himself from Feuerbach.

124 Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,” 90.

learn about the importance of Feuerbach in two well-known short introductions.¹²⁵ In an even shorter introduction, the one in the *Marx-Engels Reader* Greenfeld relies on, the editor is also clear about the significance of Feuerbach for Marx' concept of alienation.¹²⁶

But as we have seen time and again, Greenfeld is not much of a reader and a bit further in her book we learn why. Reading diligently is more something for “mediocre” scientists. Writing about German scientists and philosophers from around mid nineteenth century, Greenfeld remarks: “Their chief qualification for the job was their competence: they diligently read and could quote everything they were expected to read and quote. Their minds, while impressive reservoirs of knowledge, certainly were not fountainheads of ideas.”¹²⁷ As a paradigm shifting fountainhead of ideas, Greenfeld clearly doesn't consider herself a mediocre social scientist – *as a matter of fact*, neither should we.

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125 Jon Elster writes: “Marx was especially influenced by Feuerbach's view that religion is a form of projection of the human essence onto a divine being, who is then invested with power over man. In religion man creates God, who appears to man as his creator. This conception of an inversion of subject and object, of creator and created, is at the origin of Marx's concept of alienation. Man becomes the slave of his own products in economic life by the subsumption of labor under capital; in politics, by the usurpation of power by representatives or delegates; and in religion, by the subjection of man to an imaginary divine being.” Elster, *An Introduction to Marx*, 180-181; See also Singer, *Marx*, passim.

126 Robert C. Tucker, “Introduction.” in: Robert C. Tucker ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader* 2nd edition. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) xix-xxxviii.

127 Greenfeld, *Mind, Modernity, Madness*, 462.