



## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

### MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 18, 2022

TO: NEH Workshop Attendees, University of Oregon

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SUBJECT: Sample Applications

We will discuss the attached materials as part of our application-writing workshop at the University of Oregon on Friday, February 4, 2022. These applications were submitted to the Fellowships program. To get the most out of the session, please read the applications prior to the presentation.

We have chosen Fellowships applications because they work particularly well when discussing application writing strategies. However, what we discuss during workshop should be of interest beyond the Fellowships program and, we hope, beyond NEH programs.

As you read the applications, please keep in mind that they have been selected for a particular purpose: that is, to give you a chance to consider three approaches to crafting applications. They are not intended to serve as models, nor are they intended, by virtue of their subjects, to suggest particular areas of Endowment interest. Applications for NEH awards are as diverse, in both subject matter and methodology, as the applicants who submit them. For reasons of confidentiality, we have omitted cover sheets and résumés for this exercise.

We look forward to discussing these samples with you on February 4, 2022.

## Research and contribution

*The Daughter of Granada and Fez* explores how Spanish and Moroccan writers used the history of al-Andalus (medieval Muslim Iberia) as a framework for understanding Spanish colonialism in Morocco (1859-1956). At the heart of the book is a paradox: during the colonial period, the historical memory of al-Andalus served simultaneously as a justification for Spanish colonialism and as a sign of Moroccan anticolonial resistance and national identity. In the spirit of the NEH “Bridging Cultures” initiative, my book analyzes colonial and postcolonial discourses that are built on the multidirectional use of a shared, interfaith past. Theorists of nationalism have long emphasized the anachronistic nature of nationalist imaginaries, which legitimize the nation by projecting it back onto a distant past. What is unique about the use of al-Andalus in the context of Spanish colonialism in Morocco is the simultaneous deployment of the *same* mythic national past, the Andalusí past, by two ideological projects that are fundamentally at odds with each other: Spanish colonial propaganda and Moroccan national self-determination. My book not only provides a fresh account of Spanish colonialism and of Moroccan nationalist discourse, but it also sheds a light on the politics of the contemporary Mediterranean world, where the historical memory of al-Andalus continues to structure debates about Europe’s evolving relationship with the Muslim world.

Celebrations of al-Andalus permeate contemporary literature, historiography, political discourse, and tourism on both sides of the Mediterranean. A diverse array of Mediterranean cultures lay claim to the cultural legacy of al-Andalus. In particular, Morocco and Spain have cast themselves as the direct descendants of al-Andalus. The most recent Moroccan constitution, ratified in 2011, provides ample evidence of how al-Andalus has become an institutionalized element of Moroccan culture and politics. Its preamble cites the influence of the “Andalusí tributary” on Morocco’s “national identity” and celebrates “the Moroccan people’s attachment to the values of openness, moderation, tolerance, and dialogue” (2). The constitution thus aligns Morocco with one of the most potent modern myths associated with the history of al-Andalus: the idea of *convivencia*, the supposedly harmonious coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in medieval Iberia. The constitution also exemplifies what I call the “Andalus-centric” narrative of Moroccan history: the idea that the Christian Reconquest of Muslim Granada in 1492 did not mark the demise of Andalusí culture but rather its migration from the Iberian Peninsula to Morocco, where it has continued to thrive until the present day.

Despite the apparently medieval origins of Morocco’s Andalusí identity, my book argues that the “Andalus-centric” narrative of Moroccan history is a modern invention that emerges from the colonial encounter between Spain and Morocco in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Starting with the Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859-1860, Spanish writers revived the historical memory of al-Andalus in order to legitimize Spain’s historical connection to North Africa and to justify Spain’s colonial projects in Morocco. The exploitation of Spain’s Muslim past reached its apogee in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), when Franco and his Fascist collaborators used the image of al-Andalus as a tool to recruit approximately 80,000 Moroccan soldiers to fight in the Rebel army. To ensure Moroccan support for the Rebel cause, Franco granted unprecedented freedoms to the Moroccan nationalist movement, including the creation of an Arabic-language nationalist press and the legalization of Morocco’s first nationalist party. From these organs of Moroccan nationalist politics, forged in the opening months of the Spanish Civil War, emerged a widespread call for the creation of a Moroccan national culture, whose cornerstone would be Morocco’s Andalusí heritage. It is therefore not a coincidence that the 1940s witnessed a revival of various Moroccan artistic traditions that claimed descent from al-Andalus. Thus, in one of the eloquent ironies of colonial history, the Spanish insistence on Morocco’s Andalusí legacy, which had served as a

justification for Spanish colonialism, sowed the seeds of the Moroccan national culture that would supplant colonial rule.

## Methods and work plan

An NEH fellowship will allow me to finish the book manuscript, which will entail writing the introduction and finishing Chapter Four (summarized below). The introduction will put the book into dialogue with recent developments in Mediterranean studies and postcolonial studies, where scholars have called for transnational and transcolonial approaches to the study of Mediterranean colonial history. I also hope to revitalize communication between modern Spanish studies and modern North African studies. While scholars have devoted much attention to the medieval history of al-Andalus, there has been much less scholarship on modern Hispano-Arab cultural interactions. Likewise, classical accounts of European colonialism in North Africa have tended to focus on French colonialism, often disregarding Spain's colonial possessions in Morocco and the Sahara. My book's introduction will reinsert Spain into modern Moroccan history, Morocco into modern Spanish history, and Spanish colonialism in Morocco into the study of Mediterranean colonial history.

Only two chapters of my book project (Chapters One and Two) originated in my dissertation, which explored Spanish and Moroccan representations of the War of 1859-1860, the war that paved the way for Spanish colonialism in Morocco. **Chapter One** focuses on Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's *Diary of an Eyewitness to the War of Africa* (1860), and **Chapter Two** analyzes the elegy and the chronicle that the Moroccan poet and religious scholar Mufaddal Afaylal wrote about the war and the subsequent Spanish occupation of his native Tetouan. Both Alarcón and Afaylal represent the Spanish campaign in Morocco as an extension of the medieval Christian Reconquest of al-Andalus. These chapters thus illustrate Spanish and Moroccan efforts to rewrite the origins of Spanish colonialism as the continuation of medieval Andalusí history. Much of my research and argument for the book – including all of the material for Chapters Three, Four, and Five – took shape during my postdoctoral fellowship at the Michigan Society of Fellows. **Chapter Three** explores the contradictory ideological legacy of Blas Infante (1885-1936), hailed today as the “Father of the Andalusian Fatherland.” In post-Franco Spain, Infante's legacy of *andalucismo* (Andalusian nationalism) has become inexorably linked with the myth of *convivencia*, interfaith harmony in al-Andalus. Yet Infante's posthumous fame as a champion of intercultural tolerance masks his influence on Spanish colonialism in Morocco. By tracing the afterlife of Infante's work in Francoist writings about Morocco, this chapter demonstrates how Spain's colonial projects made strange bedfellows of Spanish liberals and fascists, both of whom defended Spain's historical right to rule Morocco.

Chapters Four and Five examine the representation of al-Andalus in Spanish and Arabic writings from the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) until the first years of Moroccan independence (1956-1959). Finishing Chapter Four will be one of my main goals during my fellowship period. **Chapter Four** opens with an account of the Lebanese-American writer Amin al-Rihani's visit to Morocco in 1939, as an official guest of Juan Beigbeder, the High Commissioner of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco. Al-Rihani's official state visit was part of a concerted effort by Spanish fascists to promote the idea that the Francoist mission in Morocco was to resurrect the glories of al-Andalus. In fact, al-Rihani's account of his trip helped to propagate this idea for an Arabicspeaking readership beyond Morocco. In it, al-Rihani credits Beigbeder with wanting “to renew the Hispano-Arab culture” and “to resurrect Cordoba in Tetouan” (271). The idea of “resurrecting” al-Andalus in Tetouan, the capital of the Spanish Protectorate (1912-1956), formed the basis of Spain's cultural policies in Morocco under Franco. Through the creation of such institutions as the Hispano-Moroccan Music Conservatory and the School of Indigenous Arts,

Spanish colonial authorities codified a canon of Andalusí arts, which, today, are upheld as essential components of Morocco's Andalusí identity. In order to finish my research for Chapter Four, I will spend one month of my proposed fellowship period working in archives that have materials related to the Spanish promotion of Morocco's Andalusí heritage: the General Archive of Administration in Alcalá de Henares (Spain) and the General Library of Tetouan (Morocco). **Chapter Five** explores the emergence of the "Andalus-centric" narrative in Moroccan historiography and letters in the 1940s and 1950s. At the center of this chapter is one of the first and most emphatic proponents of the Andalus-centric idea of Moroccan history: Muhammad

Dawud's twelve-volume *History of Tetouan*, which Dawud began in the 1930s and continued to write through the 1970s. Dawud's *History of Tetouan* is a polyphonic text, in which many leading Moroccan nationalist thinkers participated, including al-Tuhami al-Wazzani and M'hammad Bennuna. In fact, it was Bennuna, in his prologue to *The History of Tetouan*, who coined Tetouan's moniker as "the daughter of Granada and Fez" (15), which gives my book its title. Chapter Five shows how Dawud and his collaborators appropriated the Spanish celebration of al-Andalus and re-purposed it as a tool for anti-colonial resistance. It also places modern Moroccan representations of al-Andalus in transcolonial perspective by highlighting their dialogue with contemporaneous Levantine and Egyptian writings about al-Andalus, which began to circulate in Morocco in the 1930s.

### **Competencies, skills, and access**

My book will be the first comparative study of Spanish colonialism in Morocco, based on both Spanish and Arabic sources. I have acquired fluency in both languages after studying for several years in Spain, Morocco, and Syria. My project also incorporates primary and secondary texts in French and Catalan, as well as drawing upon medieval Iberian texts in Arabic, Latin, and Castilian. Over the past nine years, I have developed deep relationships with colleagues at several Moroccan and Spanish research institutions, such as 'Abd al-Malik al-Sa'adi University (Morocco) and the University of Granada (Spain). These colleagues have helped me to refine my book's argument and to identify several sources that are not known outside of Morocco.

### **Final product and dissemination**

The final product of this project will be a scholarly monograph that I will publish with an academic press. I believe that the book will be of interest to scholars working in several areas, including Spanish and North African cultural studies, Arabic studies, Mediterranean studies, and postcolonial studies. While my book is intended for a scholarly audience, it will also inform my ongoing work as a journalist. In addition to my academic publications, I have also contributed essays and commentary to such venues as NPR, the BBC, *Foreign Policy*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The American Scholar*. A commitment to the public life of ideas shapes my identity as a scholar. My book is part of my continuing efforts to contribute to the public debate about the relationship between Islam and the West in the past, present, and future.

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National Endowment for the Humanities  
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NARRATIVE

***Islamic Literacy in Early America:  
Muslim Sources of U.S. Authorship***

***Synopsis***

Uncovering Islam's formative impact on the nation's literature, *Islamic Literacy in Early America: Muslim Sources of U.S. Authorship* traces covert genealogies of Arabic and Persian influence, extending from Revolutionary beginnings to the Civil War. Complementing NEH's *Bridging Cultures* initiative, this monograph excavates the multi-lingual and cross-religious foundations of literary America, revising the received portraits of our most iconic authors, while also giving voice to unknown Muslim writings penned in the young republic.

***Research and contribution***

While Orientalism has long been recognized as vital to the nation's origins, *Islamic Literacy in Early America* redirects our attention inward, revealing the private investments which underlie U.S. public interests. Exposing manuscripts previously neglected, seminal figures from 1765-1865 – from Ezra Stiles to Ralph Waldo Emerson – are understood as cultivating a personal “Islamic literacy”, weaving Muslim discourse into the intimate fabric of their diaries, letters, memorials and marginalia. Amplifying the Arabic and Persian undertones hushed underneath U.S. literary life, I argue that Islamic traditions catalyze emergent American identities, serving as vehicles of liberation in artistry, religion and politics. Reaching to the Middle East to circumvent Britain, resisting European influence through Islamic reception, key American authors map new cultural alternatives in their informal writing, quietly mirroring the transatlantic struggles that define the country's first decades. In locating the Muslim Sacred *inside* New World experience, *Islamic Literacy in Early America* aims not only to re-orient our literary past, however, but to accent present-day echoes and ironies, discovering early Islamic receptions to have anticipated contemporary U.S. debates on foreign relations and domestic citizenry.

This new approach to literary Orientalism is made possible by marrying two distinct areas of expertise, drawing equally upon: i) extensive research at a range of American archives, and; ii) close familiarity with Islamic sources and languages. Never before synthesized, these scholarly efforts not only expose American passages and practices previously overlooked, but also pose unlikely American figures in fresh dialogue, bridging seminal intellectuals (Ezra Stiles); romantic fictionists (Washington Irving); and enslaved West Africans (‘Umar ibn Sayyid). Merging academic fields and literary figures, *Islamic Literacy in Early America* re-centers the Muslim margins of U.S. authorial origins, discovering the reading and rendering of Arabic and Persian sources at the literary heart of discrete American lives.

***Methods and work plan***

During the proposed award period – the calendar year, 2014 – my exclusive commitment to *Islamic Literacy in Early America* will result in the completion of archive research for the book,

as well as the writing of a polished typescript, to be submitted for University Press review and publication by December 31, 2014. Due to my extensive preparatory research (detailed below), I require only two additional months of targeted library visits in 2014; the remainder of the award period will be reserved for textual analysis, translation, and core writing.

Although still in the earliest stages of composition, my years of amassing manuscripts for *Islamic Literacy in Early America* has given rise to its concrete, five-chapter structure. Unfolding chronologically, from 1765 to 1865, each of the book's chapters illuminates a seminal American author, surveying specific archival witnesses to their Islamic literacy:

**Chapter 1 – Ezra Stiles**

*Archives: Yale; Redwood Athenaeum*

Diarist, patriot, and President of Yale, Ezra Stiles was a founder of U.S. intellectual life. This public American profile, however, shields a private devotion to Arabic, Stiles struggling with the language of the Qur'ān, even while recording his nation's struggles for independence. Relying on marginalia and manuscripts never before published, Chapter 1 explores surprising parallels in Stiles' commitment to political union and religious unity, uncovering revolutions of both country and creed imbedded in his 1765-85 writings.

**Chapter 2 – William Bentley**

*Archives: Am. Antiquarian Society; Boston Athenaeum*

Salem minister, and successor to Stiles as national diarist, William Bentley produced voluminous records of U.S. daily life until his death in 1819. Bentley also succeeded Stiles, however, in personally appealing to Muslim sources, gesturing to Islamic precedents as he pioneered American Unitarianism. Chapter 2 not only reveals the Muslim echoes scattered through Bentley's domestic journals, but also uncovers his foreign correspondence with actual Muslim leaders. Translating a cache of Bentley's lost Arabic letters, first recovered during my 2012 research at the Boston Athenaeum, this chapter situates Bentley's transatlantic exchange with the Arab World as a forgotten early chapter in U.S. relations with the Middle East.

**Chapter 3 – 'Umar ibn Sayyid**

*Archives: Davidson College; Spartanburg Co. Hist. Assoc.*

Shifting from canonicity to captivity, Chapter 3 is dedicated to 'Umar ibn Sayyid – an African slave of Muslim descent, whose memoirs of antebellum life in North Carolina are authored entirely in Arabic. Although distinct in national origins and political status, Ibn Sayyid shares with his American contemporaries an interior life framed by Islamic literacy. Unearthed during my NEH-supported research in 2011, Chapter 3 will publish letters and marginalia neglected by previous scholarship, illuminating Ibn Sayyid's hybrid expressions of culture and religion. In addition to his correspondence merging biblical and Qur'ānic idioms, I highlight personal inscriptions in Ibn Sayyid's Arabic Bible – a gift intended to promote his Christian conversion, but whose margins instead become covert vehicles for Muslim observance.

**Chapter 4 – Washington Irving**

*Archive: New York Public Library*

Famed father of U.S. fiction, author of "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", Washington Irving was also privately one of America's earliest translators of the Qur'ān – an argument I advanced initially in 2009 (*Journal of Qur'anic Studies*; 11:2). Chapter 4 develops this startling claim, establishing the extent of Irving's Islamic studies, reproducing and rendering ample selections from his *Arabic Notebook*. Held by the New York Public Library, this neglected resource not only testifies to Irving's re-definition of the American literary through Islamic language, but also his imaginative translation of the Muslim Sacred into a distinctly American idiom.

## **Chapter 5 – Ralph Waldo Emerson**

*Archive: Houghton, Harvard*

Reaching up to the Civil War, Chapter 5 concludes with Ralph Waldo Emerson, mapping the wide expanse between his public image and private practice. Icon of American exceptionalism, Emerson was also America's most prolific translator of Islamic verse, rendering more than 2,000 lines of Persian poetry between 1846 and 1865 – an Orientalist campaign that resists European influence, even while promoting U.S. Abolitionism. Scribbled through diaries, letters, even on the backs of envelopes, Emerson's Islamic literacy is fully realized only by aligning his personal papers with Muslim sources, discovering his daily translation of Sufi verse to be a catalyst for poetic identity and political activism.

### ***Competencies, skills and access***

Completing a trajectory of research extending from my Cambridge doctorate (2001-2005) to my recent NEH Teaching Development Fellowship (2011), *Islamic Literacy in Early America* aims to realize a dozen years of preliminary work, including archive visits; internal and external grants; and the publication of monographs and articles that fuse Middle Eastern translation with U.S. Literature. Significant efforts and outcomes which anticipate, and inform, the book include:

a) the publication of my first monograph – *Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature in Middle Eastern Languages* (Edinburgh UP, 2013) – a book that reads U.S. authors as they now appear in Arabic, Hebrew and Persian translation. Tracing the Middle Eastern afterlives of American classics, this 2013 book forms both a prequel and companion to *Islamic Literacy in Early America*, tracing reciprocal processes of literary transmission, passing from West to East, rather than East to West.

b) conducting grant-funded archive research at prominent U.S. institutions, including the Boston Athenaeum; Davidson; Duke; New York Public Library; Redwood Athenaeum; UNC Chapel Hill; and Yale. In addition to competitive support from my home institution, a 2011 NEH Teaching Development Fellowship advanced my research into U.S. Arabic Slave writings, serving now as the basis for the book's Chapter 3 (see also: [www.niu.edu/arabicslavewritings](http://www.niu.edu/arabicslavewritings)).

As professor of early American Literature, and specialist in Middle Eastern translation, it is my field knowledge and language facility that sustains the cross-cultural texture of *Islamic Literacy*, while also accounting for the book's uniqueness and originality in the critical record. Equally indispensable, however, are the relationships with archive libraries and librarians fostered through recent years of my research. Familiar now with respective procedures and policies of relevant institutions, I have not only gained personal access to restricted materials, but received permission to publish manuscripts from libraries such as the New York Public Library – successes which will ensure the book's fluid transition from composition to production.

### ***Final product and dissemination***

As the Fellowship's final product, *Islamic Literacy in Early America* will target its primary readers through publication and distribution by a prominent University Press, with a proposal first offered to Oxford – a press at which I have enjoyed significant prior success (see Resume, "Awards"), and which has recently invited a full proposal for review (April 2013). As a research project that also complements my ongoing pedagogic efforts, the book will reach additional audiences through online platforms, with NIU's Arabic Slave Writings website promoting this parallel venture. Perhaps most importantly, however, *Islamic Literacy in Early America* intersects urgent issues of contemporary debate and topical concern, holding the rare potential to attract not only scholarly interest, but also press coverage beyond academia, allowing this NEH-supported research and writing to impact broader arenas, public and civic.



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*Islamic Literacy in Early America: Muslim Sources of U.S. Authorship*

Primary Sources

Unpublished manuscripts comprise the book's core primary sources. Relevant archives for Stiles, Bentley, Ibn Sayyid, Irving and Emerson are indexed in the Narrative's précis of chapters.

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**Project Narrative:**  
 ‘Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition’

Friedrich Nietzsche is notorious for his rhetorically and philosophically dramatic statements concerning truth: that “truths are illusions we have forgotten are illusions,” and that “facts are precisely what there are not, there are only interpretations.” Such proclamations have caused Nietzsche to be labeled a ‘postmodernist’, a ‘relativist’, a ‘pessimist’ about truth, even an ‘epistemological nihilist’; but perhaps most frequently Nietzsche is characterized as a *skeptic*. With the exception of a handful of short discussions, however, this affiliation between Nietzsche and skepticism has generally been alleged without any head-on engagement with philosophical skepticism, its history, or its methodological commitments. Most recent discussions use ‘skepticism’ in a fairly casual sense, as a non-technical term requiring no special treatment or explanation. Since it typically denotes little more than a somewhat radical and mostly negative attitude toward the existence of facts or the possibility of human knowledge, the question, “what *kind* of skepticism?” has not yet been raised in the literature. Nietzsche scholars have in particular failed to take account of the rich and substantial philosophical difference between the skepticism that originated in ancient Greece and its modern, post-Cartesian derivatives. The oversight is significant, for at least two reasons. The first is that Nietzsche, who was trained as a professor of classical philology and maintained a fascination with Greek literature, culture, and philosophy throughout his productive academic life, clearly appreciated the difference. Second, since ‘skepticism’ in the ancient sense is incompatible with ‘relativism’ and many other positions commonly attributed to Nietzsche, appreciating properly his understanding of and debt to the Greek skeptics will force us to re-evaluate a good deal of what has been written of one of the last century’s most influential thinkers.

The impact of Nietzsche’s engagement with the Greek skeptics has never been systematically explored in a book-length work. Here I propose to bring together under the title *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition* my previous research on Nietzsche and the Greek skeptics, expanding on published articles and papers presented over the last several years. Much of this story has been told piecemeal in my publications to date, yet scholars in the field have encouraged me to bring these disparate parts together in a sustained, book-length argument. My project has generated substantial interest among scholars on Nietzsche, but it has also appealed to specialists in Ancient philosophy and to those who have interests in epistemology and skepticism more broadly construed—in short, those who have not thought Nietzsche had anything of philosophical value to say on the subject of truth or knowledge. This work fills a gap in the literature on Nietzsche by demonstrating precisely how an understanding of ancient skepticism—the Pyrrhonian tradition in particular—promises to illuminate Nietzsche’s own reflections on truth, knowledge, and ultimately, the nature and value of philosophic inquiry.

More specifically, the proposed book promises an original contribution to the field in two ways: first and most obviously, from the standpoint of the history of philosophy. While there are a handful of volumes that take up Nietzsche’s intellectual relationship with Socrates and Plato, or “the Greeks” more generally, the treatment is often philosophically too thin or too broad and not philologically sensitive, which limits the value of the works for those interested in Nietzsche and has made them downright unappealing to specialists in Ancient philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I propose to correct these problems, at least with respect to Nietzsche and the Hellenistic skeptics, with this more focused volume. Second, my research engages with the extant literature on Nietzsche’s epistemology and his views on truth, but offers a reading that is novel and that challenges many widely-respected works on the topic (e.g., Wilcox (1974), Grimm (1977), Cox (1999)), including works that are considered ground-breaking and highly cogent interpretations, such as Maudemarie Clark’s (1990) *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*. Reading

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<sup>1</sup> Recent exceptions include Bett (2000a), and Porter (2000a and 2000b). Otherwise, Schlechta (1948) is a useful volume, but seriously dated. Tejera (1987) and Dannhauser (1974) are dated as well; in addition, the philosophical handling of Nietzsche is in each of these works uneven, and neither work handles the Greek texts in a way that meets the standards of contemporary specialists in Ancient philosophy. The most recent treatment, by Wilkerson (2006), is certainly less dated, but it suffers from weaknesses similar to the other treatments.

Nietzsche's work on the model of the Pyrrhonian skeptics helps to illuminate his provocative but often opaque remarks on the very topics that have so revitalized Nietzsche scholarship in the last twenty years.

Finally, this reading will afford us deeper insight into Nietzsche's ethics, since the Greek skeptics (like Nietzsche) take up the position they do as a means of promoting well-being and psychological health. Thus, it will help to recover a portrait of Nietzsche as a philosophical psychologist and ethical naturalist that has been too often obscured by commentaries on his thought. The Pyrrhonian skeptics have also been described as ethical naturalists: like so many of their Hellenistic contemporaries (most notably the Stoics and Epicureans), they present a robust account of the good for human beings and a series of recommendations or practical suggestions for attaining it. Their conception of the good identifies it with psychological balance or equanimity, *ataraxia*—commonly, though in some cases misleadingly translated as 'tranquility'. The Pyrrhonian formula for realizing this state, however, often raises eyebrows, for the skeptic argues that the good we seek will be the result of a total suspension of belief, especially with regard to claims that take us beyond what our best empirical evidence could support. The skeptic, aptly captured by Nietzsche's description of the "philosopher of the future," is "curious to a vice, an investigator to the point of cruelty," and sets out in good faith to satisfy his curiosity. Soon, however, he discovers that he consistently comes across *equipollent* arguments: arguments of roughly equal persuasive force for and against just about any claim. In light of this discovery, the skeptic finds himself psychologically compelled to suspend judgment on the issues he investigates, a state upon which psychological well-being follows fortuitously, "like a shadow follows a body." Maintaining his state of equanimity requires the skeptic to maintain his suspension of judgment, which in turn requires, perhaps contrary to our expectations, that he continue actively to investigate the matters that concerned him initially. This restless intellectual curiosity is in fact the hallmark of Pyrrhonian skepticism, for while everyone else has given up inquiring, either because they take themselves to have definitive answers to their questions or because they have succumbed to epistemological hopelessness and decided their questions are unanswerable (a condition Nietzsche would characterize as a kind of intellectual death), the skeptic alone remains engaged with the world and open to the *possibility* of truth—though he no longer stakes his happiness on its attainment.

The plan for the book includes two introductory chapters: one will lay out a brief account of Pyrrhonism and its history, for the purposes of familiarizing non-specialists in Ancient philosophy with some of its salient features; and another will recount the historical evidence for Nietzsche's own familiarity with the relevant sources of this tradition, including for instance his doctoral work and subsequent publications on the 3<sup>rd</sup> century doxographer Diogenes Laertius, in which he carefully examines Diogenes' accounts of the lives of the skeptic Pyrrho and his followers. The research for these chapters is complete, and I have a draft of each. The core of the book comprises four chapters, drawing upon articles I have published since the completion of my doctoral research. Here, with an eye toward showing how the skeptical strains of Nietzsche's position gain in strength, subtlety, and coherence over the course of his career, I will present them together, organized roughly chronologically: The early chapters will investigate skeptical themes in the writings of the young Nietzsche, concentrating on his treatment of truth in the infamous (unpublished) essay "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense," and on the naturalism that first emerges in *Human, All too Human*. In later chapters, I examine central features of Nietzsche's middle and late works, including his ethical views and his mature views on truth. Here, for example, I advance a reading of Nietzsche's much-discussed 'perspectivism'—the cornerstone of many postmodern interpretations of his thought—that demonstrates how Nietzsche's claim that there is "only a perspective seeing, only a perspective knowing" does not commit him to an inescapable subjectivism or relativism. Rather, he notices, in a way strongly reminiscent of Diogenes Laertius' presentation of the classic arguments of the Pyrrhonists, that if we have a number of possible cognitions of the same object and no agreed-upon criterion by which to adjudicate disputes about which of them is closest to reality, then we are compelled to suspend judgment and, in a term Nietzsche himself uses, embrace *ephexis* (suspension of judgment) in interpretation. Thus, Nietzsche's position is not that of an atheist about truth

(“there is no truth, since there are hidden things-in-themselves to which our beliefs could never correspond”), as has often been supposed, but that of a principled agnostic. Finally, after making the case for Nietzsche’s use of this skeptical mode of reasoning, I expand on what is distinctly ‘Greek’ about Nietzsche’s skepticism by exploring *via* his interest in the pre-Platonic philosopher Democritus of Abdera (who is sometimes included as one of the earliest influences on the skeptical tradition) the connections between Nietzsche’s epistemology and his ethics. The Pyrrhonists forge a strong connection between what we believe and how we live, how healthy we are as human creatures; Nietzsche, I argue, has exactly the same ends in view.

The last two chapters of the book should be of the broadest philosophical interest. In one, I will defend my interpretation against an important objection—the *prima facie* incompatibility between skepticism and naturalism, both of which I attribute to Nietzsche. Here I will draw upon my presentation of this crucial argument at a workshop on ‘Nietzsche and Naturalism’ sponsored by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. In the final chapter, I will demonstrate some of the philosophical merits of this version of skepticism on its own terms, which will strengthen the case for reading Nietzsche on the model of the Pyrrhonian skeptics and underscore the importance of understanding his epistemological views to the project of reading his moral philosophy properly. It would be useful to be able to show, for example, how Nietzsche’s position reveals the internal instability of views like one recently defended by Walter Sinnott-Armstrong (2006) in *Moral Skepticisms*: While Sinnott-Armstrong advances a recognizably Pyrrhonian account of the level at which our moral claims may be said to lack justification, his conclusion that we may nevertheless be entitled to maintain our conventional and pre-established views about right and wrong leaves intact systems of moral belief and practice that Nietzsche diagnoses as pernicious and unhealthy—a betrayal of the ethical aims of the very skeptics who inspire Sinnott-Armstrong’s position.

My primary task during this semester of grant support will be to complete the research for and produce a draft of this final chapter. I will devote the first eight to ten weeks of the grant period to research, engaging the contemporary literature on skepticism and moral philosophy in order to characterize Nietzsche’s views in terms most relevant for the current debate and stake out in Nietzschean terms a position in epistemology and moral psychology that I hope will interest readers beyond this immediate area of specialization. During the next six to eight weeks, I will bring the results of this research together and draft the chapter. Since this is roughly the pace at which each of the other seven chapters has been researched and drafted, I am confident that a teaching release of this duration will afford me the opportunity to bring this chapter to completion. In the remaining time, I will also be able to make significant progress toward carrying the drafts of these eight chapters to final copy, bridging the gaps between chapters, eliminating overlap between one and another (where, for instance, each free-standing article has required its own broad-strokes account of the relevant features of Pyrrhonism, I will here be able to devote an introductory chapter to their thorough discussion), and strengthening those arguments to which I have been able to entertain objections and comments from colleagues and reviewers over the years. A manuscript version of *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition* has been solicited by one academic press, and a proposal for the book is currently under review at another. That the book has an audience is clear. An NEH grant for the spring will allow me to deliver to that audience in the timeliest fashion a persuasive, novel, and provocative reading of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

**Project Bibliography:**  
'Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition'

In addition to primary texts in Nietzsche (published and unpublished in 'Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe', ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980)), and in Hellenistic philosophy (particularly Sextus Empiricus and Diogenes Laertius) the following works are among those important to my project:

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