Progress is Our Only Product: Legal Reform and the Codification of Evidence

Michael S. Ariens

St. Mary's University School of Law, mariens@stmarytx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.stmarytx.edu/facarticles

Part of the Legal History Commons

Recommended Citation


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Law Faculty Scholarship at Digital Commons at St. Mary's University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Articles by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at St. Mary's University. For more information, please contact jlloyd@stmarytx.edu.
Progress Is Our Only Product: Legal Reform and the Codification of Evidence

Michael Ariens

Twentieth-century reform of the American law of evidence was initially premised on the ideals of legal progressivism, ideals splintered by American legal realism. In preparing the American Law Institute's Model Code of Evidence from 1939 to 1942, Harvard Law School professor Edmund M. Morgan attempted to reconstitute the framework of reform in light of the challenge of legal realism. The Model Code was based on granting greater discretion to the trial judge and changing the goals of the trial from a search for truth to a "rational" resolution of disputes. In large part due to these apparently radical and "corrosive" changes, the Model Code failed to win professional support and was not adopted by any state. The structure of the Model Code was used for the two subsequent evidence codification efforts, the Uniform Rules of Evidence and the Federal Rules of Evidence. These codification efforts found greater academic favor in part because they fit within the post–World War II jurisprudence of reasoned elaboration. The Federal Rules also enjoyed extraordinary professional favor because the drafters explicitly affirmed truth as the goal of the rules. The irony is that the framework of the Federal Rules, since they are based on the Model Code, contradicts this message.

I. INTRODUCTION

The story of 20th-century American legal thought is often told as a history of labels, from Sociological Jurisprudence through Critical Legal Studies and beyond. If people play any role, it is as characters, emblems of theories they apparently represent. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., for exam-
pie, is cast as either the demonic positivist or the mature "modern" jurist. Lon Fuller characterizes the secular Natural Law scholar. Additionally, modern American legal thought is often structured as a story of Law in the abstract; Law as heavenly conception versus Law as social fact. What is missing from these pictures is the relationship of legal thought and substantive legal doctrine. Fierce "intramural" debates about the efficacy of change in legal doctrine may serve as a proxy for a larger battle among divergent jurisprudential views. Conversely, differences among competing jurisprudential views may mask underlying similarities, similarities that reduce the differences from a clash of "paradigms" into another intramural struggle, albeit one at a broader level than a doctrinal debate. Understanding particular doctrinal disputes in light of their shared assumptions may provide a ground-level perspective from which to assess shifts in 20th-century American legal thought.

My concern in this article is to discuss recent American jurisprudential currents by locating them in an unlikely place: the work of Harvard Law School Professor Edmund M. Morgan, specifically his work as Reporter to the American Law Institute's (ALI) Model Code of Evidence. I contend that Morgan, although not considered a jurisprudential thinker like a Lon Fuller, crafted the Model Code of Evidence as a jurisprudential response to both the devastating criticism of the trial process by "realists" like Leon Green, Thurman Arnold, and Edward Robinson, on the one hand, and to the (then) "reactionary" views of John Henry Wigmore and the practicing legal profession, on the other hand. Morgan's efforts to structure the Model Code of Evidence were an attempt to re-form the ideals of legal progressivism, to find a "middle way" between the extremes that threatened the legal order. Instrumentally, the Model Code was a failure, since no state adopted it. However, the drafters of the Uniform Rules of Evidence used the Model Code as the basis for codifying the law of evidence, and the drafters of the Federal Rules of Evidence (FRE) acknowledged using the Uniform Rules as their starting point. With the enactment of the Federal Rules of Evidence in 1975 and with the adoption

---


2. Morgan received bachelor's, master's, and law degrees from Harvard University, the last coming on 1905. He practiced law in Duluth, Minn., for seven years before he joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota School of Law. In 1917 Morgan joined the Yale Law School faculty, where he remained until 1925, when he returned to his alma mater. Morgan retired from Harvard in 1950. He then began teaching at Vanderbilt Law School, where he taught until 1963. He died in 1966. See Mason Ladd, "Edmund M. Morgan—In Memoriam," 79 Harv. L. Rev. 1546 (1966).
by 34 states of evidence codes modeled on the FRE, the *structure and theory* of the Model Code survived in the FRE, although this was and is rarely acknowledged.⁴

The parentage of the Federal Rules of Evidence is rarely acknowledged in part because of the notoriously short memory of Americans (and American lawyers) and in part because recognizing the theory of the Model Code requires the legal profession to confront painful issues the legal profession has tried to avoid for 50 years. The particular issue raised by the Model Code was its denial that the rules of evidence exist to ascertain the truth. The more general rules raised by the reaction to the Model Code, and to subsequent evidentiary codification efforts, is the idea of progress. In the study of the law and reform of the rules of evidence, almost all legal scholars and the entire legal profession have avoided discussing these issues.⁴ Thus, articles praising or condemning the extent of judicial discretion in the Federal Rules of Evidence brush only gently against those unarticulated assumptions governing the idea of judicial discretion.

To understand the context in which the Model Code of Evidence was framed requires a discussion of the rise of legal progressivism in the early 20th century as well as the impact of those academics branded legal realists in the 1930s. The spectacular failure (and later success) of the Model Code of Evidence may allow us to understand notions of legal reform and that post–World War II jurisprudence categorized as reasoned elaboration or legal process.

---


II. AMERICAN LEGAL THOUGHT AND LEGAL REFORM

A. Introduction

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, implemented in 1938, and the Federal Rules of Evidence, enacted in 1975, are designed, we are told, to promote the "just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of every action." They are to be "construed to secure fairness in administration, elimination of unjustifiable expense and delay, and promotion of growth and development of the law of evidence to the end that the truth may be ascertained and proceedings justly determined." The stated goals of these transsubstantive rules, then, are that the truth be determined and disputes be justly resolved.

The foundational assumptions underlying the claim that the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Federal Rules of Evidence are instruments that permit the discovery of truth and the "just" resolution of disputes are three related phenomena: first, the general "optimistic rationalism" pervading most of Western legal and intellectual thought from the Enlightenment; second, the legal "progressivism" of influence.

5. In the Rules Enabling Act of 1934 Congress authorized the Supreme Court to prescribe general rules of practice and procedure, which were to become effective if Congress took no action during a regular congressional session to nullify them after being reported to Congress. 28 U.S.C. § 2072 (1934). By order dated 20 Dec. 1937, the Supreme Court adopted the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, which were then transmitted to Congress by the Attorney General in Jan. 1938. Congress took no action during that congressional session to nullify the new Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. On 16 Sept. 1938, the Rules became effective. See text accompanying notes 71-77.


9. See text accompanying notes 130-39, discussing the change from perceiving the rules of evidence as a way to ascertain the truth to a perception of the rules as part of the process of creating a politically convenient way to settle disputes.

10. Twining, Theories of Evidence vii; see also Lawrence M. Friedman, A History of American Law 663-64 (2d ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchstone, 1985) ("Friedman, History of American Law") ("This state of mind is part of the general debris of a world-wide movement of recent centuries that can be called, for want of a better name, rationalism"); Calvin Woodard, "The Limits of Legal Realism: An Historical Perspective," 54 Va. L. Rev. 689, 691-94 (1968) (noting that the process of secularization of society is based on the growth of rationalism, the development of science, and the invention of new technology); John Merryman, The Civil Law Tradition 28-29 (2d ed. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1985) (discussing the influence of the spirit of "optimistic rationalism" on the codification of French private law in the Code Civil of 1804).

11. Twining, Theories of Evidence 1-18. See also William Twining, "Evidence and Legal Theory," 47 Mod. L. Rev. 261, 272 (1984); id., "The Rationalist Tradition in Evidence Scholarship," in Enid Campbell & Louis Waller, eds, Well and Truly Tried 211, 242-49 (1982) ("Twining, 'Rationalist Tradition' "). In "Evidence and Legal Theory," Twining notes that this pervasive optimistic rationalism has been challenged in the history of ideas by the thought of "Croce, Collingwood, Freud, Mannheim, Marx and Weber," id. at 274, and in legal thought by "contemporary writing on judicial processes." Id. I believe that the "oppo-
tial early to mid-20th-century American reformers, who acted as catalysts for both procedural and evidentiary reform; and third, the jurisprudential reaction to American legal realism, which coalesced after World War II into legal process or reasoned elaboration.

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Federal Rules of Evidence were explicitly presented as means to the goals of “truth” and “just-


13. On William Draper Lewis, former dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Law and founder and executive director of the American Law Institute, see N. E. H. Hull, “Restatements and Reform: A New Perspective on the Origins of the American Law Institute,” 8 Law & Hist. Rev. 55, 81–86 (1990). See also 21 Wright & Graham, *Federal Practice* at § 5005 (“There can be little doubt of the ties between the A.L.I. and legal scholars of Progressive political leanings, for the Institute was led for many years by William Draper Lewis, former Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and an active Progressive”).


tice" in part due to this broader Western and narrower American intellectual milieu. These goals were also channeled by a deep public and professional reverence for both Law and the Rule of Law. Finally, the legal profession was dedicated to the beauty and utility of the adversary system, the hallmark of the "Anglo-American" system of adjudication. These explicit statements were not part of the wellspring of the Federal Rules of Evidence, the American Law Institute's 1942 Model Code of Evidence. Part of the failure of the Model Code of Evidence was due to its apparent disavowal of these goals.

The abiding belief of early 20th-century legal progressive thought was that legal reform could rationally aid in the progress of a legal system toward consensual notions of "truth" and "justice." Legal realism, while having little contemporary impact on the legal profession, shattered a jurisprudential faith in legal progress toward truth and justice. The restructuring of legal progressive thought into reasoned elaboration or legal process after World War II required a fundamentally different justification for a "rational" and progressive administration of justice. This justification, however, was unacceptable to a legal profession then essentially unaffected by legal realism. While legal academics could not longer faithfully argue that the goal of the trial was truth, nor that the administration of justice was concerned with substantive rather than procedural justice, the legal profession and the public continued to believe in both goals. Invoking the goals of truth and justice to garner public and professional support was necessary to the passage of the Federal Rules of Evidence; the structure of the Federal Rules, because it is based on the Model Code of Evidence, undermines those goals.

B. Optimistic Rationalism

William Twining describes the tenets of "optimistic rationalism" as a congery of beliefs in truth, reason, and justice under law.\textsuperscript{15} Events occur independently of human observation, and past events can be truthfully reconstructed in the present, although "establishing the truth about alleged past events is typically a matter of probabilities or likelihoods falling short of complete certainty."\textsuperscript{16} Ascertaining the truth is accomplished by listening to experts explain and interpret relevant data and through the "common-sense" generalizations of society.\textsuperscript{17} In adjudicating disputes, establishing the truth must be based on relevant evidence and justice can be accomplished only if the truth is established on the basis of relevant evi-

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Id. at 13.
\item[17] Id. at 14.
\end{footnotes}
dence. Further, justice can be accomplished only if the method of fact finding is "rational." Rational decision making means making decisions based on inferences from relevant evidence. Rational decision making based on relevant evidence will thus lead the fact-finder to the truth and to "correctness" in decision making. The search for truth, then, is at the core of a system of justice. Since, however, decisions about the truth of factual allegations occur in an imperfect, human setting, the concern for justice is not a concern for an idealized justice but a justice under [positive] law, which means that truth will not always be discovered or a correct decision rendered and further means that the goal of "correctness" may be matched or superseded by other social goals.

The "Anglo-American" system of adjudication—the adversary system—structures and channels these tenets of optimistic rationalism. Unlike trial by compurgation or trial by ordeal, the adversary system was perceived as a rational system for the discovery of truth and the pursuit of justice. In the adversary system, each participant, with the notable exception of the parties, plays a significant role in fulfilling the requirements of optimistic rationalism. The attorneys for the parties investigate and sift the facts pertinent to their (opposing) cases and offer and object to the introduction of evidence; the judge impartially decides disputed issues of law, including the admissibility of evidence; and the jury, given the conflicting evidence presented by both parties and instructions on the applicable law by the judge, decides the disputed issues of fact and renders a verdict for a party. This system provides checks on abuses by counsel (by the judge), by the judge (by counsel on appeal), and by the jury (through jury instructions, limiting their purview to issues of "fact" and, in egregious cases, permitting the court to render a judgment notwithstanding the verdict or to inquire into the validity of the verdict), and so limits any departures from rationality.

C. Legal Progressivism and Procedural Reform

The story of the codification of the rules of evidence is further linked to the story of legal progressivism, for the interest in a code of evidence

18. Twining uses the phrase "rectitude of decision." Id.
19. Id.
20. See 5 Wigmore, Treatise § 1367 (3d ed. 1940) (cross-examination "is beyond any doubt the greatest single engine ever invented for the discovery of truth"). See also Twining, *Theories of Evidence* 161 (cited in note 4) ("Wigmore placed far more emphasis on the role of the law of evidence as a means for promoting the search for truth than on its role in constraining that search in the interest of other values and policies"). See text accompanying notes 130-39.
21. Cf. Pound, "Popular Dissatisfaction" at 404-5 (disparaging the ideal that a trial was a sporting contest and pleading for a procedure allowing a judge to independently search for truth and justice).
rules is based on the legal progressives’ spirit of legal reform. In 1904–5, Wigmore’s Treatise was published. This four-volume first edition was an immediate critical and commercial success. Dean Wigmore became the unchallenged authority on the law of evidence in America.

The publication of Wigmore’s Treatise was “the most important event in the history of the law of evidence in this century.” Wigmore’s Treatise was not simply a compendium of cases and a rationalization of inconsistencies in the law of evidence but also a call for reform. If the legal system was to be a rational system for the discovery of truth, as Wigmore believed, the rules of evidence needed to be applied consistently with those goals and to be workable in practice, that is, in trials. Wigmore’s ideas for reforming the law of evidence were part of the emergence of legal progressivism, or sociological jurisprudence, led by Roscoe Pound.

In 1906 Pound spoke at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association in St. Paul, Minnesota, about the reasons for public dissatisfaction with the administration of justice in American courts. Among the reasons for public dissatisfaction with the American legal system was contentious procedure, which turned litigation from a search “for truth

22. Wigmore, Treatise. The first important treatise on the law of evidence in America was written by Harvard Law School Professor Simon Greenleaf and first published in 1842. The title of Greenleaf’s book was A Treatise on the Law of Evidence. Greenleaf’s treatise was preceded in America only by Swift, Digest of the Law of Evidence, which apparently had little impact. See 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5001. See also Twining, “Rationalist Tradition” at 231 (cited in note 11). Initially, Greenleaf’s treatise was written for his students but became the authoritative source of the American law of evidence for the rest of the 19th century. See Twining, Theories of Evidence 5. The 16th, and final, edition of Greenleaf on Evidence was edited by Wigmore, then a professor at Northwestern University Law School, in 1899. Little, Brown & Company, the publishers of Greenleaf on Evidence, were impressed with Wigmore’s efforts to the extent that they asked him to author a treatise on the law of evidence, which resulted in Wigmore’s monumental Treatise.

23. Wigmore was named dean at Northwestern University Law School in 1901, a position he held until 1929. After military service in Washington, D.C., during World War I, Wigmore preferred the appellation “Colonel.”

24. The death in 1902 of Wigmore’s evidence teacher at Harvard Law School, James Bradley Thayer, and the publication of Wigmore’s Treatise to replace Greenleaf left Wigmore as the dominant evidence scholar within both legal academia and the legal profession.

25. 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5001. The following paragraph draws heavily on that work.


28. Id.

(1) The individualist spirit of our common law, which agrees ill with a collectivist age; (2) the common law doctrine of contentious procedure, which turns litigation into a game; (3) political jealousy, due to the strain put upon our legal system by the doctrine of supremacy of law; (4) the lack of general ideas or legal philosophy, so characteristic of Anglo-American law, which gives us petty tinkering where comprehensive reform is needed, and (5) defects of form due to the circumstance that the bulk of our legal system is still case law.
and justice” into a game or sport “that the parties should fight out ... in their own way without interference.” Decrying the sporting theory of justice, Pound cited Wigmore for the proposition that this view inaccurately depicted the adversary system. The sporting theory disfigured the administration of justice and mistakenly led even the “most conscientious” judge to believe that he was “not to search independently for truth and justice” and to assume that “errors in the admission or rejection of evidence are presumed to be prejudicial and hence demand a new trial.”

This gave the community “a false notion of the purpose and end of law.”

Pound’s call was for a true “scientific jurisprudence” based on the use of experts to make the legal system more efficient. Making judges “scientists” would instill in judges an expertise which would create a greater efficiency in the administration of justice. It would also alter the administration of justice by creating an emphasis on substantive justice in the courts. Two years later, Pound fleshed out both these themes in a *Columbia Law Review* article. The science of law was a means to the end of “reason, uniformity, and certainty.” A scientific jurisprudence was a search for full justice, for “solutions that go to the root of the controversies,” for equal justice, and for exact justice. Law was scientific in order to eliminate “the personal equation in judicial administration, to preclude corruption and to limit the dangerous possibilities of magisterial ignorance.”

The scientific administration of justice, however, was not to be confused with a mechanistic jurisprudence, although a degeneration of legal science could lead to stagnation and “petrifaction” in the legal system.

The antidote to the problem of “petrifaction” was “a pragmatic, a sociological legal science.” “The sociological movement in jurisprudence is a movement for pragmatism as a philosophy of law; for the adjustment of principles and doctrines to the human conditions they are to govern rather than to assumed first principles; for putting the human factor in the central place and relegating logic to its true position as an instrument.”

Pound then noted that the law of procedure and evidence suffered

29. Id. at 405.
30. Id.
31. Id.
32. Id. “The inquiry is not, What do substantive law and justice require? Instead, the inquiry is, Have the rules of the game been carried out strictly?” Id. at 406. A related problem was the “injustice of deciding cases upon points of practice, which are the mere etiquette of justice.” Id. at 408.
33. Id. at 406.
34. See 21 Wright & Graham, *Federal Practice* at § 5001.
35. Pound, 8 *Colum. L. Rev.* at 605.
36. Id.
37. Id. at 609.
38. Id. at 609–10.
An insistence on perceiving procedure and evidence in conceptual terms led judges to view them as ends rather than means, and Pound gave examples of this error. He concluded by suggesting the enactment of "a common-sense and business-like procedure."

The advent at the beginning of the 20th century of sociological jurisprudence, also known as legal progressivism, progressive proceduralism, and progressive-pragmatism, was part of the general progressive movement and specifically part of the intellectual departure from formalism. Pound, the progenitor of sociological jurisprudence, relied, like all good progressives, on the "ideology of bureaucracy" to support his efforts at reforming the legal system. In general, "[p]rogressivism believed in the management of government by experts and advocated the expansion of the executive branch, primarily in the form of administrative regulatory agencies, at the expense of the Congress and the courts." Specifically, formalist jurisprudential theory employed a priori reasoning rather than reasoning based on actual economic and social conditions. The use of...
disinterested experts in adjudication would make the administration of justice more rational and just. Such reform was a gradual reform, conservative in the sense of taking the best from the American past and molding it to the present. Political and legal progressives, as their name suggests, believed in the evolution of human progress, a gradual but continued movement toward greater enlightenment about the human condition. As advocates for efficiency, expertise, and progress, progressives claimed that their movement was nonideological. All bureaucrats, including judges, if correctly trained and learned as “scientists,” could act disinterestedly in support of progress. Finally, some legal progressives, including Pound and Wigmore, believed in moral absolutes. While society’s values were often inchoate and in flux, there was some consensus about values.

Pound’s ideas for legal reform gradually captured the attention of influential academics and “elite” members of the legal profession. In a 1937 article looking back at the early proposals for legal reform, Wigmore called Pound’s 1906 speech “the spark that kindled the white flame of progress.” Wigmore noted that on the morning after Pound’s speech was given, he met with William Draper Lewis, then of the University of Pennsylvania, and they, along with others, “resolved to do something about it in our own limited spheres.” In 1936, a writer discussing the third draft of the proposed Federal Rules of Civil Procedure in the American Bar Association Journal traced the movement for reform of the rules of civil procedure to Pound’s 1906 speech.

When Pound spoke to the American Bar Association, he was dean of the University of Nebraska School of Law, a “hitherto obscure Nebraska jurist.” Two years later, Wigmore recruited Pound to Northwestern, and shortly after that, he was named Story Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. By 1916, Pound was dean at Harvard, and during his 20-year term he consolidated Harvard’s preeminence in legal education.


51. Id. at 178 (emphasis in original).


55. On Pound, see Paul Sayre, The Life of Roscoe Pound (Iowa City: State University of Iowa, 1949); David Wigdor, Roscoe Pound: Philosopher of Law (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood
preeminence of Pound at Harvard and Wigmore at Northwestern eased the transition of the legal academy from formalist to "progressive-pragmatist" notions of jurisprudence.

In 1912, the ABA recommended the adoption of a uniform set of procedural rules prepared by the Supreme Court for use in federal common law litigation. The next year, a midwestern lawyer named Herbert Lincoln Harley founded the American Judicature Society for the purpose of improving the American administration of justice. Two members of its first board of directors were Wigmore and Pound. At about the same time, the Association of American Law Schools recommended the creation of a juristic center for the advancement of jurisprudence. The United States's entry into World War I stalled efforts to implement this plan, but they began afresh in 1920. Also in 1920, the Commonwealth Fund sponsored a Legal Research Committee to aid legal reform. The Legal Research Committee, composed of Pound, Judge Benjamin Cardozo, and other well-known members of the legal profession, commissioned a study on the law of evidence. The chairman of the Evidence Committee was Edmund M. Morgan, then a professor at Yale Law School. Wigmore was named a member of the committee. Two years later, the conservative Chief Justice Taft urged the merger of law and equity in a speech before the ABA. That same year, a Permanent Organizing Committee met and discussed the likely work of the newly created juristic center. In February 1923, the first meeting of that organization, now called the American Law Institute, took place in Washington, D.C. The institute, comprised of many of the most influential lawyers, judges, and legal aca-


60. Id. at 65.

61. Id. at 67-70.


63. Id. at viii.

64. Tolman, 22 A.B.A.J. at 784 (cited in note 52). See Burbank, 130 U. Pa. L. Rev. at 1069-70. Taft had personally supported the merger of law and equity as early as 1914, as president of the American Bar Association, and had urged procedural reforms on the model of the English legal system as early as 1909. See id. at 1048, 1051.

65. See Hull, 8 Law & Hist. Rev. at 76-80 (cited in note 13).

66. Id. at 85.
demics in the country, would attempt to eliminate uncertainty in the law by drafting a Restatements of the Law.\textsuperscript{67}

While the efforts to re-form and restate the law agency, contracts, restitution, and torts were begun by the institute in 1923 and partially concluded by 1934, and while the American Judicature Society had drafted a model code of state civil procedure in 1919,\textsuperscript{66} "reform" of the federal rules of civil procedure in federal courts was blocked until 1934. The leading opponent of "reform" was Montana Senator Thomas J. Walsh, who feared that a revision of the rules would lead to a more complex procedural code like that in New York, rather than the simpler codes found in several states in the West.\textsuperscript{69} After his election in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt nominated Walsh as his attorney general. Shortly after the American Bar Association disbanded its committee on procedural reform, which had been guided and aided by Roscoe Pound,\textsuperscript{70} Walsh died. Roosevelt then nominated Homer Cummings for the office of attorney general. Attorney General Cummings, noting the "consensus" of bench, bar, and academia, urged Congress to authorize the Supreme Court to make procedural rules. Less than a year later, after little discussion, the Rules Enabling Act of 1934 was passed unanimously.\textsuperscript{71}

The Rules Enabling Act authorized the Supreme Court to unify common law and equity pleading. In January 1935, Yale Law School Dean Charles Clark, with James Wm. Moore,\textsuperscript{72} wrote an article predicting that

\textsuperscript{67} The American Law Institute eventually undertook the Restatement of the law in nine discrete areas of private law: agency, conflicts, contracts, judgments, property, restitution, security, torts, and trusts. The institute's executive secretary was William Draper Lewis. After listening to Roscoe Pound's St. Paul address to the ABA, Lewis joined with Wigmore in resolving to do something to reform the American administration of justice. Nearly 20 years later, Lewis wrote that the institute would also "promote those changes which will tend better to adapt the laws to the needs of life." Hull, 8 Law & Hist. Rev. at 83 (quoting "Report of the Committee on the Establishment of a Permanent Organization for the Improvement of the Law Proposing the Establishment of an American Law Institute," 1 ALI Proc. (1923)). In his article "Mechanical Jurisprudence" (8 Colum. L. Rev. at 622 (cited in note 26)), Pound suggested that legal scholars test the conceptions of the common law "to lay sure the foundations for the ultimate legislative restatement of the law."


\textsuperscript{70} Tolman, 22 A.B.A.J. at 784 (cited in note 52) ("After years of study, during all which time Roscoe Pound continued as the mentor of the committee and its draftsman"). See also Burbank, 130 U. Pa. L. Rev. at 1045-48 (cited in note 56).

\textsuperscript{71} Id. at 1095. See also 4 Wright & Miller, Federal Practice at § 1003 (cited in note 13).

\textsuperscript{72} James William Moore, born in Condon, Ore., on 22 Sept. 1905, received his law degree from the University of Chicago in 1933. He received a J.S.D. from Yale in 1935 and from 1935 to 1943 was an instructor at Yale. He became a professor at Yale in 1943. Moore is the author of Moore's Federal Practice, first published as a three-volume work in 1938. 2 Who's Who in America (43d ed. 1984-85).
procedural reform would fail unless there was a merger of law and equity pleading. In June of that year, Dean Clark was appointed Reporter to the Advisory Committee and Moore was named a member of the committee. The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure unified common law and equity procedure. The committee published the third draft of the Rules in May 1936, and an amended version of that draft was adopted by the Supreme Court on 20 December 1937. When Congress failed to act to reject the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the Rules became effective on 16 September 1938.

The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure revolutionized the theory of procedure. The rules were broadly written. Only general features of procedure were made rules. Specific issues were left to the judge to fashion as experience warranted. The supporters of the rules cited Pound, among others, for the proposition that broad, flexible rules provided the best method to reform rules of civil procedure.

The successful adoption of Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, the growth and influence of reforming organizations like the American Judicature Society and the ALI, and the enormous success of ALI's project to restate the law convinced reformers that the rules of evidence should be reformed and codified.

D. Early Evidentiary Reform Efforts

In 1910, Wigmore wrote the first evidence code, which had little effect on evidence reform. As noted above, in 1920, the Commonwealth Fund's Committee to Propose Specific Reforms in the Law of Evidence began working on reforming the law of evidence. The committee's report,

76. See Tolman, 22 A.B.A.J. at 784 (cited in note 52) (quoting Pound on the efficacy of a general system of procedure).
published in 1927, contained five specific proposals. The author of the Commonwealth Fund's report was Professor Edmund M. Morgan, who had moved from Yale Law School to Harvard Law School in 1925. Morgan's writings on evidence and his ubiquitous presence in organized efforts to reform the rules of evidence make him as important in the development of the American law of evidence as is Wigmore. The Commonwealth Fund's Evidence Committee decided not to propose a model code of evidence for three related reasons. First, quoting Wigmore, the committee concluded that "[o]ur system of evidence is sound on the whole." Second, the preparation of a model code was beyond the scope of the committee. Third, the bar would not accede to evidentiary reform.

In its final chapter, entitled "The Outlook for Reform," the Evidence Committee stated: First, "[r]ules of evidence should be so devised as to facilitate the ascertainment of truth"; second, "[d]iscretionary power of the trial judge over the conduct of the trial is of the very heart of effective trial procedure," but trial judges were perceived as unworthy of the bar's trust, so reform was stymied; and third, for reform to occur, "the traditional conservatism of lawyers must yield to the need for a more efficient administration of justice." Additionally, the committee based its specific reforms of the law of evidence on quantitative data compiled from questionnaires sent to practitioners. The committee believed that empirical support for proposed reforms was better than "relying on opinion and a priori argument."

Although this attempt to correlate the rules with the law in action was primitive, it marked a difference between the "old" formalist jurisprudence and the "new" sociological jurisprudence. The report of the Commonwealth Fund's Evidence Committee was thus thoroughly based on the ideals of legal progressivism: incremental reform, truth as the goal of the trial, efficiency in the administration of justice, a requirement that judges be disinterested experts who wisely used the discretion granted them, and empirical support for reform.

79. The proposals included giving the judge the discretion not to abide by rules of evidence concerning matters not in dispute, allowing the judge to comment on the weight of the evidence, abolishing Dead Man's statutes, admitting declarations of dead persons, and simplifying and modernizing the business records exception to hearsay.

80. See note 2.


82. Morgan, Law of Evidence xiii.

83. Id. at 68.

84. Id. at 66.

85. Id. at 67.

86. Id. at 68.

87. Id. at viii.

88. Only one proposal suggested by the Commonwealth Fund's Evidence Committee eventually was adopted. See 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5005 (business
When the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure Advisory Committee to the Supreme Court was appointed eight years later in 1935, Morgan was named a member. Although Chief Justice Hughes apparently believed that the Advisory Committee would include rules of evidence, the committee decided to delay work on rules of evidence, except for Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 43, which concerned the mode of proof.

In 1938, the ABA published a report of the Committee on Improvements in the Law of Evidence, a committee whose purpose was to suggest improvements in the law of evidence. The chairman of the committee was Wigmore, whose imprint is seen throughout the committee's report. (Wigmore was the only member of the five-man committee who assented to all the committee's general and specific proposals.) The committee made 12 general proposals and 20 specific proposals. The proposals consisted of two parts: first, general proposals to reform and improve the administration of the laws of evidence, and second, specific rules changes. The committee's report was based on three assumptions: (1) that there was "a probable lack of united professional support for any radical, or even any substantial changes"; (2) that "[a]ll will agree that the body of the rules of evidence, in their skeleton framework, are wise and wholesome—in short, they are a valuable and unique contribution to the world's expedients in the investigation of truth"; and (3) that any reform of the rules of evidence should be undertaken through rules of court rather than through legislative enactment. The most interesting of the general proposals were the suggestions that the ABA sponsor an attempt to draft "a short code" simplifying the law of evidence, that "the terms records exception to the hearsay rule). In 1936 the ABA embraced three of the five proposals.

89. See Wigmore, 22 A.B.A.J. at 813 (cited in note 68) (noting the infeasibility of offering a code of federal evidence rules when there was no existing state code of evidence). See also 4 Proceedings of Meeting of Advisory Committee on Rules for Civil Procedure of the Supreme Court of the United States 974 (20-25 Feb. 1936), quoted in Burbank, 63 Notre Dame L. Rev. 718 n.187 (cited in note 77) ("In a discussion about the original Advisory Committee's power to recommend Federal Rules on matters of evidence, Professor Morgan observed: 'I think, if you put that up to the Court, they would say, as the servant girl said, "It is such a little baby." (Laughter)'").

90. See Burbank, 130 U. Pa. L. Rev. at 1137-43 (cited in note 56) (discussing the Advisory Committee's concerns about their power to draft federal rules of evidence and their distinguishing rules regarding the mode of taking evidence and rules regarding the admissibility of evidence).


92. Id. at 570.

93. Id. at 576.

94. Id. at 571. The final general proposal adopted by the committee urged that state legislatures "make no changes in the rules of evidence without due notice and opportunity of hearing to the state and local bar associations." Id. at 580. This was another tenet of progressivism, which distrusted the political nature of legislatures in favor of the "nonpolitical" impartiality of experts.

95. Id. at 576-77.
'discretion' and 'abuse of discretion' be discarded, as having false implications; and that the trial court's ruling be ordinarily treated as final, insofar as it involves the mere application of the rule to the facts; thus leaving to the reviewing court its proper function, viz., the safeguarding of the tenor of the rule."

In addition to the 5-member committee, an Advisory Committee of 66 members was polled concerning its agreement with the proposals. One of the members of the Advisory Committee was Morgan. While Morgan agreed with most of the proposals, he disagreed with the suggestion that the terms "discretion" and "abuse of discretion" be eliminated and with the proposal that an evidentiary ruling by a trial court be viewed as final if it simply applied the facts to the rules of evidence.

E. The Model Code of Evidence

According to the "Introduction" to the Model Rules of Evidence, written by ALI director William Draper Lewis, the ALI had carefully considered restating the law of evidence at some point shortly after the ALI was created. The governing council unanimously decided against restating the law of evidence because there "was the belief that however much that law needs clarification in order to produce reasonable certainty in its application, the rules themselves in numerous and important instances are so defective that instead of being the means of developing truth, they operate to suppress it." Having successfully completed most of the Restatement of the Law, the ALI approached the Carnegie Corporation in late 1938 (shortly after the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure had become effective and in the same year that the ABA committee called for the development of a short, simplified code of evidence) for a grant involving the "study of the Law of Evidence with a view not to its Restatement but to its revision." After receiving a grant in 1939 from the Carnegie Foundation, the institute's Evidence Editorial group was named. The Reporter for the Evidence Editorial group was Professor Morgan. Named as chief consultant to the group was the 76-year-old Wigmore.

A Proposed Tentative Draft of the Model Code of Evidence was presented to the ALI Council in February 1940 and approved for discussion at the ALI's annual meeting in May 1940. The discussion at the annual meeting was about the divergence in evidence theory between Wigmore and Morgan. George Wharton Pepper, president of the ALI and

---

96. Id. at 576.
97. No more than 44 Advisory Committee members voted on any one proposal.
99. Id. at ix.
member of the Advisory Committee on the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, introduced the discussion of this draft of the Model Code:

We have not merely the usual series of questions respecting the content of particular paragraphs, but we have broad questions of policy to consider which I suppose may be expressed somewhat thus: That at one extreme of the field of opinion you find those who think that the subject of Evidence should be so flexible that the trial judge should be all but the final arbiter of what is admissible and inadmissible. At the other extreme you find the view of those who believe that as the law of Evidence is to be a working guide for those conducting the business of trial, it should be so specific, so detailed and so meticulous that scarcely any situation should fail of specific recognition in the system of rules. And in between is the view, which in a general way represents what I understand to be the view of the Reporter and his group, that a great measure of flexibility should be introduced into the law, but that there is a such a thing as too great particularization and that should be avoided. 100

Appended to the Tentative Draft was Wigmore's dissent from the approach taken by Morgan and the rest of the Evidence Editorial group. Wigmore proposed six Postulates as guides for the preparation of the Model Code. 101 In his view, none of the Postulates had been followed by the Evidence Editorial group. Therefore, according to Wigmore, any follower of Wigmore's Code of Evidence 102 would reject the Model Code. 103 Morgan's response, in both the Tentative Draft and before the ALI at its annual meeting, was that all of Wigmore's Postulates except Postulate IV had been adopted by the Evidence Editorial group. 104

Wigmore believed that reform of the law of evidence required both a

---

100. 17 ALI Proc. 64–65 (1940).
101. These Postulates formed the basis of Wigmore's Code of Evidence, the second edition of which had been published in 1935 ("Wigmore, Code 2d").
102. Id. A third edition of the Code of Evidence was published in 1942, shortly before the ALI adopted the Model Code of Evidence.
103. See American Law Institute, Code of Evidence Tentative Draft No. 1 (Appendix) 112 (1940) ("ALI, Code").
104. See id. at 115; see also 17 ALI Proc. 66–70 (1940). Postulate IV stated:

This Code, in aiming as it does to become a practical guide in trials, must not be content with abstractions, but must specifically deal with all the concrete rules exemplifying the application of an abstraction, that have been passed upon in a majority of jurisdictions; the Code specifically either repudiating or affirming these rules.—If the objection be made that the law of Evidence should no longer remain a network of petty detailed rules, the answers are, first, that both Bench and Bar need their guidance in order that a normal routine be ordinarily followed for speedy dispatch at trials without discussion; secondly, that the Bar needs them in order to prepare evidence for trial among normal expected lines; and, thirdly, that the really effective way to eliminate the present frequent overemphasis on detailed concrete rules, is to provide that they shall be only guides, not chains,—directory, not mandatory,—and therefore to forbid the review of the Trial Court's rulings, except in extreme instances.

See ALI, Code (Appendix) 111–12 (emphasis in original).
great particularity in rules and limitations on appellate review of evidentiary rulings by the trial court. His disagreement with Morgan was linked to their differing approaches to judicial discretion. Wigmore believed that the phrase “abuse of discretion” was “mere palaver,” code words for an appellate court’s disagreement with the decision of the trial court.\(^{105}\) Since the phrase was misleading, it should be abandoned. Instead, courts should adhere to a rigid distinction between law and fact. Application of the rules to the specific facts of the case should be solely within the trial court’s domain. The appellate court was only to decide issues of evidence law.\(^{106}\) Therefore, although Wigmore was in favor of a detailed code of evidence rules, that code should be flexibly applied because the facts of each case varied. “The rules should be guides, not chains.”\(^{107}\)

Morgan supported a more general code of evidence rules. Broadly written rules both encouraged trial court discretion and permitted appellate court oversight based on the abuse of discretion standard.\(^{108}\) Without referring to Wigmore, Morgan’s Foreword to the Model Code indicates another reason for his disagreement with Wigmore: “[T]he emotions of the persons involved—litigants, counsel, witnesses, judge and jurors—will play a part. A trial cannot be a purely intellectual performance.”\(^{109}\)

Ironically, Morgan’s structure was aided at the 1940 ALI annual meeting by the proposal of Judge (formerly Dean) Clark, who believed that Morgan’s draft was hampered by too many detailed rules for reform to result. During the discussion of the merits of the Wigmore and Morgan approaches, Clark took the podium (at ALI President Pepper’s request) and suggested that after a period of study of two or three years, “you would have very few [rules] that you would need to suggest. There would be probably one broad general rule of admissibility of relevant evidence and then certain subordinate rules that seem necessary for statement, but there would not be included these well understood generalities such as we have here.”\(^{110}\) While Clark protested that his proposal was not at the

\(^{105}\) 1 Wigmore, Treatise at § 8a (3d ed. 1940) (cited in note 13).

\(^{106}\) Id.


\(^{108}\) 17 ALI Proc. 70 (1940).

\(^{109}\) Edmund M. Morgan, Foreword, in American Law Institute, Model Code of Evidence 4 (Philadelphia: American Law Institute, 1942) (“Morgan, Foreword”). Morgan believed that it was wishful thinking to expect the trial court to take an exclusively intellectual approach to matters of evidence, and to understand detailed rules as directory rather than mandatory, or to expect trial or appellate courts to clearly demarcate the line between issues of fact and issues of law in evidence. See also Edmund M. Morgan, “The Model Code of Evidence,” 39 Proc. Vt. B. Ass’n 94, 100 (1945) (“If a trial is to be a rational proceeding with a competent judge in charge, he must be given a large measure of discretion. A trial cannot be a purely mechanical performance”). In an earlier book review, Morgan stated, “To be sure, the jury is often swayed by sympathy and prejudice; but are trial judges motivated solely by intellectual impulses?” Edmund M. Morgan, Book Review, 46 Harv. L. Rev. 1203, 1203 (1933), reviewing Joseph N. Ulman, A Judge Takes the Stand (1933).

\(^{110}\) See 17 ALI Proc. 82 (1940). This was consistent with the structure of the Federal
other "extreme" from Wigmore's proposal, his suggestion that the Evidence Editorial group draft fewer rules of evidence was perceived just that way. After Clark's plea for greater reform, the annual meeting voted first to approve Morgan's approach rather than Wigmore's approach and later approved Morgan's approach over Clark's suggestion. When Morgan wrote the Foreword to the Model Code, he stated that the choice was "between a catalogue, a creed, and a Code. The Institute decided in favor of a Code." 111

A second draft of the Model Code of Evidence was presented at the 1941 annual meeting of the ALI. Later that year, Morgan wrote four articles about the proposed Model Code for the ABA Journal. 112 In the first, published in September 1941, Morgan discussed the theory of the Model Code. Without mentioning either Wigmore or Clark by name, Morgan suggested that any approach other than that utilized by the Model Code was flawed. Wigmore's approach was insufficient because it could never be complete. Additionally, "[e]ach generalization would have to serve as the base for an elaborate superstructure of specifications and qualifications." 113 "To adopt such a method would be to produce a long, unwieldy enactment which would be in effect a restatement of the law of evidence similar to the restatements of the substantive subjects." 114 On the other hand, the Clark approach would be valuable "only in case the decision of the trial judge is to be final and not subject to review. Otherwise each application of the general principle to a new situation would invite appeal." 115 The only reasonable approach, then, was to "draw a series of rules in general terms covering the larger divisions and subdivisions of the subject without attempting to frame rules of thumb for specific situations and to make the trial judge's ruling reviewable for abuse of discretion." 116

In the January 1942 issue of the ABA Journal, the first issue after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entry of the United States into World War II, Wigmore attacked the Model Code. 117 He began by lamenting that he will be portrayed as "too conservative and unprogressive" but for-

---

111. See Morgan, Foreword at 13.
114. Id. In his Foreword to the Model Code of Evidence (at 12), published in fall 1942, Morgan added: "It would give the restatement a legislative form, make it rigid and hamper the normal growth of the law."
116. Id.
merly had been "reproached" as "too radical, too advanced." He then noted that while he was the draftsman of a competing Code of Evidence, he had thought about the style of the Model Code for the three years of its drafting and had not changed his mind. Limiting himself "to the defects in method and style of the Draft as a legislative measure," Wigmore then returned to the Evidence Editorial group's failure to follow his six Postulates. The battle Wigmore lost at the 1940 ALI annual meeting was renewed in his January 1942 ABA Journal article.

The ALI approved the Model Code of Evidence at its May 1942 annual meeting, and ABA members were informed of this in the June 1942 issue of the ABA Journal. By this time, however, the Journal was more concerned with the ongoing war effort than with anything else, and the next mention of the ALI's Model Code of Evidence was a short report in the November 1942 issue of the Journal.

In mid-1943, the ABA's House of Delegates directed the Committee on Jurisprudence and Law Reform to study the Model Code, Wigmore's Code of Evidence, and other writings to aid in the reform of the law of evidence in federal courts. Later that year a Special Committee of the American Bar Association on Improving the Administration of Justice recommended to state committees that they study the Model Code of Evidence with a view toward adopting it. Both the Texas and Alabama bar associations discussed the Model Code during 1943. In late 1944 the ABA's Committee on Jurisprudence and Law Reform recommended the Model Code to the Supreme Court's Advisory Committee on Rules of Civil and Criminal Procedure in preference to Wigmore's Code. This recommendation was adopted by the ABA's House of Delegates.

In June 1944, however, a Committee on Administration of Justice on Model Code of Evidence of the State Bar of California excoriated the theory, assumptions, and form of the Model Code. Citing Wigmore's January 1942 ABA Journal article, the committee concluded that the Model Code "was designed, not to offer any improvement to existing statutes or ex-

118. Id. at 23.
119. Id. (emphasis in original).
121. 68 A.B.A. Rep. 146 (1943).
122. See "Spotlight on Evidence," 27 J. Am. Jud. Soc'y 113, 115 (1943). The ALI's official position was that it did not "urge the immediate recommendation of the Code as a whole by a bar association or its adoption by a legislature or a court. Rather, it submits the work to the legal profession of the country, on its merits, for such action as the bench and bar feel prepared to take after the work has become known." Id. at 113.
123. University of Texas Professor Charles T. McCormick, a member of the Evidence Editorial group, coordinated the discussion of the Model Code of Evidence at the 1943 Texas State Bar Association meeting. Id. at 114.
124. Id.
isting codes of evidence, but to entirely revolutionize our present rules of evidence and to substitute for them the rules of evidence that are generally in force in continental Europe."126 The California committee attacked the Model Code in a number of different ways. The most predictable move was to deny that any substantial problems existed with the California rules of evidence. The committee also claimed that the Model Code granted the trial judge too much power at the expense of lawyers. Third, the committee argued that the Model Code created, rather than alleviated, uncertainty in the law. Finally, and most curiously, it suggested that revising the rules of evidence during a time of war misdirected American energy. A small notice that the State Bar of California had rejected the Model Code appeared in the December 1944 issue of the ABA Journal.127 After the rejection of the Model Code by the State Bar of California, there was little continued support from the organized bar for the adoption of the Model Code.128

The reasons for the failure of the Model Code include Wigmore's preemptive strike, the California State Bar's reaction to the Model Code, and the perception that the institute and its Evidence Editorial group were part of an elitist Eastern establishment attempting to impose their theories on trial lawyers nationwide.129

Just as important, in my view, were Morgan's explicit disavowal of truth as the goal of the American system of adjudication and his acknowledgment that the Model Code was an effort to "radically reform" the rules of evidence by giving the trial judge greater discretion to admit and exclude evidence.

In addition to their disagreement concerning the structure of the Model Code, Wigmore and Morgan disagreed about the goal of the trial and the need for reform. Wigmore remained a legal progressive, while Morgan, I believe, departed from legal progressivism in order to meet the challenge coming from scholars associated with American legal realism.

126. "Report of Committee on Administration of Justice on Model Code of Evidence," 19 J. St. B. Calif. 262 (1944). I assume that this rhetoric was an attempt to equate the Model Code with the evil of the civil law system. The Model Code's radical reformation of the law of evidence was not modeled on civil law, although, like civil law, it gave greater power to the trial judge and less to the attorneys.

127. 30 A.B.A.J. 700 (1944). A number of addresses were given and articles written for state bar associations from 1941 to 1944 by supporters of the Code and members of the Evidence Editorial group, but nothing was printed in the ABA Journal.


129. On the last point, see 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5005.
The notions that the discovery of truth was the goal of adjudication and that the trial judge needed discretionary power because he was the only disinterested expert in the courtroom were consonant with progressive thought.\textsuperscript{130} While Wigmore later qualified his support for the second tenet,\textsuperscript{131} he believed that the goal of the trial was the discovery of truth.\textsuperscript{132} All previous reform efforts were premised on this belief. For example, the Commonwealth Fund's Evidence Committee, chaired by Morgan, expressly adopted this goal in 1927. Even in the Introduction to the Model Code, Institute Director Lewis stated that the Council had rejected a restatement of the Law of evidence because "the rules themselves in numerous and important instances are so defective that instead of being the means of developing truth, they operate to suppress it."\textsuperscript{133} Absent this goal, the "Anglo-American" system of adjudication was not rational. Less than 15 years after the Commonwealth Fund's report, Morgan's view, set forth in the ABA Journal, was, "A lawsuit is not a means of making a scientific investigation for the ascertainment of truth; it is a proceeding for the orderly settlement of a controversy between litigants."\textsuperscript{134} In his Foreword to the Model Code of Evidence, Morgan wrote,

The court is not a scientific body. It is composed of one or more persons skilled in the law, skilled in the general art of investigation, but not necessarily skilled in the field which the dispute concerns, acting either alone or with a body of men not necessarily trained in investigation of any kind. Its final determination is binding only between the parties and their privies. It does not pronounce upon the facts for any purpose other than the adjustment of the controversy before it. Consequently there must be a recognition at the outset that nicely accurate results cannot be expected; that society and the litigants must be content with a rather rough approximation of what a scientist might demand.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{130} See Morgan, Law of Evidence 66–68 (cited in note 48).
\textsuperscript{132} Id. "What the law of Evidence, and of Procedure, nowadays most needs is that the men who are our judges and our lawyers shall firmly dispose themselves to get at the truth and the merits of the case before them."
\textsuperscript{133} Lewis, "Introduction" at viii (cited in note 98).
\textsuperscript{134} Morgan, 27 A.B.A.J. at 539 (cited in note 112). This is repeated in essence in Morgan, Foreword at 3 (cited in note 109). This view is foreshadowed in a 1936 book review, in which Morgan suggested that the book be read by no one interested in believing "that a law suit is a proceeding for the discovery of truth by rational processes." Edmund M. Morgan, Book Review, 49 Harv. L. Rev. 1387, 1389 (1936), reviewing Irving Goldstein, Trial Technique (1935). See also Edmund M. Morgan, "Hearsay Dangers and the Application of the Hearsay Concept," 62 Harv. L. Rev. 177, 184 (1948).
\textsuperscript{135} Morgan, Foreword at 3–4. A similar statement is made in Morgan, 27 A.B.A.J. at 539.
However, according to Morgan, this did not make the rules of evidence irrational. Indeed, acknowledging the "political" nature of dispute resolution would assist in eliminating the artificial barriers which interfere with the ordinary, daily decision-making processes of persons. The dispute resolution function of the courts was a middle ground between the "truth" theory of Wigmore and those who concluded that the trial was irrational. To Wigmore, of course, this was heresy. The committee of the California State Bar seemed unable to accept Morgan’s statements at face value, for in “praising” the motives of the Evidence Editorial group, it stated, “We believe they feel, as we do, that . . . a trial should be conducted for the purpose of ascertaining the truth.” The predominant view remained that the adversary system of adjudication was designed to find the truth. In a 1948 book on the meaning of the Sacco and Vanzetti case, Morgan again disparaged the assumption that in the adversary system “the truth will emerge to the view of the impartial tribunal.” These arguments, however, remained unappealing both to legal progressives and the larger legal profession.

A third difference between Wigmore and Morgan was that Wigmore’s conservatism in regard to the legal profession and in regard to the common law of evidence made anathema Morgan’s statement that “[i]t is time, too, for radical reformation of the law of evidence.” Wigmore continued to believe, “[o]ur system of Evidence is sound on the whole.” He further believed that reform efforts needed to be modest in order to succeed. Although his influence on the ALI’s Evidence Editorial group was

136. 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5005 n.45. See also Leon Green, Judge and Jury 376 (Kansas City, Mo.: Vernon Law Book Co., 1930) (concluding that judicial approval of the jury trial was based on its “prime political function” of absorbing citizen discontent with verdicts). A similar statement by legal process scholars Henry Hart and John McNaughton is found in “Evidence and Inference in the Law,” 87 Daedalus 40, 44 (1958) (“Hart & McNaughton, ‘Evidence and Inference’ “): “A contested lawsuit is society’s last line of defense in the indispensable effort to secure the peaceful settlement of social conflicts.”

137. See text accompanying notes 162–64. See also Morgan, 27 A.B.A.J. at 541 (disparaging the view “that the trial is to be a battle between the great champions of the contending parties; a battle of wits between their lawyers with the judge as umpire and the jury making the decision without advice from the judge”).

138. 19 J. St. B. Calif. at 281 (cited in note 126).

139. G. Louis Joughin & Edmund M. Morgan, The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti 184 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948) (“Joughin & Morgan, Sacco and Vanzetti”). According to the Preface, Morgan was the sole author of the chapters concerning the law of the Sacco and Vanzetti case. Id. at v–vi.

140. Morgan, 27 A.B.A.J. at 540; Morgan, Foreword at 6.

141. I Wigmore, Treatise at § 8c (3d ed. 1940) (cited in note 13). See also “Report on Improvements” at 576 (cited in note 91) (“All will agree that the body of the rules of evidence, in their skeleton framework, are wise and wholesome; in short, they are a valuable and unique contribution to the world’s expedients in the investigation of truth”).

142. “Report on Improvements” at 572 (“So in any proposed improvement of a rule of law, it is wise at the same time to take measures to insure a suitable environment and administration. Any proposed improvement in the rules of evidence must heed the same warn-
limited, to the legal profession Wigmore remained the preeminent authority on the law of evidence.

Professors Wright and Graham suggest that while Morgan was not a heretic, he rejected the more extreme views of legal progressivism.143 My thesis is slightly different: Because of the intellectual conflagration caused by the rise of American legal realism in the 1920s and 1930s, Morgan believed it necessary to destroy legal progressivism in order to save it.

F. American Legal Realism and Attacks on Reform

American legal realism144 styled itself as a methodology growing out of the insights of sociological jurisprudence.145 It differed from legal progressivism in two ways. First, in crude, undifferentiated terms, the horrors of World War I led many intellectuals to disparage any proclaimed connection between morality and law, and the optimism of pre–World War I progressives became the cynicism of postwar realists. Second, realists were much more critical about the decision-making processes of judges.146


---

143. 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5005 n.45.
146. In addition, through its reliance on the learning in psychology, sociology, as well as non-Euclidean geometry, see Purcell, Crisis of Democratic Theory 74–94 (cited in note 14), realism also suggested an empirical advance over the primitive empiricism of sociological jurisprudence. The empirical “advances” made by the realists are extremely well depicted by Professor John Henry Schlegel. See his “American Legal Realism and Empirical Social Science: From the Yale Experience,” 28 Buffalo L. Rev. 459 (1979); id., “American Legal Realism and Empirical Social Science: The Singular Case of Underhill Moore,” 29 Buffalo L. Rev. 195 (1980).
Professor Karl Llewellyn believed that Pound's article was directed at an article he had written the previous year in the *Columbia Law Review*. Llewellyn responded to Pound by suggesting that one of the differences between realism and sociological jurisprudence was "[t]he temporary divorce of Is and Ought" in the study of law in action. There were two strains of realist thought regarding the is/ought distinction, and two responses. Llewellyn years later argued that he was not necessarily suggesting that there were no absolute moral values; instead, he was simply concerned with empirically evaluating and understanding law in American society in light of his confession that such values did not inexorably lead to deductions which answered specific questions of law. Others denominated as realists, however, were convinced that values were simply subjective preferences. For example, in a 1933 review of a book by Felix Cohen, Yale Law School Professor Walter Nelles wrote, "I deny ethical right and ought without qualification." Yale Law School Professors Thurman Arnold and Edward Robinson wrote companion books published in 1935 which seemed premised on the belief that there were no moral absolutes.

The response was twofold. Pound and Felix Frankfurter at Harvard Law School responded to the realist charge by refusing to acknowledge or

---

148. Llewellyn granted from Yale Law School in 1918 at the top of his class. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Yale Law Journal* and stayed a year after graduating to ensure the journal's continued publication. After working for National City Bank (the predecessor of Citicorp) and the law firm of Shearman & Sterling, he began teaching at Yale in 1922. Llewellyn became a professor at Columbia in 1925 and stayed there until 1951, when he began teaching at the University of Chicago law school. He died in 1962. Llewellyn was influenced by his teachers Arthur Corbin and Wesley Hohfeld, who were intellectual parents to legal realism. A biography of the work of Llewellyn is William Twining, *Karl Llewellyn and the Realist Movement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973; reprinted 1985) ("Twining, Karl Llewellyn").


accept the postulates of realist thinking. Lon Fuller, then of Duke Law School (and later of Harvard Law School), denied in The Law in Quest of Itself "the possibility of a rigid separation of the is and the ought." 154 Morris Cohen, a philosopher and good friend of Felix Frankfurter, complained that the realists "do away altogether with the normative point of view in law." 155 The second response was that of Catholic legal academics, who argued for a return to Thomistic natural law. 156

The second attack by the realists on sociological jurisprudence concerned the nature of judicial decision making. In 1929, Federal District Judge Joseph Hutcheson wrote that he decided cases subjectively, "more or less offhand and by rule of thumb." 157 The next year, a practicing lawyer named Jerome Frank wrote Law and the Modern Mind, in which he explicitly followed in Judge Hutcheson's footsteps. Frank asserted: "If the personality of the judge is the pivotal factor in law administration, then law may vary with the personality of the judge who happens to pass upon any given case." 158 Yale Law School Professor Thurman Arnold argued in The Symbols of Government that the notion of the rule of law was a myth. 159 If

---


The essence of all doctrines of natural law is the appeal from positive law to justice, from the law that is to the law which ought to be; and unless we are ready to assert that the concept of a law that ought to be is for some reason an inadmissible one, the roots of natural law remain untouched. Now, it is true that the issue has seldom been so sharply put, for to do so is to espouse an amount of dualism between the is and the ought which is shocking to the philosophically respectable. . . . There have not, of course, been wanting intellectual radicals who, in the interests of a strident monism have clearly and conscientiously attempted to eliminate the chasm between the ought and the is, either by denying the former, or by trying to reduce it to a species of the latter." (Notes omitted)


156. See Purcell, Crisis of Democratic Theory 164-72 (cited in note 14). The Catholic response was more fully developed after World War II. See Mensch & Freeman, 25 Ga. L. Rev. at 963-85 (discussing the creation and development of the legal journal Natural Law Forum (now American Journal of Jurisprudence)).


159. Arnold, Symbols 33-37, 216-19. See also Frank, Law and Modern Mind 100-101 (criticizing the notion of judging on which the ideal of the rule of law is based).
true, then the progressive notion of the disinterested judge would unravel, and placing authority in the “judge-as-expert” would not consequently lead to a more “scientific” administration of justice. It would mean the end of our system of government according to law, not the rule of men, something which Wigmore\textsuperscript{160} and Pound\textsuperscript{161} could not countenance. More broadly, this attack struck at the foundation of the law itself, its rationality.

Both Arnold and Frank criticized the jury trial and the judicial process. Arnold, who taught evidence at Yale, scoffed at the belief in the efficacy of procedural reform in courts,\textsuperscript{162} and entitled a chapter of The Symbols of Government about the civil trial system, “Trial by Combat.” Frank concluded: “The jury makes the orderly administration of justice virtually impossible.”\textsuperscript{163} Leon Green, who succeeded Wigmore as Dean of the Northwestern Law School, concluded in his 1930 book Judge and Jury that the jury trial should be abolished.\textsuperscript{164}

With the exception of Morgan’s review of Edward S. Robinson’s Law and the Lawyers,\textsuperscript{165} Morgan’s response to this attack by realists was indirect.

\textsuperscript{160} See Wigmore, 28 A.B.A.J. at 24 (cited in note 49) (uncabined judicial discretion would return us to “that primal condition of chaos”).

\textsuperscript{161} See Purcell, Crisis of Democratic Theory 161–62 (cited in note 14) (discussing Pound's reaction to the perceived excesses of realism).

\textsuperscript{162} Arnold, Symbols 129. See also id., “Trial by Combat and the New Deal,” 47 Harv. L. Rev. 913 (1934) (presenting an earlier version of chapter 8 of The Symbols of Government); id., “The Role of Substantive Law and Procedure in the Legal Process,” 45 Harv. L. Rev. 617 (1932) (discussing the idea of the courtroom as theater); id., Book Review, 42 Yale L.J. 459 (1933), reviewing W. P. Barrett, The Trial of Jeanne D’Arc (1932); id., Book Review, 40 Yale L.J. 333 (1931), reviewing Leon Green, Judge and Jury (1930). See also Thurman Arnold & Fleming James, Cases on Trials Judgments and Appeals (St. Paul, Minn.: West, 1936) (a collection of cases, the purpose of which is to convince the reader that the system of trial is better understood as concerned with rhetorical devices rather than the rational resolution of disputes). Arnold’s decision to part ways with Charles Clark in using data to reform the rules of procedure is discussed in Schlegel, 28 Buffalo L. Rev. at 511–12 (cited in note 146). A sensitive description of Arnold’s evolving views is Ayer, 23 Stan. L. Rev. (cited in note 46).

\textsuperscript{163} Frank, Law and Modern Mind 181. Frank also noted, “The decisions of many cases are products of irresponsible jury caprice and prejudice. . . . [T]hat the principal witness for one of the parties is a Mason or a Catholic . . . such facts often determine who will win or lose.” Id. at 177–78. See also Jerome Frank, Courts on Trial (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949).

\textsuperscript{164} Leon Green, Judge and Jury 395–417 (1930). Green also complained that “[t]he trial judges’ power to deal decisively with questions of evidence has constantly dwindled.” Id. at 379. There is an elliptical suggestion in Roalfe, Wigmore 228 (cited in note 13), that Green supported Wigmore’s view regarding the ALI’s Model Code of Evidence, but the single sentence indicating support is terribly unclear.

\textsuperscript{165} Edmund M. Morgan, Book Review, 13 N.Y.U.L.Q. 322 (1936), reviewing Robinson’s Law and the Lawyers (cited in note 153). The review is written in the second person, in which the “you” Morgan refers to throughout the review is a reference to himself. In gen-
However, in his short two-and-a-half page review, Morgan attacked Robinson, a psychologist at Yale University, for his caricatured explication of law and lawyers in the first four chapters of the book. While Morgan believed the later chapters of some value, he concluded that Robinson's book only partially brought "the doctrines of the substantive and procedural law into harmony with the approved and tested doctrines of the social sciences."166

By the mid-1930s, the American Law Institute had completed several of the Restatements of the law. While the response of the legal establishment was exceedingly favorable,167 the Yale-based realists, who for the most part were not involved in the Restatements,168 unceasingly criticized its purpose, assumptions, and methodology.169 To some it likely seemed that the realists were striking at the very heart of the legal system. For example, Dean Herbert Goodrich of the University of Pennsylvania Law School (and later the second director of the institute) wrote an article170 defending the Restatement project after taking umbrage at a comment made by Robinson in Law and the Lawyers.171 While the comment seems today to be a sharp but not unfair comment about the methodology of the Restatement, Goodrich considered it "fighting words, clearly passing the
limit of fair comment."\textsuperscript{172} Robinson's collaborator, Thurman Arnold, responded in defense of Robinson, and chastised his Harvard Law School classmate Goodrich.\textsuperscript{173} Interestingly, in the course of his apologia, Arnold wrote,

The most important institution wherein such conflicts are reconciled, either by ceremony or logic, is the judicial system. It cannot, therefore, be a place where hard, cold truth is sought, yet it must be a place where everyone thinks that truth is searched for. For this paradoxical function the technique of trial by battle seems admirably fitted. Both sides state their positions with the utmost exaggeration possible, and the ordinary decision permits all the conflicting ideals to stand which may be reconciled with its decision.\textsuperscript{174}

The attack by the realists appeared to be an attack on both the legal profession (represented in part by the Harvard Law School professors who worked as Reporters for the Restatements) and the ideals of legal progressivism.

In a sense, then, as Reporter for the American Law Institute's Model Code of Evidence, Morgan was stepping into this fray. As a Harvard-trained lawyer and a Harvard Law School professor, Morgan was outside the immediate intellectual home of realism. However, he had taught at Yale from 1917 to 1925, and as an academic critical of the handling of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, he had used his interest in law in action to demolish the trial judge's handling of the evidence in that case.\textsuperscript{175}

Morgan was jurisprudentially and pedagogically different from the archetypical Harvard Law School formalist, like Samuel Williston or Joseph Beale. In directing the Commonwealth Fund Evidence Committee's report on the law of evidence, Morgan and the committee "engaged in a primitive form of empirical research so that they could claim that their proposals were based on 'factual material', rather than upon opinion and \textit{a priori} judgments."\textsuperscript{176} Jerome Frank characterized Morgan in late 1948 as "perhaps" a "fact skeptic,"\textsuperscript{177} Frank's highest compliment for any legal

\textsuperscript{172} Goodrich, 48 Yale L.J. at 452.
\textsuperscript{173} Arnold, 84 U. Pa. L. Rev. 811 (1936).
\textsuperscript{174} Id. at 813.
\textsuperscript{175} See Joughin & Morgan, \textit{Sacco and Vanzetti} (cited in note 139). Morgan's contributions had in part been written 20 years before publication of the book. \textit{Id.} at v.
\textsuperscript{176} 21 Wright & Graham, \textit{Federal Practice} at § 5005.
\textsuperscript{177} Jerome Frank, \textit{Law and Modern Mind} xi (Preface to 6th printing 1948) (cited in note 158). Frank delineated two camps of "realists," a term he disparaged, rule skeptics and fact skeptics. The other persons categorized as fact skeptics were Leon Green, Max Radin, Thurman Arnold, and William O. Douglas, along with himself. \textit{Id.} at xii. This preface was separately published in the \textit{Syracuse Law Review}. See Jerome Frank, "Legal Thinking in Three Dimensions," 1 \textit{Syracuse L. Rev.} 9, 11 (1949). See also Frank, \textit{Courts on Trial} 74 (cited in note 163). Morgan critically responded to Frank's claims about "fact skepticism" in a review of \textit{Courts on Trial}. See Morgan, Book Review, 2 \textit{J. Legal Educ.} 385 (1950) ("It is
scholar. At Harvard during the 1930s, Morgan was one of a group of "five
men who rebelled against formalism." Each tried to position himself,
both in class and in writing, between the "anarchy" of legal realism and
the "sterility" of legal formalism. Their successors, mostly trained at the
Harvard Law School, would use some of those insights to form the juris-
prudential thinking denominated reasoned elaboration, or legal process.

By 1939, when the ALI Evidence Editorial group began its work, legal
realism was portrayed as the jurisprudential equivalent to Nazism. Real-
ism's relentless positivism caused a tremendous fear in jurisprudential cir-
cles; at the same time, its messages concerning the absence of absolute
values and the subjectivity (read arbitrariness) of judicial decision making
had penetrated much of American legal thought. However, it appears that
the jurisprudential "crisis" shortly before World War II was, in part, an
intramural battle as far as the legal profession was concerned. The claims
and counterclaims made largely by several professors at Harvard and Yale
law schools had little immediate impact on the direction of the legal pro-
fession. After all, the Supreme Court had just retreated from formalism in
1937, and the American Bar Association, the only "national" association
of lawyers, was largely a reactionary organization. The efforts exerted
by legal academics to attack or defend an autonomous legal order had little
apparent effect on legal practice.

Morgan's compromise between the "formalistic" catalogue suggested
by Wigmore and the "realistic" creed suggested by former Yale Law
School Dean Clark, was an attempt to find a middle way to restore law to
its relatively autonomous place in the jurisprudential firmament. The
choices made in the Model Code of Evidence reflected this middle way:
judicial power to admit or exclude evidence was not only necessary (a pro-
gressive tenet) but inevitable (a realist tenet). This power required giv-
ing the trial judge a great deal of discretion (contrary to Wigmore's view),
but discretion was cabined (contrary to realism), albeit only within some

178. Included in this group were Felix Frankfurter, James M. Landis, Thomas Reed
Powell, and George Gardner. See Kalman, Legal Realism 49 (cited in note 1). I would add
Professor Zechariah Chafee, an evidence, remedies, and constitutional law scholar, to that
list.

179. See Purcell, Crisis of Democratic Theory 159 (cited in note 14). Cf. Robert Gordon,
"Introduction: J. Willard Hurst and the Common Law Tradition in American Legal Histori-

180. See Jerold S. Auerbach, Unequal Justice: Lawyers and Social Change in Modern
America 216 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) (discussing the applications to
ABA membership of three black lawyers in the early 1940s. The two who publicly chal-
 lenged the discriminatory practices of the ABA were denied membership, while the third,
who remained silent, was admitted).

181. See Morgan, Foreword at 13-16 (cited in note 109).
more general rule, with appeals available for the abuse of discretion.182 While the trial was not a scientific search for the truth183 (contrary to progressive tenets), neither was it an irrational way of allocating rights and responsibilities (contrary to realist tenets). The rules governing adjudication of the dispute were rational as long as "artificial barriers to logically persuasive data be removed."184 This, of course, assumes that the jurors could be logically persuaded by receiving more "relevant" data, an assumption not shared by many realists. Related to this was Morgan's statement, "A trial cannot be a purely intellectual performance."185 The realist-based insight that "the emotions of the persons involved—litigants, counsel, witnesses, judge and jurors—will play a part"186 in decision making was used to counter the "formality" of Wigmore's approach but was adopted only with the qualifier "purely." That is, a trial was not purely an "emotional" performance either.187 Finally, in drafting an evidence code, Morgan assumed the competency of a judge. He did not require, as the progressives did, an unusually expert judge, nor did he assume, as Jerome Frank did, that the competent judge needed to make himself aware of his "own prejudices, biases, antipathies, and the like"188 to somehow free himself from those inevitable biases.

The published response in legal periodicals indicates that the legal profession perceived Morgan's attempted reconstruction of the law of evidence as part of a truly "radical" reform. The Model Code was opposed by the legal profession for a number of reasons: (1) Wigmore's opposition; (2) greater power accorded judges (and less to advocates); (3) the Code's disinclination to treat a trial solely as a search for truth, particularly at a time when the United States was engaged in a war against the forces of evil in a fight for freedom and justice; and (4) the admission that a trial was not a purely intellectual (read rational) performance.189 No state adopted the Model Code of Evidence. As Morgan wrote in 1951, "The reception which the Model Code of Evidence of the American Law Institute has met strongly indicates that the bar at any rate is not ready for

182. Id. at 12.  
183. Id. at 3.  
184. Id. at 4.  
185. Id.  
186. Id. (emphasis added). See Frank, Law and Modern Mind.  
187. A contemporary use of Morgan's distinction is found in the FRE Advisory Committee's Notes. See Advisory Committee's Note, Federal Rule of Evidence 403 (1975) (permitting exclusion of relevant evidence to counter the risk of "inducing decision on a purely emotional basis").  
188. Frank, Law and Modern Mind 147 n.* (cited in note 158).  
189. Wright and Graham write that the heavy concentration of "Eastern Establishment" figures in the Evidence Editorial group also affected the reception of the Model Code of Evidence. 21 Wright & Graham, Federal Practice at § 5005 ("The Code doubtlessly suffered as well from the prejudice of many lawyers toward the Harvardians and Easterners who dominated the drafting Committee").
Harkening wistfully back to the progressive notion of expertise, Morgan continued,

"It might have been supposed that a proposal sponsored by a body which is composed of representative judges, lawyers, and law teachers would meet with general approval, especially in view of the standing of the lawyers and judges who compose its Council, and who are responsible for proposals put to the Assembly, and whose work is subject to veto by the Assembly."

It is likely that Morgan and many members of the legal profession differed regarding their understanding that either the Evidence Editorial group or the Assembly of the American Law Institute was "representative" of the legal profession.

Morgan continued to believe in the efficacy of reform. Following in Pound's footsteps, Morgan implored the profession to abolish those rules "designed to make the lawsuit a contest of skill instead of a rational investigation." Morgan made one final argument for granting more discretion to trial judges, calling the judge "[t]he only impartial official dealing with the jury." Morgan cautioned that resistance to reform would result in a continued increase in the power of nonexpert administrative agencies. His concluding paragraph was a plea for the Advisory Committee to the Supreme Court to treat the law of evidence as it had treated the law of civil procedure.

G. Uniform Rules of Evidence

In 1948, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) decided that the law of evidence was a proper subject for uniformity among the states. The next year the ALI referred the Model Code of Evidence to the NCCUSL for study "and if deemed desirable for redrafting." The NCCUSL decided that the Model Code would provide the basis for their work. After some discussion with the ALI, the Uniform Rules were drafted independently. A committee consisting of

---

191. Id.
192. Id. at 599.
193. Id. at 604.
194. Id. at 607–9. This flipped the progressive notion of expert bureaucratic control and played well with lawyers, concerned as always about the extraordinary discretion given administrative judges and officials.
195. Id. at 610.
197. Id.
some of the same members of the Evidence Editorial group of the institute, as well as some practicing lawyers from southern and midwestern states, was chosen in 1949. The NCCUSL unanimously passed the Uniform Rules of Evidence in 1953. Shortly thereafter, the ABA adopted the Uniform Rules of Evidence. The goal of the NCCUSL was and is uniformity; therefore, compared with the Model Code of Evidence, efforts at reform were limited. "So with the objects of acceptability and uniformity in mind, this effort is devoted to the policy of retaining such parts of the Model Code as appear to meet the requirements of such objectives, and to reject, revise or modify the rest." The NCCUSL evidence committee followed the general form of the Model Code and, with the elimination of several "procedural" rules, succeeded in reducing the number of rules to 72. The complete edition of the Uniform Rules of Evidence had a mere 57 pages.

While legal academics largely supported adoption of the Uniform Rules of Evidence, Supreme Court inaction quickly dissipated any momentum for states to adopt the Rules. Because the Rules were drafted less to reform the law of evidence than to make it uniform, the only argument in favor of adoption was that the law of evidence would be the same in all the states. Since most lawyers were limited by attorney licensure laws and the economics of practice to one state, and since any change meant learning new and different rules of evidence, this argument was unpersuasive. While a few states did adopt the Uniform Rules of Evidence, comment-

198. By the end of the drafting of the Uniform Rules, the committee was composed of Spencer A. Gard, a judge from Kansas; Mason Ladd, a professor at the University of Iowa who had been a member of the committee which prepared the Model Code; Charles T. McCormick of the University of Texas, also a member of the Model Code Committee; Lucian Morehead, a practitioner from Texas; Maynard Pirsig, a professor at the University of Minnesota; John Pryor, a practitioner in Iowa; Robert Woodside, Pennsylvania Attorney General; and Joe Estes, a Dallas, Texas, lawyer. Earlier in the drafting process, practitioners from New Jersey, Delaware, and Florida had been members of the committee.


200. "Prefatory Note" at 161. See also Spencer A. Gard, "The Uniform Rules of Evidence," 31 Tulane L. Rev. 19, 23 (1956) ("Sensible change without shock is an underlying policy of the Rules. That is the reason why the Rules take a somewhat conservative approach to the problem of hearsay").

201. "Also, the general policy of the craftsmen for the Model Code in covering the matter in the form of rather broad general rules has been adopted, in preference to a policy of voluminous detail." "Prefatory Note" at 162.


203. Kansas, New Jersey, and Utah adopted versions of the Uniform Rules of Evidence, as did the Virgin Islands. The relationship between California's evidence code and
tors suggested that true reform required the passage of uniform rules of evidence in the federal courts.204

The theory of the Uniform Rules of Evidence was similar to the Model Code of Evidence: more authority should be placed in the hands of the trial judge and less in the hands of opposing counsel; a judge must be given discretion to make "judgment calls"; this discretion is subject to appellate reversal for abuse; and the rules of evidence must be rewritten to make the investigation of the events at issue more rational. But, unlike Morgan, the Conference Committee downplayed any suggestions that the trial was not a search for truth, and, as mentioned above, claimed that the Uniform Rules were a modest reform, not a radical reformation of the law of evidence.

**H. Reasoned Elaboration**

The theory granting the trial court discretion to make evidentiary rulings, viewed as "radical" only a decade before, fit snugly within the dominant form of legal thought in the post–World War II era: reasoned elaboration.205 According to Harvard Law School Professors Henry Hart and Albert Sacks, "the power of reasoned elaboration" meant "two principal things."206 "It means, first of all, that the magistrate is obliged to resolve the issue before him on the assumption that the answer will be the same in all like cases."207 "Secondly, the magistrate is obliged to relate his decision in some reasoned fashion to the . . . statute out of which the issue arises."208 Of course, Hart and Sacks acknowledged, this involved the ex-
exercise of discretion, but the constraints of reasoned elaboration permitted a middle way between "the rigors of a perfected rule, on the one hand, and the looseness of unbuttoned discretion, on the other." 209

Reasoned elaboration grew out of the response to American legal realism. As earlier suggested, the two most alarming conclusions of the realists were, first, the subjectivity of moral values and, second, the political or nonlegal nature of judging. The rise in the 1930s of the Nazis in Germany and the Fascists in Italy, as well as the continued aggression of Japan in East Asia, led some academics to equate legal realism with totalitarianism. The first effort in jurisprudence, then, was to attempt to repair the notion of a "fit" between law and morality. The second effort, begun in part by Morgan in the Model Code of Evidence, was to re-separate law from politics.

The pre–World War II "anti-formalists" 210 at Harvard Law School, in particular Frankfurter, T. R. Powell, James Landis, and Morgan, wrote and taught that judicial behavior influenced law. However, that behavior did not necessarily lead to the conclusion that law was politics by another name. Instead, this simply meant that a closer examination of judicial decision making, particularly in public law, was necessary. This view was best stated by Powell, discussing the teaching of constitutional law: "My emphasis is on process, process, process, on particularities, particularities, on cases, cases, cases, on the contemporary court, on resolving competing considerations, on watching for practicalities not likely to be expressed in opinions in which the court pretends that the case is being decided by its predecessor rather than by itself." 211

The emphasis on process by Powell, among others at Harvard Law School, was an attempt to reinvigorate the autonomy of law. Frankfurter and Landis's landmark study, The Business of the Supreme Court, while concluding that the issues of federal procedure often involved political and cultural battles, suggested that the Court be granted the authority to control procedure because it was "technical and non-partisan." 212 The realist conclusion that political battles recurred throughout all of law was never adopted by the Harvard antiformalists. Instead, a better understanding of and appreciation for the institutional and doctrinal constraints in the judicial process was needed. Academics were doctrinal experts who could provide that appreciation to judges who had strayed. Therefore, law

ask for the decision and on the basis of the evidence presented. A decision must be made now, one way or the other").

210. See Kalman, Legal Realism 49 (cited in note 1). See note 178.
211. Id. at 51 (quoting an undated memorandum from Powell).
professors were in the best position to assist judges to better shape the legal system and the legal profession. 213

Frankfurter left Harvard to become an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 1939. Landis spent several years in the 1930s in Washington as a New Deal administrator. 214 Their departures, however, did not markedly affect the development of reasoned elaboration at Harvard Law School after World War II. The dean at Harvard from 1946 to 1947, Erwin Griswold, received his legal education at Harvard in the late 1920s. Lon Fuller, a trenchant critic of realism and later exponent of legal process theory, 215 was named to the Harvard Law School faculty in 1940. Henry Hart, a 1930 Harvard Law School graduate and president of the Harvard Law Review, was appointed to the faculty in 1932. Albert Sacks graduated from Harvard in 1948, and in 1952, after practicing law and working as a judicial clerk for Justice Frankfurter, was appointed to the Harvard Law School faculty.

Reasoned elaboration attempted to demonstrate that institutional structures and procedural constraints could reintegrate the “is/ought” distinction; 216 it also attempted to return the judge to the status of competent, impartial magistrate. 217 Supporters of reasoned elaboration “solved” the “is/ought” problem by resort to process. This avoided dealing with notions of moral “right” or the problem of the subjectivity of values. Whether the substantive law was right was not the focus of reasoned elaboration. 218

At the same time that reasoned elaboration became the dominant mode of legal thought, the American Law Institute began the Second Restatement. In its Annual Report for 1953, the institute indicated a need for a Second Restatement of the law, to ensure that the Restatements continued accurately to reflect the law. 219 In 1958, ALI director Goodrich asserted that little had changed in the rules or principles since the First Restatement. 220 Drafting a Second Restatement to keep up with the law

213. See Alexander Bickel, The Least Dangerous Branch 25–26 (paper; 2d ed. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986) (“Judges have, or should have, the leisure, the training, and the insulation to follow the ways of the scholar in pursuing the ends of government”).


217. Id. at 161–79.


220. Herbert Goodrich, Introduction, Restatement (Second) of Agency vii (St. Paul,
contradicted Goodrich’s statement, for the conclusion that the law could vary from the principles of the Restatements was contrary to the assumption of the First Restatement that they were needed to create certainty and uniformity. The Second Restatement was necessary in part because the law could never be certain nor uniform. It was also necessary because a Second Restatement could be used as a bridge between “formalists” unwilling to alter the law and “realists” interested in “radical” reformation of the law. The Second Restatement would moderate any reforms, given the instrumental assumption that law changed as society changed. From Judge Goodrich the directorship of the institute passed in 1962 to Herbert Wechsler.

The two most important texts of reasoned elaboration were Hart and Sacks’s The Legal Process: Basic Problems in the Making and Application of Law and Hart and Wechsler’s The Federal Courts and the Federal System. Henry Hart and Herbert Wechsler were the dominant forces in reasoned elaboration. Wechsler, who had no formal connection with Harvard Law School (he received his law degree from and taught at Columbia Law School), also wrote the most important law review article exploring the compatibility of reasoned elaboration and issues of social justice. After Wechsler became director of the institute, the Second Restatements were used explicitly as part of reasoned elaboration to show changes in policy. In discussing the differences between the First and Second Restatement of Conflicts, Wechsler stated:

It is a treatment that takes full account of the enormous change in dominant judicial thought respecting conflicts problems that has taken place in relatively recent years. The essence of that change has been the jettisoning of a multiplicity of rigid rules in favor of standards of greater flexibility, according sensitivity in judgment to important values that were formerly ignored. Such a transformation in the corpus of the law reduces certitude as well as certainty, posing a special problem in the process of restatement. Its solution lies in candid recognition that black-letter formulation must often consist of open-ended standards, gaining further content from reasoned elaboration in the comments and specific instances of application there or in the notes of the Reporter. That technique is not unique to Conflicts but

Minn.: American Law Institute Pubs., 1959) (“Few of the rules laid down in the first edition have been changed”). The Introduction itself was dated 11 April 1958.


the situation here has called for its employment quite pervasively throughout these volumes. The result presents a striking contrast to the first Restatement in which dogma was so thoroughly enshrined.\textsuperscript{225}

Reasoned elaboration was the heir to progressive proceduralism. With the notable exception of Wechsler, it was largely Harvard law professors and Harvard-trained lawyers who used the jurisprudential insights of reasoned elaboration to ward off (Yale-based) realism. This successor to progressive proceduralism permitted them to do so without retreating either to formalism or to natural law. Reasoned elaboration returned the judge to a position of impartiality and defended the rationality of law. The training and shaping of judges by expert academics, as well as informed critique of judges by academics, would ensure the competence of judges. The judge remained a (the only) disinterested person at the trial, and the acknowledgment of judicial discretion did not invite the judge to substitute his personal views as "legal" views, for the institutional and profession constraints imposed on the judge by the structure of the legal system limited his discretion. Additionally, advocates of reasoned elaboration affirmed the need for judicial discretion: "Discretion is a vehicle of good far more than of evil. It is the only means by which the intelligence and good will of a society can be brought to bear directly upon the solution of hitherto unsolved problems."\textsuperscript{226} Explicit balancing of individual and state interests by a competent, disinterested judge was in the best tradition of common law (and constitutional law) adjudication.

Part of the difficulty of categorizing jurisprudential "movements" and accounting for their effects is the lag of time.\textsuperscript{227} While it may be true that reasoned elaboration ran aground as a jurisprudential theory when its proponents decided that \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}\textsuperscript{228} was an "unprincipled" decision,\textsuperscript{229} reasoned elaboration continued to be taught and was the dom-

\textsuperscript{225} Herbert Wechsler, Introduction, \textit{Restatement (Second) of Conflicts} vii (St. Paul, Minn.: American Law Institute Pubs., 1971).
\textsuperscript{226} Hart & Sacks, \textit{The Legal Process} 179 (cited in note 205).
\textsuperscript{227} For example, former Harvard University history professor Alan Brinkley, now at Columbia University, wrote a review of the 1988 Presidential campaign. Alan Brinkley, "A Savage and Demeaning Ritual," \textit{N.Y. Times Bk. Rev.}, 14 Oct. 1990, at 1, col. 1, reviewing Sidney Blumenthal, \textit{Pledging Allegiance} (1990). In the review, Brinkley suggests that Michael Dukakis's "image of public life reflected the value-neutral credo of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, where he taught for several years between his first and second terms as Governor of Massachusetts." \textit{Id.} at 28. Since Dukakis was a 1960 graduate of the Harvard Law School, he instead may have reflected the process-based credo of reasoned elaboration. My point is that jurisprudential movements often are implemented after some delay. For example, since the Supreme Court presently consists of three 1960s graduates of the Harvard Law School, the Court eventually may attempt to revive reasoned elaboration.
\textsuperscript{228} 374 U.S. 483 (1954).
\textsuperscript{229} See Wechsler, 73 \textit{Harv. L. Rev.}
inant theory of jurisprudential discourse until the 1970s.\textsuperscript{230} Reasoned elaboration was the jurisprudential basis for the structure of the Federal Rules of Evidence.

I. Federal Rules of Evidence

In March 1961, Chief Justice Earl Warren appointed a Special Advisory Committee on Rules of Evidence “to study and report on the advisability of adopting a system of uniform rules of evidence in the Federal courts.”\textsuperscript{231} The Special Committee concluded that rules of evidence were procedural, that a study of federal judges and some practitioners showed a desire for uniform rules, and that the Uniform Rules of Evidence could be used as a model.\textsuperscript{232} Adoption of the Special Committee’s report occurred in 1963,\textsuperscript{233} and an Advisory Committee was appointed in 1965, with Professor Edward Cleary appointed as Reporter.\textsuperscript{234}

The Advisory Committee submitted a Preliminary Draft in 1969, and in 1970 and in 1971, further Revised Drafts were submitted. Amendments to the third draft were made in 1972, and in 1973 a bill was passed in Congress delaying the implementation of the Rules until after the adjournment of the first session of the 93d Congress, unless Congress first approved them. Congressional approval finally occurred in December 1974, and the bill was signed into law by President Ford on 2 January 1975. The Federal Rules of Evidence were implemented on 1 July 1975.\textsuperscript{235}

The overarching structure of the Federal Rules of Evidence, following the path of the Model Code of Evidence, avoids the “extremes” of particularity or undue generality. “Style would strike a middle course between

\textsuperscript{230} See White, 59 Va. L. Rev. at 291–94 (cited in note 14). The Hart/Sacks Legal Process teaching materials, although never published in final form, were used by many law schools in teaching courses entitled Legal Process in the 1960s and 1970s. Further, the Hart/Wechsler casebook on federal courts dominated that field for many years.


\textsuperscript{232} Thomas F. Green, Jr., “Preliminary Study of the Advisability and Feasibility of Developing Uniform Rules of Evidence for the Federal Courts,” 30 F.R.D. 79, 99–105, 110–13 (1962). The report mentioned the Model Code of Evidence as “a starting point” for the Committee which wrote the Uniform Rules of Evidence. \textit{Id.} at 111. At the end of the report, the Special Advisory Committee reprinted the ABA resolution in favor of uniform federal rules of evidence. Notably absent from the ABA resolution was any mention of the Model Code of Evidence. Instead, there was an explicit statement that a drafting committee “adapt the Uniform Rules of Evidence.” \textit{Id.} at 113.

\textsuperscript{233} 21 Wright & Graham, \textit{Federal Practice} at § 5006.


vague generalities and constricting particularity, except as individual situations might require a variation in treatment." 236 It was as if the Advisory Committee had heard Morgan explain why neither the Wigmore nor the Clark approach was acceptable and then followed the path created by Morgan. Thus, the Federal Rules were designed to rely heavily on judicial discretion. 237 Clearly, reasoned elaboration pointed the drafters of the Federal Rules in the direction of using judicial discretion to resolve most evidentiary disputes. Giving the trial judge the discretion to admit or exclude evidence with limited appellate review was believed to comport better with our notions of the imperfectability of trials. Even more pragmatically (and efficiently), the theory of discretion in the Federal Rules permits the trial judge some confidence that her decision, if appealed, will be upheld and permits the appellate courts to focus their attention on issues other than evidentiary claims. Finally, drafting a uniform body of rules applicable to all disputes revived the claim that the Federal Rules created a greater efficiency in the administration of justice, a claim traceable to legal progressivism.

But the rationale for granting the trial court discretion to make evidentiary rulings, as articulated by Morgan, was not only to account for the imperfectibility of trials (and to avoid the sporting theory of justice) but also to acknowledge that the goal of the trial was not to ascertain truth but to provide an orderly resolution for disputes. Prominently placed at the beginning of the Federal Rules of Evidence was Rule 102, which assumed that the justification for the rules of evidence remained the discovery of truth. 238 Jurisprudentially, then, the Federal Rules allow the legal profession to speak of the goals of justice and truth while creating an evidentiary code which avoids facing the problem of truth. 239


238. Fed. R. Evid. 102. This rule was in the preliminary draft of the FRE and remained unchanged throughout the drafting process. The drafters chose not to attempt to split the difference, as attempted by Hart & McNaughton in a 1958 article. Hart & McNaughton, "Evidence and Inference" at 45 (cited in note 136). (In a lawsuit "something more is at stake than the truth only of the specific matter in contest. There is at stake also that confidence of the public generally in the impartiality and fairness of public settlement of disputes").

239. Thus, I think it wrong to assume that the procedural reformers of the 1930s and 1940s were naïve in their reliance on the good faith of judges and government. Instead, they seemed well aware of the limitations of trial courts, as indicated by one of Morgan's last essays on evidentiary reform. See Edmund M. Morgan, "Practical Difficulties Impeding Reform in the Law of Evidence," 14 Vand. L. Rev. 725, 734–35 (1961) (criticizing Professor David Louisell's suggestion that real reform lay in selecting and securing good trial judges as
III. CONCLUSION

The search for an autonomy of law from politics and the search for a rationality in judicial decision making led to reforms predicated on judicial discretion. In codifying the law of evidence, the drafters of the Model Code pinned their belief in progress on the rationality of the rules and the actors applying the rules. This became necessary after realists showed that truth was no longer a defensible goal of the rules of evidence.

The Federal Rules of Evidence is the latest attempt to rationalize a particular branch of the law. It is both a restatement of the law and a desperate attempt to reconstruct law as Law as autonomous. I mean simply this: The history of American legal thought since World War II is the effort to find a solution to the "twinned" problems of the relationship of law and morality and of idiosyncratic judging. Both problems present issues testing our commitment to notions of impartiality and neutrality, justice and fairness, and the guiding ideal of the rationality and progress of law. These notions make up much of the "core" of a belief in the Rule of Law. While there are still clarion calls for a return to a formalism and Law that probably never existed—particularly in the statements of those who want judges to "interpret the law, not make it"\(^{240}\)—the jurisprudential response to realism, in the form of reasoned elaboration, was an attempt to limit judges to making good law.\(^{241}\) The project of reasoned elaboration was not to search for a nonexistent objectivity but to constrain the subjectivity of judges and judicial decision making through requirements including professional craft, critique by scholars, abnegation of power or deference to other branches, and a reasoned articulation of decisions.\(^{242}\) Constraints on judicial subjectivity would return law from the abyss (or abuse) of politics. While those affiliated with reasoned elaboration directed most of their concerns to decision making in the Supreme Court,\(^{243}\) the project of the (First) Restatement was an earlier attempt to curb the discretion of state courts by creating certainty and uniformity in compiling "black letter" rules on various doctrinal subjects.\(^{244}\) By 1953, the (Second)
Restatement was being readied. The original Restatement was an attempt to ensure an objectivity in law; the Second Restatement was an attempt to domesticate the inherent subjectivity of law.\footnote{245. W. Noel Keyes, "The Restatement (Second): Its Misleading Quality and a Proposal for Its Amelioration," 13 *Pepperdine L. Rev.* 23, 28 (1985).}

The Model Code of Evidence was the first organized response to the challenge to Law presented by legal realists. The Model Code explicitly reconstructed the bases for the law of evidence in part to more broadly protect Rule of Law beliefs. In reconstructing the law of evidence to provide a foundation for a renewed belief in the rule of law, however, the Model Code failed to persuade the legal profession of the value of "radical reform." Instead, the Model Code became a shell in which to place a more comforting, less demanding code of evidence.

The Federal Rules of Evidence, although not enacted until 1975, are structured within the framework of the legal thought of reasoned elaboration, which in turn tried to resurrect legal progressive thought. To effectively counter the problems posed by legal realism, reasoned elaboration, unlike legal progressivism, downplayed both the goal of a trial as a search for truth, and the general search for substantive justice apart from procedural justice. The irony is twofold: first, the Federal Rules are structured to deny the goal proclaimed in the Federal Rules, ascertaining the truth; second, in an effort to "rationalize" the law of evidence, the Federal Rules are justified as ends, not means. This required the subversion of the progressive claim that evidence was an instrument and an embrace of Thurman Arnold's claim of the inseparability of procedure and substance. The very attempt to overcome the realist threat resulted in submission to realist insights.

\footnote{246. There is a very complex interaction regarding the relationship of the development of the legal profession and legal education and their impact upon the American Law Institute's Restatement projects. My tentative thoughts are that the elite within the bar and legal academia wanted to use the (First) Restatements both to create greater certainty and uniformity in the law of various states and to ensure a form of control over the legal systems of the various states. By the time of the (Second) Restatements, the main purpose was to create opportunities for graduated doctrinal change, like § 402A of the *Restatement (Second) of Torts*, given the assumption of the subjectivity of legal decision making. See Herbert Wechsler, "Restatements and Legal Change: Problems of Policy in the Restatement Work of the American Law Institute," 13 *Saint Louis U.L.J.* 185 (1969); compare W. Noel Keyes, 13 *Pepperdine L. Rev.*, with John W. Wade, "The Restatement (Second): A Tribute to Its Increasingly Advantageous Quality, and an Encouragement to Continue the Trend," 13 *Pepperdine L. Rev.* 59 (1985). Cf. Hull, 8 *Law & Hist. Rev.* (cited in note 13) (concluding that the creation of the ALI was a product of "progressive-pragmatists," whose interest in the reform of law was antithetical to the conservative interests of formalists interested in freezing law). See generally G. Edward White, *Tort Law in America: An Intellectual History* 139–79 (paper ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).}
Review Section

Edited by Howard S. Erlanger

REVIEW ESSAYS

Another Version of "Sweetness and Light": White on Cultural and Legal Criticism 259
Susan Sage Heinzelman

"You Can't Interview the Dead": McIntosh's The Appeal of the Civil Law and the Debate over Longitudinal Studies of Courts 291
Stephen Daniels

The Intrigues of Rights, Resistance, and Accommodation 313
Neal Milner

REVIEW COMMENTARY

Revisiting Hopewell: A Reply to Neal Milner 335
Carol J. Greenhouse

Fallen Women and Thieving Ladies: Historical Approaches to Women and Crime in the United States 351
Mary E. Odem

Law and Indigenous Peoples 363
Lawrence Rosen

BOOK NOTES 373

Howard S. Erlanger is professor of law and sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.