



The ‘transnational turn’ in transatlantic studies

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Abstract

This introductory essay for a special issue of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* on transnational transatlantic relations begins by providing a brief overview of the emergence of the transnational approach in the humanities and social sciences before tracking the development of the ‘transnational turn’ when applied to transatlantic studies in the fields of History and Literature. It goes on to consider the tendency of historical studies employing a transnational approach to focus on ‘ordinary people’, rather than ‘elites’, and suggests that when directed at the transatlantic region a transnational approach has the potential to bridge this divide. The introduction finishes with a brief overview of the articles included in the special issue.

Keywords transatlantic · transnational · History · Literature

The ‘transnational turn’ in the humanities is not a new development. Transnational approaches to the study of international politics began to appear with some regularity in the 1970s, with Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane shaping the field to a large extent with their special issue of *International Organization* on ‘Transnational Relations and World Politics’ published in 1971.¹ The transnational turn was well enough established in the field of History by 2009 for Palgrave-Macmillan to publish a dictionary of transnational history. This followed a number of special issues of the *American*

¹ Joseph S. Nye and Robert O. Keohane, ‘Transnational Relations and World Politics: An Introduction,’ *International Organization*, 25, no. 3 (1971): 329–349. For the introduction to a similarly themed special issue, see also Susan Strange, ‘The Study of Transnational Relations,’ *International Affairs*, 52, no. 3 (1976): 333–345.

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Historical Review and the *Journal of American History* dedicated to transnational history published throughout the 1990s and 2000s.² While literary studies of the transnational turn may focus on the literature of a specific country (for example, the *Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature* published by Yogita Goyal in 2017), Paul Jay's *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (2010) and *Transnational Literature*, a journal founded in 2008, decentre the nation state as a requisite part of the process of transnationalising literature.³

Conscious of these broad trends across the humanities, the editors of this special issue of the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* observed an increasing tendency for scholars presenting their work at the annual conference of the journal's sister association (the Transatlantic Studies Association) to adopt a transnational approach to their work. This trend seemed particularly apparent in some of the most exciting work being presented by early career scholars. From these observations stemmed the idea for a special issue of the journal that would bring together a collection of articles united by a transnational approach to the study of relations between Europe and the Americas in the modern era.⁴

While conceptions of the 'transnational' differ both between and within different disciplines, for our purposes, the definition offered by Akira Iriye of 'the study of movements and forces that have cut across national boundaries' is a good starting point.⁵ The emphasis on connections that exist 'below or above' the level of the nation state was developed by Nye and Keohane in their description of the transnational approach as focusing on 'contact, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of government'.⁶ The articles in this special issue share this focus on the role of individuals, institutions and ideas that have travelled back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, largely independent of national governments, to shape political and cultural developments in Europe and the Americas.

Just as the 'transnational turn' has been apparent for some time throughout the humanities, an increasing focus on trends that transcend the nation state has been evident in work focused on the transatlantic area for a number of decades. This

² See, in particular, Volume 86, Issue 3 (1999) of the *Journal of American History* and Volume 111, Issue 5 (2006) of the *American Historical Review*.

³ Yogita Goyal (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to Transnational America Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). In addition to *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), see Paul Jay's recently published *Transnational Literature: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2021).

⁴ In line with the majority of articles published in the *JTS*, this special issue and the discussion that follows is limited to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A transnational approach has proved fruitful to studies of the transatlantic region during earlier periods of history. However, as Christopher Bayly has pointed out, the prominence of international actors other than nation states (Empires, city states etc.) prior to the mid-nineteenth century means a transnational approach has more limited utility in pre-modern studies. In the words of David Reynolds, 'there were few nation states to transcend'. See 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', *American Historical Review*, 111, no. 5 (2006): 1442 and David Reynolds, 'From the Transatlantic to the Transnational: Reflections on the Changing Shape of International History,' *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 24, no. 1 (2013): 141.

⁵ Akira Iriye, 'Transnational History,' *Contemporary European History*, 13, no. 2 (2004): 213.

⁶ Nye and Keohane, 'Transnational Relations and World Politics,' 331.



approach has featured in the work of sociologists, political scientists and those working in the disciplines of Security Studies and International Relations. The last of these categories has featured prominently in this journal, not least in the recent special issue from 2020 on ‘Transgovernmental Networks and Security Policy Coordination in North America and the European Union’⁷. Reflecting the disciplinary profile of the articles contained within this issue, we will limit ourselves in this discussion to the fields of History and Literature.

The transnational approach to literary study differs significantly from the study of world literature and comparative literature but is indebted to both. Unlike world literature, which places great emphasis on the classics from a Eurocentric or Amero-centric point of view and favours the notion of universal appeal, transnational literature considers a much wider range of literature than the Western canon in its examination of specific interconnections between marginalised cultures or between marginalised and dominant cultures. Through the study of two or more national literatures, comparative literature paved the way for transnational literary study by extending the study of literature beyond a single nation state even though the nation state remained the basic unit of that field. What separates the transnational approach to literature from older approaches is the recognition of the permeability of boundaries and resultant hybridities in the wake of enormous changes following decolonisation and independence after World War II.

Related to transnational literature but distinct from it are several overlapping specialities in cultural studies such as Postcolonial, Border, Diaspora and Migration, and Globalisation Studies. The first of these, Postcolonial Studies, established a new historical context for the study of literature based on empire, colonisation and decolonisation, for which Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) remains a seminal text.⁸ Border Studies, the second, may focus on contact zones, a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt in her book *Imperial Eyes* (1992), or on a region such as Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic* (1993) or the Global South in which there is burgeoning interest.⁹ The third, Diaspora and Migration Studies, is explored in Derek Walcott’s epic poem, *Omeros* (1990), and novels such as Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* (2000), set in London, about two intersecting diasporas, Caribbean and South Asian, and Teju Cole’s *Open City* (2011) in which the narrator explores the similarities between the Nigerian diasporic communities in New York and Brussels.¹⁰ Finally, Globalisation

⁷ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 18, no. 2 (2020).

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

⁹ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, (1992)); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, (1993). See also Laura Doyle’s examination of regional studies in ‘Towards a Philosophy of Transnationalism,’ in *Locating Transnational Ideals* (London: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁰ Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (London: Faber, 1990); Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2000); Teju Cole, *Open City: A Novel* (New York: Random House, 2011). For fresh consideration of this rapidly growing field, see Sarah Ilott, Ana Cristina Mendes, and Lucinda Newns, *New Directions in Diaspora Studies: Cultural and Literary Approaches* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield 2018).



Studies, a fourth speciality, examines literature in light of the influence of economic and social developments.¹¹

Closely related to the transnational approach to the study of literature are historical studies of the transfers of ideas and systems of belief across the Atlantic. A significant strand of this work has focused on conceptions of race, as they have evolved in a transatlantic setting. Studies focused on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have depicted the growth of ‘Anglo-Saxonism’ and the related quest to establish a ‘Greater Britain’ based on racial ties. Duncan Bell’s book, *Dreamworlds of Race*, is a good recent example of this and builds on related studies by David Haglund and Srdjan Vucetic of how race and ethnicity featured in relations between Britain, America and the broader ‘English speaking world’ in this period.¹² Where race has provided the analytical context for studies of the later twentieth century, the role of African Americans and Black Britons has often featured prominently. Examples include Clive Webb’s study of African American responses to Winston’s Churchill’s evocation of a ‘special relationship’ in the aftermath of the Second World War and the collection of essays edited by Robin D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck, including contributions on the transnational roots of ‘British Black power’ and the relationship between the civil rights movements in the USA and Northern Ireland.¹³

Religion has provided a further lens through which to view transatlantic relations from a transnational perspective. Various studies have identified common religious doctrines as a central element of the Anglo-American world during the early modern period.¹⁴ Dianne Kirby extended this analysis into the twentieth century in her study of how religion featured in the US–UK Cold War relationship.¹⁵ Religion has also been identified as an important factor in driving various social campaigns that operated across transatlantic national boundaries in the modern era. For example, Ian

¹¹ See, for example, Timothy Brennan, ‘Postcolonial Studies and Globalization Theory,’ in *The Post-Colonial and the Global*, Revathi Krishnaswamy and John C. Hawley, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (2008)).

¹² Duncan Bell, *Dreamworlds of Race: Empire and the Utopian Destiny of Anglo-America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020); David Haglund, *The US “Culture Wars” and the Anglo-American Special Relationship* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2019); Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011). See also Kevin P. Phillips, *The Cousins’ Wars: Religion, Politics, Civil Warfare and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

¹³ Clive Webb, Reluctant Partners: ‘African Americans and the Origins of the Special Relationship,’ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 14, no. 4 (2016): 350–364; Robin D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck, eds., *The Other Special Relationship: Race, Rights and Riots in Britain and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). See also Clive Webb’s historiographical essay: ‘More Colours than Red, White and Blue: Race, Ethnicity and Anglo-American Relations,’ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 18, no. 4 (2020): 434–454.

¹⁴ See, for example, Phillips, *The Cousins’ Wars*; James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2011)); Walter Russell Mead, *God and Gold: Britain, America and the Making of the Modern World* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007).

¹⁵ Dianne Kirby, ‘Anglo-American Relations and the Religious Cold War,’ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 10, no. 2 (2012): 167–181.



Tyrell's study of the Women's Christian Temperance Union depicts an international movement that had particularly strong representation in Britain and the USA from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.¹⁶ Based on a similar time period, Paul T. Phillips identified Social Christianity as a major force influencing the development of the welfare state in the USA, Canada and Great Britain.¹⁷

In the secular realm too, individuals and organisations from both sides of the Atlantic were identified by Daniel T. Rogers as essential to the progressive political movement that took shape in the USA in the early twentieth century.¹⁸ The study of activist groups with goals which were international in scope has necessarily required a transnational approach on the part of historians who have studied them. Particular attention in this area has been paid to the range of peace groups that operated throughout the interwar period in both Europe and the Americas.¹⁹ Similar studies of activism in the more recent past include the work of Sarah B. Snyder on human rights groups from the 1960s onwards.²⁰

A focus on the work of transnational activist groups tends to bring national governments back into the frame to at least some extent, given the tendency for these groups either to lobby or, in some cases, work closely with government agencies in order to effect the change they seek. Nevertheless, whether exploring the role of organisations like international peace activists, conceptions of race and religion, or ideas expressed in literary works, there is a marked tendency in the transnational approach to the humanities to focus attention on the activities and thoughts of 'ordinary' people, as opposed to the 'elites' who populate governments.

This 'bottom up' approach has led several authors to remark on the overlap between transnationalism and the 'cultural turn' present in the study of History since the 1970s. As Robert M. Hendershot put it in a recent discussion of cultural approaches to the study of Anglo-American relations, 'cultural studies have enhanced our understanding of powerful international connections that exist beyond the official apparatus of national governments'. However, as Hendershot acknowledged in the same article, 'the role of culture in the post-1940 Anglo-American special relationship has been consistently underexplored in favour of more traditional

¹⁶ Ian Tyrell, *Woman's World, Woman's Empire: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union in International Perspective, 1880–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Paul T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ See, for example, Andrew Webster, 'The Transnational Dream: Politicians, Diplomats and Soldiers in the League of Nations' Pursuit of International Disarmament, 1920–1938,' *Contemporary European History*, 14, no. 4 (2005): 493–518 and Christy Jo Snider, 'The Influence of Transnational Peace Groups on US Foreign Policy Decision-Makers during the 1930s: Incorporating NGOs into the UN', *Diplomatic History*, 27, no. 3 (2003): 377–404.

²⁰ See, in particular, Sarah B. Snyder, *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Sarah B. Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).



methods of historical analysis'.²¹ Writing in the same journal issue, Alan P. Dobson made a similar point, highlighting the 'continuity of the traditional' in a survey of the literature on Anglo-American relations over the course of the last fifty years.²²

There are, however, examples of scholars working in areas traditionally preoccupied with elite groups, such as international history, that have adopted a transnational approach to their subject. Introducing the articles contained in a transnational-themed special issue of *Contemporary European History* from 2005, Patricia Clavin described an intentional shift in focus towards 'political, economic and financial communities'—or 'somebodies', as she termed them—rather than the traditional focus of transnational histories on non-elites. For Clavin, this shift in focus towards elite actors entailed a broader challenge for historians adopting a transnational approach: 'whether, and how, to engage with the nation state'.²³ For David Reynolds, engagement with the state and elite actors is imperative if transnational historians are to remain relevant. As he poses the challenge: 'Transnational history that does not take seriously the dimension of power will ultimately lack teeth. Conversely, transnational history that connects with power structures has real explanatory bite'.²⁴

Recent works focused on the transatlantic area have taken up this challenge in seeking to adopt a transnational approach to the region, while at the same time eschewing neither nation states nor the elite-level actors that operate within, or at the margins of, governments. Depicting what he calls the 'transnational transatlantic' that underpinned the dominance of the Atlantic world in the twentieth century, Giles Scott-Smith describes:

The construction and *deliberate projection* of overlapping networks of public figures, intellectuals, academics, and media personalities, who believed in the need to cement the ties between the United States and Europe by presenting and promoting them as much as possible as a rational *fait accompli*.²⁵

As well as Scott-Smith's own studies of international anti-communist networks and the State Department's cultivation of foreign leaders in European countries, others have also unearthed the often-shadowy elite networks that spanned the transatlantic over the course of the twentieth century. For example, Andrea Bosco has explored the formative influence of the Round Table Movement on the Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Council on Foreign Relations, the leading foreign

²¹ Robert M. Hendershot, 'Reflecting on the "Cultural Turn": New Directions in the Study of Anglo-American Relations and the Special Relationship,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 18, no. 4 (2020): 459.

²² Alan P. Dobson, 'The Evolving Study of Anglo-American Relations: The Last 50 Years,' *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 18, no. 4 (2020): 425.

²³ Patricia Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism,' *Contemporary European History*, 14, no. 4 (2005): 422 and 436.

²⁴ Reynolds, 'From the Transatlantic to the Transnational,' 141.

²⁵ Giles Scott-Smith, 'The Transnational Transatlantic: Private Organizations and Governmentality,' in Charlotte A. Lerg, Susanne Lachenicht and Michael Kimmage, eds., *The Transatlantic Reconsidered: The Atlantic World in Crisis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018): 77.



policy think tanks in Britain and the USA, respectively, as part of the emergence of the twentieth-century ‘Atlantic system’.²⁶ The transatlantic links between financial elites in the nineteenth century have been the focus of Jessica M. Lepler. Similarly, Thomas C. Mills has explored the role of business groups in US–UK economic diplomacy during the twentieth century.²⁷

While the works cited above go some way towards shifting the focus of transnational histories back towards those groups who wielded power, it is important to note that, for Scott-Smith at least, the creation of an ‘Atlantic community’ by these actors was an artificial construct intentionally created by transatlantic elites to serve the perceived national interests of the countries from which they came. In some of the most recent work to emerge on Anglo–American relations, the elite actors engaged in constructing institutional and ideological ties across the Atlantic are depicted as doing so on the basis of more substantive historical and cultural bonds between the peoples of those two countries.

Historians of Anglo–American relations who have focused on the traditional domains of high politics (diplomacy, security, economic policy) have long been aware of the underlying currents of cultural affinity that have undoubtedly shaped relations between the USA and the UK. As Coral Bell put it in an essay published in 1964, the ‘diplomatic superstructure’ of the Anglo–American relationship ‘has its foundation in a less readily mapped historical and intellectual bedrock’.²⁸ However, as noted above, the less tangible cultural elements of Anglo–American relations have tended to be overlooked by scholars in the decades since Bell’s observation. This has changed in more recent years with publications explicitly focused on Anglo–America cultural relations published by Sam Edwards and Robert Hendershot, as well as a collection of essays on the topic edited by Hendershot and Steve Marsh published in 2020.²⁹

Further recent studies of Anglo–American relations have attempted to fully synthesise the cultural underpinnings, or shared history, of the two peoples with the actions of those elite actors engaged in political exchanges. For example, David Haglund explored the notion of a shared ‘strategic culture’ between the USA and

²⁶ Andrea Bosco, ‘From Empire to Atlantic “System”: The Round Table, Chatham House and the Emergence of a New Paradigm in Anglo–American Relations,’ *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 16, no. 3 (2018): 222–246. Bosco’s work builds upon that of Inderjeet Parmar. See, in particular, Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

²⁷ Jessica M. Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics, and the Creation of a Transatlantic Financial Crisis* (Amherst: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013); Thomas C. Mills, ‘British Industry and US–UK Economic Diplomacy during the Second World War,’ in John Fisher, Effie G. H. Pedaliu and Richard Smith, eds., *The Foreign Office, Commerce and British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2016), 233–252.

²⁸ Coral Bell, *The Debateable Alliance: An Essay in Anglo–American Relations* (London: Oxford University Press under auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1964), 129.

²⁹ Sam Edwards, *Allies in Memory: World War II and the Politics of Transatlantic Commemoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Robert M. Hendershot, *Family Spats: Perception, Illusion and Sentimentality in the Anglo–American Special Relationship, 1950–1976* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008); Robert M. Hendershot and Steve Marsh (eds.), *Culture Matters: Anglo–American Relations and the Intangibles of “Specialness”* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).



Britain and its role in forging the security alliance between the two countries at the mid-point of the twentieth century. Similarly, Alan Dobson's recent work has argued the case for a shared political tradition of Liberalism in both Britain and the USA that has shaped the political culture in both countries.³⁰

That such a synthesis of underlying cultural affinities and interstate diplomacy should be possible suggests that, when applied to the transatlantic region, a transnational approach is capable of bridging the gap between cultural and international history. This is at least true of a number of studies of Anglo-American relations, assuming one accepts the salience of a shared culture between the two countries and its influence on political relations between the two states. Whether the same could be said of broader transatlantic relations—taking in American states beyond the USA and continental Europe—is beyond the scope of this essay. The Anglo-American relationship certainly features prominently in the articles presented in this special issue, particularly in the works by Elliott, Serafini and McCaskill, and Cross, whereas the articles by Quinn, McMillan and Loignon cover a broader transatlantic area.

Karen Likorish Quinn, Peruvian-British author of *The Dust Never Settles* (2021), explores the multi-layered history of Peru in 'A Confluence of Counterhistories: Reflections on Excavating Lost Stories through a Nation-Building Novel' by examining the particular strands that make up the transnational history of the country.³¹ Eschewing a chronological account of Peru's history, Quinn favours a nonlinear, cyclical treatment of time that she identifies as pre-Hispanic for which she quotes an old saying from the pre-Incan culture of Aymara: 'We need to walk in the present with the past before our eyes and the future behind our back'. The past that she puts before the eyes of the reader juxtaposes the valorising of Incan descendants and criollo elites in official histories against the lumping together of indigenous people with those of African- and Asian-descent whose stories have largely been erased. By writing counterhistories that focus on individual stories of the marginalised, Quinn believes that transnational fiction can contribute to building a more inclusive Peruvian nation state. To that end, Quinn adopts *pachacuti*, a pre-Hispanic Andean cosmovision of a cataclysmic overturning whereby high and low are reversed in an open-ended process. Bringing to light the stories that have long been in the dark undergirds, Quinn's methodology draws upon postcolonial as well as diaspora and migration approaches to literary study.

In 'Emerson After Coleridge: The Evolution of Ralph Waldo Emerson's Philosophy in the nineteenth-century Atlantic World', Clare Elliott employs a transnational approach that establishes literary connections between two countries in a very traditional way, or so it might appear at first glance. Much has been written about links between nineteenth-century British and American writers and even more about the

³⁰ David Haglund, 'Is There a "Strategic Culture" of the Special Relationship? Contingency, Identity, and the Transformation of Anglo-American Relations,' in Alan Dobson and Steve Marsh (eds.), *Anglo-American Relations: Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2013); Alan P. Dobson, 'Anglo-American Political Culture', in Hendershot and Marsh (eds.), *Culture Matters*, 108–129.

³¹ Karen Likorish Quinn, *The Dust Never Settles* (London: OneWorld Publications, 2021).



influence of British writers on American authors.³² What has received scant attention is the influence of an American on British writers. Elliott uses Emerson's two British tours to assess his varying opinions of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Carlyle and William Wordsworth whom he met on his first tour in 1833 and Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold and Alfred, Lord Tennyson whom he met on his second tour in 1847–48. On both tours, he saw Carlyle. It is Dickens, however, to whom Elliott gives special attention as a British writer influenced by Emerson. In examining Emerson's influence on Dickens, Elliott chiefly relies on *American Notes* (2009) by Dickens and Emerson's *Journals*.³³

The prominence of race, religion and social activism in transnational studies of the transatlantic region are all identifiable in the study by Sidonia Serafini and Barbara McCaskill of the African American Minister Reverend Peter Thomas Stanford. That so many aspects of the transnational linkages that have characterised transatlantic relations should be embodied in the study of one individual speaks to the extraordinary breadth of Stanford's activities. Beyond the lectures Stanford delivered to British audiences on his experience as a formerly enslaved person, and his work to aid destitute African American children in Canada and the USA, the minister also advocated, through his writings and activism, for poor white labourers and children in Britain. In his campaigns for social justice, Stanford fought what he saw as the dual evils of white supremacy and an exploitative economic system that afflicted marginalised groups on both sides of the Atlantic.

The alleviation of poverty in different national settings continues as the major focus of Rebekah O. McMillan's article. Beginning with the Elberfeld System of poor relief, named after the German town in which it originated in the mid-nineteenth century, McMillan shows how this personalised system of welfare served as a model for the development of more complex and bureaucratised social welfare systems in both Britain and the USA at the turn of the twentieth century. By tracing the development of welfare practices across national boundaries, McMillan is able to go beyond traditional nation-based histories of this process to highlight the importance of transnational factors, most prominently industrialisation, that were common across the three countries and were intimately tied to the development of modern welfare systems.

A reforming impulse is also a feature of Austin E. Loignon's article, this time aimed at improvements in health through the advancement of new technologies. In particular, Loignon traces the American health reformer and entrepreneur John Harvey Kellogg's role in the development of light therapy as a treatment for various ailments, particularly tuberculosis. During the early twentieth century, Kellogg studied the work of European scientists, based variously in Austria, Switzerland and

³² For an example of the former, see Jonathan Arac, *Commissioned Spirits: The Shaping of Social Movement in Dickens, Carlyle, Melville, and Hawthorne* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); and for an example of the latter, see J. Pace and M. Scott (eds.), *Wordsworth in American Literary Culture* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

³³ Charles Dickens, *American Notes: For General Circulation* (London: The Floating Press, [1842] 2009) and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, ed. William H. Gilman (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960–1982).



Denmark, involved in the development of light therapy and transferred many of their practices to his sanatorium in Battle Creek, Michigan. Having originated in Europe, the light therapy treatments studied by Kellogg were eventually exported back across the Atlantic in the form of his ‘light bath’, a relatively transportable form of the treatment that became available for commercial sale in Germany in particular. Loignon’s study of light therapy thus represents a circular flow of intercultural transfers back and forth across the Atlantic.

In the last article of this special issue, Graham Cross depicts the evolving interpretations of the Cambridge American Military Cemetery located in Madingley. Officially dedicated in 1956 to commemorate American soldiers killed during the Second World War, the design of the cemetery and memorial at Madingley originally portrayed the government-led national effort of World War II and the enduring values ascribed to American world power of democracy, freedom and capitalism in the context of the Cold War. In more recent years, the significance ascribed to Madingley has shifted to emphasise the sacrifice of individual participants in the Second World War. Cross explores how various constituencies have reshaped the meaning of the American cemetery in East Anglia in accordance with their own objectives and in response to broader social forces. In identifying the various individuals and institutions—ranging from presidents and prime ministers through government agencies to ordinary veterans—that have invested meaning in Madingley against a backdrop of shared Anglo-American history and culture, Cross provides a revealing example of transnational forces that intersect between elites and the broader public across the Atlantic.

In totality, these articles provide a window on the state of scholarship that applies a transnational approach to the transatlantic region from a literary and historical perspective, covering countries from across Europe and the Americas at different points of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The presence of several early career scholars, in particular, amongst the authors of these works confirms our belief that the transnational approach to the study of transatlantic relations contains much promise in the years to come.

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