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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

Renaissance Self-Fashioning after 44 Years: Hybridity, Conversos, Individuation, and *littérature totale*

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Abstract

While Stephen Greenblatt's 1980 book, *Renaissance self-fashioning: from More to Shakespeare*, was methodologically innovative within the field of literary criticism, his work also grew from the roots of Jacob Burckhardt's old cultural history, and his method of new historicism developed alongside the new cultural history. Although certain parts of Burckhardt's arguments have been discarded, the work of Greenblatt and others has continued to build upon his foundation. Courtiership, anxiety, and the relationship between outward and interior identities, text and context, hybridity, and individuation are all useful concepts for constructing less monolithic understandings of early modern identities. With a European scale, this article traces early modern historiography and literary criticism from the nineteenth century to 2024 and introduces historical examples of identity formation from early modern England, France, Iberia, the Italian peninsula, and the Holy Roman Empire. The article reflects upon early modern examples of self-fashioning in the light of Burckhardt, the *Annales*, Greenblatt, and others who have contributed to our understanding of agency and identity up to the present day, arguing that these historians and literary scholars have worked together to answer questions that are fundamentally psychological in nature.

This article presents a hopeful synthesis of literary criticism and historiography in the *longue durée*, suggesting that the two disciplines have been tackling the same fundamental questions regarding the representation of the self, in different yet complementary ways, and that this collaboration has led to complex insights regarding the nature of early modern identities. The article outlines the significant lingering historiographic influence of Stephen Greenblatt's 1980 book, *Renaissance self-fashioning: from More to Shakespeare*

(and for that matter, since the two are closely linked, Jacob Burckhardt's conception of Renaissance individualism, from 1860), into our present day, in the fields of early modern European history and Renaissance literary studies.[1] While Greenblatt was methodologically innovative within the field of literary criticism, his work grew out of the roots of Burckhardt's old cultural history, and the questions of individual agency raised by the French *Annales* school. Both Burckhardt and Greenblatt admired interdisciplinarity both in their scholarly methods and also in the early modern authors and ideas they studied. While the historians of the *Annales* collaborated with multiple social sciences in the mid-twentieth century, the study of identity formation in early modern Europe has brought literature and history together today into one humanistic and empirical project, building upon and mirroring the enthusiasm the *Annales* school had in the mid-twentieth century for unifying the pursuit of knowledge among the social sciences.

Tracing the history of these lines of inquiry, several interrelated historical, historiographic, and philosophical issues will be discussed: the historical experience of individuals and the ways they projected out to society a constructed image of themselves, a representation, which was at an anxious tension with a private interior identity; the question of what scholars today can actually hope to know about the identities and minds of individuals who lived in early modern Europe; structure and agency, geography and history, and the role of an individual's 'sincere self';[2] and the relationship between self-fashioning, confessional regimes, courtiership, and anxiety. Methodological convergences between new historicism and the new cultural history will be examined. Finally, the concept of hybridity has in recent years been added to this conversation as a helpful tool for crafting a less monolithic understanding of early modern identities. Two recent books about Spanish conversos (Jewish converts to Christianity) by Kevin Ingram and Roger Louis Martínez-Dávila will be highlighted, since they reflect upon these same questions of hybridity, identity, and agency.[3] Individuals living in courts across Europe, in both Protestant and Catholic lands, will be discussed. The striving for a higher social status is key to self-fashioning, and is a fundamental human drive; a Morisco knight's successful application to a Spanish military order is analysed to provide an example of this.

All of this evidence reveals a shared concern among historians and literary scholars for the way identity was constructed in early modern Europe. This essay follows the chronological unfolding of these themes from the nineteenth century until 2024. It is my contention that these scholars have all been reflecting upon a fundamentally psychological phenomenon, which in Jungian terms relates to the way the *persona* is created in response to an

[1] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning: from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, IL, 1980); Jacob Burckhardt, *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (New York, NY, 1960).

[2] John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance individualism* (Basingstoke, 2004).

[3] Roger Louis Martínez-Dávila, *Creating conversos: the Carvajal-Santa María family in early modern Spain* (Notre Dame, IN, 2018); Kevin Ingram, *Converso non-conformism in early modern Spain: bad blood and faith from Alonso de Cartagena to Diego Velázquez* (Cham, 2018).

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individual's social environment, and the process through which they individuate, influenced by interactions both with 'others' outside themselves and with archetypes within the collective unconscious.[4] It might be unwise to invoke Jung in a paper reflecting upon the legacy of Greenblatt, as he has published a critique of Freud-centric literary analysis; and yet, Jung is not Freud, and Greenblatt's essay only confirms the deep importance he grants to psychology. But he is committed to historicizing psychological phenomena.[5] I argue that both historians and literary scholars from the nineteenth century onwards have been labouring to understand the same processes within the human psyche, with fruitful results. The field remains vibrant, and new research on religious minorities is pushing it forwards. With sensitivity to the unique context of early modern Europe, scholars have brought the strengths of historical and literary disciplines to bear on the fundamental question of how an individual responds to their environment, and what level of agency they possess in doing so, with some taking a more conservative and others a more optimistic approach towards what we are actually able to know about the identities of early modern individuals.

I

In *The civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), in his famous chapter on the individual, Jacob Burckhardt (1818–97) presented two ideas: in Renaissance Italy, the 'spiritual individual' began to have a separate identity from the group that surrounded them; and the *uomo universale*, or universal man, was a person of broad interests who sought success in multiple fields. The first idea explains the relationship between the individual and the group, and the second sympathetically describes the pursuit of interdisciplinary knowledge.[6] Both of these ideas would have a significant impact on scholarly interpretation and serve as the bedrock for the epistemological and historical questions grappled with by the French *Annales* school and by Stephen Greenblatt and other new historicists and historians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Burckhardt famously attached culture and art to a political timeline.[7] A new volume, reflecting on Burckhardt's legacy, calls him 'methodologically

[4] See Renos K. Papadopoulos, ed., *The Handbook of Jungian psychology: theory, practice, and applications* (London, 2006). Anna Green, *Cultural history* (London, 2008), p. 27, identifies *mentalités* and psychoanalytic theory as two separate historiographic paths towards understanding the collective unconscious, but she stops with Freud; Jung took a broader approach.

[5] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance culture', in *Learning to curse: essays in early modern culture* (New York, NY, 1992), pp. 131–45. Freud was far more focused upon sex and sexual development than Jung: see Mary Klages, 'Psychoanalysis', in *Literary theory: a guide for the perplexed* (London, 2011), pp. 63–87.

[6] Burckhardt, *Civilization*, pp. 121–8.

[7] Burckhardt's claim was that artistic and intellectual production (*Kultur*) grew best in an atmosphere of freedom, and that this type of freedom developed first in the city-states of northern Italy, in the fourteenth century. The freedom and leisure to pursue culture was present under both despots and republics. 'Wealth and culture' flourished as long as 'display and rivalry' were not forbidden. There, a 'society arose which felt the need for culture'. Ibid., pp. 121–3, 148.

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adventurous'.[8] After him, there were others who combined diverse disciplines of study. The German physician Wilhelm Wundt (1836–1920) studied the relationship between psychology and the body, and published, among other works, *Elements of folk psychology: outlines of a psychological history of the development of mankind* (1916), which contributed to religious studies, anthropology, and historical studies.[9] In 1900, the French philosopher Henri Berr (1863–1954) founded a scholarly journal, the *Revue de synthèse historique*, in hopes that philosophers and historians would unite their efforts. According to Martin Siegel, 'Historians were told by Berr that a search for unity and integration of knowledge would put the historian at the helm of the arc of scientific scholarship. History for Berr would become nothing less than a science of the "total reality" of the unity of humanity.'[10] The great Belgian historian Henri Pirenne similarly believed that history writing should be interdisciplinary and comparative.[11]

Carl Jung, another significant European thinker of the early twentieth century, used religion, philosophy, and esoteric ideas to shed light on psychology. He described the period in which he investigated his own dreams as follows: 'When I was writing down these fantasies, I once asked myself, "What am I really doing? Certainly this has nothing to do with science. But then what is it?" Whereupon a voice within me said, "It is art." I was astonished.'[12] In addition to seeking interdisciplinary knowledge, Jung contributed to Burckhardt's first point, as he described the process of the creation of the *persona*, which is the mask seen by the outside world, and argued that a person is affected not only by their own shadow and their own unconscious mind, but also by the archetypes that exist within the collective unconscious of all humanity. Jung called this process of human development 'individuation'.

The works of these European scholars, active in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, represent different attempts at interdisciplinary synthesis. I argue that Jung's insights on individuation, in particular, remain relevant to the entire body of historiography and literary criticism compared in this article, including critiques of both Greenblatt and Burckhardt. The Jungian analyst Murray Stein explains:

[8] Stefan Bauer and Simon Ditchfield, 'Introduction', in Stefan Bauer and Simon Ditchfield, eds., *A Renaissance reclaimed: Jacob Burckhardt's 'Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy' reconsidered* (Oxford, 2022), p. 9.

[9] Wilhelm Wundt, *Elements of folk psychology: outlines of a psychological history of the development of mankind* (London, 1916).

[10] Martin Siegel, 'Henri Berr's *Revue de synthèse historique*', *History and Theory*, 9 (1970), pp. 322–34, at p. 327.

[11] Walter P. Simons, 'The *Annales* and medieval studies in the Low Countries', in Miri Rubin, ed., *The work of Jacques Le Goff and the challenges of medieval history* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 99–122, at p. 100.

[12] C. G. Jung, *Memories, dreams, reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, NY, 1965), p. 185. See also John Pennachio, 'Gnostic inner illumination and Carl Jung's individuation', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 31 (1992), pp. 237–45, at p. 241: 'Like Gnosticism, individuation is a primal and original expression of inner life directed towards the task of wholeness and integration. Growth and transformation are natural processes, the potential for which resides in the unconscious. As such, inner exploration, or individuation, may occur with or without the permission of the conscious mind, motivated entirely by the unconscious.'

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> Individuation is sometimes confused with individualism. To some extent these two concepts overlap in meaning, but individuation is in fact much broader in that it is not limited to emphasizing only the ego. Individualism often ends up being a kind of narcissism, centered on the importance of the ego and its rights and needs .... Individuation on the other hand ... goes on to include and integrate the polarities and complexities within and without ... it fosters both self-regard and broad social interest in that it focuses on the Self (not the ego), which is common to all humanity. The individuality that arises from the third stage of individuation is made up of a unique collection of common human elements embodied in one particular life, and this one life is not cut off from others or made more important than any other life on the planet.[13]

Jung and his heirs focus not on the individual by themselves, but on their relationship to collective ideas and life.

The French historians Marc Bloch (1886–1944) and Lucien Febvre (1878–1956) founded a scholarly journal in 1929 devoted to social and economic history and interdisciplinary scholarship, the *Annales*, making explicit and manifest the desire to unite multiple academic disciplines in a common goal. In his foreword to Febvre's *A geographical introduction to history*, Berr writes that 'the treatment of this complex problem needs a geographical historian, or a historical geographer, who is also more or less a sociologist'.[14] The project to understand the relationship between humankind and the environment must be interdisciplinary. Berr and Febvre reject geographical determinism, in favour of a more triumphant story – one in which we are forced to change our behaviour in order to deal with our environment. It is even possible for us to do so and to succeed. Berr writes, 'Humanity escapes from its natural environment by the action of internal activity or logic; the Idea – the idea which men make for themselves of their environment, the idea which impels them to alter it – plays a part the importance of which cannot be exaggerated.'[15]

Febvre rejects the easy conclusions drawn by geographic determinists, calling them tidy, but lacking evidence. As Febvre's student Fernand Braudel (1902–85) would later say, 'We should only accept the simplifications of overall theories when there is unmistakable evidence to support them.'[16] Febvre issues a comprehensive critique of the geographical determinists, calling their work 'dangerous' and unproven.[17] He argues that each type of environment offers humankind a different list of possibilities. It is up to each person to embrace one or another.[18] 'We admit regional frames in a general sense, but

[13] Murray Stein, 'Individuation', in Papadopoulos, ed., *Handbook of Jungian psychology*, pp. 196–215, at pp. 212–13.

[14] Henri Berr, 'Foreword', in Lucien Febvre, *A geographical introduction to history* (London, 1925), pp. v–xx, at p. v.

[15] Ibid., p. xvi.

[16] Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II*, trans. Sian Reynolds (2 vols., Berkeley, CA, 1995), I, p. 295.

[17] Febvre, *Geographical introduction*, pp. 16–17.

[18] Ibid., p. 171.

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in the collection of physical features it represents we see only possibilities of action.'[19] Climate and environment offer humanity different possibilities for action at different times, as if fortune itself changes hands between people of different regions as the centuries progress. In short, Febvre emphasizes the 'human factor'. He insists that generalization is useless: 'We can never repeat too often that the object of geography is not to go hunting for "influences", such as that of Nature on Man, or of the Soil on History. These are dreams. Such words in capital letters have nothing to do with serious work.'[20] Febvre can see little to gain from 'the use of a few abstract words, demonstrating that Man is subservient to Nature, or Nature to Man'. Instead he declares, somewhat sarcastically, 'it is a problem of "relations", not of "influences". "Relations" is a sane word and its past is not wrapped in fog and obscurity or steeped in occultism.'[21] Fundamentally, he is arguing that humanity's relationship with the environment is exactly that, a relationship, in which both sides are agents: 'there is perpetual action and reaction'.[22]

Despite the *Annales* school's emphasis on structure, Bloch and Febvre allowed for the appearance of some individual lives within their study of collective *mentalités*. Febvre wrote a biography of Martin Luther. To him, Luther was not a 'great man', existing *in vacuo*. Instead, he was the leader of a group, who himself needed to adapt: 'Luther versus Melanchthon? No. But Luther versus the men of his time, the group influenced by the individual, individual thought influenced by collective thought. In the end a compromise.'[23] Famously, Braudel would make the individual (King Philip II of Spain) the object of his analysis only after spending more than a volume magisterially describing the king's physical and political environment.[24] In his inaugural lecture, stepping into Febvre's chair at the Collège de France on 1 December 1950, Braudel made his position on this subject clear:

> We do not, for all that, seek to deny the reality of events or the role of individuals; to do so would be puerile. But it must be said that, in history, the individual is all too often a mere abstraction. In the living world there are not individuals entirely sealed off by themselves; all individual enterprise is rooted in a more complex reality, an 'intermeshed' reality, as sociology calls it. The question is not to deny the individual on the grounds that he is the prey of contingency, but somehow to transcend him, to distinguish him from the forces separate from him, to react against a history arbitrarily reduced to the role of quintessential heroes.[25]

[19] Ibid., pp. 173–4.
[20] Ibid., p. 360.
[21] Ibid., p. 361.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Lucien Febvre, *Martin Luther: a destiny*, trans. Roberts Tapley (New York, NY, 1929), pp. 299–300.
[24] Braudel, *Mediterranean*.
[25] Fernand Braudel, 'The situation of history in 1950', in *On history*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago, IL, 1980), pp. 6–24, at p. 10.

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Febvre had encouraged Braudel to study the Mediterranean and Philip II rather than Philip II and the Mediterranean, a contextual orientation which deeply influenced Braudel's historical contributions. Braudel himself weighed in boldly on the necessity of understanding the broader geographic, economic, social, and political context. Recently, the historian Ian Merkel has shown that the early years of Braudel's career, spent in São Paolo, show both Brazil's influence upon Braudel and Braudel's upon Brazil.[26] There he was able to engage meaningfully with geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists, and develop his conviction that the discipline of history should guide the social sciences. 'Surely history need not simply be condemned to the study of well-walled gardens?' he famously declared.[27] Merkel has identified that, in Brazil, the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss 'constructed rather abstract models of human culture, based upon internal mental structures. Braudel, on the other hand, built history out of structures largely external to humans (namely geography, climate, and economic materialism).'[28]

Braudel's mentor Febvre was closer to describing a psychological collective unconscious with his understanding of *outillage mental*, or 'mental tools'. While the *Annales* took a very different approach from that of Burckhardt to the individual, both of Burckhardt's interests highlighted in this article (interdisciplinarity and the individual) appear in Braudel and Febvre's work. According to Peter Burke, Braudel, Febvre, Jung, Berr, Wundt, and Burckhardt were themselves all 'polymaths', who made contributions to multiple fields of study, much as Leonardo da Vinci had.[29]

Bloch and Febvre both praised Johan Huizinga's *Waning of the middle ages* in their reviews of 1928 and 1935, calling it a study of 'historical psychology, that is to say collective psychology' and 'an admirable psychological monograph', respectively.[30] While these historians disagreed with one another on certain methodological points, and Huizinga did not ultimately contribute to their new French historical journal, the founders of the *Annales* recognized that Huizinga's attempt to explain how medieval people understood chivalry, art, or death was similar to their analysis of the 'mental tools' of a past society, such as sixteenth-century France for Rabelais. Huizinga ultimately rejected the 'anachronism' created by applying modern psychology to the past.[31] Later scholars, such as Greenblatt, would be less prickly than Huizinga on this point, but would still historicize the literary works they analysed.

The problem that Braudel and Febvre were grappling with regarding the relationship of an individual to their cultural and physical environment is

[26] See Ian Merkel, 'Atlantic crossings and disciplinary reformulation', in *Terms of exchange: Brazilian intellectuals and the French social sciences* (Chicago, IL, 2022), pp. 38–64.

[27] Braudel, preface to *The Mediterranean*, cited in Braudel, *On history*, pp. 1–5, at p. 4.

[28] Merkel, *Terms of exchange*, p. 156. See also the 'interactions' between the family household and the market economy described by Jan de Vries in *The industrious revolution: consumer behavior and the household economy, 1650 to the present* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 10.

[29] Peter Burke, *The polymath: a cultural history from Leonardo da Vinci to Susan Sontag* (New Haven, CT, 2020).

[30] Cited in Simons, '*Annales* and medieval studies', p. 109.

[31] Ibid., p. 113.

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echoed by Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance self-fashioning*: the 'self' Greenblatt describes is not an independent agent. According to him, Thomas More's outer self was constantly performing at court, like an actor. It was 'a career in which More was at once enmeshed in a larger drama and yet never the mere reciter of lines anyone else had written'.[32] In 1977, Braudel's student Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie called men like More, Luther, and Philip II the 'noisy minority', and participated in a shift away from the study of elite individuals.[33] While the members of the *Annales* school were structuralists, many of whom focused on specific social or economic problems, their interest in collective *mentalités* and psychological questions meant that worldview, identity, and culture were not absent from their analysis.

II

In literary studies, old historicists believed that history influenced literature. The surrounding world acted upon an author's psyche and influenced the texts they produced. One historian who adopted an approach similar to old historicism was Theodore K. Rabb, who argued in *The struggle for stability in early modern Europe* (1976) that the horrors of the Thirty Years' War led artists and authors to turn aside from martial and epic themes and either critique the war directly or engage in escapist aesthetics.[34] Greenblatt's method, new historicism, made the case that not only did history influence literature, but literature influenced history. A problem he saw in the old historicism was the idea that a past society held to a 'coherent and consistent' set of ideas or 'political vision'. This worldview could then be described like a set of historical facts, and the historian who created it was unaware of their own biases or subjectivity on the topic. Greenblatt's solution was to propose another method, new historicism, which 'challenges the assumptions that guarantee a secure distinction between the "literary foreground" and "political background"'.[35] The interactions between the two are messier and more complex, in his analysis.

Of course, not all literary theorists were historicists. Many, influenced by the methods of new criticism, focused their attention on the internal coherence of a literary text. The close reading of a text is a tool that new criticism bequeathed to literary studies as a whole. Despite saying that new critics treated 'a text as an iconic object whose meaning is perfectly contained within its own formal structure',[36] Greenblatt continued to practise close readings, and wrote close readings not only of texts but of objects, paintings, and even the

[32] Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, p. 30.

[33] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, 'Motionless history', *Social Science History*, 1 (1977), pp. 115–36, at p. 134.

[34] Theodore K. Rabb, *The struggle for stability in early modern Europe* (New York, NY, 1976).

[35] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Introduction to *The power of forms in the English Renaissance*', in David H. Richter, ed., *The critical tradition: classic texts and contemporary trends* (Boston, MA, 2007), pp. 1442–5, at p. 1445.

[36] Ibid., pp. 1442–5; Paul Fry, 'The new historicism', Introduction to Theory of Literature (ENGL 300), spring 2009, Open Yale Courses, https://oyc.yale.edu/english/engl-300/lecture-19.

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historical context itself. He sought to bring back the early modern historical context that some new critics had ignored. He was revising historicism, creating a new historicism that took a different approach to studying the relationship between text and context. Greenblatt also brought several key elements of the critical turn, in that he was seeking the source of an author's anxiety, reading a text for inconsistencies, as well as interrogating his own interpretations and assumptions.[37]

In *Renaissance self-fashioning*, Greenblatt argued that there was a reciprocal relationship between the individual and their context, and identified the existence of a phenomenon he called 'Renaissance self-fashioning', which 'inevitably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one's own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one's control, [and] the attempt to fashion ourselves'.[38] Thus, his idea of individual agency is closer to that of Febvre and Braudel than to that of Burckhardt. 'Perhaps the simplest observation we can make is that in the sixteenth century there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process.'[39] Greenblatt argued that literature and rhetoric were the vehicles for this process of self-fashioning, and, alluding to Burckhardt, that antiquity provided the guide.

Here are Burckhardt's comments on this topic:

> But culture, as soon as it freed itself from the reverie of the Middle Ages, could not at once and without help find its way to understanding the physical and the intellectual world. It needed a guide, and found one in the ancient civilization, with its wealth of truth and knowledge in every spiritual interest. Both the form and the substance of this civilization were adopted with admiring gratitude; it became the chief part of the culture of the age.[40]

Greenblatt agreed, and summarized the situation in this way: 'There is also a genuine desire to fashion a new and original voice not by disappearing into the old masters but taking those masters into the self.'[41]

This is what Greenblatt thought of Burckhardt:

> Despite its age and its well-documented limitations, one of the best introductions to Renaissance self-fashioning remains Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Burckhardt's critical perception was that the

[37] Thanks to Joel B. Davis for our conversations about this.

[38] Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, p. 3.

[39] Ibid., p. 2.

[40] Burckhardt, *Civilization*, p. 148. As an old cultural historian, Burckhardt saw culture as a valuable quality that not everyone possessed. In the first words of his title, *Die Kultur*, which we translate as 'civilization', Burckhardt meant art, poetry, and learning – high culture. The German word *Kultur* is expressed in the plural as *Kunst und Wissenschaft*, art and science, or art and the creation of knowledge. See Peter Terrell, Veronika Schnorr, Wendy V. A. Smith, and Roland Breitsprecher, 'Kultur', in *Collins German–English English–German Dictionary Unabridged* (New York, NY, 2004), p. 1569.

[41] Stephen Greenblatt, *The swerve: how the world became modern* (New York, NY, 2011), pp. 123–4.

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> political upheavals in Italy in the later Middle Ages, the transition from feudalism to despotism, fostered a radical change in consciousness: the princes and *condottieri*, and their secretaries, ministers, poets, and followers, were cut off from established forms of identity and forced by relation to power to fashion a new sense of themselves and their world: the self and the state as works of art. But his related assertion that, in the process, these men emerged at last as free individuals must be sharply qualified.[42]

These individuals were not free, but deeply embedded in their surroundings. The process of self-fashioning was not the development of maturity, or merely the expression of individuality; rather, it was a combative, psychological, generative contest, between an authority and an 'other'. Greenblatt explained:

> self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an authority and an alien, that what is produced in this encounter partakes of both the authority and the alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss.[43]

Self-fashioning was not mere imitation of past precedent, tropes, or exempla 'of old', but rather, the crafting of a unique individual early modern identity that drew from such examples.

Greenblatt provided numerous exempla in his book. I point here to his first 'triad': the Christian humanist, lord high chancellor of England, and eventual victim of Henry VIII, Thomas More (1478–1535); the Protestant biblical translator William Tyndale (1494–1536); and the court poet Thomas Wyatt (1503–42). More finds himself playing one role at the English royal court, and another at home, with 'the shadow of the designing consciousness manipulating the mask'.[44] He writes '*Utopia*, with its vision of the entire absorption of the individual into the larger body of the community, at the moment in which he is most intensely engaged in calculated self-presentation'.[45] In Tyndale's case, 'the principle of negation, though necessary, is not sufficient to the fashioning of the self. Alongside rejection of the Church – and hence alongside individuation, isolation, singleness of being – there is a powerful counterforce of obedience.'[46] For Tyndale, this obedience is not to an institution or to a communal ritual, but to the Bible, and there is no 'social performance as distinct from inward reality'.[47] Wyatt 'has neither More's church nor Tyndale's passionate obedience to the Word of God: he has only secular power, the will to domination that governs both political

[42] Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, pp. 161–2.
[43] Ibid., p. 9.
[44] Ibid., p. 31.
[45] Ibid., p. 157.
[46] Ibid., p. 159.
[47] Ibid., pp. 158–9.

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and sexual relations at court'.[48] In Greenblatt's telling, despite contradictions and subversions, quite a lot can be known about the inner life of a sixteenth-century courtier. A person's writings and poems can provide a window into their consciousness. Their literature has agency and reflects an ongoing relationship between the writer and their environment. Greenblatt points out that early modern works of fiction also reflect upon the question of identity: 'Shakespeare's characters are frequently haunted by the sense that their identity has been lost or stolen: "Who is it that can tell me who I am?" cries the anguished [King] Lear.'[49]

While scholars of early modern European literatures apply numerous diverse lenses and methods in their work, many still employ an overall contextual principle and engagement with Greenblatt's 'cultural poetics', analogous to the *Annales* school's idea of a surrounding, historicized, *mentalité*.[50] Febvre perhaps leaned a little closer to old historicism when he thought of *mentalités*, for Febvre's Rabelais was unable to be an atheist because, in the mindset of his age, the concept of atheism did not exist.[51] New historicists engage with Burckhardt's first point about the relationship between the individual and the group, turning away from the idea that isolated texts exist outside of time. On his second point, that of interdisciplinarity, new historicists also take a stand. Their broadly contextualizing methods of literary analysis break down Braudel's 'well-walled gardens' – in this case, between literary studies and history – such that, as a happy result, historians and literary scholars can find themselves toiling side by side.[52] H. Aram Veeser, in *The new historicism* (1989), wrote that 'the new historicism has given scholars new opportunities to cross boundaries separating history, anthropology, art, politics, literature, and economics'.[53] Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, in *Practicing new historicism*, twenty years after *Renaissance self-fashioning*, acknowledged that 'one of the recurrent criticisms of new historicism is that it is insufficiently theorized'.[54] I would argue, however, that the capaciousness and flexibility of this form of literary analysis actually enables historians to more easily engage with it. Gallagher and Greenblatt also make their allusion to Braudel's interdisciplinary and boundary-crossing research explicit by declaring they had 'impetuously rushed beyond the confines of the canonical

[48] Ibid., p. 160.

[49] Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance culture', pp. 139–40.

[50] Thanks to Joel B. Davis for discussing this with me.

[51] Lucien Febvre, *The problem of unbelief in the sixteenth century: the religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, MA, 1985).

[52] 'Surely history need not simply be condemned to the study of well-walled gardens?' Braudel asks, in his preface to *The Mediterranean*, cited in *On history*, p. 4.

[53] H. Aram Veeser, 'Introduction', in H. Aram Veeser, ed., *The new historicism* (New York, NY, 1989), pp. ix–xvi, at p. ix.

[54] Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, 'Introduction', in *Practicing new historicism* (Chicago, IL, 2000), pp. 1–19, at p. 3. Jean E. Howard, 'The new historicism in Renaissance studies', *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), pp. 13–43, at p. 42, argues that 'the new historicism needs at every point to be more overtly self-conscious of its methods and its theoretical assumptions'.

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garden'.[55] Greenblatt himself is clearly an admirer of the *Annales* since, 'from the perspective of what French historians call the *longue durée*', he wrote an essay comparing the manipulative tactics used by a Baptist minister to break his toddler's will, described in *The American Baptist Magazine* in 1831, to the 'love test' that begins Shakespeare's *King Lear*.[56]

Let us turn to another comparison between different ages. The Italian poet Francesco Petrarca, or Petrarch, wrote in 1372:

> Among the many subjects which interested me, I dwelt especially upon Antiquity, for our own age has always repelled me, so that, had it not been for the love of those dear to me, I should have preferred to have been born in any other period than our own. In order to forget my own times, I have continually striven to place myself in spirit in other ages, and consequently I delighted in history.[57]

Petrarch lived in the time of the Avignon papacy, when sheep wandered across the Roman forum. Poggio Braccolini (1380–1459), whose book-hunting career Stephen Greenblatt elaborates upon in *The swerve* (2011), lived in the period immediately following Petrarch, and even served as the secretary of an anti-pope who was later deposed. According to Greenblatt, 'The world around Poggio was falling to pieces, but his response to chaos and fear was always to redouble his immersion into books.'[58] So, what then is the relationship between the scholar and the political upheavals of his own age? Is the past an escape? In a new preface to *Renaissance self-fashioning*, written in 2005, Greenblatt reflected upon the 'profoundly disorienting time' in the late 1970s when he was working on his book, which affected

> my vision of an immense malevolent force determined to crush all resistance, in my account of the targeting of aliens and the manipulation of their perceived threat as an excuse for the consolidation of power, in my disquieting perception that those who oppose this power recapitulate some of its most salient characteristics.[59]

Burckhardt was also quite depressed when he wrote about the Renaissance, although it was revolution that worried him, not the power of the state. As a young man in Switzerland, he edited a conservative newspaper called the *Basler Zeitung*. However, he soon tired of it and consoled himself by writing to his friends about his concerns for Europe. He took refuge in the culture of the past, writing to a friend on 5 May 1846:

[55] Gallagher and Greenblatt, 'Introduction', p. 14.

[56] Stephen Greenblatt, 'The cultivation of anxiety: King Lear and his heirs', in *Learning to curse: essays in early modern culture* (New York, NY, 1992), pp. 80–98, at pp. 80–2.

[57] Petrarch, 'To posterity', *Medieval Sourcebook*, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/petrarch1.html.

[58] Greenblatt, *The swerve*, p. 177.

[59] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Preface', in *Renaissance self-fashioning* (Chicago, IL, 2005), pp. xi–xvii, at p. xvi.

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> Good heavens, I can't after all alter things, and before universal barbarism breaks in (and for the moment I can foresee nothing else) I want to debauch myself with a real eyeful of aristocratic culture, so that, when the social revolution has exhausted itself for a moment, I shall be able to take an active part in the inevitable restoration – 'if the Lord wills, and we live', of course.[60]

He wrote that he was feeling judged by his friend for being 'off so light heartedly in search of southern debauchery, in the form of art and antiquity, while in Poland everything is going to pieces and the messengers of the Socialist Day of Judgment are at the gates'.[61] Greenblatt, on the other hand, in America in the age of the Vietnam War and Civil Rights, wrote that

> I believed that the ragged forces standing up to military power would ultimately triumph. And I believed that in describing some of the mechanisms of identity formation in the Renaissance I was participating in a small, scholarly way, in a much larger project, the project of grasping however we have become the way we are.[62]

To Burckhardt, the individual is liberated from the group – his fear was the rise of mass politics, socialism, and other dramatic upheavals of the 1840s. To Greenblatt, the individual is embedded in a constant dialogue with the group, and the context which surrounds them, which is sometimes a malevolent political force – his fear was the revolution failing, and the American government of the 1970s and early '80s suppressing the rights of its citizens. These observations are in line with Greenblatt's assertion,

> I should add that if cultural poetics is conscious of its status as interpretation, this consciousness must extend to an acceptance of the impossibility of fully reconstructing and reentering the culture of the sixteenth century, of leaving behind one's own situation: it is everywhere evident in this book that the questions I ask of my material and indeed the very nature of this material are shaped by the questions I ask of myself.[63]

This self-awareness is emblematic of the *mentalité* of Greenblatt's own context.

According to Allan Megill, *Annaliste* historians of *mentalités* such as Febvre, and the scholars Clifford Geertz, Foucault, and Greenblatt, all helped lay the foundation for what became the new cultural history in the 1980s.[64]

[60] Jacob Burckhardt to H. Shauenberg, Basle, 5 May 1846, in *The letters of Jacob Burckhardt*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York, NY, 1955), p. 97.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Greenblatt, '2005 preface', pp. xvi–xvii.

[63] Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, p. 5.

[64] Allan Megill, *Historical knowledge, historical error: a contemporary guide to practice* (Chicago, IL, 2007), p. 203.

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Through this transformation, more historians have come to define culture 'as the system of meaning through which people experience the world'.[65] All the while, even as culture is democratized beyond 'high' cultural products like paintings or poetry (which Burckhardt, an old cultural historian, would have analysed), few new cultural historians would deny literature its role as a primary source for cultural history. Both new historicism and the new cultural history are responses to a form of structuralism: a structural approach, on the one hand, to literature, and on the other, to society.

They are re-hashing Burckhardt's first point, disagreeing with him over the relationship between an author and the culture or discourse in which they live, and the degree of agency that they have. In the opinion of the historian William Sewell,

> identifying culture with agency and contrasting it with structure merely perpetuates the same determinist materialism that 'culturalist' Marxists were reacting against in the first place. It exaggerates both the implacability of socioeconomic determinations and the free play of symbolic action. Both socioeconomic and cultural processes are blends of structure and agency.[66]

According to the new cultural history, historical context can be a form of structure in which authors and texts are embedded. An author can also be surrounded by a discourse, or a web of meaning. Either way, they are not entirely independent or free.

Peter Burke, in his history of the *Annales*, wrote self-reflectively that 'Those of us in Britain who did support *Annales* in the early 1960s had a sense of belonging to a heretical minority, rather like the supporters of Bloch and Febvre in France in the 1930s.'[67] After the *Annales* turned historians' attention to social history, an additional methodological turn – to microhistory and to cultural history in the 1970s and '80s – made the worldviews of lesser-known individuals, from Martin Guerre and his family members to the Italian protagonist of *The cheese and the worms*, the new objects of historians' attention.[68] Greenblatt himself reflects upon *The return of Martin Guerre* as a case of mistaken identity which led to the execution of an impostor. He says that the assumption that 'the self is at its core a stable frame of reference' is a 'unitary vision ... achieved, as Natalie Zemon Davis's book makes clear, only by repressing history, or, more accurately, by repressing histories – multiple, complex, refractory stories'.[69] An obvious theme in these works of microhistory was

[65] Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From reliable sources: an introduction to historical methods* (Ithaca, NY, 2001), p. 117.

[66] William Sewell, *Logics of history: social theory and social transformation* (Chicago, IL, 2005), pp. 159–60.

[67] Peter Burke, *The French historical revolution: the Annales school, 1929–2014* (Stanford, CA, 2015), p. 126.

[68] Natalie Zemon Davis, *The return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA, 1983); Carlo Ginzburg, *The cheese and the worms: the cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller*, trans. John and Ann Tedeschi (Baltimore, MD, 1980).

[69] Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance culture', p. 138.

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identity formation. Microhistorians brought a sensitivity and empathy to bear as they wrote their archive-centric 'history from below'. Microhistory asks its reader to care about the identities of individuals who may have been quite distant from the events and ideas that drove their elite contemporaries. As Jan de Vries recently observed,

> The microhistorian's attraction to the exceptional and the marginal and the social scientific historian's inclination to discard the outlier are twin vulnerabilities of a history that starts with the sources rather than with the problem. A microhistory that begins with a curious document may reveal the historian's virtuosity in recreating a lost place and time and it can excite the reader to wonder over the exceptionality of certain hitherto obscure historical figures. But a valuable and potentially powerful microhistory sets out to address a problem, or challenge a thesis.[70]

The first two generations of the *Annales* school had thought broadly, with their 'problem-oriented' histories, but the microhistorians who followed them could choose to continue addressing problems, or to simply describe the thought world of a pre-modern, lesser-known individual.

To summarize the overall transformation that took place within the historiography of European history: after the shift away from Leopold von Ranke and his nineteenth-century political, institutional, and diplomatic history, and the biographies of 'great men' that came along with it, the *Annales* turned to social history. Then social and cultural 'history from below' brought new groups into the spotlight of scholars' analysis. For instance, E. P. Thompson's work on the English working class 'radically shifted the emphasis from structure to culture'.[71] Many historians moved from social to cultural history, making a 'cultural turn', in the 1980s. Simultaneously, new historicists, like Greenblatt, set off to explore the work of non-canonical authors.[72] Interestingly, the work of microhistorians returned the field to biography once again, but to biographies of completely different people. When subaltern groups were studied, the desire to treat these groups more justly, not as monoliths, but as filled with unique people, turned the dial back again to identity, Greenblatt, Burckhardt, and the individual. As Anna Green wrote in 2008, 'It is time for the rediscovery of individuality within cultural history.'[73]

III

The question of cultural or religious assimilation is closely linked with that of identity formation. Scholars studying Spain's religious minorities today often ask questions such as were the Moriscos just appearing to accept Christianity in the sixteenth century in order to survive? Did Islamic views

[70] Jan de Vries, 'Playing with scales: the global and the micro, the macro and the nano', *Past & Present*, supplement 14 (2019), pp. 23–36, at pp. 35–6.

[71] Howell and Prevenier, *From reliable sources*, p. 116.

[72] Joseph North, *Literary criticism: a concise political history* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), pp. 86–91.

[73] Anna Green, *Cultural history* (Basingstoke, 2008), p. 119.

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on outward conformity give them that right? How did experiences differ among elite and poor Moriscos, or between Moriscos in Valencia, Granada, and Valladolid?[74]

This article would not be a reflection upon new historicism without a specific early modern example of self-fashioning. In the early years of the seventeenth century, a Morisco nobleman from Granada, Don Pedro III de Granada Venegas (1559–1643), applied to enter the Spanish military order of Alcántara – an order whose *limpieza de sangre* (purity of the blood) statutes excluded Moriscos and conversos (converts from Islam and Judaism, and their heirs) from membership. His application was large – over three hundred pages in length – and included twenty-nine discrete documents, within which were seven letters written in his name where he asked the Spanish Council of Orders to read the documentation he had provided and let him into the order. His documentation included the opinions of fifty theologians, family trees, wills, and royal chronicles.

Don Pedro was open about being a descendant of Muslims, but he made it clear that the Muslims he descended from were Nasrid royalty who had been faithful vassals and allies of Castile. He argued that it was common for Christian and Muslim royal dynasties to intermarry, and thus his lineage should not be seen as suspect. His fifty theologians argued that a Morisco with royal blood like Don Pedro could not possibly be excluded by Alcántara's *limpieza* statutes. Royal blood trumped Moorish blood. His application lingered at the Council of Orders, perhaps due to the influence of his father's enemy Don García de Medrano. Don Pedro was subject to three separate investigations in 1602, 1605, and 1606, but after a papal dispensation he ultimately became a knight of Alcántara, his warrior-monk habit being dated 1607.[75] He was fortunate in this, since Philip III of Spain began the general expulsion of the Moriscos shortly thereafter, in 1609. Don Pedro avoided this expulsion and ultimately became part of the titled nobility of early modern Spain. Fashioning this 'self', who was worthy of honours at Madrid's royal court, was not merely an exercise in creativity or expression but, for this man from a well-known Morisco family, a matter of life or death, societal acceptance or exile, and thus must have caused him great anxiety.

[74] These questions arise in the following works, among others: Mark D. Meyerson, *The Muslims of Valencia: in the age of Fernando and Isabel, between coexistence and crusade* (Berkeley, CA, 1991); Benjamin Ehlers, *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and religious reform in Valencia, 1568–1614* (Baltimore, MD, 2006); Mercedes García-Arenal and Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, *Un oriente español. Los moriscos y el Sacromonte en tiempos de contrarreforma* (Madrid, 2010); Trevor J. Dadson, *Tolerance and coexistence in early modern Spain: old Christians and Moriscos in the Campo de Calatrava* (Woodbridge, 2014); Stephanie M. Cavanaugh, 'Litigating for liberty: enslaved Morisco children in sixteenth-century Valladolid', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 70 (2017), pp. 1282–1320. For information regarding the relationship between conversion strategies and scholarly disciplines, and on the role of Arabic translation in Morisco history, see Seth Kimmel, *Parables of coercion: conversion and knowledge at the end of Islamic Spain* (Chicago, IL, 2015); and Claire M. Gilbert, *In good faith: Arabic translation and translators in early modern Spain* (Philadelphia, PA, 2020).

[75] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Ordenes militares: Alcántara, year 1607, exp. 655.

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Previous debates in the historiography of the conversos have hinged on the question of whether they were still Jews, facing attacks based in either anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism, or if they were sincere Christians, unjustly persecuted due to their lineage, despite their conformity to Christian practice or belief. In this debate, historians were building a case to determine as accurately as possible the religious identities of past individuals. There was a Rankean sort of confidence to this.[76] But not everyone shares this confidence.

How much can we really know about an early modern person's interior life, or are we only left with the mask, or *persona*? Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, in their 2001 historiographic guidebook for students, have urged caution regarding what it is possible for the historian to learn from their sources:

> it is true that most historians, for most of the long history of our profession, have thought that a reality lay behind these sources and if we read our sources skillfully enough we could arrive at that reality. Today many of us would disagree, arguing that any reality that lay behind the sources is, finally, inaccessible to us, no matter how skilled we are – and that we have to settle for studying the reality that the sources construct rather than 'reality' itself.[77]

Almost a century before them, another polymath, Johan Huizinga, wrote that no scholarly work could approach the past by itself, but it could do so alongside the works of others. Each historian was therefore part of a larger project, which led to a 'certain catholicity of learning, a *consensus omnium*'. The historian is in a 'paternal house with many rooms', working towards a larger cause.[78] Therefore no scholar's research, however small, is ever 'preliminary':

> His true justification lies much deeper. He meets a vital need, he obeys a noble urge of the modern spirit. Whether his work yields tangible fruits for later research is, relatively, of secondary importance. In polishing one facet out of a billion he manifests the historical discipline of his day. He achieves the living contact of the mind with the old that was genuine and full of significance.[79]

Like polishing one facet on a great diamond, a historian contributes to a project far larger than their own. Huizinga expresses pure medieval realism: the sources are the shadows on the wall, but they point to a reality beyond, which is the Platonic fire we cannot see. Each historian's work expounds one

[76] See B. Netanyahu, *The origins of the Inquisition in fifteenth century Spain* (New York, NY, 1995); Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison, WI, 2002).

[77] Howell and Prevenier, *From reliable sources*, p. 149.

[78] Johan Huizinga, 'The task of cultural history', in *Men and ideas: history, the middle ages, and the Renaissance*, trans. James S. Holmes and Hans van Marle (Princeton, NJ, 1984), pp. 17–76, at p. 22.

[79] Ibid., p. 24.

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part of a larger whole; it is not that they can see the whole picture themselves. For some of us, Huizinga's description of the scholar's field of vision still holds meaning. The historians of the *Annales*, with their *histoire totale*, sought, scientifically and quantitatively, to build a mansion with many rooms that would unite a better understanding of the past which was larger than any one historian's vision.[80] Not all have succumbed to the nominalism of the postmodern critique.

IV

Turning from the question of what we can know, to what we *do* know about Renaissance self-fashioning, perhaps it is in the recent scholarship on cultural hybridity where we start to see a fruitful reframing of Greenblatt and Burckhardt.[81] Cultural hybridity allows for both the inner person and their outer mask to be equally real – that a genuine but hybrid identity could emerge out of the conflict or generative encounter between an old and a new identity, between what came before and the conformity to what is now. For instance, without conversion, forced or voluntary, there would be no converso or Morisco identities. Hybridity discards the binary of Jew or Christian, and instead of trying to compile enough evidence to show a converso was 'actually' still a Jew, or 'actually' a Christian, argues that there were such things as religious, cultural, and social identities that drew distinct elements from both traditions. Hybridity is not bound by the definitions left behind for us by Catholic inquisitors or by narrow Protestant confessions, and allows for a more creative and generative reading of the sources. In modern European history, postcolonial studies, and histories of nationalism, historians also argue that 'appropriation and rejection are two sides of the same coin'.[82]

Two excellent recent books on the lives of Spanish conversos are illustrative of the current state of the question regarding early modern identity formation, and the role of hybridity and self-fashioning within it: Kevin Ingram's *Converso non-conformism in early modern Spain* and Roger Louis Martínez-Dávila's *Creating conversos* (both 2018). To Martínez-Dávila, the converso experience illustrates both the power of self-fashioning and the existence of 'identity' in early modern Europe – for him this is what makes early modern Europe different from the middle ages – and he refers directly to Burckhardt and Greenblatt when laying out his theoretical approach and intellectual lineage. He writes of the converso family he studies that the 'active process of self-selecting the religious and cultural characteristics they wished to promote, as well as those they attempted to conceal, is a harbinger of early modern identity'.[83]

Martínez-Dávila's confidence regarding what can be known about past individuals' lives is also reflected in the method of biography. Biography may be

[80] Ihor Sevcenko uses this image (from John 14:2–3) of the house with many rooms in 'Two varieties of historical writing', *History and Theory*, 8 (1969), pp. 332–45, at p. 345.

[81] See the work of Homi Bhabha, cited in Stefan Berger, *History and identity: how historical theory shapes historical practice* (Cambridge, 2022), p. 25.

[82] Ibid., p. 89.

[83] Martínez-Dávila, *Creating conversos*, p. 5.

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considered by some a classic or even old-fashioned genre of historical writing because its very method supports the idea that something of a past person's inner life, through the analysis of primary sources, can actually be known. When Anthony Grafton wrote his book on Leon Battista Alberti in 2000 he said that the sources 'may enable us, if not to reveal the man behind the brilliantly crafted mask, at least to re-create something of Alberti's own sense of what he had lived and achieved'.[84] Grafton followed Greenblatt into this cautious middle ground. In his 2019 biography of Charles V (1500–58), Geoffrey Parker asks, 'Have I likewise attempted to excuse Charles in the hope of understanding him better and thus bringing him back to life?'[85] Parker confidently believes that there is much that it is possible for the historian to conclude about the interior life of past individuals, through analysis of abundant archival sources – and thus Parker's numerous royal biographies express little caution in their conclusions about Philip II's or Charles V's inner character or ideas. Parker and Martínez-Dávila, here, take the side of Ranke and Huizinga. Parker does, however, concede in his 'note on sources' that there are both 'known unknowns' and 'unknown unknowns' which make our knowledge of Charles incomplete.[86]

In contrast, like Howell and Prevenier, Kevin Ingram actively doubts how accurately the inner things of the mind – an early modern converso's anxieties and identities – can be known at all. Ingram argues in *Converso non-conformism* that discovering the true identity of any historical subject is impossible – that it is only possible to see what that subject wanted those around them to see. More specifically, he also argues that a high percentage of significant Spanish humanists were actually conversos, but that this fact has gone unrecognized, hidden in plain sight. Conversos were powerful actors within Spanish religion and politics, and in the Spanish Renaissance, but many of them never spoke of their Jewish origin out of fear of persecution. He qualifies his contribution by saying that 'while this study offers some insights into what I refer to as converso disquiet, it does not pretend to be an exploration of the nuances of New Christian identity – an impossible task given my subjects' wariness of self-revelation'.[87]

While Martínez-Dávila draws from both Burckhardt and Greenblatt, he uses this newer concept of hybridity to help explain an episode he found in his sources – that an effort by a converso family to conform to Christian practice could lead to their cultivating a unique type of Catholic devotion to the Virgin Mary. The fact that they were preparing for worship on Friday and celebrating a mass in honour of the Virgin in the cathedral on Saturday, following the holy days of Jewish practice, made their new religious activities hybrid in nature.[88]

[84] Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: master builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), p. 29.

[85] Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: a new life of Charles V* (New Haven, CT, 2019), p. 533.

[86] Geoffrey Parker, 'Note on sources', in Parker, *Emperor*, pp. 569–95, at pp. 593–5.

[87] Ingram, *Converso non-conformism*, p. xiii.

[88] Martínez-Dávila, *Creating conversos*, p. 117.

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This concept of hybridity is comparable to what psychologists call acculturation, which can be found in immigrant communities to varying degrees.[89]

As far as current scholarship on hybridity is concerned, Américo Castro seems to have won his debate with Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz.[90] Now, not only literary scholars, but also historians, and not only medievalists, but also early modernists, are very interested in tracing the influence of Jews and Muslims on Castilian culture. The history of the Morisco century (1492–1614) and the study of early modern Islam are growing fields.[91] Though in some sense, from the *longue durée*, Castro and Sánchez-Albornoz were actually re-enacting a debate between early modern Catholics and Protestants about whether the revival of an ancient idealized past (the Visigothic monarchy, or the early church) was more or less significant than all that happened in between their own era and antiquity. Early modernists know, of course, that the idealized past, its attempted revivals, and the long arc of continuity are culturally significant things, worthy of our study and analysis.

Various interpretations of the hybridity concept have taken off in recent years. For example, Thomas J. Dandelet rechristened Charles V's composite monarchy a 'hybrid empire'.[92] Charles's courtiers hailed from destinations across his many lands, bringing their Burgundian, Castilian, and Piedmontese perspectives, and many others, to bear on the questions which faced him. Charles's internationalism makes him a troublesome outlier for traditional political historians of the early modern state. The emperor himself had a hybrid identity of Burgundian duke, Holy Roman emperor, and Spanish king, whose heroes were both Julius Caesar and the knight riding a horse named desire in *Le chevalier deliberé*.[93]

Peter Burke, in *Hybrid Renaissance* (2016), argues that the Renaissance itself was a hybrid movement, meaning that it contained a fruitful interplay between old and new, and among contemporary ideas and aesthetic forms. He emphasizes the importance of active interaction, and thus the degree of 'hybridization', rather than just the presence of hybridity, and traces his ideas back to Mikhail Bakhtin, Gilberto Freyre, and numerous other theorists from literature, art history, anthropology, and other fields.[94] The reciprocity that Greenblatt had seen between the author and their environment is similar to this type of cultural interplay. Similarly, Christopher Ocker, in *The hybrid Reformation:*

[89] John W. Berry, 'Conceptual approaches to acculturation', in Kevin M. Chun, Pamela Balls Organista, and Gerardo Marín, eds., *Acculturation: advances in theory, management, and applied research* (Washington, DC, 2003), pp. 17–37, at p. 23.

[90] See Américo Castro, *España en su historia. Cristianos, moros, y judios* (Buenos Aires, 1958); Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, *España. Una enigma historica* (Buenos Aires, 1962).

[91] See Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal, and Abigail Krasner Balbale, *Arts of intimacy: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the making of Castilian culture* (New Haven, CT, 2008).

[92] Thomas J. Dandelet, *The Renaissance of empire in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2014).

[93] See Olivier de la Marche, *Le chevalier deliberé (The resolute knight)*, trans. Lois Hawley Wilson and Carleton W. Carroll, ed. Carleton W. Carroll (Tempe, AZ, 1999).

[94] Peter Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance: culture, language, architecture* (Budapest, 2016), p. 13. Peter Davidson makes a similar argument in *The universal baroque* (Manchester, 2007).

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a social, cultural, and intellectual history of contending forces, has applied the hybridity concept to the Reformation.[95]

V

Experts on Renaissance Florence and the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli and Leonardo Bruni have fundamentally questioned the knowability of past individuals' true beliefs, in a similar manner to Howell and Prevenier. If Machiavelli had actually used his rhetoric to support both the republic and the empire, and if Bruni was not actually as committed to the republic as Hans Baron thought, what can we genuinely know about what either Bruni or Machiavelli believed? What if they were of two minds, and it was all rhetoric?[96] Paul Oskar Kristeller gave us the freedom to break humanism free from republicanism: to see imperial humanists, republican humanists, Christian humanists, curial humanists, and endless others spreading out across early modern Europe as humanistically trained representatives of this historically and rhetorically informed skillset – all with different masters and different ideological commitments. Lu Ann Homza has applied this argument to early modern Spain.[97] There were many types of humanists, yes, but perhaps an individual humanist could maintain opposing viewpoints.

Not only this, but early modern individuals were even of two minds when it came to a driving motivation in humanist scholarship: historical accuracy. As Dandelet pointed out in *The Renaissance of empire* (2014), while imperial humanists may have pursued the ideal of using better primary sources, *ad fontes*, some actually forged ancient sources, like Antonio de Guevara, who forged the letters of Marcus Aurelius to concoct a proper imperial model for Charles V.[98] The two approaches existed at the same time – the high ideal of a better, more accurate, less legendary past, and the creation of new legend. As in personal identity, there is both the true self and the mask, or the old self and the new. Together, they can create a complex hybrid.

Another example of an early modern forger was the Jesuit Jerónimo Román de la Higuera (1538–1611), who wrote false chronicles modelled on Eusebius in which Santiago became a Tridentine figure who preached the immaculate conception! Katrina Olds, in *Forging the past* (2015), shows us how much effort Higuera and others put into crafting a holy history for Spain, forged out of the same textual raw materials that empirical humanist histories used. Again, this duality of the true self and the mask provides a mess for the historian to disentangle, which Olds does with extraordinary precision. She writes, 'Higuera's own deep familiarity with authentic historical, hagiographic, and liturgical sources enabled him to transform information about local

[95] Christopher Ocker, *The hybrid Reformation: a social, cultural, and intellectual history of contending forces* (Cambridge, 2022).

[96] James Hankins, 'The "Baron thesis" after forty years and some recent studies of Leonardo Bruni', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995), pp. 309–38.

[97] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance thought and its sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York, NY, 1979); Lu Ann Homza, *Religious authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD, 2000).

[98] Dandelet, *Renaissance of empire*, pp. 88–92.

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religious traditions into something resembling historical fact in the false chronicles.'[99] This crafting of history and legend took place in numerous contexts, with multiple aims: some courtiers and humanists wanted Philip II to emulate Caesar Augustus as a model of good kingship, and others David and Solomon.[100]

The conscious imitation of both ancient authors and contemporary poets created an identity minefield among participants in the Italian and Spanish literary Renaissances. Ignacio Navarrete has shown that the Spanish had a generative encounter with something that was both an authority and an 'other': the Italian poetry of Petrarch. He writes that 'language, and with it literature, are at any moment of time caught in an uncomfortable position of feeling inferior to the past and anxious about the future'.[101] Eleonora Stoppino discusses intertextual relationships as a form of genealogy, mapping both ancient epics and medieval chivalric precedents onto the poems of Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533).[102]

The historian John Jeffries Martin addresses the idea of a writer's sincerity, as well as their interests in imitation, in *Myths of Renaissance individualism* (2004). He takes on both Greenblatt and Burckhardt, saying that they had written powerful, founding myths, identifying the origins of the modern and the postmodern 'individual' or 'self' in the Renaissance. In response, he identifies multiple ways 'in which men and women in the Renaissance generally understood the self', one 'performative', another 'sincere'.[103] All these 'selves' addressed the problem of reconciling interior life with exterior behaviour. Martin concludes: 'In the midst of the sixteenth century (though there is some evidence that this new moral meaning of sincerity had begun to appear in Renaissance writers as early as Petrarch and Valla) we discover a growing moral imperative to make one's feelings and convictions known.'[104]

How does Martin's idea of the 'sincere self' play out on a practical level? Niccolò Machiavelli wrote admiringly about his favourite prince, Ferdinand of Aragon, who attacked Granada and then Africa 'under the same cloak of piety'.[105] It is worth quoting at length the famous passage where Machiavelli discusses how a prince should 'seem' and 'be':

> It must be understood, however, that a prince – especially a prince who has but recently attained power – cannot observe all of those virtues for which

[99] Katrina Olds, *Forging the past: invented histories in Counter-Reformation Spain* (New Haven, CT, 2015), p. 165.

[100] See Adam Beaver, 'Nebuchadnezzar's Jewish legions: Sephardic legends' journey from biblical polemic to humanist history', in Mercedes García-Arenal, ed., *After conversion: Iberia and the emergence of modernity* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 21–65; Ingram, *Converso non-conformism*; Dandelet, *Renaissance of empire*.

[101] Ignacio Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch: poetry and theory in the Spanish Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), pp. 4–5.

[102] Eleonora Stoppino, *Genealogies of fiction: women warriors and the dynastic imagination in the 'Orlando furioso'* (New York, NY, 2012), pp. 2, 9–11.

[103] Martin, *Myths of Renaissance individualism*, pp. 30, 32, 35, 37, 38.

[104] Ibid., p. 110.

[105] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The prince*, trans. Daniel Donno (New York, NY, 1981), ch. 21, p. 77.

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> men are reputed good, because it is often necessary to act against mercy, against faith, against humanity, against frankness, against religion, in order to preserve the state. Thus, he must be disposed to change according as the winds of fortune and the alterations of circumstance dictate. As I have already said, he must stick to the good so long as he can, but, being compelled by necessity, he must be ready to take the way of evil.[106]

Neither the prince's strategy nor the prince's character were fixed. They needed to transform to meet the needs of the moment.

In another famous passage, from Baldassare Castiglione's *The courtier*, we learn of a man who could imitate Ferdinand of Aragon through his facial expressions: 'There are many like this who think they are marvelous if they can simply resemble a great man in some one thing; and often they seize on the only defect he has.'[107] After this anecdote, Castiglione (1478–1529) provides the 'universal rule' that one should 'steer away from affectation at all costs, as if it were a rough and dangerous reef, and (to perhaps use a novel word for it) to practice in all things a certain nonchalance which conceals all artistry and makes whatever one says or does seem uncontrived and effortless'.[108] This is *sprezzatura*. The Renaissance identities we find within the words of Machiavelli and Castiglione, despite the former describing the real and the latter the ideal, are both moulded and malleable, changeable and changed by their circumstances and context in the court of the Renaissance prince.

Sincerity and the 'sincere self' have a greater spiritual significance when we turn to the Reformation. Interior piety was a theme throughout the high and late middle ages and was not new to the Protestants. What early modern Protestants did was to pair the doctrine of total depravity with a sincere, salvific faith, which they believed justified the believer through the grace and mercy of a loving God. The sincerity of emotion was the soul's response to grace, and the joyful assurance of salvation given through sincere repentance and faith. Without sincerity, confessions of faith were worthless. *Fide* needed to be sincere in order to justify. This sincere self was the self which went to the scaffold and the stake for believing in the assurance of its salvation, and this was the sincere self which did the same for the sake of the historic Catholic faith.

Charles V was a man who valued his own sincerity very highly. He was not above propaganda, and his courtiers wrote tracts justifying his troops' sack of Rome in 1527. However, when it came to his personal interactions with people, Charles valued sincerity above all else. This was why, when Francis I of France, who had only recently been his prisoner, re-invaded his territory despite giving his word not to do so in the treaty of Madrid, Charles challenged his rival to single combat. There was no greater betrayal for Charles than for Francis to not be his 'sincere self'.[109] The same was true in his frustrations with Pope

[106] Ibid., ch. 18, p. 63.

[107] Baldassare Castiglione, *The book of the courtier*, trans. George Bull (London, 2006), p. 67.

[108] Ibid.

[109] James D. Tracy, *Emperor Charles V, impresario of war: campaign strategy, international finance and domestic politics* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 65.

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Clement VII, whose primary skill, according to many contemporaries, was vacillation between various imperial masters. Charles's speech in response to Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521) could be summarized in one sentence: this is who I am and who I will always be – a Catholic emperor.[110]

Now, Charles V was not alone but surrounded by an entire apparatus of secretaries, councils, and courtiers. Courtiership is a significant topic within the history of Renaissance self-fashioning and the 'sincere self'. On this topic, Greenblatt was not the first, but was part of a longer scholarly conversation, influenced by Daniel Javitch's *Poetry and courtliness in Renaissance England*, and other works.[111] The sociologist Norbert Elias contended that the nobility's transition from warrior to courtier was a civilizing process.[112] He used 'psychoanalytic concepts' to study the 'rise of self-control', as courts required 'a stronger restraint upon the emotions'.[113] Leah Middlebook brought this discussion to early modern Spain, writing that, at the Spanish court, the noble warrior's 'worthiness now became linked to equally violent and powerful acts of suppression that were directed inward, against the self, in the manner described by Norbert Elias in his discussions of the process of "courtierization"'.[114]

Harry Berger has explained courtiership as a 'performance opportunity' which 'guarantees performance anxiety'.[115] Because the court was a place where adept self-fashioning could lead to successful social climbing, it became a stage for those in search of advancement, even for the Spanish literary character, the *picaro*, a young rogue such as Pablos in Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón* (1626): 'A *picaro* can dress like a nobleman, but to truly impersonate one, he needs *sprezzatura* and a host of skills (one of which, horseback riding, Pablos lacks). Thus, the link between Castiglione and the picaresque is reinforced: true courtiership cannot be learned from a book.'[116] Jon Snyder has traced manuals of courtiership from Castiglione to Balthasar Gracián (1601–58), revealing the greater power of the monarch over his courtiers in the age of absolutism, whereas earlier, in Castiglione's time, 'the courtier chooses to pay voluntary homage to the prince, and is free to leave if the latter is not worthy of such respect', demonstrating a significant amount of individual autonomy.[117] Paola Ugolini has shown how 'survival at court became increasingly cynical' over time, and how seventeenth-century courtiers were

[110] 'Charles V's speech at Worms, 19 April 1521', in B. J. Kidd, ed., *Documents illustrative of the continental Reformation* (Oxford, 1911), pp. 85–6.

[111] Daniel Javitch, *Poetry and courtliness in Renaissance England* (Princeton, NJ, 1978).

[112] Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford, 2000), p. 389.

[113] Green, *Cultural history*, pp. 42–3.

[114] Leah Middlebrook, 'Introduction', in *Imperial lyric: new poetry and new subjects in early modern Spain* (Kindle edn, University Park, PA, 2009).

[115] Harry Berger, Jr, *The absence of grace: sprezzatura and suspicion in two Renaissance courtesy books* (Stanford, CA, 2000), p. 18; Norbert Elias, *The civilizing process, volume 2: power and civility*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York, NY, 1982), pp. 104–16.

[116] Ignacio Navarrete and Elizabeth A. Terry-Roisin, 'Nobles and court culture', in Hilaire Kallendorf, ed., *A companion to the Spanish Renaissance* (Leiden, 2019), pp. 235–57, at p. 255.

[117] Jon Snyder, *Dissimulation and the culture of secrecy in early modern Europe* (Berkeley, CA, 2009), p. 88.

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at the 'mercy of Fortuna'.[118] According to Snyder, in an Italian courtiership manual written at the end of the sixteenth century, Lorenzo Ducci argues that the courtier's relationship with the prince

> consists in a confidence game: through role-playing and dissimulating intended to remove and extinguish all suspicion, the prince may be led to believe that his interlocutor in the courtly conversation is speaking freely and plainly, although the courtier is in fact closely guarding his or her true thoughts and desires.[119]

Self-control and wise strategizing were necessary to the career of the successful early modern courtier.

VI

For these reasons, the court could be a stressful environment. Anxiety often resulted from a divide between the courtier's sincere self and their mask. Structurally, the idiosyncratic way that various rulers enforced religious conformity was another reason for an early modern person to be anxious. Identities changed to aid in human survival. Ethan Shagan describes the way in which Protestants and Catholics in Tudor England lived in a 'hall of mirrors'. They twisted their psyches back and forth in their attempts to believe rightly or to obey fully, as the crown changed hands between Protestant and Catholic rulers. The degree to which individuals moulded their religious identity to match what each regime considered orthodox was not only personally significant and fraught but also a matter of life or death, in the confessional age.[120]

Shagan's research in *The birth of modern belief* (2018) parallels these observations written by Greenblatt about Martin Luther:

> Luther's crisis of guilt was symptomatic of a far broader cultural crisis, as the events of the 1520s and '30s make abundantly clear. Again and again we encounter the same pattern: grave spiritual anxiety, an intense feeling of being in a false or sinful relationship to God, a despairing sense of the impossibility of redemption despite scrupulous ritual observance, suddenly transformed into inner conviction of salvation through faith in God's love. Luther's brilliant exposition of this pattern became, of course, a model, but only because it spoke so powerfully to the psychological and spiritual state already in existence.[121]

[118] Paola Ugolini, *The court and its critics: anti-court sentiments in early modern Italy* (Toronto, 2020), p. 182.

[119] Snyder, *Dissimulation*, p. 92.

[120] See Ethan Shagan, *The birth of modern belief: faith and judgment from the middle ages to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ, 2018); Ethan Shagan, *Popular politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2002).

[121] Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, p. 52.

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Between Greenblatt (1980) and Shagan (2018), William Bouwsma published his biography of John Calvin (1989). Bouwsma writes that 'nothing bound Calvin more closely to his time than his anxiety. He offers the historian, therefore, a unique opportunity to study the inner turmoil of a peculiarly troubled age.'[122] In *The waning of the Renaissance* (2000), Bouwsma expounded further on this theme, arguing that the early modern period itself was defined by anxiety.[123]

Ultimately, the historian must both use the historically grounded categories and concepts provided to us by past individuals and also employ concepts and tools from our own age (anxiety or the Renaissance) to render the past comprehensible to us. It becomes clear, in Bouwsma's analysis, that hybridity would have been something John Calvin himself found dangerous and disordered:

> He abominated the papacy above all because it had, as he believed, mixed human invention with divine ordination, earthly with heavenly things. Scriptura sola was intended precisely to prevent such mixture. The positive corollary of Calvin's loathing of mixture was his approval of boundaries, which separate one thing from another.[124]

At least in his efforts to categorize and divide, Calvin was not the enemy of scholasticism he has often been called.

VII

Burckhardt emphasized individual identity in the Renaissance city-state and contrasted it with strong group identity in the middle ages, seeing his own nineteenth-century ideas about individualism reflected back to him in his sources. Medievalists and others have attacked this contention over the years.[125] Walter Ulmann and Colin Morris have located the rise of the individual in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries, respectively.[126] Joseph Strayer has identified *The medieval origins of the modern state*, and cultural and intellectual historians from Huizinga to Warren Treadgold to Charles Homer Haskins and others have questioned whether the word 'Renaissance' should ever have deserved the definite article.[127] For Joan Kelly, the freedom experienced by

[122] William Bouwsma, *John Calvin: a sixteenth century portrait* (Oxford, 1989), p. 32.

[123] William Bouwsma, *The waning of the Renaissance, 1550–1640* (New Haven, CT, 2000).

[124] Bouwsma, *John Calvin*, pp. 34–5.

[125] Douglas Biow, *On the importance of being an individual in Renaissance Italy: men, their professions, and their beards* (Philadelphia, PA, 2015), pp. 226–7, calls Burckhardt's view of the individual 'misguided and untrue', arguing instead that 'the individual and the collectivity are dialectically engaged'.

[126] Walter Ulmann, *The individual and society in the middle ages* (Baltimore, MD, 1966); Colin Morris, *The discovery of the individual, 1050–1200* (New York, NY, 1972). Morris claims to be able to graph a quantity, the 'rise of the individual'. Both Burckhardt and Morris describe one cultural revival as a turning point in world civilization, and an origin for the modern individual. Today, scholars have questioned the drama of this story and have identified many more medieval renaissances.

[127] Joseph R. Strayer, *The medieval origins of the modern state* (Princeton, NJ, 1973); Huizinga, *Men and ideas*; Warren Treadgold, *Renaissances before the Renaissance: cultural revivals of late antiquity and the middle ages* (Stanford, CA, 1984); Charles Homer Haskins, *The renaissance of the twelfth century*

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women in twelfth-century France was far greater than in fifteenth-century Florence.[128] The field of early modern studies as a whole has had to grapple with whether 'Renaissance and Reformation' herald modernity or merely represent a transition to it, whatever it may be – but these questions take us outside the scope of this article.[129]

Several distinguished historians have taken aim at Burckhardt's first point: that the middle ages were dominated by group identity but were followed by a rise in individual identity. Richard Trexler identified 'the Reformation's denial of the meaningfulness of action', and then took Burckhardt's topic head on, in *Public life in Renaissance Florence* (1980), showing the ongoing power of group identity after the middle ages. According to Trexler, 'the belief that the individual is not defined by a socially active self, that the search for one's identity takes place in the mind of the individual, not upon the streets of cities, disguises a fear of change', on the part of the conservative forces that resist social action and progress.[130] John Bossy, in *Christianity in the West* (1985), explained how the English Reformation broke apart social and kinship ties which had been forged not only by relationships among local parishioners but by the communion of the saints and masses for the dead which connected Christian communities in heaven and on earth. Rather than new Reformation ideas or theologies setting anyone free, Bossy observed social loss and alienation.[131] Perhaps Burckhardt had layered his Renaissance too closely upon his father's Calvinist Reformation. Both Bossy's social approach to the Reformation and Trexler's cultural history of civic ritual in Florence took aim at Burckhardt by turning the lens of their analysis away from an early modern individual's identity to a community far bigger than them, which, in turn, shaped them.[132] Guido Ruggiero has more recently emphasized that there was a lively interaction between the historical individual and their group. 'Reversing Burckhardt', he argues that the Renaissance 'created the individual as a work of art'.[133] Ruggiero's 'complex negotiations', where identities are impacted by 'consensus realities', echo Greenblatt, and to some extent Febvre, and the *Annales*' many debates about agency and structure. He does not make the distinction Burckhardt did that group identity was

(Cleveland, OH, 1970). See also Maria Mavroudi, 'The modern study of selfhood in Byzantium compared with medieval Europe and the Islamic world: parallel and diverging trends in the construction of "East" and "West"', *Palaeoslavica*, 30 (2022), pp. 234–304.

[128] Joan Kelly, 'Did women have a Renaissance?', in Renate Bridenthai and Claudia Koonz, eds., *Becoming visible: women in European history* (Boston, MA, 1977), pp. 137–64.

[129] See Randolph Starn, 'The early modern muddle', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6 (2002), pp. 296–307; William Bouwsma, 'The Renaissance and the drama of Western history', *American Historical Review*, 84 (1979), pp. 1–15.

[130] Richard Trexler, *Public life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, NY, 1980), p. xvii.

[131] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985).

[132] A new volume has also recently addressed Burckhardt's legacy. See Bauer and Ditchfield, eds., *A Renaissance reclaimed.*

[133] Guido Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy: a social and cultural history of the Rinascimento* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 326.

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stronger in the middle ages. For Ruggiero, modernity came much later. He disagrees with Greenblatt that the Renaissance was the origin of modernity.[134]

Numerous historians have questioned Burckhardt's bold claim that, in Renaissance Italy, 'man became a spiritual *individual*, and recognized himself as such'.[135] Here is the student of Leopold von Ranke rashly making a spiritual statement that cannot empirically be proved! According to Wietse de Boer, what Norbert Elias, Pierre Bourdieu, and Stephen Greenblatt 'had in common was an emphasis on the outer man or woman. But they also questioned the assumption of a transparent correspondence of interior and exterior that appears to underlie Burckhardt's work. Under the chisel of poststructuralist analysis, the inner person remained concealed.'[136]

The debate described earlier in this article between groups represented by Ranke, Huizinga, Parker, and Martínez-Dávila on one hand, and Ingram, Howell, and Prevenier, on the other, continues, as scholars reflect upon whether only collective *mentalités*, or individual identities, can actually be known. Overall, thanks to the work of Trexler, Bossy, Ruggiero, and many others, Burckhardt's contention that a free 'individual' arrived on the scene for the first time in Renaissance Italy has been largely discarded as an exaggeration which rested on a spiritual conviction that came from his own nineteenth-century *mentalité*.[137] But Renaissance self-fashioning remains, and so does interdisciplinary scholarship.

VIII

Fernand Braudel was famous for pursuing *histoire totale*. I would argue that Greenblatt held up a similar ideal, which I am calling *littérature totale*.[138] H. Aram Veeser writes,

> Far from a single projectile aimed at Western Civilization, new historicism has a portmanteau quality. It brackets together literature, ethnography, anthropology, art history, and other disciplines and science, hard and soft … at the same time, it encourages us to admire the sheer intricacy and unavoidability of exchanges between culture and power.[139]

Drawing from Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, and others, new historicists describe 'culture in action'.[140] If Braudel's dream was to unite history and

[134] See Greenblatt, *The swerve*.

[135] Burckhardt, *Civilization*, p. 121, emphasis in original.

[136] Wietse de Boer, 'Expressions of the self in Burckhardt's Renaissance', in Bauer and Ditchfield, eds., *A Renaissance reclaimed*, pp. 120–41, at pp. 130–1.

[137] See Bossy, *Christianity in the West*; Trexler, *Public life*; Gerald N. Izenberg, *Impossible individuality: romanticism, revolution, and the origins of modern selfhood, 1787–1802* (Princeton, NJ, 1992); Thomas Albert Howard, 'Jacob Burckhardt, religion, and the historiography of "crisis" and "transition"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), pp. 149–64.

[138] I am using this term to mirror the *Annales*' ideal of *histoire totale*, and am not referring to the concept coined by Jean-Paul Sartre.

[139] Veeser, 'Introduction', p. xi.

[140] Ibid.

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the social sciences, then new historicism made a treaty among the humanities, to bring together history and literature, and also gave a significant nod to the social science of anthropology. This ideal resists specialization. Burckhardt united political history and art history; Wundt, Jung, and Herr, religion and psychology; Febvre and Braudel, geography and history. For this, Peter Burke called them polymaths.[141] But I would argue that this long history of interdisciplinarity rests upon Burckhardt's original insights about Italy's *uomo universale*. Jan de Vries has remarked in a number of historiographic essays that Braudel's interdisciplinary dream between history and the social sciences was admirable but unsuccessful.[142] In my opinion, there is still hope for *littérature totale*, especially as the humanities band together to fight for survival. Whether scholars are able to individually pursue multiple fields, or simply polish one facet out of a billion, as Huizinga encouraged us, the march continues.[143]

Historians and literary scholars may disagree over how much we are able to know about the identity and inner life of past individuals. Yet there is an overall agreement that early modern people had choices and represented themselves accordingly. William Childers describes this as the 'many examples of passing, go-betweens, and chameleon-like shifts'.[144] Early modern people began to have an abundance of options regarding what to believe – 'Reconquistas', Renaissances, and Reformations provided those choices for them – and their ability to change, convert, and move between multiple identities and geographic spaces led to unease, something that, by the seventeenth century, as William Bouwsma would say, was perhaps a malaise. They had cultural agency but also cultural anxiety, a quality endemic to early modern Europe.[145] Greenblatt's argument that the early modern period initiated a world of self-fashioning has been substantiated by numerous recent studies, especially those emphasizing hybridity. His work critically builds upon the foundation built by Burckhardt. Therefore, despite all the critique he has received since 1860, through Greenblatt, Burckhardt remains.

In early modern Europe, not only were religious belief and practice up for grabs, but so were fashion, social status, and comportment. The courtier created himself anew through his *sprezzatura*. So did the prince, through his actions, and able propaganda – printed, painted, and carved into stone. The authors whose works Greenblatt chose to examine, including More, Shakespeare, and Wyatt, were all individuals who moved up in social status – like a Spanish picaresque character, who, once he had enough money, stopped working as a water seller, bought a sword and a new jacket, and tried to be

[141] Burke, *Polymath*.

[142] Jan de Vries, 'Great expectations: early modern history and the social sciences', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 22 (1999), pp. 121–49, at p. 124.

[143] Burke, *Polymath*, p. 243, is concerned about increasing specialization and the fact that there are fewer polymaths today: 'In any case, specialization continues its relentless progress. The different branches of knowledge are constantly producing new things.'

[144] William Childers, 'Cervantes in Moriscolandia', *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 32 (2012), pp. 277–90, at p. 290.

[145] Bouwsma, *Waning of the Renaissance*.

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taken for a nobleman.[146] His accessories were a 'consumption cluster', of noble self-fashioning and consumerism.[147]

The early modern period provides us with not just the high value placed on the authenticity of sources (and an authentic revival of antiquity, both Christian and pagan) but also its opposite: guidebooks on the naked craft of artifice, or holy history which was forged. This tension existed both in early modern creative expressions of the self and in the writing of sacred and secular history. Examples abound of early modern individuals like Calvin for whom the common boundary crossing of his age provoked disapproval and anxiety.

Today, early modernists are more self-aware, and far more careful not to disparage the middle ages. They study plenty of early modern groups as well, following the example of Trexler and Bossy. This does not mean that scholars have ceased to investigate the multitudinous identities of individual early modern people, analysing literary and archival sources in order to do so. Rather, they are now discussing individuals' relationships to their various communities, the interplay that Greenblatt and Febvre pointed to between the early modern writer and their environment, the collective rituals of a community, and the ways in which the demands that Protestant and Catholic rulers made of their subjects drove them to transform and conform themselves in order to survive.

When historians study the anxious inner life of the *uomo universale* and read the literary criticism of Greenblatt and others like him, some of Burckhardt's insights are reborn. Greenblatt's Renaissance self-fashioning is still with us, and a new chapter has now been written about it, called hybridity. How understandings of Morisco or converso history might interface with Martin's idea of the 'sincere self' is something that is worthy of further investigation, as are insights which can be gained by the application of a Jungian lens, on individuation and the collective unconscious. The early modern period is not one thing alone – it is rather all things to all men. These decades of fruitful debate and discussion about identity formation in the early modern period are nowhere near concluded.

Recalling Burckhardt's second point – his admiration for the *uomo universale* of Renaissance Italy who sought to master multiple fields of study – Greenblatt makes clear that he admires such interdisciplinary activities. Describing the ancient library or museum of Alexandria, he writes that its 'scope was the entire range of philosophical inquiry. It represented a global cosmopolitanism.'[148] There, people experienced 'religious pluralism under paganism'.[149] But after the coming of Christianity, all of this came crashing down. 'The museum, with its dream of assembling all texts, all schools, all ideas, was no longer at the protected center of civil society.'[150] While Byzantinists will

[146] Michael Alpert, trans., *Two Spanish Picaresque novels: Lazarillo de Tormes and The swindler* (New York, NY, 2003).

[147] See 'consumption clusters', as defined in de Vries, *Industrious revolution*, pp. 31–4.

[148] Greenblatt, *The swerve*, p. 87.

[149] Ibid., p. 89.

[150] Ibid., p. 93.

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rightly take issue at his characterization of the 'loss' of ancient knowledge in the middle ages, other early modernists have agreed with Greenblatt that there was a strong sense among Italian humanists that antiquity was dead and buried and needed to be revived.[151]

Greenblatt believed he saw the roots of his own day in the Renaissance. While Burckhardt was less self-aware than Greenblatt, so did he. Cultural critics today, in the age of social media, 'cloud' storage, globalization, pandemics, and other upheavals, say we are now in the age of the 'extreme self': 'unless it's narrating itself, the Extreme Self ceases to exist'.[152] As the millennial generation and those even younger begin to publish their historical and literary scholarship, one wonders what new insights will be brought to bear on the history of identity formation in early modern Europe.

Returning to the Morisco Granada Venegas family, recent research by Frédéric Alchalabi has shown that this family and their humanist allies were also forgers. They crafted two genealogical and historical works that sought to amplify the political role of their family within Spain's Islamic past.[153] Despite this, it is interesting to note that, when Don Pedro III de Granada Venegas's future was truly on the line, under the shadow of a looming Morisco expulsion, when he needed to protect himself under the folds of a habit of knighthood, he chose to provide the Council of Orders with the chronicles of Marmol and King Juan II, which were not forgeries, and which provided evidence of his family's genuine political loyalty to Christian rulers, and of their military service – two key characteristics of nobility, a nobility that Don Pedro was seeking empirically to prove. *Limpieza de sangre* laws were fundamental to his historical context, but he navigated these laws successfully.[154] Fortunately for Don Pedro, he was granted the title of marqués de Campotéjar in 1643.[155] As Castiglione's pen writes, 'we can truthfully say that true art is what does not seem to be art; and the most important thing is to conceal it'.[156]

In disentangling the tensions and contradictions within Don Pedro III's story, and within the lives of his forebears and contemporaries, we continue to write the history of self-fashioning in early modern Europe. While

[151] Ibid., p. 130: 'It was better not to pretend any longer, but to acknowledge that there was no continuity. Instead, there was a corpse, long buried and now disintegrated, under one's feet.' Dandelet, *Renaissance of empire*, p. 37: 'If it was the internal strife of Italy that caused Petrarch to yearn for the revival of ancient Roman power and to offer his biography of Caesar as a source of inspiration for the emperors of his own day, the Ottoman threat was an even greater spur that led the popes after 1450 to revive the memories of ancient Roman grandeur and the hope for a new Caesar to lead Europe.'

[152] Shumon Basar, Douglas Coupland, and Hans Ulrich Obrist, *The extreme self* (Cologne, 2021), unpaginated.

[153] See Frédéric Alchalabi, ed., *Tractado del origen de los reyes de Granada* (Granada, 2020); Enrique Soria Mesa, 'Una version genealógica del ansia intregadora de la élite morisca: el *Origen de la casa de Granada*', *Sharq al-Andalus*, 12 (1995), pp. 213–21.

[154] Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Ordenes militares: Alcántara, year 1607, exp. 655.

[155] José Antonio García Luján, 'El alma única y universal heredera del patrimonio rústico de don Pedro de Granada Venegas Manrique de Mendoza, primer marqués de Campotéjar (1643)', *Historia, Instituciones, Documentos*, 44 (2017), pp. 104–31.

[156] Castiglione, *Book of the courtier*, p. 67.

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Greenblatt and other new historicists may not believe that there is anything psychologically universal about self-fashioning,[157] Greenblatt, Febvre, and Burckhardt all wished to understand the 'mental tools' (to borrow Febvre's term) that early modern people had at their disposal. Thus, their work and the work of their heirs continues to shed light on the psychological specificity of the early modern past.

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[157] H. Aram Veeser has compiled a list of what he calls the 'assumptions' of new historicism. Among them is the idea that 'no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths nor expresses inalterable human nature' (Veeser, 'Introduction', p. xi).

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