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OTHER REVIEWS

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Roundhead reputations: the English civil wars and the passions of posterity. By Blair Worden. London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 2001. Pp. xii + 387. ISBN 0-713-99603-X. £20.00.

For Clarendon, Oliver Cromwell was a 'brave bad man'. This book is a brave good book. Brave, because it bridges professional and popular history without compromising scholarly integrity, and it does so by tackling topics which are not obviously amenable to popularization. The book reflects two current historiographical preoccupations: the history of reputations and representations, and the history of Britain's 'monarchical republic'. The monarchical republicanism in question is the tradition of 'Commonwealth' thinking that flourished for several generations after the restoration of kingship in 1660. Scholarship on this topic has hitherto largely belonged to the arcana of the history of political thought, but it is now beginning to find a wider audience – another recent instance is Frank Prochaska's *The republic of Britain, 1760–2000* (2000).

The republican tradition was sustained by texts which were republished and handed down. Worden seeks to explain how historians have been dependent upon, and sometimes mislead by, the manhandling of texts by their editors. His book is thus a study of textual and cultural transmissions. In a quietly unpolemical way, he argues that, while the past can be radically obscured by the 'present's habit of indicating what it wants to hear' (p. 18), history is saved from fiction by constant direct encounters with the archive. If it is true that, both metaphorically and literally, historians necessarily edit what they find in the archive, this at least is a leap beyond mere dependence on the editors who have gone before them. We are, as Worden shows, remarkably under the spell of past editors; yet we can edit afresh.

Worden's salient case is John Toland's 1698 edition of General Edmund Ludlow's memoirs, a text which Toland skilfully filleted of its 'phanatick' Puritanism, decking it out instead in secular, patriot Roman dress. Not for this airbrushed Ludlow the wrath of Phineas or the imprecations against Meroz, but rather the republican virtue of Cato and the Gracchi. Ludlow was now fit to serve a century of 'polite' Enlightenment Commonwealthmen, committed not to building an apocalyptic Zion but to sustaining a critique of corrupt Whig ministers. Toland's fabrication of Ludlow's *Memoirs* is not here called a fraud but 'a work of genius', for Toland's edition and the veritable library of civil war texts he published in 1698–1700 (Sidney, Milton, Harrington) were the cornerstones of a century of Whig radicalism and American patriotism. Toland, in more senses than one, canonized the republicans. Not till the 1970s did part of Ludlow's manuscript turn up in Warwick Castle to expose the trick. Worden set about editing it afresh.

Ludlow died a natural death in Swiss exile. John Hampden died in battle and Algernon Sidney on the scaffold. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Commonwealth, and the cult of the 'murdered patriots' amounted to a secular religion for later generations. Sidney's slashing indictment of tyrants in the visitors' book of Copenhagen University became the motto of the State of Massachusetts, and in Virginia there is a Hampden-Sidney

College. In the 1790s Sidney's exhumed body was found to be 'very perfect'. Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, and Coleridge revered those 'sages and patriots that being dead yet speak to us'. The appeal of the Roundhead patriots reached its zenith in the eighteenth century, but it declined thereafter. They lost their voice when the French Terror made republicanism suspect, when socialism lost patience with *frondeur* aristocrats, and when Nonconformity got out from under the skirts of Low Church Whiggery.

From the republicans, Worden moves to Cromwell. Here we see how the Protector's reputation was transformed by Thomas Carlyle's 1845 edition of Cromwell's *Letters and speeches*, bizarre and wayward though it was. Caryle's explosive mix of Calvinism and Romanticism made Oliver a giant among pygmies and put God back into the civil wars. Carlyle practically invented 'the Puritan Revolution'. Curiously perhaps, Cromwell's stock was low in the eighteenth century, despite the strength of Roundhead reputations, perhaps because Cromwell's coups against parliaments rankled among parliamentarian Whigs. It was Carlyle who turned him from a tyrant into a hero. Worden, drawing on the History Workshop archive of Victorian invocations of Cromwell, explores the socialist Cromwell, the russet-coated plain man who was a stick to beat lords and landlords; the Cromwell of Smilesian middle-class Nonconformity, who was a warning to Puseyite popery; the Cromwell of colonial conquest who was a model for imperialists; the Cromwell who was the iconoclastic Strong Man favoured by promoters of National Efficiency. As Roy Strong showed in *And when did you last see your father* (1978), the Victorians were passionately partisan about the civil wars, and it still takes one aback to realize how much of our mental imagery of that conflict is owed to Victorian genre painting. In the Victorian chapel of Mansfield College, Oxford, Cromwell is commemorated in stained glass. The Cromwell cult culminated in the campaign for a statue at Westminster, unveiled in 1899, Oliver with sword and bible in hand.

The coda to Worden's account is the surprisingly late discovery of the Levellers. Any account of the civil wars today, and especially of its political thought, makes the Levellers central. But they were quickly forgotten after the 1640s and were ignored until the end of the nineteenth century. The magnificent Thomason Collection of civil war tracts was essential to their revival, and crucial was G. P. Gooch's *English democratic ideas in the seventeenth century* (1898), one of the first fruits of the Cambridge school of the history of political thought. Yet it was not the liberal Gooch but a phalanx of socialists who promoted the Levellers, some of whom were neither British nor primarily historians, such as Eduard Bernstein and D. W. Petegorsky. (Worden does not say that the 'Henry Holorenshaw' who published on the Levellers in 1939 was in fact the Marxist biochemist Joseph Needham.)

Scholars familiar with Worden's work will recognize that much of this book reworks earlier essays, and there is a forgivable sleight of hand in retelling his 1978 Ludlow story as if it were newly minted. There is some narrative flourish in withholding until page 95 the 'secret' that Toland was responsible for the 1698 Ludlow edition – 'we can try to discover' the perpetrator, but it 'will need detective work' (pp. 85, 11). The absence of footnotes can be frustrating, but there is a full bibliographical essay. The book is enormously absorbing and Worden is to be congratulated on offering to the public audience for history not a pat past but an insight into the complex process by which the past reaches the present.

CHURCHILL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE MARK GOLDIE

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The agrarian history of England and Wales, VII: 1850–1914. Edited by E. J. T. Collins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. In two parts, Part 1, pp. xl+944, ISBN 0-521-32926-4; Part 2, pp. xv+945–2,277. ISBN 0-521-32927-2. £195.00.

Volume VII of the *Agrarian history of England and Wales* is the fitting grand finale to this innovative and informative series. The protracted route taken by the *Agrarian history* sequence to reach its completion outlines the perils of undertaking a project that is defined by a long-term perspective and a multi-author approach. Designed in the 1950s, and inspired by the newly launched British Agricultural History Society, the series aimed to produce a fresh survey of the agrarian history of England and Wales from prehistory to the eve of the Second World War, augmenting Lord Ernle's authoritative, but ageing, study of 1912.[1] The first volume (covering the years 1500–1640) appeared in 1967. It has therefore taken over thirty years to accomplish the original goal. During that time new historical approaches and techniques have enriched the study of agriculture and have taken the project in directions unforeseen by the originators. As the General Editor, Joan Thirsk, comments in the short preface 'if we had known at the beginning the shape of the subject at the end, then we would have planned our agrarian history differently' (p. xxxv).

Volume VII itself was planned over fifteen years ago, with Part IV being submitted in 1989, and other chapters following at varying points throughout the 1990s. This does cause some problems, as not all sections fully encompass important new research undertaken in the last few years. Indeed this is acknowledged in the editor's summing-up, where the achievements of the volume are described as 'uneven', with 'much' remaining 'to be done' (p. 2,152). A good part of the material presented is a reworking and extension of previously published work, and the usage by different authors of the same contemporary printed source (notably James Caird, Henry Rider Haggard and A. D. Hall) can become repetitive. The deaths of two of the main contributors – Gordon Cherry and B. A. Holderness – also deprived agrarian history of two leading scholars, and inevitably disrupted the editing process of the volume. But to be too critical of the presentation and editing would be unjust, and that the final outcome is such a triumph – in its size, scale, and detail – is a tribute to all those involved in its production. The size is indeed formidable and certainly confirms the heavyweight status of the series. The unwieldy nature of the volume is partly mitigated by publishing in two parts. Together they cover some 2,277 pages, with 140 figures and maps, and 285 tables. The scale and detail will be off-putting and frustrating for some: the undergraduate student who wants simple, compressed, and easily located answers, or the casual reader who may still do better by consulting the more populist works by G. E. Mingay and Pamela Horn.[2] However, for those after authoritative debate and the detailed minutiae of agrarian matters, this volume is unsurpassable. It is divided into seven parts, which contain separate, but overlapping, themes. In fact, the volume would be indigestible in a single sitting read and each part should be approached as a distinct monograph in its own right.

[1] Lord Ernle, *English farming: past and present* (London, 1912).

[2] G. E. Mingay, *The Victorian countryside* (London, 1981); G. E. Mingay, *A social history of the English countryside* (London, 1990); Pamela Horn, *The changing countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (London, 1984).

A brief overview of the contents reveals the scope of the volume. Part I looks at change in food supply, output, productivity, and income between 1850 and 1914. Part II breaks down the component parts, outlining the different regions, systems, and techniques of farming, whilst Part III moves on to examine the position of landowners, farmers, and labourers. Rural trades and industries are the focus of Part IV, with marketing, servicing, processing, manufacturing, and retailing all covered. Part V is where agricultural history transmutes most obviously into rural social history. There demographic change, community and cultural life, and rural institutions are all examined. The penultimate part analyses the ideological, physical, and environmental impact on the countryside of urbanism and urbanization. Part VII is an exhaustive collection of statistical data pertaining to agricultural performance and composition, and includes sections on the size of holdings; rents and land values; population and occupation; wages, capital, and prices. It is impossible here to do justice to all sections but some overriding themes emerge from the volume.

In 1851 agriculture accounted for around 20 per cent of national income and employed around 22 per cent of the workforce of England and Wales. By 1914 these figures had declined significantly to 7 and 8 per cent respectively. Can it be argued, then, that Victorian farming failed? This is one of the central questions posed by E. J. T. Collins in his assessment of the validity of the established chronology of farming between 1850 and 1914. The orthodox view of the High Farming period (defined by Lord Ernle as 'an era of advancing prosperity and progress, of rising rents and profits')[3] is undermined but not totally discarded. Thus, although the Golden Age was 'broadly prosperous' (p. 125), it was actually 'less golden in retrospect than reality' (p. 130). Collins contends that agricultural achievement in terms of output was less than impressive in the period between the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846) and the onset of depression (mid-1870s), and certainly smaller than previously claimed. Cereal output increased marginally, livestock production improved, but only slightly faster than in the second quarter of the century (under protection), and although dairying output advanced by 15 per cent (with milk and milk products accounting for one eighth of agricultural output in England and Wales by the late 1860s), the population as a whole grew by 35 per cent (p. 107). The good fortune of agriculture was sustained less by innovation, improvements in efficiency and output, than by buoyant prices and lack of cheap imports. By the mid-1870s such favourable conditions had diminished, although Ernle's view of a depression so deep it 'could scarcely fail to affect every side of farming'[4] has been undermined significantly since the 1960s. Following the work of T. W. Fletcher, and more recently F. M. L. Thompson, Collins's conclusions reinforce the current thinking on the agricultural depression, which is shown to have been regionally specific.[5] So whilst the large arable enterprises of the south and east felt the full impact of the downturn, small dairy and livestock farmers of the north and west were not particularly affected, and even prospered. The 'Fletcher effect' is also confirmed by Michael Turner in chapter three (and linked to data presented in chapter thirty-eight). Turner's estimates indicate that 'the real volume of agriculture was at least maintained or even rose *throughout* most of the period' (p. 320). The notion of a national depression is not entirely repudiated; instead, Turner

[3] Ernle, *English farming*, p. 346.

[4] Ibid., p. 383.

[5] T. W. Fletcher, 'The great depression of English agriculture, 1873–1896', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 13 (1960–1), pp. 417–32; F. M. L. Thompson, 'An anatomy of English agriculture, 1870–1914', in B. A. Holderness and Michael Turner, eds., *Land, labour and agriculture, 1700–1920: essays for Gordon Mingay* (London, 1991), pp. 211–40.

calls for a rethinking of the language of the period, which, being tied still to the terminology used in the 1880s, is clearly outdated (p. 305). After the mid-1890s, Collins's evidence sustains the notion of a relative upturn in agriculture to 1914, although the extent of this remained regionally based, with recovery slower in arable areas than dairying and stock-rearing regions (the 'new products' – milk, eggs and poultry, fruit and vegetables – accounted for the bulk of expansion prior to the Great War) (p. 214). Moreover, the overall scale of this recovery in output and prices was modest, perhaps little more than a period of 'recuperation' (p. 208). These years, between the end of the depression and the beginning of the Great War, emerge with little identity, signifying a gap in the historiography.

What of those who owned or worked the land? Can they be held responsible for the 'failure' of Victorian farming? The most likely culprit appears to have been farmers. The entrepreneurial shortcomings of farmers, according to Collins, have yet to be seriously challenged and they are not in this volume. Mingay claims that farmers may have lacked the 'ambition' or 'education' to handle diversification during the depression, and were reluctant to break free from 'their accustomed role of dependent employees' (p. 782). A lack of faith in agricultural scientific developments was another farming trait. Paul Brassley finds that the 'average farmer' did not adhere to textbook advice on fertilizer application for example (p. 543). Moreover, Brassley also shows that formal agricultural education made little headway until the 1890s. Training largely consisted of farmers instructing their sons informally, or new entrants to the business being apprenticed to established farmers, with an emphasis on practical teaching (p. 623). Even by 1914, those farmers who received any formal, academic training were in a minority. Farmers though were, and remain, a notoriously difficult group to define. Alun Howkins expands on the division between large and small farmers, or 'management' farmers (essentially managers or employers of labour) and 'peasant' farmers (who worked their holdings with their own and their families' labour). Yet on the whole, volume VII doess not fill the gap in our understanding of this diverse, but key group in agrarian society, and farmers (large and small, northern, southern, and Welsh, male and female) and their families, emerge as a group demanding to be studied in much more detail.

For landowners, the depression is shown to have been a watershed. Agricultural rents rose by 25 per cent between 1850 and 1878, with few estates failing to reap the benefits (p. 745). After 1879 the trend reversed, with virtually all landowners (except those in Wales) experiencing a sharp fall in the capital value of their estates. Land price figures, John Beckett notes, 'must certainly have made landowners *feel* depressed, whatever the real position in terms of their incomes' (p. 748). By the 1880s the real impact of the depression was being felt by landowners, with the balance of power in landlord–tenant relationships shifting towards tenants. But Beckett heeds caution, arguing that whilst some large landowners sold outlying property in a bid to reconstruct their estates, the depression in the market, and the ruination of the estate system, should not be exaggerated (p. 717). The social significance of land also retained its importance throughout the period, ensuring that the cultural power of the elite remained dominant (p. 1,369).

Peter Dewey highlights the diversity of experience for the farm labourer. Regional distinctions in hiring patterns, contracts, hours, housing conditions, and wages continued to persist after 1850. Agriculture remained a low-income occupation for the labourer. Although wages rose by some 60 per cent between 1860 and 1913, this rise was significantly below that achieved by the working population as a whole (80 per cent) (p. 837). The wage-gap between agricultural and non-agricultural occupations was a permanent feature of the period, and labourers' efforts to ameliorate their position are not seen as having any great

effect. Dewey finds little evidence to suggest that the bargaining power of workers strengthened due to union activity (p. 853). Similarly, J. F. Fisher claims that despite his symbolic significance, Joseph Arch was 'a political nonentity' (p. 345). The problems of classifying labourers, and the weaknesses of the only national source for occupational information – the census – are addressed, with women workers emerging as an obvious victim of under recording. The 'suggestion' of under enumeration, Dewey argues, 'remains for further research' (p. 816), although Turner and Afton provide a useful estimate of the true numbers of female (and male) agricultural labourers in England and Wales (using Edward Higg's reworking of census data) (p. 1,976). Howkins also interweaves the gender dimension into his analysis, claiming that 'without the labour of women and children many labouring families would simply not have survived' (p. 1,395). Since Dewey's chapter was written there has been more research focusing on the female agricultural labour force in the nineteenth century (confirming the gender-blindness of census enumerators), although much remains to be done.[6]

But is it still admissible to use Caird's 1850s tripartite classification of 'the three great interests connected with agriculture – the landlord, the tenant, and the labourer[7] – when analysing the period 1850–1914? Whilst in some areas this categorization remains pertinent, in many others it 'is clearly far too simple', as Howkins points out (p. 1,508). The diversity of experience within each rank indicates the problematic nature of working with an oversimplistic interpretation. One debate that has been rumbling in the pages of the *Agricultural History Review* over the past few years illustrates this problem well: should nineteenth-century farm servants be classified alongside agricultural day workers, as labourers?[8] Moreover, two excellent chapters by John Chartres in volume VII suggest that a fourth group should be added to the traditional taxonomy of rural society – those who worked in rural industry, manufacturing and retail trades, and agricultural services. The persistence of rural industries in the English and Welsh countryside after 1850 is convincingly documented by Chartres using census data. Some of these industries were certainly declining, characterized as exploitative low-skilled, low-paid occupations performed by outworkers for urban-based manufacturers (handloom weaving and pillow lacemaking being good examples). Others though remained buoyant, at least until the 1890s, adding a distinctive milieu to village life. Those who worked in rural industry, or who owned and ran retail ventures, did not operate in a society totally divorced from farming, but, as Chartres reminds us, they 'formed a distinct set worthy of separate analysis' (p. 1,150).

The final section of volume VII raises some intriguing questions which set the direction for future research: why was the arable sector unable to sustain the momentum it reached in the years immediately prior to the 'Golden Age'? Did the perception of farming (and farmers) as a leading and fundamental element in national life change during the period 1850 to 1914, and why? Who were the newcomers into rural areas and what impact did they

[6] See, for example, H. V. Speechley, 'Female and child day labourers in agriculture in Somerset, c. 1685–1870' (PhD thesis, Exeter, 1999); Nicola Verdon, 'Changing patterns of female labour in rural England, c. 1790–1890' (PhD thesis, Leicester, 1999).

[7] James Caird, *English agriculture in 1850–1851* (London, 1852), p. 520.

[8] Alun Howkins, 'Peasants, servants and labourers: the marginal workforce in British agriculture, 1870–1914', *Agricultural History Review*, 42 (1994), pp. 49–62; Richard Anthony, 'Farm servant vs agricultural labourer, 1870–1914: a commentary on Howkins', *Agricultural History Review*, 43 (1995), pp. 61–4; Stephen Caunce, 'Farm servants and the development of capitalism in English agriculture', *Agricultural History Review*, 45 (1997), pp. 46–60; Gary Moses, 'Proletarian labourers? East Riding farm servants, c. 1850–1875', *Agricultural History Review*, 47 (1999), pp. 78–94.

have? It is inevitable in a volume like this that the reviewer can find gaps and weaknesses. The often patchy coverage afforded to Wales can be cited as an example. Yet the validity of restricting the parameters to England and Wales may also be questioned. Turner points out that nearly all existing statistical data relates to Great Britain, or the United Kingdom, so that in econometric terms 'it is no longer useful to talk about the *Agrarian History* simply of *England and Wales*' for the period 1850 to 1914 (p. 1,758). Several authors outline the impact Irish farming had on the mainland (pp. 111–12, 277–83). Going beyond this, a discussion of the wider European context would enable a more meaningful comparative perspective. This is signalled by Howkins, who calls for the adoption of the term 'agrarian crisis' in preference to 'depression', in line with the European terminology for the period (p. 1,505). Moreover, although volume VII offers scope for new exiting and innovative initiatives, it could be argued that the suggested future research agenda contains familiar themes that have been touted as the way forward for many years (women, farmers, northern agriculture, and so on). We should celebrate the scholarly achievements of this volume – parts of which will become essential reading for everyone with an interest in agrarian history – but recognize that the completion of the series now signals the time to move on and fully embrace such issues.

RURAL HISTORY CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF READING NICOLA VERDON

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Americanization and its limits: reworking US technology and management in post-war Europe and Japan. Edited by Jonathan Zeitlin and Gary Herrigel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi + 410. ISBN 0-19-829555-3. £53.00.

A substantial part of the history of twentieth-century Japan and Europe concerns their engagement with the United States. For much of that century the US was the dominant economic power in the world, and for much of the second half also the dominant political power. Recognition of the strength of the American economy has led industrialists and politicians from elsewhere to see it as a model for their own economies and societies; the projection of American power has backed up that example with persuasion, arm-twisting, and, in extreme cases, coercion. As a result the nations of Europe and Japan have become to a degree 'Americanized'. That process has recently become a focus of much attention from historians, and this book is a major addition to this literature.

In his substantial introduction Jonathan Zeitlin develops a typology of dichotomous approaches to Americanization as it applies to economic issues. From this typology he outlines a set of guiding assumptions: that there was never a single model of 'American production' to be copied; that the applicability of 'Americanization' elsewhere was always highly dependent on the national and industrial context; and that its efficiency advantages were local and temporary. The dichotomy between the ideas of either tightly or loosely coupled elements in the 'American model' is rejected in the belief that the elements of the model were interdependent, but could be reassembled to suit the local context. Similarly, the dichotomy between work which emphasizes institutional plasticity and that stressing path dependency is refused on the grounds that institutions do indeed matter, but that self-reflective actors were never their prisoners. While the individual contributions are highly empirical and extremely diverse, and written almost entirely by established experts in the

particular industries studied, they all respect these broad assumptions about the nature of the beast to be confronted.

Many of the authors stress that interest in American economic and industrial practices can be found in much of western Europe and Japan since at least the First World War. Duccio Bagazzi, for example, in his chapter on the Italian car industry, notes the interest evident under the Fascist regime in the 1920s, and its attempt to separate the 'desirable' features of the American system (productive efficiency) from its undesirable corollaries of social instability and 'lack of values'. But like the other contributors Bagazzi analyses in greatest depth the early post-war years. This period saw the most intensive interest in the American model, as countries in western Europe and Japan sought to rebuild after wartime devastation. The war had demonstrated the enormous vitality of the American industrial system, so the power of the example was at its peak. The war also left the US as the major supplier of international finance (especially through Marshall Aid) and as the occupier of Japan and (most of) West Germany. So to the power of example was added the leverage of money plus American political control of two major industrial countries.

In no case, however, did the Americans simply impose their system on another country. As Gary Herrigel shows in his persuasive chapter, even in the occupied nations the reforms that followed were shaped by a complex interaction between the desire of the US to insist on certain socio-political norms and the ability of the steel industry to shape these reforms in their own direction. In unoccupied countries like Italy and France, as Ruggero Ranieri and Mathias Kipping respectively show, the steel industry was also reshaped in this period along lines which combined the American 'model' with indigenous influences. Alongside steel, cars get the most attention.

Steve Tolliday's essay addresses Americanization through a study of the transfer of the management and technologies of the multinational car producers, Ford and General Motors, to their subsidiaries in Britain, France, and Germany. He shows that even though legally subsidiary, these enterprises, sometimes in the face of explicit opposition from Detroit and Dearborn, often pursued their own local strategies rather than simply replicating American patterns. These arguments suggest intriguing parallels with recent historical work on the relationship between the Communist International and allegedly subordinate national Communist parties. In both cases the idea of a national organization simply following orders from afar was impossible in practice, with the local entity with varying degrees of success able to deploy claims of superior local knowledge to deflect the authority of the centre.

This book is written explicitly to counteract the view, as Zeitlin puts it in his chapter, that 'mass production and systematic management as they were practised in the US during the 1940s and 1950s was a universal model of industrial efficiency which other nations failed to embrace at their peril' (pp. 125–6). This is something of a straw man; despite Zeitlin's sometimes polemical tone it is difficult to find advocates of such a simple-minded view, certainly amongst those authors he cites. Equally, the argument he makes that British engineering, in its rejection of wholesale adoption of US 'mass production', was a precursor of later Japanese-style 'flexibility', deploys a crude dichotomy similar to those he rightly rejects in his editorial contribution. But despite such minor caveats this book is a major enrichment of our understanding of 'Americanization', combining a rich array of new research with a rigorous attention to problems of conceptualization.

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