thinking" and judge dispassionately. . ." (359). Yet how is this separation possible? How can a truly dispassionate objective decision be rendered given all the variables that come into play, not only personal ones but ideological and professional as well? Those of us who have been involved in tenure cases know very well that when a candidate comes up for tenure, there is a predisposition in favor or against; we are subject to a series of often unrecognized factors that influence that predisposition. Given this reality, we should do the opposite of what he suggests, not pretend to be objective (because I think if we were honest we would agree that this is impossible), but acknowledge our own biases and recognize that our favorable or unfavorable predisposition may be rooted in something other than the candidate's dossier. For this very reason, we should again do the opposite of what Professor Weyland wants us to do. In order avoid the destruction of a human being for an arbitrary reason, we need to err on the side of the person. Indeed, the department and the institution are made up of human beings working collectively; that department and that institution work best when there is "solidarity" and encouragement. When Professor Weyland refers to "misconceived notions of solidarity," I wonder what he means. Is it our task to work only as individuals? Does our work not relate to the work of our colleagues? In my opinion, when colleagues work well together (both in agreement and disagreement on certain issues), the department works for the benefit of the community and for the society at large.

The general principles on which Professor Weyland's arguments are based are not the only issues I found objectionable (with all due respect to a very *productive* scholar). He seems not to put much stock in the outside reviews of the candidate's dossier because these outside reviewers "embrace strikingly different methods, theories, and approaches," and thus they cannot render objective decisions. But again, is this not a good reason to err positively rather than negatively? Another idea advanced by Professor Weyland is that books should be given less weight in decision making than articles, because articles, he affirms, are judged with greater objectivity—the chances of an arbitrarily positive evaluation of a book are higher because it is likely that the evaluator may know the candidate personally or that he/she is biased in favor of the candidate's specialty. Indeed, we all know that there are different criteria for scholarly value according to the discipline. Indeed, political science tends to give more weight to articles than books, as do philosophy, linguistics, and communications. But should a political scientist with 349 articles listed in the CV question the work of a candidate in German literature because there are only seven articles? I think perhaps even Professor Weyland would answer no to my rhetorical question, yet again the tenure decision maker should (must) keep disciplinary exigencies and conventions in mind, and defer to those who know about those conventions. If I were to embrace my own prejudices, I would deny the work of a political scientist with no books and over 100 articles, all of which became outdated six months after they were published, besides being poorly written (in my impeccable judgment). Professor Weyland claims his criteria should be defined in "universalistic terms," but if he can find valid "universal" criteria that pertain to all disciplines in a university, he's a better man than I. Indeed, virtually all of his anecdotal evidence comes from political science. Professor Weyland has engaged us all in what amounts to a turf battle, and that's not good for anyone.

Another interesting point in Professor Weyland's article is that in periods of dwindling budgets, faculty will vote to award tenure to a candidate for fear of losing a position. For this very reason, then, institutions need to assure departments that a negative tenure decision—I'd like to make it clear that I don't think that everyone should get tenure—will not lead to such a loss in personnel.

Sincerely,
Michael Ugarte
Department of Spanish Literature
University of Missouri–Columbia

A RESPONSE TO UGARTE

Dear Editor,

I thank Professor Ugarte for his comments and reflections and am glad that my essay, published in a political science journal, has elicited scholarly interest far beyond the confines of our discipline, in a department of Spanish literature. While it would take too much space to respond to all comments (for instance, concerning a "turf battle"), I want to clarify a few important points.

First and foremost, I do believe that academics can conduct the tenure process in a pretty objective fashion—which is a crucial precondition for the principle of *in dubio* contra *"reum"* advocated in my essay. My proposal to base tenure decisions on predefined criteria of scholarly productivity is designed precisely to make this process more objective. Such a precommitment strategy sets transparent standards for assistant professors. By limiting the discretion of the judges in each specific tenure decision, it also protects tenure candidates against arbitrariness. As Professor Ugarte mentions, there are some cases in which a department is unfairly predisposed against an assistant professor. In these situations, my recommendation to base tenure decisions on clear criteria of productivity serves as a safeguard: when an assistant professor has achieved a good deal of success at the publication front, there is no room for doubt, and intradepartmental colleagues will have difficulty justifying a negative vote inspired by problematic motives.

Therefore, it is crucial to base tenure decisions on documentable accomplishments, especially scholarly publications in prestigious outlets. That is what I had in mind with my emphasis on academic productivity, which had nothing to do with "see[ing] the university as a diploma mill." Basing tenure decisions on a candidate's record depersonalizes them and makes them more objective than judgments about scholarly caliber and potential alone would be. The focus on productivity keeps at bay considerations derived from personal friendships, collegial networks, or subfield self-interests—which is what I meant by "misconceived notions of solidarity" (aka "old-boy networks," "letter-writing combines," "niche coalitions," etc.).

Professor Ugarte regards my principle of *in dubio* contra *"reum"* as too rigorous and strict. But in his concern to "avoid the destruction of a human being for an arbitrary reason"—maybe a somewhat melodramatic formulation—he does not seem to appreciate that a "false-positive" tenure decision prevents another human being from getting a good job. Given the scarcity of faculty lines, there is a human cost to excessive leniency in our professional judgments, but it is often overlooked because it is not directly visible. This cost is borne by the most vulnerable members of the academic community, namely freshly minted

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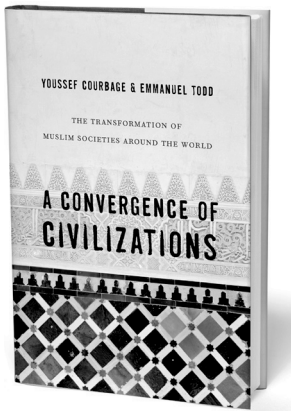
Ph.D.s who are trying hard to get a faculty line in the first place. Academics need to move beyond a one-sided focus on the current tenure candidate and consider all sides of this decision-making process.

One last clarification: when I advocated "universalistic" standards, I meant impersonal criteria that are clearly defined, equivalent, and applied consistently across the board. Certainly, different disciplines, and even various subfields within disciplines, may have somewhat different standards—for instance, in the relative weight attached to academic books or journal articles, or in the number of articles that qualify as sufficient. But all disciplines I know have prestigious journals, and therefore all professors, especially tenure candidates, should place some of their work in such outlets. The occasional claim that history and the humanities are "book disciplines" cannot mean that journal articles do not matter, despite Professor Ugarte's totally unsupported "broadsides" against journal articles at the end of his letter. In the specious debate over books "vs." journal articles, I take inspiration from Marie Antoinette: "Let them write both!" Contrary to the French queen, I do know from my own experience how difficult that is—but it *is* our main professional task, and therefore it should be the principal base for judging academic success and for awarding tenure.

Yours sincerely,
Kurt Weyland
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https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511000898 Published online by Cambridge University Press

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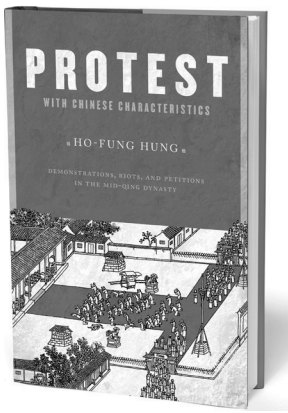
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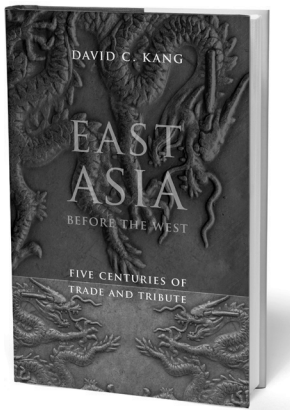


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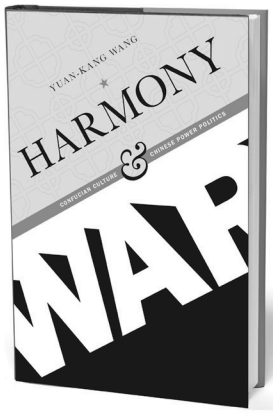
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