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THE
WILSON QUARTERLY
Surveying the World of Ideas

Destination Paradise

Empires Ancient and Modern

Bearing Russia's Burdens

The Craft of Diplomacy
BY COLIN L. POWELL

Do Smarts Rule?

Intelligence in America

WQ
SUMMER 2004
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DEPARTMENTS

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Editor's Comment

Inspiration for the articles in the *WQ* often arrives from unexpected sources, but never before has it come from a high-school class reunion. The idea for our "cluster" on intelligence in America was born last summer in the ballroom of a Hilton hotel, where I stood, name tag on my chest, surveying the class of 1973 and marveling at how time had turned the world upside down.

The world of our high school wasn't something I'd been eager to revisit. "Accelerated" kids (the smart ones) were pariahs near the bottom of a social order that rose above us in elaborately orchestrated ranks and culminated in the distant grandeur of a few golden athletes. What was striking even then about this order of things was how enthusiastically educators supported it, beginning with a principal who, in the great American tradition, was a former coach. It wasn't just a taste for sports that inspired them, I always thought, but a deep unease about distinctions that separated individuals too much from the school "team"—and, not incidentally, also drew the community's attention to the academic performance of the rest of that team. Still, this was one of the better public high schools in New York State, a steady producer of National Merit Semifinalists. After the names were announced over the public-address system one morning in my junior year, a sympathetic teacher pulled a friend of mine aside to tell him what a rare honor it was to receive such public recognition for his academic triumph.

At the Hilton, recognizing anybody was a challenge, but it was striking how time had rewarded the pariahs of '73. With their impressive careers and big salaries, they were now stars. But I doubt the world we left behind has changed much. As I argue elsewhere in this issue, American society as a whole now tends to mistake smarts for a moral virtue, but its schools, paradoxically, still often treat them as an embarrassment to be swept under the rug.

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Democracy in the Middle East

The essays in "The Middle East: Ready for Democracy?" [*WQ*, Spring '04] examine the possibility that the United States can democratize the Middle East. They draw our attention to important issues, but they largely ignore a major factor: the extent to which U.S. statements on democratization serve to diminish the chances for change.

Statements of U.S. intentions to radically transform the Middle East, particularly when coupled with more radical policies of intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, fundamentally hinder the prospects for democratization. Despite the rhetoric, the United States actually appears ambivalent toward democratization. Daniel Brumberg explains: To achieve democratization will require putting significant pressures on states to implement institutional changes that may weaken U.S. allies and strengthen Islamist forces. There is little expectation that the U.S. administration will push for such "supply side" policies. We know this, and many in the region know this as well.

Proclamations about Middle East democratization fall on cynical ears, and this weakens the reformist opposition in the region. As Saad Eddin Ibrahim notes, U.S. claims, coupled with the occupation of Iraq and an unwillingness to seriously address the Palestinian question, cast

Continued on page 5

From the Center

At a dinner earlier this year marking the 30th anniversary of the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute, Secretary of State Colin Powell jokingly recalled the instructions he received as a young officer assigned to guard Germany's Fulda Gap: "Lieutenant, you see that tree and you see that tree? Well, you guard between those two trees, and when the Russian army comes, don't let 'em through."

That story sent me back to one of the more remarkable events in my life. A little more than 13 years ago, when I was the U.S. ambassador to Switzerland, I had the privilege of boarding a helicopter at the U.S. military base in Fulda and traveling along the border between East and West Germany at the very moment bulldozers were ripping down the fence that separated the two countries. From aloft I watched in awe while entire families rushed from the communist side into the arms of their West German compatriots. As Secretary Powell observed, it is just such near-unimaginable changes that we must recall if we are to dream of a better future.

The Wilson Center has seen dramatic changes of its own in recent years, and many of them have occurred outside the walls of our Washington home. To respond to the world's new realities and to help build the better future of which we dream, we have ambitiously expanded our efforts abroad.

Because Mexico and Canada are neighbors of vital importance to the United States, we've established two new institutes at the Center focused on those nations. Both have substantial programs in Washington, and both are also active across U.S. borders. The Mexico Institute regularly conducts seminars in Mexico, in partnership with local institutions, and provides a forum for discussion of U.S.-Mexico issues. The institute is part of our Latin American Program, which has also gathered scholars and others in the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil. The Center's Canada Institute has held seminars and conferences in Toronto, Montreal, and Calgary, and in February, we launched—in Toronto—an important annual lecture series on U.S.-Canada relations. In the fall, former Canadian prime minister Joe Clark will come to the Center to spend several months in residence as a public policy scholar.

The Center's work extends across the oceans as well, and across a range of topics from practical policy to high politics. In June, for example, Jennifer Turner, of our China Environment Forum, led a study tour in China for American, Japanese, and Chinese experts seeking to identify lessons in environmentally sound river-basin governance that can be applied in that rapidly growing country. And in September, the crisis in transatlantic relations will be the prime topic of discussion when Samuel F. Wells, the Center's associate director, travels to Bonn to convene a meeting of European alumni of the Center's residential fellowship programs—an influential group of nearly 700 scholars, journalists, and public figures.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

No arm of the Center has done more abroad than the Kennan Institute, whose staff members' work often takes them to Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kyiv, and other cities in Russia and neighboring countries. Of particular note is the institute's role in the administration of nine new centers established at regional state universities in Russia to help maintain the vitality of higher education and to integrate Russian scholars into the international academic community. This is an undertaking of immense urgency and ambition, and we are proud that the Kennan Institute has been assigned a key role in it.

In the years ahead, we intend that the Center's international presence will continue to grow. As Woodrow Wilson concluded in 1919, there is in the international arena no "absolute guaranty against the errors of human judgment or the violence of human passions." But a tradition of globally shared and globally informed dialogue may at least serve to limit the errors and temper the violence. Which is why the Wilson Center is determined not just to draw the world into the conversation but to take the conversation to the world.

Joseph B. Gildenhorn
Chair

doubts on domestic activists calling for democratic reform. "The danger for the reformists is that they will be viewed by the public as agents not of positive change but of foreign occupation."

The consequence of this is to strengthen authoritarian elites. They dismiss secularist reformers as U.S. puppets, and many of their most disgruntled citizens accept these charges. At the same time, as partners in the U.S.-led war on terrorism, state elites harshly repress Islamist opponents, claiming the Islamists have ties with radical groups. The strongest domestic opposition is weakened, America applauds, and the ruling elites foster the American fear that the demise of its authoritarian friends will mean the rise of Islamist enemies. The potential for a democratic Middle East slips further away, a victim, in part, of American calls for democracy.

Ellen Lust-Okar
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Daniel Brumberg is right that a real U.S. democratization strategy would move beyond promotion of civil society to encourage the strengthening of political parties, as well as increasing the power of elected parliaments currently dominated by unelected executives. He is also right that the United States may be pursuing the civil society strategy precisely because of, not in spite of, its limited democratization potential; there is little evidence that U.S. leaders truly seek regime change.

What would be required if our government were truly committed to Arab democratization? Most Arab leaders fought tenaciously against the proliferation of weak civil society groups, which posed no threat to them. A serious democratization strategy would require sustained pressure on these leaders, probably by tying U.S. aid, in those countries that receive it, to the completion of concrete measures. Arab leaders would then circle the nationalist wagons, accusing the United States of exploitation. This claim would be widely believed. The invasion of

Iraq, which few Arabs believe was launched to support Iraqi democratization, and unqualified U.S. support for Ariel Sharon, have already convinced Arab publics that U.S. policy in the region is not motivated by concern for their interests. While many Arabs admire American democracy and would like to live under a similar system, they see little evidence that the United States wants the same democracy and freedom for Arabs that it practices at home.

Two things are essential if the United States is to credibly promote Arab democracy: an even-handed U.S. approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which Israeli policies antithetical to peace (such as continued settlement building) are met with aid reductions, and a true commitment to letting Iraqis run their own affairs.

Vickie Langohr
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Worcester, Mass.

If the geopolitical goal of the United States is to democratize Iraq as a flagship state for other Arab and Muslim-dominated countries, such a goal is dead on arrival unless Iraq's draft constitution is revised to liberalize the rights of Iraqi women.

There can be no democracy when half of the citizens of a state are second-class and subjugated by anachronistic religious beliefs.

The Islamic sharia demeans women and makes them socially and politically inferior to men. The draft Iraqi constitution, while not requiring the application of the sharia à la the Taliban, does permit reference to it in the adoption of laws. The

extent to which Iraqis apply the sharia will determine Iraq's democracy and woman's full participation as citizens.

In addition, the draft constitution sets a goal of 25 percent female representation in a new Iraqi parliament. Although the aspiration of 25 percent may appear encouraging, if women are denied equal rights in the social and political spheres, they will never be able to reach or exceed that goal, and real democracy will have been thwarted.

The United States should exert its influence while it still can to revise the Iraqi constitution to make it more likely that women will have full participation in a reformed Iraqi society with a stable, democratic political environment.

Richard N. Friedman
Miami, Fla.

The essays on democracy in the Middle East touched on a major trend that warrants more attention. The phenomenon, now altering the political scene in the Middle East, might be called the information tide.

It hasn't been long since only the region's few literate elites really knew what was going on in the wider world. Leaders—be they kings, dictators, warlords, or mullahs—controlled access to information. Ordinary people, especially women, knew only what they were told.

But now, with the electronic tide of information sweeping the world, all that ordinary people need is a receiver to discover what's "out there." The walls around these closed societies are crumbling, and in some places have already fallen. It happened in the Soviet Union, it's well on its way in China, and today we're seeing it in Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and many other countries. The thirst for knowledge is universal. Remember when Baghdad fell? Satellite dishes were swept off the store shelves as soon as they arrived.

As the people in these regions get access to information, they'll see what's "out there" and will begin to compare competing ideas and leaders. Don't like what state TV is putting out? Change channels. The leaders will have to do some explaining.

As more women get involved, they'll exert a moderating influence, and the ensuing reduction in violence will benefit all. A woman in Baghdad recently told a foreign journalist, "If any government can bring security, I will support them." A couple of years ago, any sort of public statement by a woman would be unthinkable.

With computers and the Internet, people will talk to the world "out there," as they are doing today in China. Gradually, the building blocks of a pluralistic free society, such as the principles of private property and the rule of law, will take hold, and the people will be able to pull themselves out of poverty and partake of the blessings of commerce that we in the hated West take for granted. Growing dialogue will lead to better mutual understanding between "them" and "us," which should further reduce violence.

Since this trend is clearly to America's advantage, should we be doing more to speed things up? Perhaps it's sufficient to encourage literacy and make more information available. Let all ideas compete in the marketplace. America has some pretty good ones.

Tom Sherman
Michigan City, Ind.

More on McLuhan

Tom Wolfe's essay on Marshall McLuhan ["McLuhan's New World," WQ, Spring '04] is a puzzling combination of interesting revelations and absurd hyperbole. Though Wolfe draws a compelling and logical connection from McLuhan to Teilhard de Chardin, his equation of the Catholic "mystical body" with the "global village" of today's Internet experience raises more questions than it answers.

It took an oddball Catholic existentialist and Darwinian evolutionist (Teilhard) and his notion of "noosphere" to turn the fabric of McLuhan's crazy quilt into the con-

cept of a global village, but there are villages and there are *villages*. Disney's Frontierland is a far cry from Lawrence, Kansas, which is a far cry from the land of a Borneo headhunter tribe.

Though contemporary electronic media seem to hold "mystical" elements tantamount to the powers of Merlin, the religious aspects of modern technological culture aren't necessarily supplanting our multicultural reality with a single, sacred, technological culture. It seems to me that the technology, by its very nature, *disembodies*. So to connect the electronic "global village" to a "mystical body" makes little sense. A "mystical mind"—maybe. A "mystical central nervous system"—OK. But a "mystical body"?

The "mechanical bride" McLuhan described in 1951 may still wear a military helmet and jackboots and carry a baton, but chances are that, on the Net now, that's all she's wearing, and she works out of her trailer home with a $50 webcam and an electronic credit card verifier. The *ultimate medium?*

The "shimmering Oz" of the Internet that Wolfe rhapsodizes over and the prophetic vision of a "mystical unity of all mankind"—a package suggesting an evolutionary step of Darwinian dimensions—made me wonder what life would be like in such a paradise. Will we all "get up at 12 and go to work at one . . . take an hour off and then at two we're done—jolly-good-fun!" I'm a high school English teacher, and I see this kind of outlook taking hold among lots of my kids. Being a "Munchkin" in Oz isn't my idea of evolutionary human progress. Yes, it's kind of cool to Web-surf and e-mail friends in Prague every day, but I wonder if our ideas, hopes, dreams, experiences, and desires aren't all being co-opted by the unreal world of new media such as the Internet.

James E. Egan
Tucson, Ariz.

Congress's Real Problem

I am writing to comment on Lee Hamilton's article "The Case for Congress" [*WQ*, Spring '04]. As a former congressman, Mr. Hamilton sees much that is positive about the current state of affairs on Capitol Hill, while the public views the Congress with intense skepticism. He attributes the disrespect for Congress prevalent throughout the land to "cynicism" or a lack of "active participation and engagement in public affairs." The reality is even more discouraging.

The problem recognized throughout the nation is simply stated: The system, as it exists today, is fundamentally flawed. At its very base, it is corrupt. It has been corrupted by the very element Mr. Hamilton identifies and then dismisses as "overstated"—money. The truth is simple: Money buys access. Lobbyists, political action committees, and corporate "bundlers" of contributions get private meetings with members of Congress to discuss their issues and influence decision making. If a private citizen writes to his or her representative or senator, he or she will receive, several months later, a generic letter of response signed by an automatic pen. Who, then, has greater influence on the legislative process?

On July 20, 2003, the Associated Press reviewed six measures before the House—dealing with medical malpractice, class action lawsuits, bankruptcy laws, energy, gun manufacturer lawsuits, and overtime pay rules—and compared lawmakers' votes with the financial backing they received from interest groups supporting or opposing the legislation. According to the AP's computer-assisted analysis of campaign finance data from the Center for Responsive Politics, in the vast majority of cases the biggest congressional recipients of interest group money voted the way their donors wanted. Groups that outspent opponents got the bills they wanted in five of the six cases examined by the AP. I invite Mr. Hamilton's attention to the AP story. It may explain the "cynicism and disengagement" of the American people. Again and again, it seems only money talks. If you want your congressman to listen to your views, take up your pen—but only to write a check!

Charles Justice
Easley, S.C.

Findings

Gum Control

In a breakthrough for American trade negotiators, Singapore recently relaxed its ban on chewing gum, imposed a dozen years ago for the sake of tidiness. Singaporeans now can lawfully buy "medicinal" gum—including Nicorette and, on the theory that it promotes dental hygiene, Wrigley's sugar-free Orbit—but only in pharmacies, and only after showing identification. A pharmacist convicted of selling unregistered gum, the Associated Press reports, can be jailed for two years.

Modern chewing gum originated around 1870, when someone—many accounts credit Mexican general Antonio López de Santa Anna, victor at the Alamo—arrived in New York with a load of chicle. A latex gum from the sapodilla tree of Central America, chicle was considered a potential substitute for rubber, Cambridge University science writer, John Emsley recounts in *Vanity, Vitality and Virility: The Chemistry behind the Products You Love to Buy* (Oxford Univ. Press). Thomas Adams, a photographer and tinkerer, found that chicle made lousy tires but great chewing gum, much superior to the then-dominant spruce bark and paraffin wax.

Singaporeans blow a last few bubbles just before the government ban on gum-chewing was instituted in 1992.

Chicle gave way to artificial ingredients in the 1940s, and gum's chewy base nowadays comes not from Central American trees but from ExxonMobil polymers. The Wrigley Company, notes Emsley, has applied to patent an innovation likely to meet Singapore's medicinal benchmark: Viagra gum.

According to Singapore newspapers, street cleaners there are grumbling about wads of gum defacing sidewalks and pavement. Folks at the site of General Santa Anna's sanguinary victory, though, are more sanguine. "We do have trouble with chewing gum," says Virginia Garcia, a maintenance supervisor at the Alamo, "but we've got a spray that pretty much takes it off."

Piracy's Perks

A democratic utopia flourished beneath the Jolly Roger, University of Pittsburgh historian Marcus Rediker writes in *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Beacon). The crew of a pirate ship would ratify a constitution and elect a captain, who, like a modern-day California governor, could be recalled by the electorate at any time. Major decisions were put to a referendum; the captain wielded absolute authority only in battle. When the booty from a plundered ship was divvied up, the gap between top and bottom earners was relatively modest: "The captain and the quartermaster received between one and a half and two shares; gunners, boatswains, mates, carpenters, and doctors, one and a quarter or one and a half; all the others got one share each." Anyone injured in battle received an extra portion—incipient workman's comp. All in all, concludes Rediker, pirate ships exhibited "one of the most

egalitarian plans for the disposition of resources to be found anywhere in the early 18th century." Compassionate swashbuckling?

Raising Caine

When Herman Wouk, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), was 11 years old, an itinerant bookseller came to his family's Bronx apartment hawking a set of works by Mark Twain.

"Who's Mark Twain?" asked Wouk's mother, a Russian-Jewish immigrant.

The salesman replied, "Why, he's the English Sholem Aleichem."

On that recommendation, she bought the Twain collection. Young Herman read *Huckleberry Finn* and laughed until "tears ran down my face," Wouk told an audience at the Library of Congress in April, a few weeks before his 89th birthday.

Responding to questions from William Safire of *The New York Times*, Wouk held forth on Balzac, Stendahl, Cervantes, Hawthorne, and Hemingway, never stammering over a forgotten name or title. He published a new novel in April, *A Hole in Texas* (Little, Brown), and he's seven chapters into his next book, a novel that's "as close to impossible as anything I've done." Interlocutor Safire concluded the evening by saying, "Herman, you're—to put it mildly—a goddam inspiration."

Psychic Shrinkage

As scientific understanding grows, the reported magnitude of supernatural events seems to shrink, physicists Georges Charpak, winner of the 1992 Nobel Prize, and Henri Broch explain in *Debunked! ESP, Telekinesis, and Other Pseudoscience* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press).

Centuries ago, believers claimed that psychic power had moved the massive Easter Island statues. "In the 1850s, the same power supposedly moved heavy tables, weighing hundreds of pounds. Several decades later, it was time for poltergeists—the 'knocking spirits'—and the movement of casserole dishes and cooking utensils, items weighing a pound or two. In the 1970s telekinesis could move little objects like chess pieces. These days, the same power allows a medium exerting enormous concentration to move a tiny piece of paper. . . . So, psychokinetic phenomena have declined: As the ability to validate them scientifically has improved over time, they have decreased by a factor of more than a million."

Gender Diffs

- Although both men and women tend to snack more during times of stress, only women continue overeating after the stress dissipates, Laura C. Klein of Pennsylvania State University writes in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.
- When subjects are told to indicate the point at which they can no longer endure pain (a finger squeezed in a clamp), they hold out longer if the pain inflicter is female, according to BBC News. In the view of researchers at the University of Westminster, people assume a woman won't hurt them as much as a man.
- Students give higher instructional rankings to attractive professors, report Daniel S. Hamermesh and Amy M. Parker of the University of Texas, but the impact "is much lower for female than for male faculty. Good looks generate more of a premium, bad looks more of a penalty, for male instructors." The researchers open their National Bureau of Economic Research working paper with an epigraph from supermodel Linda Evangelista: "It was God who made me so beautiful. If I weren't, then I'd be a teacher."

Twisting Roots

Stokely Carmichael (1941–98) helped lead the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, popularized the phrase "Black Power," joined and then broke from the Black Panthers, changed his name to Kwame Ture, and, in 1969, moved to Guinea in West Africa. "The black man should no longer be thinking of transforming

Kwame Ture with his wife and son in front of their house in Guinea.

American society," he told a reporter at the time. "We should be concerned with Mother Africa."

But Ture's reception there wasn't quite what he expected. "My father's attempt to claim his Africanness alienated him in Africa," says his son Bokar Ture, quoted in John Blake's *Children of the Movement* (Lawrence Hill Books). "I think people have this idea of Africa being very African, culturally speaking. When you see my father, he's always dressing up in African clothing and rejecting all things belonging to Western culture. But many people in Africa are trying to grasp Western culture and are trying to leave their roots behind."

Long and Winding

In the mid-1950s, Jack Kerouac couldn't settle on a title for his novel-in-progress. According to Paul Maher's biography, *Kerouac* (Taylor Trade), he considered and discarded *Gone on the Road*, *Souls on the Road*, *Home and the Road*, *In the Night on the Road*, *Love on the Road*, *Along the Wild Road*, and a trendy one that he believed might double his sales, *Rock and Roll Road*. Kerouac finally adopted the title suggested by his editor, Malcolm Cowley. The novel appeared in 1957 as, simply, *On the Road*.

Kierkegaardian Self-Help

Banish bad habits the Søren Kierkegaard way. *The Humor of Kierkegaard*, edited by Thomas C. Oden (Princeton Univ. Press), includes this advice, written in 1851, on how a man might overcome an addiction:

"Imagine that one morning he said to himself (let us suppose him to be a gambler), 'I solemnly vow that I will never more have anything to do with gambling, never—tonight will be the last time'—ah, my friend, he is lost! I would rather bet on the opposite, however strange that may seem. [But] if there was a gambler who in such a moment said to himself, 'Well, now, you may gamble every blessed day all the rest of your life—but tonight you are going to leave it alone,' and he did—ah, my friend, he is saved for sure!"

Coming soon, perhaps: the Schopenhauer diet.

Shifting Seasons

Newspaper editorial writers and columnists periodically contemplate the seasons. "There seems to have been an intensification of this pattern during the final quarter of the 20th century, perhaps because so many Americans who have led only urban lives feel so disconnected from the natural world," Cornell University historian Michael Kammen observes in *A Time to Every Purpose: The Four Seasons in American Culture* (University of North Carolina Press). Increasingly, though, these media meditations address seasonal matters outside of nature. We read about the blockbuster movies of summer, for example, or the recent warnings of possible terrorist attacks this summer and fall, rather than the summer solstice or fall foliage.

Kammen doesn't mention terrorism, but he does quote a seasonal headline published in *The Washington Post and Times-Herald* in 1959, during an earlier age of anxiety: "Autumn Held Likeliest Season for Launching an A-Attack."

Destination: Paradise

Imagine a breezy, palm-fringed island in the Indian Ocean. There's no money, no Internet or TV, and a single phone line to the outside world. Only a handful of people are allowed to visit each year. Tempted? The author was, and he tells what he found.

by William F. S. Miles

The island of Agalega is forbidden to the casual tourist and off limits even to curious citizens of the nation that claims it. Proscription makes it all the more enticing, of course, to the diehard adventurer. Agalega is actually two small islands (27 square miles in all) narrowly separated by shallow tidal waters and sitting by themselves off the southeast coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, about 1,000 miles due east of the border between Tanzania and Mozambique. Agalega's closest neighbors are the southern group of the Seychelles archipelago and the northern tip of Madagascar. Yet the island has ties with neither. It belongs rather to Mauritius, an island state more than 600 miles to the south. And the government of Mauritius has decreed that no one—Mauritian or foreigner—may set foot on Agalega unless sent by the government on official business. Because the only approved way of getting to Agalega is with the Mauritian Coast Guard or by government-chartered ship, the travel ban is easily enforced. (There's an airstrip on Agalega, but there are no commercial flights to the island. The Mauritian Coast Guard uses a small, noisy, unpressurized plane to get to and from the place when necessary.) Anyone alighting by other means would be energetically interrogated by a police force whose main duty it is to assert Mauritian sovereignty over the remote outpost. Not that any other nation contests Mauritian sovereignty.

Agalega's most precious natural resources are modest amounts of coconut and octopus, the former shipped off as copra, the latter dried into a local delicacy. Mauritius, in contrast, is an economic dynamo. The size of Rhode Island, it has a population of more than a million, exports millions of tons of sugar, manufactures tens of millions of dollars' worth of textiles, and is visited annually by half a million tourists. The place is overcrowded and polluted, which may help explain why it regards distant Agalega as paradise and is determined to keep unspoiled this bit of Eden accidentally bequeathed to it by history.

Mauritius was a French colony from 1715 until 1810, and then a British colony until its independence in 1968. These days you hear not just French and English spoken on the island but Creole, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, and Mandarin Chinese. I was there as an American Fulbright scholar doing research on multilingualism, and when I first heard of the restriction on travel to Agalega, I made up my mind to visit the island. When the permission process turned into a great bureaucratic challenge, the venture became all the more irresistible. A casual conversation with a Mauritian police sergeant at the birthday party of our housekeeper had planted the idea in my head.

The tip of South Agalega, one of the most remote islands in the world.

"Now *that* would be an interesting place for you to visit," Michel advised. "That's where you will find the true island life. A place where people live without money. Where you live in tranquility, as part of nature. A total break with your normal routine, away from modern life, away from the pressures of home and work."

Michel was wistful, though he spoke only from hearsay. "I have colleagues who've done tours of duty in Agalega," he explained, "and before I retire I'd like to do one too. But it's hard to get the assignment. One has to be very lucky. But for you, it's different. If the American embassy were to write a letter on your behalf, I'm sure you'd have no trouble getting permission. Just tie the trip to your research. You don't get seasick, do you?"

Visiting Agalega had not been part of my research plan when I arrived six months earlier. In fact, I hadn't even heard of Agalega. Most Mauritians, I was soon to discover, knew virtually nothing of the island either. Agalega had a primary school, and that provided a pretext. For the previous three months, I had been visiting schools all across Mauritius. Was Agalega not an integral part of the Republic of Mauritius, and was its school any less deserving of a visit than those on Mauritius proper?

The case had to be made at several levels: to the U.S. embassy, to the commissioner of police, to the ministry of the interior, to the office of the prime minister, to the commandant of the coast guard, to the ministry of education, and to the university dean there in Mauritius. One after another, the "no objections" miraculously filtered in. Then I received a call from the final gatekeeper, the Outer Islands Development Corporation (OIDC), which in practice rules Agalega.

"Professor, we have no objection to your conducting research in Agalega. But the OIDC is accountable to the government for every person we send and every rupee we spend. In your case, the fee will be 20,000 rupees. This will include your passage to and from Agalega and room and board for the three days you're there. You'll be well provided for."

Has paradise a price? Does heaven post an entrance fee? How much would *you* pay for the privilege of going where no casual traveler can lawfully go?

Even the most compulsive explorer has a budget he or she must respect. Twenty thousand rupees (about $1,000) exceeded mine. I informed the OIDC director, sadly, that my research stipend could not handle what was, after all, the equivalent of six months' salary for the average Mauritian. He said he understood and promised to get back to me.

A week later, the fee dropped by half. I explained how much I appreciated the efforts made to accommodate my finances but apologized that even 10,000 rupees was a

cost beyond my means.

A few days later, the fare was reduced to 5,000 rupees, the equivalent of about $250. Agalega, here I come!

The *Mauritius Pride* is a freight-cum-passenger vessel that plies the Mascarene Islands circuit of Mauritius, Réunion (which belongs to France), and Rodrigues, Mauritius's other inhabited outpost. The privately owned *Pride* is hired two or three times a year by the OIDC to service Agalega, and, for several reasons, it's not an assignment the crew members relish. The sailing time to Agalega is more than twice as long as that to Rodrigues or Réunion, and in winter months, the open seas can be extremely rough.

In the eyes of the ship's hostess and restaurateurs, passengers to Agalega are a social cut below those bound for the two "R" islands. No tourists journey to Agalega, only returning islanders, laborers, and government agents. And crew members are not allowed to go ashore. Bound by the same legal restrictions as the rest of the world, they, too, can view Agalega only from afar.

As payback for my shameless bargaining with the OIDC, I was assigned not to the first-class quarters aboard the *Pride*, where my companions would have been three solar energy technicians, two OIDC officials, a skiff manufacturer, a couple of nuns, and a priest, but to the second-class level, among Agalacians returning to the island, a few policemen, and some 40 construction workers. For reasons of proletarian solidarity and anthropological authenticity, I was initially pleased by the placement, however befuddling it was to the ship's purser and welcome hostess. It wasn't long, however, before I thought I'd been condemned to maritime purgatory.

Physically, the accommodations were correct enough. If we second-class passengers didn't have the cabin berths enjoyed by our betters, we at least had plush reclining chairs of a type normally associated with first-class airplane seating. If we didn't dine at white-clothed tables, attended by solicitous waiters, we at least had decent cafeteria-style meals, in unlimited portions. And though our bathrooms were communal and the *vomitoire* public, the showers had hot (actually, scalding) water, and the toilets never ran out of paper. No, what turned second-class into outright hell were other accouterments, of an electronic nature.

In each corner of the eight lower-deck sections was a video monitor, from which blasted, virtually nonstop and late into the night, the lowest-grade movies produced anywhere on the planet, ranging from American gangster flicks to Oriental kung fu flops. The air in the compartment was pierced repeatedly by machine-gun firings, bomb explosions, martial arts grunting, hysterical screams, torture-victim shrieks, death-throe gurgles—sometimes in harrowing combination. Each appearance of our pretty hostess, Sonya, in her quasi-sailor outfit, provoked in me a Pavlovian response of dread and rage. Her descent to the netherworld of second class had a single purpose: to replace one execrable video with another. Escape was impossible, because the doors to the decks were locked at dusk, and sleep was unsustainable. My misery was complete when I developed a first-class case of seasickness.

The reality of my nausea initially sank in at lunch, while I was squashed between some enormous construction workers with voracious appetites. An intellectual incomprehension of the ability of my maritime messmates to ingest second and third helpings of curry aboard a pitching and rolling vessel turned to revulsion at the very sight of their overflowing plates. The architectural wisdom of installing the *vomitoire* in an easily accessible location became apparent.

It was evening, it was morning, and it was the third day. Two lights glowed faintly in the predawn darkness. Agalega! Women removed their curlers and changed into fancy, bright dresses. Policemen donned their uniforms. The excitement grew as sunlight gradually illumined a vista of white dune beach bordered by wind-bent, needle-leafed filao trees, and a tender sputtered off the north island to meet us.

First aboard the *Mauritius Pride* was the commander of the police forces stationed on

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Waiting on Agalega for the* Mauritius Pride *and the long, rough sea trip back to Mauritius.

Agalega, who quickly dispensed with the formalities. No sooner had he greeted and backslapped his counterparts than he became engrossed in our latest edition of *Le Mauricien*. Were people stationed on Agalega so starved for news of the outside world that reading a newspaper took priority over clearing exhausted passengers for disembarkation? Not necessarily. Reports of police brutality on Agalega had recently become national news, and the police commander wanted to know at once how his role in the beating of a young Agalacian man had been reported in the Mauritian press. A surfeit of alcohol and a scarcity of women had apparently strained relations between transient Mauritian officers and native Agalacians. In a drunken row over an island girl, an Agalacian had been so severely beaten by Mauritian policemen—in the station house—that he required evacuation, by air, to a hospital in Mauritius. The police commander seemed satisfied with the uninformative newspaper account.

Agalega is controlled so completely by the OIDC that not even native-born islanders can own land or possess a right to residence. Every adult living on the island is an employee of the corporation or a registered dependent of one. If freedom from the tyranny of money is one idea of paradise, then Agalega satisfies it. The OIDC provides each employee with a credit account and allocates one time slot per week for shopping in the corporation store. All transactions are conducted by OIDC ledger; there's no money on the island. Because the corporation holds a monopoly on civilian transport, it knows exactly who's leaving, who's arriving, and who's a current resident. The rhythm of life on Agalega is calibrated to excitement over the arrival of coast guard and police vessels and the OIDC-chartered *Mauritius Pride*, and regret over their inevitable departure.

The OIDC's rule over Agalega may be absolute, but the corporation is benevolent. It does, after all, view development, not profit, as its primary objective. In early colonial days, in the 1800s, Agalega was run as a private plantation and the workers were personal slaves, not corporate employees. During the early years of its independence, Mauritius neglected Agalega, but it's now taking the island in hand and looking to the welfare of the inhabitants. The OIDC put in

place the nonmonetary economy to shield Agalacians from a pattern of debt and improvidence, and it's for their benefit that the company store sets a limit on the amount of liquor available to each worker. And thanks to the prefabricated housing and scores of well-fed construction workers our ship was disgorging onto the island, Agalega's ramshackle tin huts were soon to be replaced by modern dwellings.

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> As we coasted along this island, it seemed very fair and pleasant, exceeding full of foule and coconut trees: and there came from the land such a pleasant smell as if it had beene a garden of flowers.

In 1596, that's how Sir James Lancaster, an English navigator and pioneer of East Indian trade, described the desert island named after the early-16th-century Portuguese explorer Juan de Nova, otherwise known as Jean Gallégo on account of his Galician origins. Three and a half centuries later, Agalega was still idyllic, at least according to the British geographer Robert Scott, who wrote this in 1961:

> The impressions which Agalega leaves are of light, freshness, color, and incessant movement. The sun makes constantly changing patterns of green and cobalt and gold. It accentuates the whiteness of the long, straight roads and the spaciousness of the grass-covered aisles between the coconut palms. In turning to flashing green and silver the breaking rollers and shoal waters, it emphasizes the deep, changing blue of the ocean. The steady breezes temper the heat of the sun and the constant movement of vegetation gives vitality to the landscape. Whether it is the rush and murmur of the surf; the dance of light and shadow in the groves; the sudden flight of birds; the whirring of a carriole behind the beat of a pair of cantering horses; the swirl of a herd of wild horses as they gallop with flying tails towards the deeper shelter of the groves, followed sedately by their more inquisitive entourage of mules, there is always a feeling of liveliness.

Much of what Scott described two generations ago has disappeared. There are no horses or donkeys left; the roads that impressed him so much have either shrunken or been reclaimed by nature; street lighting has vanished, as have trolleys and a narrow-gauge railway. Agalega was once the "pearl" of the so-called Oil Islands, those British Indian Ocean islands from which coconut oil used to be exported in significant quantity. When the British took over Mauritius from the French, in 1810, they allowed the French elites to remain and guaranteed by treaty their cultural, linguistic, and property rights. So even under British rule, local concessions were still very much dominated by a Francophone upper class. Agalega was developed principally under the tutelage of appointed administrators, of varying degrees of enlightenment, both before and after Great Britain abolished slavery in 1835. With the founding of the Société Huilière d'Agaléga (Oil Company of Agalega) in 1892, a somewhat less arbitrary regime emerged.

There are still three settlements on the twin islands—La Fourche, Sainte Rita, and Village 25, the last so named because, according to local lore, slaves who misbehaved were taken there to receive 25 lashes of the whip. But there are half as many people as when Scott visited. Indeed, with fewer than 230 islanders, Agalega is less populated today than it was in the middle of the 19th century. You would expect the absence of humanity to make for a pristine natural setting, and Agalega is, in many respects, still as beautiful as Lancaster and Scott found it. Trees that in the local Creole are called "good God's coconuts" sway to Indian Ocean breezes along the coastline and in the interior, and the softly lapping coral-green waters mesmerize with their translucence. Yet though the place would seem cut off from the world, Agalega's otherwise lovely powdery sand beach is periodically blighted by debris brought from afar by ocean currents.

Speak of expatriates on islands, and you evoke images of wizened and overtanned colonials, hippies, and volunteers going either native or stir-crazy. On Agalega, though, the expats are themselves islanders: Mauritians. (The differences in skin color are less pronounced than in the classic expat scene: Mauritians, mostly of South Asian ancestry, are brown; Agalacians, descendants of Africans, are black.) Although the Mauritians serving as teachers, nurses, and technicians on Agalega have officially never left their own country, some manifest the same symptoms of isolation and culture shock shown by American Peace Corps volunteers parachuted into Pago Pago or Vanuatu. Typical case: A Mauritian signs up with the OIDC for a one-year contract, and after those 12 months he's supposed to sail home. But the *Mauritius Pride* doesn't show up to repatriate him, and three, maybe four, months elapse beyond the contractual expiration. The worker is stranded on Agalega.

When that happened to Rajesh Tataree, a young paramedic on North Agalega, he became philosophical. On an island that enjoys only two hours of electricity a day, Rajesh relishes his unobstructed view of the stars each night, a virtually impossible visual experience on superlit Mauritius. Santosh Bissessur, on the other hand, views every extra day as the extension of a prison sentence. For Santosh, life on Agalega is absurd. He copes by imposing an unflinching strictness on his hours of operation as manager of the island's sole telephone link to the outside world—and his rigidity inconveniences and frustrates everyone else. In 1799, in the first attempt to settle Agalega, a French physician convinced the governor of Mauritius to dispatch a sailor and a slave to conduct a survey. By the time the physician remembered to relieve them three years later, the sailor had gone mad. Reading about that unfortunate seaman, I can't help but think of Santosh.

In contrast, Santosh's fellow OIDC contractee Abeeluck copes by "attending" courses over the telephone from Brahma Kumari Raja Yoga Spiritual University in India and functioning as unofficial Hari Krishna missionary. Thanks to Abeeluck's Hindu evangelism, when you go to Santosh's tiny Mauritius Telecom office to place a phone call from Agalega, you're greeted by a "Faith in God Means No Fear" sticker at the counter.

The best-acclimated expatriates on Agalega are no transient, childless Hindus, as are Rajesh, Santosh, and Abeeluck, but a Muslim family man, Parvez Sultan Husnoo, and his wife. (Sensitivity to Muslim modesty stopped me from asking Madame Husnoo her first name.) The couple constitute the entire teaching staff at the government primary school, where they instruct 26 students, including their two sons, in grades one through six. (I observed classes taught in English and French at the school.) This is the couple's second extended sojourn on Agalega. Previous teachers, ostracized by ornery parents or racked by island fever, fled Agalega in dejection and loneliness. But when the island's parents invited Parvez to return after his first assignment, he accepted eagerly.

"This is not an easy teaching post," Parvez explains in flawless French with a Mauritian lilt, "but it has its rewards. The main problem is that there's no clear connection between what goes on inside and outside of school. Hardly any parents of our pupils are themselves literate. There's no reinforcement of children's reading or schoolwork. There's no work ethic at all on Agalega, certainly no study ethic. Only one or two kids here have any chance at all to go on to high school. For the rest, school is just a place to spend a couple of hours a day for a couple of years before going out into a world on the island in which their education is irrelevant.

"The second problem is a lack of continuity. The arrival of the *Mauritius Pride* is a great disruption to learning, not so much because we have to cancel classes when the ship arrives but because parents will just yank their kids out of school in the middle of the year and take them on board back to Mauritius. Sometimes parents will leave on the ship and *not* take their children with them. That's also disruptive." It was clearly so for one boy who sat face down and crying at his desk. His mother had decided to leave for Mauritius the next day, and the fatherless boy was to be looked after by his older sister.

"A third problem is alcohol. What is there to do on Agalega? What distraction, what entertainment? All the men do is drink. All they

Schoolchildren returning home after lessons in Agalega's primary school.

care about is getting around the regulation that rations rum. Since there's no money on the island, people trade in liquor. That's what got some of my predecessors in trouble. If teachers refuse to trade in alcohol, parents turn against them. If they get sucked into becoming suppliers, that brings trouble as well."

"How do you avoid the trap?" I ask.

"I'm a Muslim," Parvez explains, "so I don't use alcohol. I made that clear to the parents from the outset, and it's something they understand and respect. In the same way, I lay down rules for the students that I demand the parents to respect."

The Husnoos work nonstop through the morning, then send the students home and eat their family lunch in Mrs. Husnoo's classroom. Classes resume in the afternoon, and when the session's done, Parvez goes fishing for the evening meal's entrée. His is the life of Robinson Crusoe, pedagogue. It's clear that the Husnoos have not chosen to reside on Agalega for the financial bonus given all Mauritian civil servants who live there. The Husnoos savor the simplicity of existence on the island, the closeness with nature and the sea. It's a way of life not available on their native Mauritius. Yet they pay a high price. Housing is scarce, and the Husnoos' modest one-story home is not within easy walking distance of the school. They commute to work by motor scooter, over unpaved tracks, and the grueling cross-island travel has caused Mrs. Husnoo to miscarry.

I am put up at the comfortable OIDC guesthouse, within easy walking distance of the school.

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Sainte Rita, erstwhile "capital" of Agalega, resembles a ghost town. The hamlet, on South Agalega, no longer has, as it did for Scott, "a smiling . . . aspect, the mellow, comfortable look of a place that has been a loved home for generations, its old buildings carefully preserved." Agalega's administrative center was moved to the north island because it was so dangerous for ships to berth at Sainte Rita. Fronting the large village square are government stores and offices, a police station, a school, a church, and a dispensary. But the steel frames of the government buildings have been exposed and twisted by a cyclone, the

church is desolate for lack of a priest, and tropical vines creep through the closed-down schoolhouse. The companion-starved policeman, Louis Nilkamul, who argues with the "doc" in the dispensary, Paul Coralie, over who will host whom for lunch, reminds me of the abandoned French sailor of yore. We visitors from the north island, with whom I'd sailed on the *Mauritius Pride*—the solar technicians, the two nuns, the priest, and Paul's wife, Alix—make up more than half the people now on South Agalega. Other than the lonely cop and the paramedic, only a few old men and some young mothers with their children regularly occupy Sainte Rita.

Passage between North and South Agalega is much less ceremonious than it was in Scott's day. Forty years ago, the crossing was expedited by "cheerful burly men very neatly dressed in sailors' white duck uniforms" working out of a permanent boathouse. Nothing of the sort exists today. Once there was even a causeway for wheeled traffic, but that was more than a century and a half ago. At low tide one can walk the mile-and-a-half channel, and that's how Alix made her way to her husband's side. (I traveled by motorboat.) Before Paul's assignment to Agalega, the Creole couple, married for 20 years, had never spent a night apart. But their elder daughter wanted to study art and theater in France; to make that possible, Paul needed the salary bonus from the hardship posting to Agalega. A Michelin map of France adorns his wall and is the most prominent fixture in his humble home, an extension of the church.

Constable Nilkamul, a large Catholic wearing a Marlboro T-shirt, insists that, despite the dearth of available Christians, the visiting priest ought to celebrate Mass: "If you're doing it on [the] north island, you should also do it in the south." The priest says that he hasn't enough wafers for two Masses, so he will conduct a service but not perform the Liturgy.

The policeman, the priest, and I are three at the table, and Constable Nilkamul has only two teacups, both of them chipped. When a visitor empties one, Nilkamul takes it and, without rinsing or wiping, pours himself a drink. Never before in my life has a stranger—an Indian Ocean policeman at that—been so solicitous about my physical comfort. The constable insists that I take more tea, that I unload my heavy backpack under his protection, and that I follow his advice about tying my shoes. "Don't lace them so tightly," he admonishes me in French, after the obligatory siesta. "It's not good for the feet." When I loosen my laces under his guidance, he murmurs approvingly, "*Ah, ça, c'est mieux ça*."

Despite his obvious hunger for companionship, the lonely constable claims he is happy in Sainte Rita. At his regular post on Mauritius, he explains, the police register at least 3,000 cases a month. During the past three months on South Agalega, he has had to file only two reports. It's true that both involved fatalities, but then again, neither death was human. The first creature to die was a pig. That case was closed when it was determined that the swine had died of natural poisoning, after having eaten something lethal. The second to die was a cow, and the suspicion is that the animal was deliberately poisoned with insecticide. The affair is still pending, and the constable, in the meantime, spends much of his time spearing and drying octopus and taking siestas in the hammock that's plainly visible in front of the Agalega-South Police Substation.

South Agalega seems a lugubrious place, and a visit to its two burial grounds—one for the white overseers of yesteryear, the other for their black hands—reinforces that impression. Not even in death do the two races mingle. But in a counterhistorical twist, the cemetery for blacks is preserved and the one for whites is in ruins. Once-powerful masters become poignant in their anonymity. The tallest tombstone reads:

Administrateur de l'Île
Décedé le13 Février 1897
Agé de 42 ans

On North Agalega, an old woman is dying in the dispensary. She has had a stroke and presents a major managerial problem for the ethically responsible but cash-strapped OIDC. Should she be taken to Mauritius by air or by sea? What are the chances of her expiring en route? If she should die in Mauritius, where she

has no relatives, must her next of kin be transported from Agalega to bury her? The OIDC does its level best to ban dying on "its" islands. Old age, illness, and death are too administratively inconvenient.

That's why Tonton René, a sprightly septuagenarian who has no blood relatives on the island, is being evacuated against his will from Agalega. The man has been shifted back and forth between Mauritius and the island for some time now, at mounting expense to the OIDC. René's knee is bad, and the authorities have decided he cannot be properly cared for so far from Mauritius. "I want to die and be buried on Agalega," he confides in a strong but sad voice. But his wish for a tranquil demise on his peaceful island is being thwarted. Tonton René will most likely end up in the Mauritian capital, Port Louis, in a hectic, grimy slum.

On the return journey to Mauritius, the crew and Rajesh Tataree, the paramedic whose tour of duty had expired four months earlier, took pity. Rebuffed in my pleas that there be at least one "no video" section in second class, I'm upgraded to share a first-class cabin with Rajesh. And so I join the genteel company of members of the cloth, OIDC officers, solar energy technicians, and a Franco-Mauritian builder of yachts and skiffs, the only other white passenger on board the *Mauritius Pride*. It seems to make everyone more comfortable, the crew as well as the first- and second-class passengers, that I'm where I "belong." I now have an acknowledged status and nickname: "Prof," I'm called, just as the priest is always "Mon Père," the nuns are "Ma Soeur," and Rajesh is "Doc." It's quaint (and not a little colonial) the way we use these intimate but formal epithets. Seasickness returns, of course, but at least I'm miserable in the semiprivacy of a cabin, where I can put myself out of sight, mind, and video.

Sister Julie, a pint-sized and energetic nun originally from Madagascar, is a nonstop source of conversation, no matter what the sea conditions. "I'm no saint," she explains, repudiating any spontaneous first impressions. Sister Julie will return to Agalega one day, perhaps accompanied by "Mon Père." When she does, she will no doubt see the Husnoos, the Mauritian Muslim answer to the Swiss Family Robinson, and Paul Coralie, the lonely "Doc" of Sainte Rita, changing bandages and dreaming of Alix, his wife in distant Mauritius. They're among the privileged few to whom Agalega cannot be forbidden. With a little luck, even Tonton René may get his wish and return to die on the island of his youth.

I do not plan to return to Agalega. One visit was enough for me. Yes, its crystal-green waters were splendid to behold from shore and an irresistible enticement to wade. But I was unprepared for the detritus that mars the island, both physically and culturally: the bottles and footwear from Indonesia, clear across the Indian Ocean, that wash up on the beach; the violent videos that make up a large share of the imported celluloid entertainment. Remoteness no longer guarantees either a pristine land or a pristine soul.

After all my strenuous efforts to reach Agalega, I kept encountering, during my three days there, people who couldn't wait to escape the place. Islands, after all, may be exotic to us continental folk, but are not necessarily so to islanders.

Still, from Parvez I learned that you don't have to be an urbanized Westerner to want to get away from it all. The Muslim and his wife love having escaped the stresses of life on their developing island-nation of Mauritius. On Agalega, they contemplate their faith and raise a family, out of range of the siren songs of fanaticism and materialism. Parvez is master of his school, where he begins the day inspecting the fingernails of his few pupils and encouraging them to say their Christian prayers. Far from the intrusions of school inspectors and ministerial mandates, he performs his job faithfully, a true professional, answering above all to his conscience.

No man is an island unto himself? Could be. After Agalega, I rather think that an island can set you free or make you flee. One man's paradise is another's prison. ❑

Bearing Russia's Burdens

For centuries, Russia's intelligentsia occupied a unique place in the life of its country, flickering like the light of a candle in the dark. Now that the worst of the darkness has been disspelled, will the light vanish too?

by Margaret Paxson

Pilgrims walk the earth.
Crippled they are, hump-backed;
Hungry, half-dressed;
In their eyes, a waning;
In their hearts—a dawning.
—Joseph Brodsky

Can a nation look for grace? Can it assign a category of persons to bear the burden of its moral tribulations, to be its collective conscience and collective sacrifice, to be its source of spiritual transcendence? In the story that Russia tells about itself, the category of people known as the *intelligentsia* has borne much of that burden. Members of the intelligentsia have prodded and scolded the people, sought spiritual high ground through their knowledge, and endured the loneliness of sacrifice and struggle against the powers of the state. Pushkin and Dostoyevsky and Mayakovski and Brodsky (scolds and prophets all) were part of the intelligentsia, but so too were thousands of other souls, more modest in their orations to the people, perhaps, but no less full of longing for knowledge and truth.

And now, in the rough-and-tumble of Russia's transformation, what is to become of this intelligentsia, so weighed down by its historical role and by a sense of its moral mission?

On August 20, 1991, under heavy gray skies, I turned a corner onto the enormous Winter Palace Square in St. Petersburg and saw a sea of bodies, perhaps a quarter-million people, who had gathered in unity against the kidnapping of President Mikhail Gorbachev by Communist hard-liners. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev's leadership was careening toward real reforms, real freedoms, and a real grappling with the darkest chapters of its history. This was a moment of truth.

A public meeting had been called by the mayor of St. Petersburg, Anatoli Sobchak—a professor of law and vanguard reformer—and the decision to attend required for each of those 250,000 souls some sober private thinking: It was illegal for groups of more than five to congregate in the streets; jobs could be lost for attending such a meeting, and futures ruined; police were everywhere. In a scene repeated all over the city, I watched a husband and wife in a somber discussion about whether or not to go. Andrei* was a chemist, and afraid; Nina was an engineer, and determined; their son was a child for whom the days ahead would matter forever. They would go. After a quiet ride over

**Some of the names in this essay have been changed.*

The people of St. Petersburg, Russia's cultural capital, flocked to a historic anti-communist protest in August 1991, perhaps the high-water mark of the intelligentsia's direct influence in society.

the Neva River on a rickety bus, our small group reached the center of the city, turned that corner, and beheld the awesome sight.

In the 69 years of its existence, the Soviet Union kept the state together with various means—from the white noise of its propaganda machinery to the animal brutality of its repressions. As easy and lulling as it must have been to succumb to the iron will of the state, voices of thoughtful dissent were also nourished in the Soviet Union, in spite of its best designs. These voices belonged to its intelligentsia: artists, writers, linguists, geologists, playwrights, economists, biologists. Sometimes they spoke in the exquisite language of poetry; sometimes they employed irony and satire; sometimes they fell into a simple and quiet insistence on the truth of science and reason and on the need to define one's humanity through something other than fear. By the 1980s, some of these figures had become emboldened to challenge the state directly, and though the Soviet Union fell at last under the weight of its own political and economic system, the steady crescendo of their voices abetted the dissolution.

Members of the intelligentsia—painfully byzantine in their sense of social order, awkwardly ascetic in their tastes, and often entirely disconnected from the people they claimed to speak for—had spent years in faraway gulags for crimes of thought. It was they who had memorized lines of Anna Akhmatova's poems because it was too dangerous to keep written copies. It was they who kept icon-like portraits of Paul McCartney in their homes and burned the contours of foreign maps into their heads. And it was they who had endeavored to lead the Russian people to the historical moment of the toppling of communism, gathering in seas of people and preparing for anything, even death.

But was the intelligentsia prepared for victory and for the transformed Russia that emerged in the 1990s? The whisperings of their deepest mores caused many of these *intelligenty*, as they are known, to face with a combination of distaste and disgust the new flash of money and gain that infused the air around them. They hated the scramble for money, and the scramble for money (that great, history-shaping, invisible hand) had no use for them. Jobs were lost in universities, research institutes, and the arts; salaries were reduced to miserable sums. While the standard of living for some shot up to levels of real comfort and dignity, for too many others it fell toward real poverty. I saw friends thinned by hunger, with dark circles under their eyes and a new transparency to their skin. Though many members of the intelligentsia succeeded in time in reaping the benefits this new Russia yielded, the fit was awkward, like trying to walk a long, straight line in the wrong-sized shoes.

Overnight and one by one, the heroes of perestroika and the Soviet fall were shoved aside in the rush to build a state. The intelligentsia came to be seen as impractical, fussy, and harping, and as having a haughty distaste for the actual managerial problems of a new country. As time went by, some of its prominent members were "corrupted" by power; others were brutally murdered; still more receded into the quiet of the new space that surrounded them. More than ever before, being an *intelligent* became a lonely occupation.

Many Russian observers have said that it may be time to bid goodbye to the historical oddity known as the intelligentsia. Others have added "Good riddance." For me, the matter is personal. In the years I have lived and worked in Russia as an anthropologist, I have been moved and inspired by an odd panoply of *intelligenty*. There is Tolya, for example, who lived the first 20 years of his life in one room with his parents. All seven of Tolya's father's brothers died in World War II,

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and his mother saw her parents shot in front of her. Tolya writes books now that are musings on death, on the meaning of money, on the significance of quotidian events that pass unnoticed. And there is Alyosha, who tried to play in business after his stint in the army and who lost everything he had, who would write poetry into the night with fingers stained yellow by cigarettes, and who now teaches philosophy and translates books for a few hundred dollars, to maintain the bare bones of an independent life.

And there is Kesha, an archaeologist and historian who has lived for years with his family in one room in the ancient town of Staraia Ladoga, a place of great beauty in the lay of its land and rivers and great melancholy in its ruins. One night when the sky was turning purple and midnight was nearing, I trudged along the riverside with a small crowd as Kesha spoke of the vanished Staraia Ladoga he had come to know. Oblivious to the swarm of mosquitoes around him, he told stories, and more stories. Every stop furnished the occasion for a toast: a toast to history, to place, to a single, lonely, ruined spot of land. At the end of every toast, Kesha downed (*Raz*!) another shot of vodka, and his face—even with the drunken blur all over it—said that this spot right here and the gesture that honored it were the source of the grace in his life.

And there is Anya. Anya leads with a squint. I have known her for years, and have always found this charming, as though her mind were forever in the process of seizing everything at a distance and collapsing it into meaning. Anya, who embodies an active, worldly side of the intelligentsia, is a well-known journalist in her country. She was previously a brilliant translator and interpreter and, before that, a bright girl growing up in a home where there were secrets.

What were the secrets? That while living in a communal apartment, where walls had ears, her family read books and talked about ideas; that, in Stalin's long years, three of four of her grandparents had been arrested and one grandmother had been shot; that her own father had been sent to a children's "colony" when his mother was sent off to the gulag, and that he had run away; that her father was plagued with manic-depression; that because they were Jews, everything was

more frightening and risky; that in grave conversations around the kitchen table, her family spoke of the state as something "horrifying, terrible, and dangerous"; perhaps worst of all, that the family had American friends.

Anya grew up living the life of ideas. She brought illegal books into the home and developed friendships with foreigners. By the time she was in college, she had decided to study languages so that she could eventually work as a freelance translator and, with every intention of distancing herself from the rewards of Soviet life, drop out. "Anti-ambition," she has called this, but the choice meant some measure of freedom. She weighed decisions about her future using the instruments of her intelligentsia upbringing, and, in her calculation, distance from the seat of power was the correct position for truth telling, for an honest life. For Anya, the sacrifices of poverty and placelessness within a system that required placement were noble ones.

Though she saw herself as an outsider and a dissident in her youth, Anya was catapulted forward in the 1990s beyond her wildest expectations, into the center of the fray. Beginning work as a translator, she was helped by an American journalist to find her own editorial, interpretive voice. Today, she is perfectly bold in criticizing Vladimir Putin's government, the war in Chechnya, the political passivity of the Russian population, and the country's failures in its advance toward democracy.

I last saw Anya in Moscow in December 2003, two days after the Russian parliamentary elections, in which every party that was nominally "liberal" failed to receive the five percent vote required to gain representation. On that same day, a young woman had strapped explosives to her waist, gotten lost on her way to the State Duma, and, in protest of the war in Chechnya, blown herself up.

Anya was busy with calls from overseas, but warm and engaged and generous as always. As we settled down to talk, Anya referred to the TV advertisement that Anatoli Chubais and his SPS (Union of Right Forces) party had chosen for their parliamentary election campaign. In the ad, Chubais, Boris Nemtsov, and Irina Khakamada, all veterans of "liberal" politics in post-Soviet Russia, are sitting in a luxurious airplane, working on laptops, and calling on their compatriots to be more like them. The plane—pure white and bathed in golden light—then takes off into the sky, or perhaps into the radiant future. An American observer had called it "one of the most boneheaded campaign moves of all time." Anya put it simply: "Couldn't they at least have been on a white *train*"?

Why couldn't these now-aging "young liberals" see the ad through the eyes of their fellow citizens, such as the old women struggling to find food for themselves while living in tiny apartments, or the villagers doing backbreaking work for every potato and every bit of meat they eat? Such was the blindness of the members of the intelligentsia who had inserted themselves into the Russian power elite. Chubais had gone from being a young economist in St. Petersburg in the 1980s to being one of the definers, movers, and profiteers of the new Russia. In the mid-1990s, he was integral to the process of divvying up state resources in the infamous "loans for shares" deal that did much to create the Russian oligarchs. Now he was seen by many as representative of an absolutely disconnected and uncaring new elite. Their insensitivity was the worst kind of hubris. Because of it, the liberal ideas that were, at least in some limited ways, a continuation of the reforms of perestroika now had no official place in the Duma. For the kinds of people who think elections are indicative of the larger movements of an age, the golden era of Russian reform and redefinition, of grand ideas and great sacrifices by small voices, could officially be pronounced dead.

Anya, of course, doesn't want the story to be over. She wants to fight and keep fighting. But where are her comrades?

"Maggie," Lidia says, looking at me with heavy-lidded eyes, "you have to understand. I *deeply* don't give a shit." I had asked her about the parliamentary elections and whether she had voted. No, she hadn't voted. Of course not. In her St. Petersburg—the same city that had been the seat of Russia's impulses for democracy and dissent, that had been Russia's "window to Europe," the waterlogged, hauntingly lovely, deeply corrupt and corrupting city of Pushkin and Dostoyevsky and

Black and White Magic of St. Petersburg *(1995), by Alexey Titarenko*

Akhmatova and Brodsky—the population that came out to vote last December shunned liberals such as Irina Khakamada. Instead of electing Khakamada to the seat that had long been held by murdered reformer Galina Staravoitova, they opted for Communist Gennady Seleznev.

No, Lidia didn't vote, and Lidia probably won't vote. She won't stand in a crowd again with a quarter of a million people. She won't carry a sign or write an editorial.

My first memory of Lidia is of watching her eat cake. We were in a Montreal restaurant 14 years ago, and my anthropology department was hosting her stepfather, who is considered one of the great philologists of his generation. She had come to Quebec with her mother to visit. As fate would have it, Lidia and I both entered doctoral programs at the University of Montreal, and our lives began to intertwine.

Lidia is the daughter of a poet who died long before his time. She is also the daughter of a geologist and writer, and the granddaughter of a Soviet peasant turned novelist. Her family line includes actresses, aristocrats, and philologists. In the unspoken categories of the intelligentsia, she is of lesser but meaningful royalty. One of her professors in graduate school even called her "Princess."

But as integral as that social positioning—that royal positioning—has been to how someone

like Lidia is interpreted by people around her, Lidia's own concerns are different. Words—their crafting and their meaning, their shades and colors, real and beautiful words needing protection against the idiocy of a controlling state—set her on her path in life. After graduate school, she went from translating heady literary theory to translating novels, and now she is seeking a voice for her own stories. For her, words matter. And art matters. And the meaning of love matters. And life is the only thing that insistently gets in the way.

Lidia is tall and strong (the opposite, she has noted, of Russian men's ideal of beauty), with a long-legged grace in movement. She has backbone. She loves animals—the happy, cared-for ones and the lost and damaged ones—and spent her teen years running after school to catch the electric trains out of the city to riding stables, where she learned the equestrian arts and mingled with folk very unlike those she knew from school. She married a gentle man, an artist, and now lives with him and his son from a first marriage in a two-room apartment.

If Lidia loves animals, sometimes she seems to hate people. I've seen her in rages, kicking the fancy foreign cars of *mafiya* men who dare to cut her off in the street, fuming at surly waitresses in Soviet-style "rest homes," and bawling out men who change money for foreigners and charge mysterious fees. I've heard her curse at people carrying weapons. To Lidia, the only thing uglier than the remaining traces of the Soviet idiocy that once so enraged her poet father is the new class of Russian rich, with all their crassness and empty airs. She can't bear the lack of justice in the coffee that costs nearly what her grandmother earns as a pension, or the insanity of the political world, or, frankly, the new world's surpassing lack of grace.

Lidia doesn't vote, and she hates politics, and she and her husband live on what his paintings sell for and what her translations bring in. Their home is so small and so filled with the objects of life and art that at times she has said she would do anything, anything, to have enough space for her own writing table—about two feet by two feet, no more. Yet the space can't be found.

But despite all that Lidia finds crass and ugly in the world, she still finds wonder there, too: in family meals, in long hours of tea and talk with friends, in riding a horse or walking her dog, in a lurching trolley bus journey through her strange and luminous city in the violet light of the white nights, in walking, walking, walking the city's streets and canals. And in that wonder—in the restless seeking of it and in the faith that she may come upon it by chance on a moonlit night—there is a kind of custodianship, though it may not seem so at first.

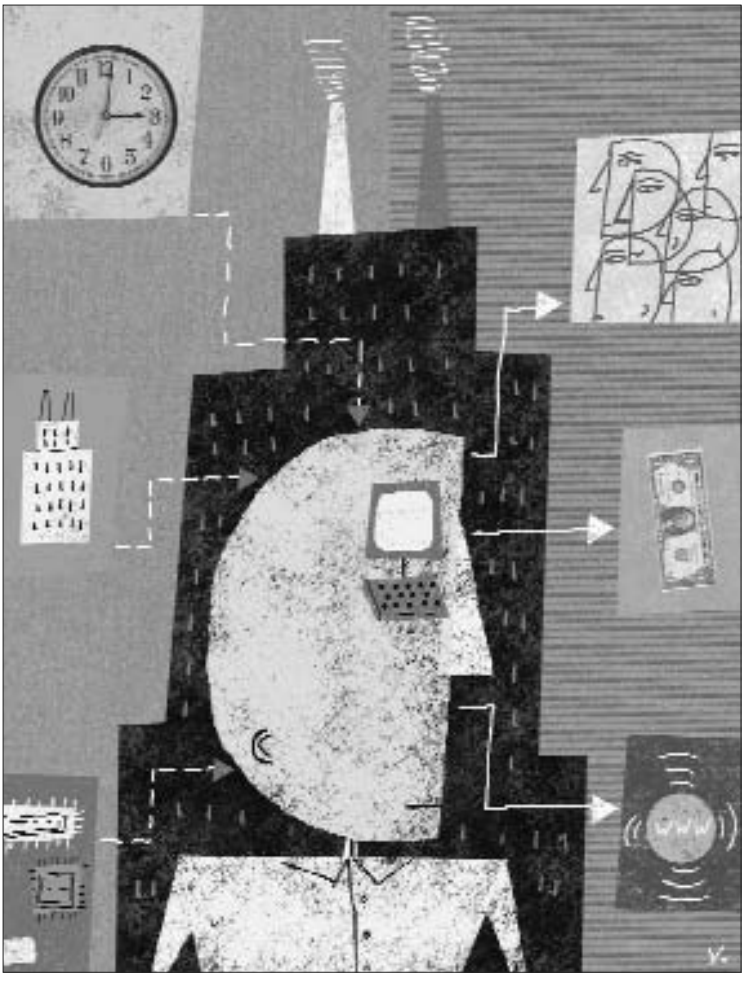
What, then, is this intelligentsia that somehow feels the need to be a custodian to "its" people? That feels the need to suffer in its fight against the state? That has to know small things exhaustively? Is it an epiphenomenon of Russian Orthodoxy, which allows for a saintliness that rejects the world, lives in rags, and scolds the tsar? Or is it rooted in the idiosyncratic feudal system of old Russia, which created an even deeper chasm between elites and "the people" than was known in the rest of Europe?

To those who believe that history careens in one direction only—toward a radiant future of rational markets and computable longings—the Russian intelligentsia has become an anachronism, now, finally, dying. Yet to Russians, the intelligentsia has always seemed on the verge of its own demise: always near ethereal, near saintly, and near buried and forgotten. In that eternally liminal state, the intelligentsia can be holy and ignored at the same time. Perhaps, in that romance of the end, there is something utterly essential to the intelligentsia's existence.

But history doesn't go in one direction only, and longing and grace don't come in neat, definable packages. The intelligentsia that so struggles with its relevancy is endlessly surprising in its powers: It did, after all, help impel 250,000 people to a revolutionary square in St. Petersburg. It created Anya, who will squint to see the distant future of her country and fight no matter what. It created Kesha, who will lift his glass in spite of the mosquitoes that eat him alive. And it created Lidia, who will continue to struggle to put food on the table, or care for an elderly grandmother, or protect a fragile son from a murderous army, as she moves toward a spot of two feet by two feet and thinks about the strength and sweetness of words. ❑

DO SMARTS RULE?

Our technological society puts a high premium on individual intelligence and education. But there's much disagreement about what intelligence really is and what it's really worth. While America exalts its brilliant technology wizards, business celebrities, and academic superstars, its schools and universities seem to be of two minds about the importance of cultivating intelligence.



The Revenge of the Nerds

by Steven Lagerfeld

When Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein published *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* 10 years ago, the book provoked a more violent response than any other in recent memory. Enough heated reviews and articles appeared to fill several anthologies. Yet the critics said very little about one of Murray and Herrnstein's central contentions: that a high-IQ "cognitive elite" is consolidating a dominant position atop American society.

Maybe that silence is understandable, given that the two men made several far more incendiary arguments—about IQ as a source of intractable forms of social and economic inequality, and about the differences in IQ between whites and blacks. Then, in 2002, Richard Florida published *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Florida, a professor of economic development at Carnegie Mellon University, came at the question from the opposite end of the political spectrum, barely breathing the word *intelligence* while asserting that creative professionals—in reality, smart people—increasingly dominate American society. Florida argued that cities seeking to revive their fortunes need to do everything possible to attract his liberal, tolerant "cultural creatives." Again there was controversy, but again it wasn't about one of the book's key arguments. To critics in the universities and the news media, the notion that people like themselves possess extraordinary mental powers must have seemed obvious.

In fact, the evidence for this view is debatable. But one thing we do know conclusively: The smart people who mold opinion in this country *think* it's true.

It's not just the academic and media elite who worship smarts. In this nation of casually anti-intellectual pragmatists, where Thomas Edison once brushed off the accolades heaped upon him with the observation that "genius is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration," it has become fashionable to be smart. Our books and movies reveal a fascination with the intellectually gifted: *Einstein in Love*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *Good Will Hunting*. In the highly popular Matrix trilogy, the heroes are hypertalented computer geeks chosen for their extraordinary ability to manipulate technology. The geek and the wonk, once social outcasts, are now cul-

A sure sign of the vogue for smarts: The organizers of a Las Vegas publicity stunt for a free Internet service bet on the popular appeal of bespectacled geeks rather than women in swimsuits.

tural heroes. If you can't be smart, you can at least look the part by donning a pair of thick-rimmed eyeglasses and a shirt with a long, pointy collar, buttoned all the way up. The annual announcement of the MacArthur Foundation's genius grants (a name the foundation disavows) is greeted as eagerly as the Queen's Honors List in Britain. We have smart cars, smart mobs, and smart growth. Thanks to Smarty Jones, even horses appear to be getting smart.

It may seem implausible to speak of a cult of smarts in the age of Paris Hilton and 30-second political attack ads, when it appears that America is being relentlessly dumbed down. But don't blame dumb people for that. Dumbing down is the idea of film and television executives, political consultants, newspaper magnates, and other very intelligent people. It's a shrewd moneymaking strategy. It also reveals one of the problems of putting too much stock in pure brainpower: Smart people are uniquely capable of producing noxious ideas.

The triumph of these canny operators points to the key reason why intelligence has achieved such high status: It's not so much that brains have risen in our esteem as that other qualities have declined. Intelligence has always been respected and rewarded, but in the past it existed in a larger world of shared values that were intensively cultivated by social institutions. The consensus that supported this system has largely dissolved, and many of the personal and institutional virtues it encouraged have been weakened. But there's at least one quality about whose goodness we still

seem able to agree: raw intelligence. It now enjoys a status akin to virtue.

Why haven't intellectuals and nascent philosopher-kings benefited much from the new status dispensation? Because Americans prefer their smarts in the form of relatively narrow expertise, and all the better if ratified by a significant paycheck. Intellectuals and academics win time in the sun only when they can convey specialized knowledge about subjects such as the economy and the Middle East.

There are other, more tangible reasons for the elevation of intelligence. The transformation of the economy since World War II, with the decline of farming and manufacturing and the rise of service industries and technology, has put a new premium on education, training, and the smarts needed to obtain them. (Ironically, the public schools are one of the few institutions that have not come to terms with this reality.) Along with economic transformation came social change. Beginning in the 1950s, doors that had once been closed to the talented were thrown open; the less-than-brilliant son of an alumnus was no longer guaranteed admission to Harvard—or to the American elite. Many bright people have had opportunities they would not have had in the past.

DO TODAY'S POLITICAL AND CORPORATE LEADERS NEED TO BE SMARTER THAN YESTERDAY'S?

Yet the rising value we attach to smarts exceeds any increase in their actual importance. America's postwar changes are of relatively recent vintage, and there are other forms of economic and social inequality that still play a role in determining who rises. At the very highest levels of society, moreover, it's hard to know whether some new increment of IQ is really needed. Do today's political and corporate leaders need to be smarter than yesterday's? Is there any evidence that they are ?

Nowhere is the trend toward the worship of smarts—and both its positive and negative consequences—more apparent than in the business world. The corporate titan as cultural hero pretty much vanished from the American scene in the 1960s, and when he reappeared a couple of decades later, he had shed his sober, Ike-like mien and gray flannel suit and become a dazzling, iconoclastic genius in a polo shirt. Instead of drearily working their way to the top, today's exalted executives travel a route more like something out of a Harry Potter novel. Initially, the wunderkind finds his way to one of our most elite universities, which still proves inadequate to contain his prodigious mental energies, as in the case of Harvard dropout Bill Gates and the two founders of Google, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who abandoned a Stanford Ph.D. program. Then he retreats to a holy site (often

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Are We All Getting Smarter?

The title of James R. Flynn's 1984 article in the *Psychological Bulletin* said it all: "The Mean IQ of Americans: Massive Gains 1932 to 1978." Later studies by Flynn and others confirmed the startling trend, creating a scientific puzzle that intelligence researchers are still struggling to solve today.

Flynn, a political scientist at the University of Otago, in New Zealand, made his discovery by examining the often-overlooked fact that IQ test companies must periodically "renorm" their tests, which are "graded" along a curve. Renorming was necessary because raw scores were steadily rising. Just as a teacher might adjust the curve on a history exam so that a student needed, say, a 94 rather than a 90 to get an A, so the companies had revised their norms upward. And this (inadvertently) concealed the magnitude of the rise in raw scores—until Flynn came along.

Since his first study, Flynn has expanded his research to include 20 industrialized countries, finding the same trend worldwide—an average increase in IQ scores over the past 70 years of roughly three points per decade. That's about a 22-point increase between 1932 and 2004.

Scholars have advanced many theories to explain the "Flynn effect." One school of thought holds that it's simply the product of improved test-taking savvy. Psychologist C. R. Brand, for example, speculates that the post-1960s wave of personal liberation has loosened inhibitions that prevented past test-takers from giving quick, intuitive responses on IQ tests. But other researchers insist there's been a real increase in intelligence. Richard Lynn, of the University of Ulster, in Northern Ireland, points to the influence of improved nutrition. Others cite the effects of increased formal education, better parenting techniques, greater environmental stimulation, and other factors.

But if intelligence levels really are rising, why have scores on the SAT and other standardized tests gone down?

The explanations offered by researchers are rooted in the fact that there are two distinct but closely intertwined forms of general intelligence, or *g*. "Fluid" *g* is the untaught capacity for figuring out novel problems, while "crystallized" *g* is the knowledge that people have consolidated from "investing" their fluid *g* in learning over a lifetime. It's therefore possible that these two different forms of intelligence could be moving in different directions: Fluid *g* could rise even as crystallized *g* fell if individuals invested less in learning. Thus, Ulric Neisser, the editor of a volume on the Flynn effect called *The Rising Curve* (1998), hypothesizes that television and other new media have stimulated an increase in problem-solving abilities related to fluid *g* even as they eroded crystallized *g*.

Some evidence supports this general thesis. The most dramatic increases in scores have occurred on the Raven Matrices and other IQ tests that zero in on abilities related to fluid *g*, such as the ability to quickly identify shapes and patterns, rather than on acquired knowledge.

Flynn himself follows a different line of reasoning. If we're getting so much smarter, he demands, "why aren't we undergoing a renaissance unparalleled in human history?" Like many other researchers, he doubts there's been a real rise in intelligence. Flynn argues that only one component of IQ scores is rising, and that it's related to some highly specific ability that's not part of general intelligence.

Even if that's correct, it doesn't mean that IQ tests are invalid. Flynn says that the tests shouldn't be used to compare the intelligence of different generations or cultural groups. But comparisons *within* generations are valid, and the tests remain reliable predictors of such things as success in school and on the job.

a Silicon Valley garage), where there's a period of mysterious wizardry involving smoke and flashes of light before our hero emerges with his Creation. More years of struggle follow, and then comes the magical ceremony that finally earns him the mantle of true genius: the initial public offering.

Turn the pages of a *Fortune* magazine from 50 years ago and you will encounter an entirely different kind of business leader. It was the world of Organization Men and team players. The first line of a profile of construction magnate Steve Bechtel describes him as a man who "works himself to the bone." He has some of the "old-time construction man's swagger" and "knows how to exert a certain force on other men." He is surrounded by "tough, well-schooled" engineers and executives. Sam Mosher, the head of Signal Oil & Gas, has "five hard years of farming" behind him and "works very hard and seriously." Of course these men were smart, but in 1954 that was not a fact *Fortune* thought worth emphasizing. Successful business leaders were hard working, seasoned by experience, a bit macho.

Brains can produce wonderful things. They gave us Google and cracked the human genetic code. But we tend to forget that big brains also ran Enron, MCI, and scores of short-lived technology company skyrockets. (One account of the Enron debacle is called *The Smartest Guys in the Room*.) During the mid-1990s, investors sank a fortune into Long-Term Capital Management, the now-infamous hedge fund, trusting in the scintillating brains of its two economists, Myron Scholes of Stanford University and Robert C. Merton of Harvard University, who had done pioneering work on the modeling of stock-price movements. For a time, the firm was fabulously successful. In 1997, Scholes and Merton won the Nobel Prize in economics. A year later, when the Russian bond market collapsed, Long-Term Capital Management lost $2 billion in the space of weeks and teetered on the edge of a collapse which, thanks to its intricate deals with Wall Street institutions, threatened to wipe out billions more in assets and trigger a global financial crisis. Only the intervention of the Federal Reserve saved the day.

BRAINS GAVE US GOOGLE AND CRACKED THE HUMAN GENETIC CODE, BUT THEY ALSO RAN ENRON.

"How could high intellect go so wrong?" asked Edward Tenner, the author of *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (1996). "Easy. Brilliance is dangerous. It tempts those who have it to pronouncements that outrun experience and even common sense."

Still, the hot pursuit of business genius goes on. It's seen in Wall Street's continuing quest for the next big idea. It's seen in the incredible

increase in the pay of corporate CEOs. In the early 1970s, CEOs earned 30 to 35 times as much as the average corporate employee. Today the multiple is about 300, or $150,000 per week. That's a paycheck only a superhuman could deserve.

It ought to be clear that high intelligence is no guarantee of good political leadership, yet we incessantly discuss the raw intelligence of our leaders as if it would determine the quality of their performance in office. Journalist Daniel Seligman, who gathered information on U.S. presidents' IQs from their biographies, reports that John F. Kennedy scored 119—on the upper end of the normal range on the IQ scale—before he entered Choate Academy, while the young Richard Nixon recorded an impressive 143. How many people now wish the smarter man had won the election of 1960? Before they went on trial at Nuremberg, the Nazi war criminals were given IQ tests that turned up uniformly high levels of intelligence: Albert Speer had an IQ of 128, Hermann Goering 138. In fact, research suggests that JFK's relatively modest IQ was just about perfect for the presidency, or most other leadership positions. Above that level, a person's ideas and language may become too complex for a mass audience, according to Dean Keith Simonton, a psychologist at the University of California at Davis. Other traits matter more. "Many empirical studies confirm the central prediction that an IQ near 119 is the prescription for leader success," Simonton writes in *Greatness: Who Makes History and Why* (1994).

RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT JFK'S RELATIVELY MODEST IQ WAS JUST ABOUT PERFECT FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

Yet the reigning assumption in the world of opinion makers is that high intelligence is a singular qualification for leadership. Political parties, which were once reasonably effective at vetting politicians on the basis of other qualities, such as their judgment, loyalty, and character, are no longer strong enough to do that job. We are left instead to rely on other, more limited standards.

If there were any doubt that intellectual brilliance is not the sine qua non of effective leadership, the case of former president Ronald Reagan should have put an end to it. Amid the remarkable bipartisan outpouring of admiration for Reagan during the week surrounding his funeral, a few critics dredged up the failings of the Reagan years—the budget deficits, the rise in poverty, Iran-contra—but hardly anybody seemed to recall one of the most damning charges the cognitive elite lodged against him in his day: that he was a simpleton, slow, a man who needed to have the world reduced to 3x5 index cards, a *movie actor*. "Even some of Reagan's friends and supporters on the right had their doubts about his intellectual candlepower," writes biographer Lou Cannon in

President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime (1991). (Cannon, who covered Reagan for many years as a reporter, doesn't share those doubts, and offers an interesting portrait of Reagan's brand of nonanalytic intelligence.)

Now Reagan is hailed for his vision, his decisiveness and determination, his modesty and civility, his self-deprecating sense of humor. Some of these are traits that can't be taught, but the others—along with still more that aren't ordinarily attached to the 40th president—are qualities American society once recognized as virtues and labored to cultivate and reward. The virtues went by names such as loyalty, fairness, discipline, hard work, and balanced judgment, and they were learned in school, in church, at the university, and in the wider world.

OUR GREATEST ADMIRATION OUGHT TO BE RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO COMBINE THEIR MENTAL GIFTS WITH VIRTUES SUCH AS HUMANITY, PRUDENCE, AND WISDOM.

In higher education, for example, the goal once was to mold a well-rounded person, grounded in many areas of learning and closely acquainted with the ideas and forces that had shaped the past. The modern university aims, reasonably enough, to create well-rounded *classes*, with the proper complement of violinists, designated ethnic groups, and lacrosse players. But it leaves individual students to look for meaning and direction on their own, or to burrow into the increasingly narrow and specialized disciplines that dominate the campus. Survive by your wits, they are told.

At some level, we all seem to recognize that a world in which only wits matter is impossible. Far from the heights of the American corporation, for example, the people who search for talent administer batteries of personality tests and pray for job candidates with "emotional" intelligence—a useful quality, perhaps, but in the end nearly as morally neutral as brainpower.

Intelligence researchers themselves often say that smarts are an overrated quality, but the conversation then quickly moves on. "We agree emphatically. . . ," Herrnstein and Murray write in *The Bell Curve*, "that the concept of intelligence has taken on a much higher place in the pantheon of human virtues than it deserves." Men and women of high intelligence certainly deserve our admiration, but our greatest admiration ought to be reserved for those who combine whatever mental gifts they have with virtues such as humanity, prudence, and wisdom. Ironically, it was left to a genius, Albert Einstein, to say it best: "We should take care not to make the intellect our god; it has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality." ❑

Schools and the *g* Factor

by Linda S. Gottfredson

In the world of the American public school, few subjects are more controversial than intelligence. If there's a tension in American society between the ideal of equality and the pursuit of meritocracy, that tension escalates into the equivalent of a migraine headache in the schools. Called upon to produce young people fully prepared for citizenship and ready to meet the competitive challenges of the modern economy, the schools are also seen, at the same time, as the nation's last best hope to level the playing field and ensure equal opportunity for all. In no American institution is the egalitarian strain of the American creed stronger. And the very notion that school performance is strongly influenced by general intelligence—a quality partly inborn—seems to contradict this deeply held ideal of equality.

During the past few decades, the word *intelligence* has been attached to an increasing number of different forms of competence and accomplishment—emotional intelligence, football intelligence, and so on. Researchers in the field, however, have largely abandoned the term, together with their old debates over what sorts of abilities should and should not be classified as part of intelligence. Helped by the advent of new technologies for researching the brain, they have increasingly turned their attention to a century-old concept of a single overarching mental power. They call it simply *g*, which is short for the general mental ability factor. The *g* factor is a universal and reliably measured distinction among humans in their ability to learn, reason, and solve problems. It corresponds to what most people mean when they describe some individuals as smarter than others, and it's well measured by IQ (intelligence quotient) tests, which assess high-level mental skills such as the ability to draw inferences, see similarities and differences, and process complex information of virtually any kind. Understanding *g*'s biological basis in the brain is the new frontier in intelligence research today.

The *g* factor was discovered by the first mental testers, who found that people who scored well on one type of mental test tended to score well on all of them. Regardless of their contents (words, numbers, pictures, shapes), how they are administered (individually or in groups; orally, in writing, or pantomimed), or what they're intended to measure (vocabulary, mathematical reasoning, spatial ability), all mental tests measure mostly the same thing. This common factor, *g*, can be distilled from scores on any broad set of cognitive tests, and it takes the same form among individuals of every age, race, sex, and nation yet studied. In other words, the *g* factor exists independently of schooling, paper-and-pencil tests, and culture.

Though there has been intense controversy about IQ tests over the years, psychologists continue to see them as valid and useful gauges of student potential.

No longer routinely administered to whole school populations—*achievement* tests are much better suited to tasks such as grouping students for instruction—they are widely used by school psychologists in individual assessments to determine, for example, whether a child who is having difficulties in school has a learning disability or some other problem. As a practical matter, all good standardized tests of IQ and achievement end up ranking students in much the same way because *g* is the major predictor of academic achievement.

DESPITE CONTROVERSY, PSYCHOLOGISTS CONTINUE TO SEE IQ TESTS AS VALID AND USEFUL GAUGES OF STUDENT POTENTIAL.

During the 1960s and 1970s, educators launched several ambitious efforts to raise the IQs of disadvantaged youngsters in experimental preschools. The results were discouraging: Even when it was possible to raise the IQs of young children, the gains never translated into comparable gains on achievement tests, and the IQ gains evaporated soon after children left the programs. The disappointing results helped fuel an attack by some researchers on the very idea of IQ and *g* and also contributed to the rapturous reception for the theory of "multiple intelligences" that emerged in the 1980s, notably in Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind* (1983). To replace the idea of general intelligence, Gardner, a developmental psychologist at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education, proposed seven coequal intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (he later added naturalist, to make eight).

Gardner's theory offers a useful reminder that there are many human abilities and forms of accomplishment, and it puts new labels on some of the most common of them. Thus, good athletes have bodily-kinesthetic "intelligence," and self-help celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey have intrapersonal "intelligence." Gardner takes the seemingly commonsensical notion that people meet the world in different ways and elevates it into a comforting accolade: Everybody is smart in some way.

In the classroom, the theory seems to give teachers a new language to describe their perceptions of students and classroom life. Teacher guidebooks such as *Teaching and Learning through Multiple Intelligences* (1995) suggest using the eight intelligences as different "entry points" for leading students into a single lesson. To teach a unit about photosynthesis, for example, a teacher might have all students read a description of photosynthesis to provide an entry point for the linguistically intelligent, have the class compare plants grown with and without sufficient light to reach children with naturalist intelligence, engage the logical-mathematical students by asking the class to prepare a timeline for the

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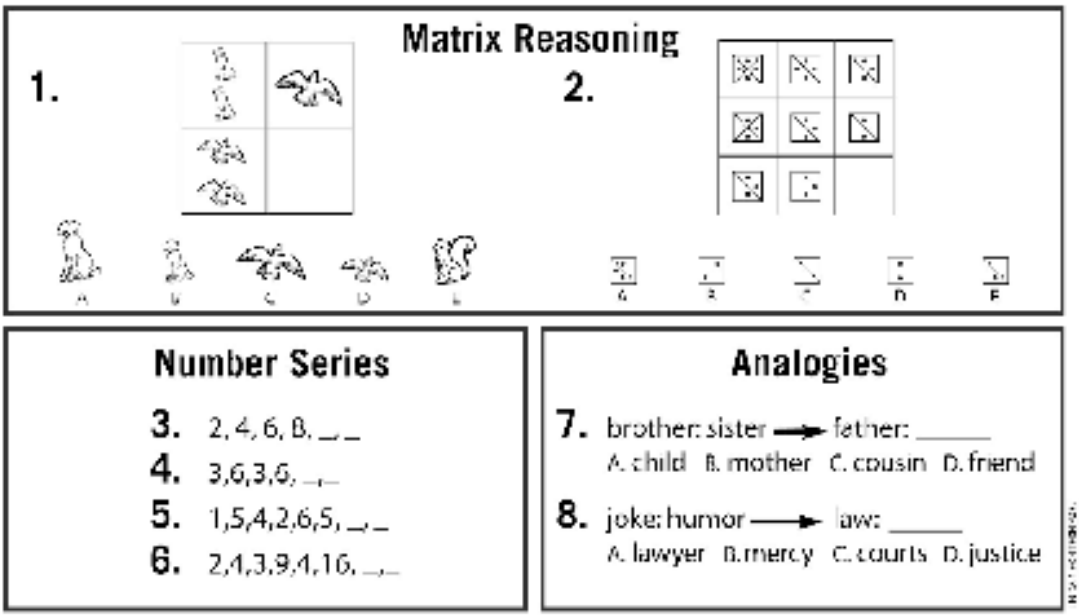


IQ tests use questions like those above to measure intelligence. Here, test takers are asked to identify patterns in images, numbers, and words, and the patterns differ in degree of complexity.

Answers: 1.A; 2.D; 3. 10, 12; 4. 3,6; 5.3,7; 6.5,25; 7. B; 8. D

steps of photosynthesis, require painting those steps to aid the visually-spatially inclined, have students role-play the "characters" in photosynthesis to help the bodily-kinesthetic child—and so on, until all eight intelligences have been accommodated.

There's something very appealing about this scenario, but it's unlikely that students kept so busy walking through multiple doorways will have much time to advance very far once they get through them. As one biology teacher told me recently, the multiple intelligence approach may allow students with special talents to express their understanding in ways that are personally gratifying, but science is inherently analytical, and understanding it ultimately requires the application of strong reasoning and analysis skills—period.

However much we might wish that there were many distinct forms of mental ability, a century of research has found none as widely useful as *g*. Neither of the two major multiple intelligence theorists, Howard Gardner and Yale University's Robert Sternberg, disputes the existence of *g*, only its preeminence among mental abilities. There are, to be sure, many different human mental abilities, but they are neither independent of one another nor equally useful.

> THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE APPROACH SUGGESTS THAT EVERYBODY IS SMART IN SOME WAY.

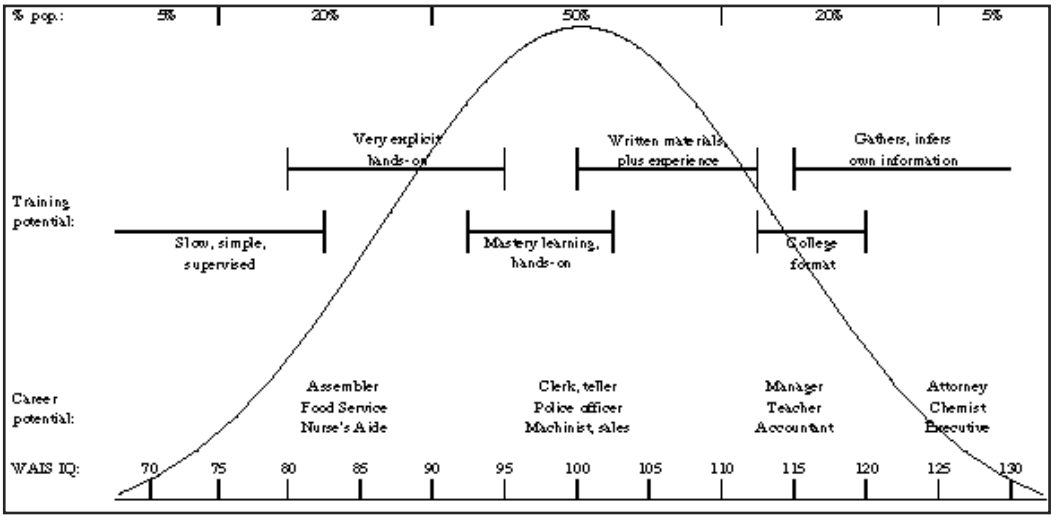
The past 100 years of research has yielded a body of knowledge that virtually all those working in the field accept as valid, despite their various per-

spectives and the controversies surrounding this issue. Differences in IQ among young children can be traced in about equal parts to differences in their genes and their environment. (A special panel named by the American Psychological Association to summarize the state of knowledge on intelligence in 1995 noted that the lowest possible estimate of the genetic component is about 40 percent.) Genetic differences become a bigger source of intelligence differences as children age. Behavior geneticists suspect the reason is that as they achieve more independence, children are more able to select and shape their environments, which then shape them. The power of genes can be seen in the fact that identical twins reared apart are more alike, after meeting in adulthood, in IQ, brain function, personality, and many other traits and behaviors than fraternal twins raised in the same home.

Genes probably work their influence by shaping various metabolic, electrical, and structural features of the brain. For example, the brains of people with higher IQs tend to have a relatively lower rate of energy use (as measured by glucose metabolism) while solving problems, and quicker and more complex brain waves in response to simple perceptual stimuli such as lights and sounds. Researchers have long debated whether people with higher IQs have bigger brains, and the latest findings, based on studies with new brain-scan technology, show that they do. Distinctions in *g*, or general intelligence, are evidently as much a fact of nature as differences in height, blood pressure, and the like.

A great deal of research also shows that *g* matters well beyond school. In *Who Gets Ahead?* (1979), sociologist Christopher Jencks and his colleagues reviewed many large studies and showed that an individual's IQ predicts his occupational level and income in adulthood (as well as years of schooling completed) better than his father's education or occupation does. The influence of *g* varies in dif-

The IQ Influence



IQ is not destiny, but many studies show that different levels of IQ are highly correlated with certain kinds of real-world outcomes, as suggested in this diagram showing the distribution of IQ in the U.S. population. About 95 percent of the population has IQs between 70 and 130.

ferent realms of life—schooling, work, parenthood—simply because some are less cognitively demanding than others. Some life outcomes are also shaped more than others by such factors as one's noncognitive traits (ambition, extraversion) and decisions that others make about the individual (college admissions, hiring, pay raises). Yet the evidence of *g*'s pervasive and lasting impact is well documented, especially when it comes to life's more complex tasks. For example, personnel psychologists Frank Schmidt and John Hunter reviewed thousands of studies that were conducted over 85 years in many different companies, government agencies, and military settings, and that used everything from handwriting analysis to job tryouts to forecast job performance. Their meta-analyses of these data showed that mental tests predict on-the-job performance better than personality, integrity level, experience, and education. In the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, I recently published a study showing that both IQ and adult functional literacy correlate in the same pattern with a wide variety of adult outcomes, including health and longevity (in part because maintaining one's health requires learning and adaptation), all regardless of social background. In that same journal, University of Edinburgh psychologist-physician Ian Deary and his colleagues reported on a study showing that each one-point increase in IQ when the study participants were 11 years old predicted a one percent decrease in mortality by age 50. If IQ is "book smarts," it is clearly much more besides.

DRAWING A BEAD ON EXACTLY WHAT *g* IS AND HOW IT WORKS REMAINS A DIFFICULT TASK.

Drawing a bead on exactly what *g* is and how it works remains a difficult task, but specialists in mental testing now commonly agree that *g* sits atop a hierarchy of mental abilities. Most of these researchers have adopted the three-level hierarchy developed by educational psychologist John B. Carroll in his monumental *Human Cognitive Abilities* (1993). After statistically extracting the common ability factors from more than 450 earlier studies in which multiple tests had been administered to the same individuals, Carroll classified all abilities into three levels.

At the highest level, Stratum III, Carroll found evidence of only one ability: *g*. In Stratum II, he documented eight broad abilities involving language, reasoning, spatial visualization, auditory perception, memory, and cognitive speediness. Stratum I includes relatively specific mental abilities, such as memory span and reading comprehension.

All Stratum II aptitudes are highly correlated with one another. A person with weak language ability, for example, is very unlikely to be strongly endowed with another Stratum II ability, such as spatial visualization. Tests of these abilities show that they are highly correlated both with one another and with *g*. All consist primarily of *g* plus a dose of some more specific ability. As Carroll puts it, the Stratum II abilities are all different "flavors" of *g*. Despite many attempts, nobody has ever succeeded in creating tests that measure these abilities without simultaneously measuring mostly *g*.

Most IQ test batteries are composed of about a dozen subtests (involving, for example, vocabulary, sentence completion, number series, matrices, and similarities) of abilities near the Stratum I level. A person's scores on each are added together to produce an IQ score. But one's intuitive sense that the Stratum I abilities are the "building blocks" of intelligence is incorrect. The basic element at each level is *g*. A Stratum II ability is made up of *g* plus some more specialized ability. A Stratum I ability is produced by adding an even more specialized ability to this mix. Each lower stratum thus includes increasingly numerous and more complex amalgams of skills that are targeted to fewer and more specific kinds of tasks.

> WHERE THERE'S NOTABLE TALENT, THERE'S ALWAYS A HIGH LEVEL OF *g*.

Researchers have drawn quite a clear picture of human mental abilities. For instance, the technical manual for one widely used test, the Stanford-Binet IV, shows that the Stratum I ability "vocabulary" is about three parts *g*, plus two parts a special language facility that makes its entrance at the Stratum II level, plus one part a vocabulary-specific ability entering at Stratum I. Similarly, the Stratum I ability "memory for sentences" is roughly two parts *g*, one part each special verbal and memory abilities entering at Stratum II, and one part an ability specific to Stratum I.

Carroll points out that four of Gardner's intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and musical) correspond to four Stratum II abilities. They aren't independent abilities, as Gardner asserts, but rather are linked to one another and to *g*. Three of Gardner's four other intelligences fall largely outside the cognitive realm, while the fourth (naturalist) is too diffuse to analyze. Gardner's intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences seem to be matters mostly of personality, while his bodily-kinesthetic intelligence reflects mostly psychomotor strengths such as eye-hand coordination. These are useful qualities, to be sure, and they can help a person get by in the world, but they will not help that person *apprehend* the world. For that you need *g*.

Because gifted children tend to have more jagged ability profiles than children of average or below-average intelligence—think of the classic math wiz who is not as dazzling in subjects such as history that depend on verbal reasoning—Gardner can allow educators to draw the inference that every child can be smart in some way. But the math wiz will still have relatively strong verbal skills. Where there's notable talent, there's always a high level of *g*. Gardner implicitly acknowledges this when he concedes that all the individuals he names as exemplars of his eight intelligences probably had IQs above 120 (the 90th percentile). His eight domains of achievement may enrich our lives, but they do not represent independent faculties of mind or alternate pathways to mastering school curricula, jobs, or everyday tasks.

Gardner's theory has been protected from direct contradiction by his failure to develop any formal tests of his proposed intelligences. (He believes that assessments should be more holistic.) None of the assessments that schools currently use to identify students' multiple intelligences would satisfy the standards for testing jointly promulgated by the three major professional organizations in the

field. Mindy Kornhaber, a Gardner collaborator now at the University of Pennsylvania, evaluated three major methods for identifying gifted students in terms of multiple intelligences and concluded in *In the Eyes of the Beholder* (2004) that they are not "technically strong enough to withstand modest scrutiny." Among other problems, some use checklists that seem to assess interests rather than abilities, and none have clear enough procedures for raters to agree on who is gifted or in what way.

In the education textbooks used to instruct tomorrow's teachers, however, one doesn't get any sense that ample evidence favors a single broadly useful intelligence rather than multiple independent ones. Textbooks written by educational psychologists tend to report the facts about IQ with reasonable accuracy, but they systematically minimize or muddy the measure's relevance. For example, they will report that IQ tests predict academic achievement quite well, but then imply that this fact need not be taken seriously because, after all, that's precisely what IQ tests were first developed to do. IQ, they say, represents only a narrow academic ability, "book smarts," and it matters little outside school. All of this is often topped off with the closing argument that IQ does not capture everything important about the human mind and soul—as if intelligence researchers have ever said otherwise.

The presentation of facts may be muddied but the larger message is clear: Multiple intelligence theories are the modern alternative—the antidote—to outmoded "unitary," "narrow," and "exclusionary" theories of ability. Textbooks create an aura of scientific superiority for the new theories by substituting their advocates' certitude for evidence, and the absence of any pertinent research for readers to critique leaves the claims pristine. Take, for example, Laurence Steinberg's *Adolescence* (2002), a textbook assigned to future teachers at the University of Delaware's School of Education, where I am on the faculty. Steinberg blithely asserts that "even the best IQ tests used today measure only a very specific type of intelligence," and that there are ways of "being equally intelligent as individuals who score high on IQ tests—but intelligent in a different way."

Multiple intelligence theory gathers unto itself all good things. Commonly accepted pedagogical principles that have no necessary relation to multiple intelligence theory—that teachers should go beyond rote learning, appreciate students' strengths and weaknesses, use different modes of presenting information, and believe that all students can learn—are described as if they were the hallmarks of the multiple intelligence approach alone. The theory's proponents link harmful, distasteful, and patently false beliefs with IQ—for example, that IQ is immutable, environments do not affect learning, some children cannot learn, and IQ is a measure of human worth. Readers are left with the impression that it is morally suspect to favor "nar-

TEXTBOOKS REPORT THE FACTS ABOUT IQ BUT TEND TO MUDDY THE MEASURE'S RELEVANCE.

row" views of intelligence, which are "elitist," and "segregate" or "privilege" some students. For all their rhetoric about diversity, proponents of multiple intelligence betray a deep uneasiness with difference.

The vogue for multiple intelligences is just one manifestation of an attack on "ability grouping" and "curriculum tracking" in the schools that has been underway for decades. Federal enthusiasm for programs for gifted children, for example, spiked after the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957, and then evaporated in the early 1960s. (Since that decade, scores by America's highest-performing students have fallen on national tests such as the SAT and the Stanford Achievement Test.) Access to advanced placement courses and programs for the gifted is being opened up in the name of inclusion, and as a result, many programs are sacrificing their rigor and distinctive curricula.

Grouping students by ability level in classes or in small groups within classes offers the promise of differentiating instruction to better fit diverse student-ability levels (though in reality that promise is seldom fulfilled). As recently as the 1980s, between 80 and 90 percent of eighth and tenth graders were being taught in "ability-homogeneous" classrooms. Twenty-two percent of seventh graders were in homogeneous classes for all subjects, and 47 percent for some subjects. About 90 percent of elementary schools at the time were using within-class grouping for at least one subject, and 70 percent were using between-class grouping. I'm aware of no more recent surveys, but observers agree that increasing numbers of schools are attempting to eliminate grouping and tracking and also to "mainstream" both gifted and special-education students into regular classrooms.

The effects of this trend, so cavalierly endorsed by those who fantasize classrooms full of pluralistically smart students, are more candidly described in textbooks for teaching instructional strategies. The text we use at the University of Delaware, *Looking in Classrooms* (2003), declares that "educators' thinking has progressively moved away from policies of exclusion and homogeneous grouping toward an emphasis on the value of diversity, policies of inclusion, and practices that meet the needs of all students." But *Looking in Classrooms* is very clear about the realities teachers face. It paints a sobering portrait of the "heterogeneous" classes created by the demise of grouping, tracking, and special classes for disabled or gifted students. Its case example is a sixth-grade classroom with 26 students from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds and family configurations. Three of the students spoke little or no English, and one of them was legally blind. Among the 23 who could be validly tested, the grade equivalents for reading ranged along a breathtaking span from 2.3 to 10.5; two students were gifted. Such large disparities are common in heterogeneous junior-high classrooms. As *Looking in Classrooms* describes it, the teacher's solution for orchestrating appropriately different

THE LONG-ESTABLISHED PRACTICE OF GROUPING STUDENTS BY ABILITY IN CLASSES OR IN SMALL GROUPS IS UNDER ATTACK.

instruction of the same "key ideas" for her 26 highly diverse students calls for an effort that is nothing short of heroic. It's as if teachers today must not only work in a one-room schoolhouse but also individualize instruction for all their charges so that all can master the same (trimmed down) curriculum in lockstep.

Degrouping, which is meant to prevent the social distinctions that arise when students are segregated by ability level, can create even bigger distinctions. Placing the intellectually unequal in proximity forces students to observe their differences in capability more directly. It is hard to miss the fact that some students typically learn two to five times faster than others, or that some are reading difficult books while others struggle with simple ones. All teacher textbooks therefore emphasize, at least implicitly, that a teacher's first concern in mixed-ability classrooms must be to ensure that students perceive each other as social equals.

> THE NEW "HETEROGENEOUS" CLASSROOM CALLS FOR HEROIC EFFORTS BY TEACHERS.

Looking in Classrooms reviews research on some of the familiar techniques for putting this into practice, such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring. These are strategies for having students interact across ability lines in ways that enhance the performance of low-ability students without stigmatizing them for their lesser achievement. Proponents cite experimental studies showing that these methods do indeed improve performance among low-achieving students, while somewhat enhancing, or at least not impairing, performance among more-able students. Only the fine print reveals that the experiments deal just with basic skills, not with higher levels of understanding. Like other textbooks, *Looking in Classrooms* mentions highly able students only when discussing how to "lean on" them for tutoring of their less-able classmates.

In reality, these instructional strategies for mixed-ability classes preclude precisely what helps the more-able students most: accelerating their curriculum, allowing them to interact with their intellectual peers, and making them work hard. Accelerated and compacted curricula can double the speed at which highly able students advance, but such differential treatment is decried as elitist and exclusionary. As targeted instruction for gifted children is reduced in the public schools, their parents must increasingly rely on opportunities outside regular school settings. Summer programs for talented youngsters at universities, for example, are routinely able to advance the top one percent of 13-year-olds one full year in biology, chemistry, physics, Latin, or math in the space of only three weeks.

Tracking and grouping persist in American schools despite the strong pressure for their elimination. Math and science teachers remain strong advocates of tracking, and many parents lobby hard for the programs they think their children need. There's also significant pressure from above: College and university admissions offices want to be able to identify students who have taken demanding courses. And there's the inescapable reality that it's very difficult to produce good results for *any* students when they are placed in heteroge-

neous classes. As James A. Kulik of the University of Michigan reported in the *Handbook of Gifted Education* (2003), "On the basis of site visits, experts have concluded that untracking brings no guarantee of high-quality instruction for everyone but may instead lead all to a common level of educational mediocrity."

Multiple intelligence theory is only the latest rationale for acting as if most children don't differ much in learning ability. An older approach, still widely embraced, is to accept IQ as a concept but act as if differences in IQ don't make much difference in the classroom. Education textbooks and journals in this vein speak only of "exceptional" versus "regular" students. So-called regular students are those who score between the upper threshold for mental retardation (IQ 70) and the lower threshold for giftedness (IQ 130). That continuum includes 95 percent of students. A closer look at differences in intellectual functioning across the 60-point range illustrates how different educability actually is, even among the supposedly average.

For example, individuals with IQs between 70 and 80 (but still above the threshold for mild retardation) require instruction that is highly structured, detailed, concrete, well sequenced, omits no intermediate steps, and links to what the individuals already know. They often need one-to-one supervision and hands-on practice to learn even simple procedures. As specialists in adult education explain, the material to be learned must be stripped of all nonessentials, including theoretical principles, and require only simple inferences. Any information, written or spoken, must be presented in small pieces with clear introductions and simple vocabulary. Because people with IQs below 80 (the 10th percentile) are difficult to train, federal law bars their induction into the military.

Successively higher IQs are associated with better odds of learning readily from more demanding forms of instruction, learning more independently, and mastering increasingly abstract and multifaceted material. Individuals of average IQ (100) can master relatively large bodies of written and spoken knowledge and procedure, especially when it is presented to them in an organized manner that allows them practice and provides feedback. By IQ 120, individuals are more self-instructing and better able to develop and organize knowledge on their own. The "complete" instruction that is most helpful for low-g learners is dysfunctional for these high-g individuals. The latter easily fill in gaps in instruction on their own and benefit most from abstract, self-directed, incomplete instruction that allows them to assemble new knowledge and reassemble old knowledge in idiosyncratic ways. But such forms of instruction are dysfunctional for low-g learners, who are more likely to be confused than stimulated by its incompleteness, abstractness, and requirements for self-direction.

As any teacher will attest, many other things besides *g*-level affect children's learning—illness, incentives, peer pressure, conscientiousness, parental support, familiarity with the language of instruction, and more. For these and other reasons, high *g* does not guarantee success—or low *g* guarantee failure. There's no question, however, that higher levels of *g* constitute a constant tailwind and lower levels a persistent headwind in cognitively demanding settings such as schools. Perhaps most important, *g* level affects what students are likely to learn with a rea-

sonable expenditure of time and effort. Textbooks on instructional strategies rightly treat time as a precious commodity to be jealously guarded and wisely spent, and they note that "slow" students often need much more of it than others to learn the same material. Instruction must therefore be more tightly focused on what is most essential for them to learn.

Although slow learners cannot be turned into fast learners, all students could learn much more than they now do. Students learn best and reap the most gratification for their efforts when instruction is targeted to their cognitive needs. Good targeting is all too rare, even in schools with ability grouping and curriculum tracking. As *Looking in Classrooms* laments, such "adaptive instruction" is regularly attacked as discriminatory because it means treating students differently. Its critics would rather give all students "access" to the "high-status" curricula and self-directed, "constructivist" learning activities that benefit bright students. But that path is far more likely to harm than to help these students, robbing them of the motivation to learn, depriving them of their full potential, and hampering their prospects in a world that increasingly requires (and rewards) well-educated people. Depriving faster learners of curricula that allow them to make the most of their abilities is likewise an injustice to them and to the society that stands to benefit from their eventual contributions. By denying the difficulties in accommodating intellectual difference, multiple intelligence theories may do little more than squander scarce learning time and significant opportunities for improvements in the quality of American schooling.

The substantial heritability of intelligence has been a source of great controversy—albeit only outside the community of researchers who study the subject. But that element of heritability provides the very hope it is often said to obliterate. While it frustrates our efforts to raise IQ, it also greatly limits the harm that poor environments can do. Research roundly affirms what experience suggests: People with higher IQs have a remarkable ability to make their way out of even the most dire environments. This protection, along with the little-appreciated fact that the laws of genetics ensure that parents and children will tend to differ substantially in IQ, guarantees that talent will emerge from even the worst of environments, in turn ensuring considerable social mobility in any free society. It's not only the distribution of IQ that is helped by the laws of genetics. The mixture of genes from two parents creates traits in children that neither parent has. Heritability thus provides a very broad guarantee of difference and variety we would not have in a world where environment was all, a world that might leave humans free not only to create an egalitarian paradise but to forge the ultimate caste society of rich and poor.

It has always been the task of America's public schools to facilitate social mobility, and, historically, they have performed the job well. They should now turn their attention to optimizing the development of *all* children. For that to happen, we'll have to acknowledge that God or nature did not make us all equal intellectually. By embracing rather than rejecting the scientific knowledge about *g*, educators can develop curricula and classroom techniques that well serve the nation's cognitively diverse students. ❑

Higher Ed, Inc.

by James B. Twitchell

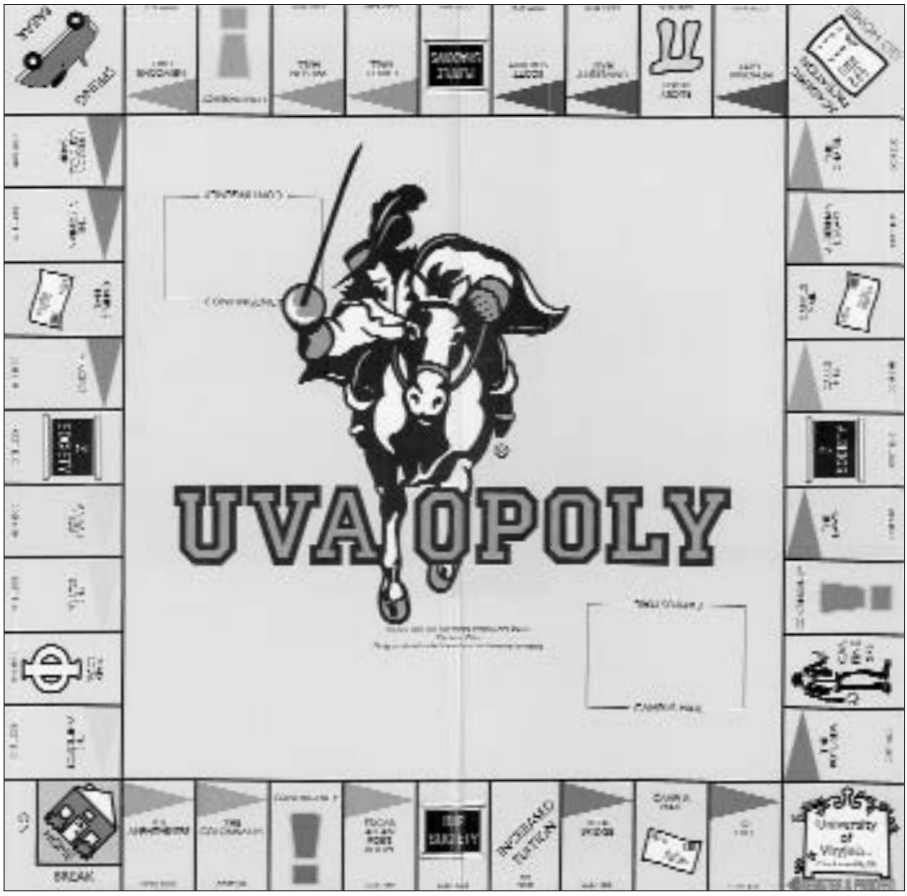
In the early afternoon of December 2, 1964, Mario Savio took off his shoes and climbed onto the hood of a car. Savio was a junior majoring in philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, and he was upset that the administration of the university had arrested a handful of students and forbidden student groups to set up tables promoting various political and social causes. So he put himself "upon the gears" of the machine:

> If this is a firm, and if the Board of Regents are the board of directors, and if President Kerr in fact is the manager, then I'll tell you something: The faculty are a bunch of employees, and we're the raw material! But we're a bunch of raw material[s] that don't mean to have any process upon us, don't mean to be made into any product, don't mean to end up being bought by some clients of the university, be they the government, be they industry, be they organized labor, be they anyone! We're human beings!

In the four decades since Savio's expression of defiance, Higher Ed, Inc., has become a huge business indeed. And as is typical of absorbent capitalism, it does not deny its struggles so much as market them. Mario Savio died in 1996. To honor his activism and insight, the academic senate at Berkeley agreed to name a set of steps in Sproul Plaza, the site of many political speeches, the Savio Steps. In an interesting bit of corporate assimilation, Savio became a lasting part of his own observations: He himself got branded.

Although Mario Savio didn't mention it, the success story of Higher Ed, Inc., is based foursquare on the very transformation that allowed him access to Berkeley. For each generation since World War II, the doors to higher education have opened wider. Unquestionably, university education is the key component in a meritocracy, the sine qua non of an open market. A university degree is the stamp that says—whether it's true or not—this kid is educated, qualified, *smart*. The more prestigious the university, in theory, the smarter the kid. And increased access to university life has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest expectation. In fact, the current dilemma is the price of success. There are too many seats, too much supply, and not enough Marios. The boom is over. Now the marketing begins.

Counting everything but its huge endowment holdings, Higher Ed, Inc., is a $250 to $270 billion business—bigger than religion, much bigger than art. And though no one in the business will openly admit it, getting into



More than a game: The university increasingly resembles a business selling a branded product.

college is a cinch. The problem, of course, is that too many students want to get into the same handful of nameplate colleges, making it seem that the entire market is tight. It most certainly is not. Here's the crucial statistic: There are about 2,500 four-year colleges in this country, and only about 100 of them refuse more applicants than they accept. Most schools accept 80 percent or more of those who apply. It's the rare student who can't get in somewhere.

The explosive growth of Higher Ed, Inc., is evident in increasing enrollments, new construction, expanding statewide university systems, more federal monies, and changes in the professoriate. In the 1950 census, for example, there were 190,000 faculty members. A decade later, shortly before Savio took to the hood of the car, there were 281,000. In 1970, when I entered the ranks, there were 532,000, and in 1998, the latest year for which figures are available from the U.S. Department of Education, some 1,074,000. And remember, what distinguishes the academic world is a lifetime hold on employment. About 70 percent of today's faculty have tenured or tenure-track jobs. Even ministers get furloughed. Museum directors get canned. But make it through the tenure process, and you're set forever.

At the turn of the 20th century, one percent of high school graduates attended college; that figure is now close to 70 percent. This is an industry that produces a yearly revenue flow more than six times the revenue generated by the steel industry. Woe to the state without a special funding program (with the word *merit* in it) that assures middle-class kids who graduate in the upper half of their high school class a pass to State U. College has become what high school used to be, and thanks to grade inflation, it's almost impossible to flunk out.

HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOW IN THE BUSINESS OF DELIVERING CONSUMER SATISFACTION.

If real estate's motto is "location, location, location," higher education's is "enrollment, enrollment, enrollment." College enrollment hit a record level of 14.5 million in fall 1998, fell off slightly, and then reached a new high of 15.3 million in 2000. How did this happen, when the qualified applicant pool remained relatively stable? Despite decreases in the traditional college-age population during the 1980s and early 1990s, total enrollment increased because of the high enrollment rate of students who previously had been excluded. What has really helped Higher Ed, Inc., is its ability to open up new markets. Although affirmative action was certainly part of court-mandated fair play, it was also a godsend. It insulated higher education from the market shocks suffered by other cultural institutions. In addition, universities have been able to extend their product line upward, into graduate and professional schools. Another growth market? Foreign students. No one talks about it much, but this market has been profoundly affected by 9/11. Foreign students have stopped coming. There are enough rabbits still in the python that universities haven't been affected yet. But they will be.

What makes this enrollment explosion interesting from a marketing point of view is that Savio's observations ("the faculty are a bunch of employees, and we're the raw material") have been confirmed. What he didn't appreciate is that instead of eating up raw material and spitting it out, Higher Ed, Inc., has done something far more interesting. As it has grown, its content has been profoundly changed—dumbed down, some would say. There's a reason for that. At the undergraduate level, it's now in the business of delivering consumer satisfaction.

I teach at a large public university, the University of Florida. As I leave the campus to go home, I bike past massive new construction. Here's what's being built. On my distant left, the student union is doubling in size: food court, ballrooms, cineplex, bowling alley, three-story

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hotel, student legal services and bicycle repair (both free), career counseling, and all manner of stuff that used to belong in the mall, including a store half the size of a football field with a floor devoted to selling what is called *spiritware* (everything you can imagine with the school logo and mascot), an art gallery, video games, an optical store, a travel agency, a frame store, an outdoor outfitter, and a huge aquarium filled with only orange and blue (the school colors) fish. On a normal day some 20,000 patrons pass through the building. The student union is looking eerily like a department store. So is the university.

On my immediate left, I pass the football stadium. One side of it is being torn apart to add a cluster of skyboxes. Skyboxes are a valuable resource, as they are almost pure profit. The state is not paying for them. The athletic department is. They will be rented mainly to corporations to allow their VIPs air-conditioned splendor high above the hoi polloi. The skyboxes have granite countertops, curved ceilings, and express elevators. In a skybox, you watch the football game on television. Better yet, the skyboxes allow what's forbidden to the groundlings: alcohol. How expensive are these splendid aeries? There are 347 padded 21-inch seats in the Bull Gator Deck. They'll run you $14,000 a person, and you get only four games in the box. For the other four, you're in the stands. Don't worry about doing the math. The boxes are already sold out. I teach in a huge building that looks like the starship *Enterprise*. It houses classrooms and faculty offices and cost $10 million when it was built a few years ago. These skyboxes and some club seats are coming in at $50 million. Everyone agrees, the skyboxes are a good idea. They'll make money. Better yet, they'll build the brand.

THE PROFESSIONAL MANAGER HAS REPLACED THE PROFESSOR AS THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN DELIVERING THE GOODS.

Across from the football stadium, at the edge of the campus on my right, is the future of my institution. I pass an enormous new building with a vast atrium of aggressively wasted space. This building houses the headquarters of the University of Florida Foundation. The foundation funnels millions of dollars of private money the state will never know about into and through various parts of the university. I don't complain. No one does. Two decades ago, the foundation gave nothing to the English department; now, about a hundred grand a year comes our way. In front of the foundation, where a statue of some illustrious donor or beloved professor would stand at an elite school, is a bronze statue of the athletic department's trademarked mascots, Albert and Alberta Alligator.

On this side of campus, enrollment, enrollment, enrollment is becoming endowment, endowment, endowment. Americans donate more money to higher education than to any other cause except religion. And Florida, with its millions of retirees looking for "memorial opportunities," is a cash cow just waiting for the farmer's gentle hands. The

residents of Florida have almost no interest in funding *education*, especially not K-12 education, which really is in dire shape. But there are wads of money to fund bits and pieces of the campus in exchange for good feelings and occasional naming rights.

American colleges and universities raise about $25 billion a year from private sources. Public universities are new to this game, but they've learned that it's where the action is. Private dollars now account for about 30 percent of the University of Illinois' annual budget, about 20 percent of Berkeley's, and about 10 percent of Florida's. In a sense, tuition-paying undergrads are now the loss leaders in the enterprise. What used to be the knowledge business has become the business of selling an experience, an affiliation, a commodity that can be manufactured, packaged, bought, and sold. Don't misunderstand. The intellectual work of universities is still going on and has never been stronger. Great creative acts still occur, and discoveries are made. But the *experience* of higher education, all the accessories, the amenities, the aura, has been commercialized, outsourced, franchised, *branded*. The professional manager has replaced the professor as the central figure in delivering the goods.

IN MANY SCHOOLS, THERE'S A PERIOD CALLED *SHOPPING AROUND*, IN WHICH THE STUDENT ATTENDS AS MANY CLASSES AS POSSIBLE LOOKING FOR A "FIT."

From a branding point of view, what happens in the classroom is beside the point. I mean that literally. The old image of the classroom as fulfillment of the Socratic ideal is no longer even invoked. Higher Ed, Inc., is more like a sawmill. A few years ago, Harvard University started a small department called the Instructional Computing Group, which employs several people to videotape about 30 courses a semester. Although it was intended for students who unavoidably missed class, it soon became a way *not* to attend class. Any enrolled student could attend on the Web, fast-forwarding through all the dull parts. This is "distance education" from a dorm room, at an advertised $37,928 a year.

Elite schools are no longer in the traditional education business. They are in the sponsored research and edutainment business. What they offer is just one more thing that you shop for, one more thing you consume, one more story you tell and are told. It's no accident that you hear students talking about how much the degree costs and how much it's worth. That's very much how the schools themselves talk as they look for new sources of research or developmental funding. In many schools there's even a period called *shopping around*, in which the student attends as many classes as possible looking for a "fit," almost like channel surfing.

Winning teams generate alumni donations—and boost applications for admission.

So we *do college* as we do lunch or do shopping or do church. That's because for most students in the upper-tier schools the real activity is getting in and then continuing on into the professional schools. No one cares what's taught in grades 13–16. How many times have I heard my nonacademic friends complain that there's no coherence in the courses their kids are exposed to? Back in the 1950s, introductory courses used the same textbooks, not just intramurally but extramurally. So Introduction to Writing (freshman English) used the same half-dozen handbooks all across the country. No longer. The writing courses are a free-for-all. Ditto the upper-level courses. Here are some subjects my department covers in what used to be English 101, the vanilla composition course: attitudes toward marriage, business, bestsellers, carnivals, computer games, fashion, horror films, *The Simpsons*, homophobia, living arrangements, rap music, soap operas, Elvis, sports, theme parks, AIDS, play, and the ever-popular marginalization of this or that group.

HARDLY ANYONE IN HIGHER ED, INC., CARES ABOUT WHAT IS TAUGHT, BECAUSE THAT IS NOT OUR CHARGE.

But cries that the classroom is being dumbed down or politicized miss the point. Hardly anyone in Higher Ed, Inc., cares about what is taught, because that is not our charge. We are not in the business of transmitting what E. D. Hirsch would call *cultural literacy*; nor are we in the business of teaching the difference between the right word and the almost right word, as Mark Twain might have thought important. We're

in the business of creating a total environment, delivering an experience, gaining satisfied customers, and applying the "smart" stamp when they head for the exits. The classroom reflects this. Our real business is being transacted elsewhere on campus.

The most far-reaching changes in postsecondary education are not seen on the playing fields or in the classroom or even in the admissions office. They're inside the administration, in an area murkily called *development*. If you don't believe it, enter the administration building of any school that enrolls more than 10,000 students (10 percent of campuses of that size or larger now account for a shade less than 50 percent of all students) and ask for the university development office. You'll notice how, on this part of the campus, the carpets are thick, the wainscoting is polished, and the lights are dimmed. Often, the development office has a new name picked up from the corporate model. Sometimes it's hidden inside *Public Affairs*, or, more commonly, *Public Relations*. My favorite: *University Advancement*. The driving force at my university is now the University of Florida *Foundation*.

THE MOST FAR-REACHING CHANGES IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ARE IN THE AREA CALLED *DEVELOPMENT*.

Development is both PR and fundraising, the intersection of getting the brand *out* and the contributions *in*, and daily it becomes more crucial. That's because schools like mine have four basic revenue streams: student tuition, research funding, public (state) support, and private giving. The least important is tuition; the most prestigious is external research dollars; the most fickle is state support; and the most remunerative is what passes through the development office. Leaf through *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the weekly journal of the industry, and you'll see how much newsprint is devoted to the comings and goings of development. Consider where the development office is housed on most campuses, often right beside the president's office, and note how many people it employs.

At many schools, there's also a buried pipeline that connects the development office with the admissions office. Most academic administrators prefer that it be buried deep, but from time to time someone digs it up. In *The Wall Street Journal* for February 3, 2003, Daniel Golden reported on how the formal practice of giving preference to students whose parents are wealthy—called "development admits"—has profound implications not just for affirmative action but for the vaunted academic ideal of fair play.

Remember the scene in the third season of *The Sopranos* when Carmella has a lunch meeting with the dean of Columbia University's

undergraduate school? She thinks the lunch is about her daughter Meadow, but the dean wants a little development money. Carmella listens to his charming patter before being hit with the magic number of $50,000. She goes to Tony, who protests that the Ivy League is extorting them and says he won't give more than five g's. But the dean eventually gets his 50 g's; Tony, the consummate shakedown artist, has met his match.

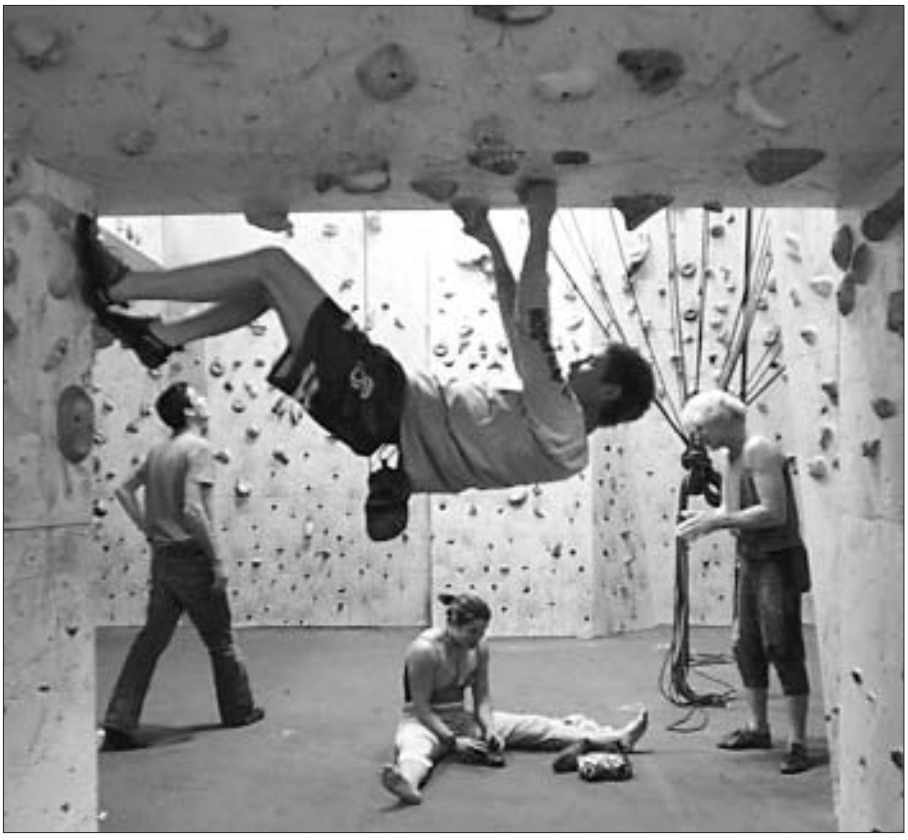
When enrollments began to escalate in the 1960s, what used to be a pyramid system—with rich, selective schools at the top (read Ivy League and a handful of other elites) and then a gradation downward through increasing supply and deceasing rigor to junior and community college systems at the base—became an hourglass lying on its side. There's now a small bubble of excellent small schools on one side (Ivy League schools qualify as small) that are really indistinguishable, and, on the other, a big bubble of huge schools of varying quality. The most interesting branding is occurring on the small-bubble side, as premier schools vie for dominance, but the process is almost exactly the same, although less intense, for the big suppliers.

Good schools have little interest in the bachelor's degree. In fact, the better the school, the less important the terminal undergraduate degree. The job of the student is to get *in*, and the job of the elite school is to get the student *out* into graduate school. The schools certify students as worthy of *further* education, in law, medicine, the arts, or business.

Premier schools have to separate their students from the rest of the pack by generating a story about how special they are. We have the smart ones, they say. That's why they care little about such hot-button issues as grade inflation, teaching quality, student recommendations, or even the curriculum. It's not in their interest to tarnish the brand by drawing distinctions among their students. These schools essentially let the various tests—LSAT, MCAT, GRE—make the distinctions for them. And, if you notice, they never divulge how well their students do on those tests to the outside world. They have this information, but they keep it to themselves. They're not stupid; they have to protect the brand for incoming consumers because that's where they really compete.

PREMIER SCHOOLS HAVE TO SEPARATE THEIR STUDENTS FROM THE REST OF THE PACK BY GENERATING A STORY ABOUT HOW SPECIAL THEY ARE.

In one of the few candid assessments of the branding of Higher Ed, Inc., Robert L. Woodbury, former chancellor of the University of Maine system, noted the folly of the current institutional *U.S. News and World Report* rankings:



At Dartmouth, a student tackles the climbing wall, the type of amenity that is fast becoming standard at many colleges and universities around the country.

When *Consumer Reports* rates and compares cars, it measures them on the basis of categories such as performance, safety, reliability, and value. It tries to measure "outputs"—in short, what the car does. *U.S. News* mostly looks at "inputs" (money spent, class size, test scores of students, degrees held by faculty), rather than assessing what the college or university actually accomplishes for students over the lives of their enrollment. If *Consumer Reports* functioned like *U.S. News*, it would rank cars on the amount of steel and plastic used in their construction, the opinions of competing car dealers, the driving skills of customers, the percentage of managers and sales people with MBAs, and the sticker price on the vehicle (the higher, the better).

The emphasis on "inputs" explains why the elite schools aren't threatened by what others fear: the much-ballyhooed "click" universities, such as the University of Phoenix and Sylvan Learning Systems, Inc., because those schools generate no peer effects. So, too, there's no threat from corporate universities, such as those put together by Microsoft, Motorola, and Ford, or even from the Open University of England and The Learning Annex. The industrial schools have not yet made their presence felt, though they will. The upper tier on the small side of the hourglass is not threatened by "learning at a distance" or "drive-through schools,"

because the elites are not as concerned with learning as they are with maintaining selectivity at the front door and safe passage to still-higher education at the back door.

So what's it like at the upper end among the deluxe brand-name schools, where Harry Winston competes with Tiffany, where Louis Vuitton elbows Prada, where Lexus dukes it out with Mercedes? In a word, it's brutal, an academic arms race.

How did the competition become so intense? Until 1991, the Ivy League schools and the Massachusetts Institute of Tecnology met around a conference table each April to fix financial aid packages for students who had been admitted to more than one school. That year, after the Justice Department sued the schools, accusing them of antitrust violations, the universities agreed to stop the practice. As happened with Major League Baseball after television contracts made the teams rich, bidding pandemonium broke out. Finite number of players + almost infinite cash = market bubble. Here's the staggering result. Over the past three decades, tuition at the most select schools has increased fivefold, nearly double the rate of inflation. Yet precious few students pay the full fare. The war is fought over who gets in and how much they're going to have to be paid to attend.

The fact of the matter is that the cost of tuition has become unimportant in the Ivy League. Like grade inflation, it's uncontrollable—and hardly anyone in Higher Ed, Inc., really cares. As with other luxury providers, the higher the advertised price, the longer the line. The other nifty irony is that, among elite schools, the more the consumer pays for formal education (or at least is charged), the less of it he or she gets. The mandated class time necessary to qualify for a degree is often less at Stanford than at State U. As a general rule, the better the school, the shorter the week. At many good schools, the weekend starts on Thursday.

LIKE GRADE INFLATION, TUITION IS UNCONTROLLABLE—AND HARDLY ANYONE IN HIGHER ED, INC., REALLY CARES.

Ask almost anyone in the education industry what's the most overrated brand and they'll tell you "Harvard." It's one of the most timid and derivative schools in the country, yet it has been able to maintain a reputation as the *über*-brand. Think of any important change in higher education, and you can bet (1) that it didn't originate at Harvard, and (2) that if it's central to popular recognition, Harvard now owns it. Why is Harvard synonymous with the ne plus ultra? Not because of what comes *out* of the place but because of what goes *in*: namely, the best students, the most contributed money, and, especially, the deepest faith in the brand. Everyone knows that Harvard is the most selective university, with a refusal rate of almost 90 percent. But more important, the school is obscenely rich, with an endowment of almost $20 billion. Remember that number.

It's key to the brand. The endowment is greater than the assets of the Dell computer company, the gross domestic product of Libya, the net worth of all but five of the Forbes 400, or the holdings of every nonprofit in the world except the Roman Catholic Church.

In a marketing sense, the value of the endowment is not monetary but psychological: Any place with that many zeros after the dollar sign has got to be good. The huge endowments of the nameplate schools force other schools, the second-tier schools, to spend themselves into penury. So your gift to Harvard does more harm than good to the general weal of Higher Ed, Inc. It does, however, maintain the Harvard brand.

With the possible exception of Harvard, the best schools are about as interchangeable as the second-tier ones. All premier schools have essentially the same teaching staff, the same student amenities, the same library books, the same wondrous athletic facilities, the same carefully trimmed lawns, the same broadband connection lines in the dorms. Look at the websites for the most selective schools, and you'll see almost exactly the same images irrespective of place, supposed mission, etc. True, they may attempt to slide in some attention-getting fact ("If you use our library, you may notice our Gutenberg Bible," or "The nuclear accelerator is buried beneath the butterfly collection"), but by and large the websites are like the soap aisle at Safeway.

If you really want evidence of the indistinguishability of the elites, consider the so-called viewbook, the newest marketing tool sent to prospective applicants. The viewbook is a glossy come-on, bigger than a prospectus and smaller than a catalog, that sets the brand. As with the websites, what you see in almost every *view* is a never-ending loop of smiling faces of diverse backgrounds, classrooms filled with eager beavers, endless falling leaves in a blue-sky autumn, lush pictures of lacrosse, squash, and rugby (because football, basketball, and baseball are part of the mass-supplier brands), and a collection of students whose interests are *just like yours*. From a branding point of view, the viewbook is additionally interesting because it illustrates how repeating a claim is the hallmark of undifferentiated producers. Here's what Nicolaus Mills, an American studies professor at Sarah Lawrence College, found a decade ago, just as the viewbook was starting to become standardized. Every school had the same sort of glossy photographs proving the same claim of diversity:

With the possible exception of Harvard, the best schools are about as interchangeable as the second-tier ones.

> "Diversity is the hallmark of the Harvard/Radcliffe experience," the first sentence in the Harvard University register declares. "Diversity is the virtual core of University life," the University of Michigan bulletin

> announces. "Diversity is rooted deeply in the liberal arts tradition and is key to our educational philosophy," Connecticut College insists. "Duke's 5,800 undergraduates come from regions which are truly diverse," the Duke University bulletin declares. "Stanford values a class that is both ethnically and economically diverse," the Stanford University bulletin notes. Brown University says, "When asked to describe the undergraduate life at The College—and particularly their first strongest impression of Brown as freshmen—students consistently bring up the same topic: the diversity of the student body."

In this kind of marketing, Higher Ed, Inc., is like the crowd in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*. Graham Chapman as Brian, the man mistaken for the Messiah, exhorts a crowd of devotees: "Don't follow me! Don't follow anyone! Think for yourselves! You are all individuals!" To which the crowd replies in perfect unison, "Yes, Master, we are all individuals. We are all individuals. We are all individuals."

The elite schools have to produce an entering class that's not just the best and brightest they can gather, but one that will demonstrate an unbridgeable quality gap between themselves and other schools. They need this entering class because it's precisely what they will sell to the next crop of consumers. It's the annuity that gives them financial security. In other words, what makes Higher Ed, Inc., unlike other American industries is that its consumer value is based almost entirely on *who* is consuming the product. At the point of admissions, the goal is not money. The goal is to publicize who's getting in. That's the product. Who sits next to you in class generates value.

EVERY TWO WEEKS, HARVARD'S ENDOWMENT THROWS OFF ENOUGH CASH TO COVER *ALL* UNDERGRADUATE TUITION.

So it's to the advantage of a good school to exploit the appearance of customer *merit*, not customer *need*. But how to pay for this competitive largesse if tuition is not the income spigot? At four-year private colleges and universities, fully three-quarters of all undergraduates get aid of some sort. In fact, 44 percent of all "dependent" students, a technical term that refers to young, single undergraduates with annual family incomes of $100,000 or less, get aid. What elite schools lose on tuition they recover elsewhere. Take Williams College, for example. The average school spends about $11,000 a student and takes in $3,500 in tuition and fees; Williams, a superbrand, spends about $75,000 per student and charges, after accounting for scholarships and other items, a net of $22,000. Why? Because Williams figures that to maintain its brand value, to protect its franchise, it can superdiscount fees and make up the difference with the cash that's to come in the future. In theory, if an elite school could get the right student body, it would be in its best interest to give the product away: no tuition in exchange for the very best students.

(That's a policy not without risk, as Williams found last year when Moody's lowered its credit rating because the college had dipped too deeply into endowment to fund its extraordinary incoming class.)

How does the brand sensitivity of the elite institutions affect the quality of the educational experience for the rest of us? How dangerous is it that schools follow the corporate model of marketing? The prestige school has other money pots than tuition. Every two weeks, for example, Harvard's endowment throws off enough cash to cover *all* undergraduate tuition. But what happens to schools below the privileged top tier? They, too, have to discount their sticker prices to maintain perceived value. So competition at the top essentially raises costs everywhere, though only some schools have pockets deep enough to afford the increase. The escalation in competitive amenities is especially acute in venues where a wannabe school is next to an elite one.

Things get worse the further you move from the top. To get the students it needs to achieve a higher ranking in annual surveys—and thereby draw better students, who boost external giving, which finances new projects, raises salaries, and increases the endowment needed for getting better students, who'll win the institution a higher national ranking, which . . . etc.—the second-tier school must perpetually treat students as transient consumers.

Really good schools have all those so-called competitive amenities, all those *things* that attract students but have nothing to do with their oft-stated lofty mission and often get little use—Olympic-quality gyms, Broadway-style theaters, personal trainers, glitzy student unions with movie theaters, and endless playing fields, mostly covered with grass, not athletes. This marketing madness is now occurring among the mass-supplier institutions. So the University of Houston has a $53 million wellness center with a five-story climbing wall; Washington State University has the largest Jacuzzi on the West Coast (it holds 53 students); Ohio State University is building a $140 million complex featuring batting cages, ropes courses, and the now-essential climbing wall; and the University of Southern Mississippi is planning a full-fledged water park. These schools, according to Moody's, are selling billions of dollars of bonds for construction that has nothing whatsoever to do with education. It's all about branding.

TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER RANKING IN ANNUAL SURVEYS, THE SECOND-TIER SCHOOL MUST PERPETUALLY TREAT STUDENTS AS TRANSIENT CONSUMERS.

The commercialization of higher education has had many salutary effects: wider access, the dismantling of discriminatory practices, increased breadth and sophistication in many fields of research, and an intense, often refreshing, concern about customer relations. But consider

other consequences for a place such as the University of Florida, which is a typical mass-provider campus. To get the student body we need for a respectable spot in the national rankings, we essentially give the product away. We have no choice. Other states will take our best students if we don't. Ivy League monies come from endowment and have the promise of being replenished if the school retains its reputation. But state universities are heavily dependent on the largesse of state legislatures, and to keep the money coming they need to be able to boast about their ability to attract the state's best and brightest. So about half of them have been sucked into simple-minded plans that are essentially a subvention of education for middle-class kids. Everyone admits that most of these kids would go to college anyway. But would they go to the state system? Who wants to find out the hard way?

BEFORE ALL ELSE, THE MODERN UNIVERSITY IS A BUSINESS SELLING A BRANDED PRODUCT.

Mario Savio was right. Before all else, the modern university is a business selling a branded product. "The Age of Money has reshaped the terrain of higher education," writes David Kirp, of the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley. "Gone, except in the rosy reminiscences of retired university presidents, is any commitment to maintaining a community of scholars, an intellectual city on a hill free to engage critically with the conventional wisdom of the day. The hoary call for a 'marketplace of ideas' has turned into a double-entendre."

Administrators and the professoriate have not just allowed this transformation of the academy, they've willingly, often gleefully, collaborated in it. The results have not been all bad. But the fact is that we've gone from artisanal guild to department store, from gatekeeper to ticket taker, from page turner to video clicker. This commodification, selling out, commercialization, corporatization—whatever you want to call it—is what happens when marketing becomes an end, not a means.

Universities are making money by lending their names to credit card companies, selling their alumni lists, offering their buildings for "naming rights," and extending their campuses to include retirement communities and graveyards. It's past time for the participants in Higher Ed, Inc., to recall what Savio said years ago: The university is being industrialized not by outside forces but by internal ones. Rather like the child who, after murdering his parents, asks for leniency because he's an orphan, universities grown plump feeding at the commercial trough now complain that they've been victimized by the market. This contention of victimization is, of course, a central part of the modern Higher Ed, Inc., brand. The next words you'll hear will be "Please give. We desperately need your support!" ❑

The Craft of Diplomacy

Diplomats have only three principles to guide their work, yet their craft is extraordinarily complex. In this essay adapted from his March 25 speech marking the 30th anniversary of the Wilson Center's Kennan Institute and the centennial of its cofounder, George F. Kennan, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell defends the Bush administration's recent use of those tools.

by Colin L. Powell

The words *diplomat* and *diplomacy* most commonly bring to mind ambassadors, consuls, and other officials engaged in foreign affairs. These words are also used more generally to praise tact and verbal finesse. But a more sardonic view of diplomacy and diplomats also remains popular among Americans. Sharing the traditional Jeffersonian antipathy to pomp and circumstance, many would second the popular 19th-century take on diplomacy as the patriotic art of lying to foreigners on behalf of one's country. Others see diplomacy as mere temporizing, affirming Will Rogers's definition: the art of saying "nice doggie, nice doggie" until you can lay hands on a good-sized stick. As for diplomats themselves, Ambrose Bierce once defined a consul as someone who, having failed to achieve public office from

the people, achieves it from the administration—on condition that he leave the country. But Bierce even disparaged patience as "a minor form of despair disguised as a virtue."

The literary abuse of diplomats and diplomacy is mostly harmless. One could easily multiply examples of such descriptions without doing damage to the national interest in the process, but I am not so inclined. From 35 years in the army and another dozen or so as national security advisor, private citizen, and secretary of state, my view of diplomacy and diplomats includes neither scorn nor skepticism. To the contrary, I deeply respect both diplomacy and diplomats because I know how difficult and important it is to conduct a truly skillful diplomacy.

Three principles lie at the core of that skill. To introduce the first, we may observe that diplomacy is often taken—improperly—to be synonymous with statecraft. Statecraft encompasses both the internal and the external management of the state, and the relations between the two; diplomacy has to do only with external affairs. For example, managing the connections between the domestic economy and international commerce is a task of statecraft, not diplomacy. Negotiating free-trade agreements is a task for diplomacy as well as statecraft.

Put a little differently, statecraft involves the full ensemble of means at the disposal of statesmen. Statesmen can choose force as a means to deal with other states, in which case they rely on soldiers, and they can use the nonforceful methods of diplomats. Wise statesmen see an intrinsic link between these two means, and between power, which is the engine of force, and persuasion, which is the engine of diplomacy. Adroitly used, each means strengthens the other.

The first principle of diplomacy concerns the relationship between persuasion and the power to coerce others, whether by military or economic means. The principle is this: Power is a necessary condition for enduring foreign-policy success but not a sufficient one.

Clearly, power is necessary. Using force in statecraft is sometimes unavoidable because it is just not possible to reason with every adversary that threatens a vital interest. Before and even after September 11, 2001, for example, we gave the Taliban ample opportunity to turn over Al Qaeda members lurking and plotting within Afghanistan's borders. The international community gave Saddam Hussein a dozen years to fulfill Iraq's international obligations, and offered him several "last chances" along the way. We were more than patient.

Patience is a virtue in diplomacy, but not invariably so. As Bierce implies, patience can degrade into passivity, allowing dangers to grow and important principles to be undermined. Beyond a certain point, it is more harmful to one's security and ideals to keep trying to reason with certain adversaries than it is to use force against them. Such circumstances are relatively rare, but we reached that point in recent years with respect to both Afghanistan and Iraq.

In both cases, President George W. Bush patiently exhausted the nonmilitary means at his disposal, gathered allies, and acted. In both cases, he displayed great patience, but also saw that patience is not the only virtue in diplomacy.

When we must use force, it is a blessing to have the best force around. The U.S. military is the finest in the world, a fact for which we are thankful. Our troops and those of our Coalition partners performed brilliantly in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and in Iraq against the Baath regime. We are in their debt as they continue today, in still-dangerous missions, to build peace after the rigors of war. We also owe our gratitude to thousands of diversely talented civilians, diplomats included, who work at these soldiers' side.

That this work in Afghanistan and Iraq goes on illustrates well the principle that power alone can but rarely produce policy success. Military victories do not translate automatically into political achievements. After the main fighting stops, other kinds of hard work, including the political and diplomatic work, have to continue.

There is another way that power is necessary but not sufficient to the enduring success of foreign policy. When statesmen use force, it affects not only the immediate theater of military operations but also, over time, a much broader theater of political operations. Power thus attains a reputation that walks before it into the future, affecting what others think and do. That reputation works as the awareness of power's potential use, and it is the business of diplomacy to transform that awareness into influence. One of my predecessors at the State Department, Dean Acheson, said it well: "Influence is the shadow of power."

America never looks for opportunities to exercise power except in defense of vital national interests. We do not use force just to burnish our reputation. But those who do not understand our democratic ways may mistake our reluctance to use force for irresolution. Because Americans are slow to anger, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Saddam Hussein may have concluded as the 1990s unfolded that we could be pummeled and spurned repeatedly without their having to fear serious reprisal. If so, they and others have now been set straight.

That is important because, as Acheson suggests, it is better, whenever possible, to let the reputation of power rather than the use of power achieve policy goals. It takes skill, diplomatic skill, to deploy the reputation of power, and it often takes time for success to manifest itself. But it is clear that enduring success in foreign policy comes from patiently deploying the *shadow* of power, as well as from the occasional application of power itself. Indeed, too much use of force makes enduring success *less* likely.

The most important reason for this is widely appreciated: A great power that uses force for less than vital interests, and that does so frequently or with a short fuse, risks mobilizing other states to join ranks to balance against it. This is what Edmund Burke meant in 1790 when, in light of the French Revolution, he wrote of a powerful Britain that "our patience will achieve more than our force."

The use of force often gives rise to an aftermath more complex and less predictable than the actual employment of force. If that aftermath is not mastered, all foregoing use of force will be retrospectively devalued; one can win a war and still lose the peace by under-reaching diplomatically. Thus, for example, America provided the margin of Allied victory in World War I, but labored too

>Colin L. Powell *is the U.S. secretary of state.*

little to shape the postwar political and economic environment to prevent a new war only 20 years later.

The work of diplomats and others in a postwar environment is inherently hard work, but it is crucial. We knew such labors would lie before us in Afghanistan and Iraq. Years of war in Afghanistan, and an avaricious tyranny in Iraq, destroyed far more than did the Coalition's use of force in either country. Worse, both societies were wounded in their spirits as well as their bodies, their national cohesion brought low by despots who manipulated internal divisions to advance their own ends. From the start, we resolved to stay the course until we achieved not only physical reconstruction but also decent representative governments in both countries—in other words, until we turned military victories into lasting political accomplishments.

Too frequent or too quick a resort to force can also undermine the *authority* of power. Not all use of force is created equal. Other states will grant authority to the use of force, implicitly if not otherwise, if it falls within the bounds of justice and reason; if they think a use of force does not fall within such bounds, they will withdraw their legitimating consent, and thereby undermine the authority of power.

Obviously, we still lack universal agreement on what is just and reasonable, but there is a growing sense of both. Between March 1991 and November 2002, the United Nations Security Council passed a dozen resolutions concerning Iraq—resolutions authorizing the use of force. That matters in a world where principles count. And that is the kind of world we live in, not least because America, more than most nations, has struggled over many generations to bring such a world into being.

Of this, too, we have been mindful in the current administration. We have used force when we had to, but not beyond. President Bush has stressed that states supporting terrorism are as guilty as terrorists themselves, and they are. But we were never so unimaginative as to think that a single approach to all terrorist groups and their state supporters, least of all a military approach, would work in every case. As the president made clear on May 1, 2003, we use "all the tools of diplomacy, law enforcement, intelligence, and finance. We're working with a broad coalition of nations that understand the threat and our shared responsibility to meet it. The use of force has been—and remains—our last resort."

Diplomacy, then, is persuasion in the shadow of power. It is the orchestration of words against the backdrop of deeds in pursuit of policy objectives. As every sentient diplomat knows, diplomacy uses the reputation of power to achieve what power itself often cannot achieve, or can achieve only at greater and sometimes excessive cost.

But not everyone is a diplomat. Some have recently argued over Libya's decision to turn away from weapons of mass destruction in terms that sound like an old beer commercial: tastes great/less filling, tastes great/less filling—force/diplomacy, force/diplomacy. But of course it's not an either/or proposition. Diplomacy without power is just naked pleading. Power without diplomacy is often unavailing. Libya's recent decision to turn away from weapons of mass destruction was, at the least, accelerated by displays of American power, but policy success also required American and British

skills at persuasion. The *combination* of power and persuasion is what worked in this case, as it is what works in most others.

A second basic principle of diplomacy follows from the first: Policy success comes more easily when more skilled actors work with you to achieve it than work against you to prevent it.

One of diplomacy's key tasks is to arrange coalitions so that one's power and its reputation are multiplied through them. Power cannot do this by itself, because power repels as well as attracts. A wise diplomacy magnifies power's attractive quality and minimizes its repellent quality by using power to benefit others as well as oneself. A wise diplomacy persuades other states that their most important interests and principles will be advanced if they cooperate with you. The epitome of this principle is a formal alliance.

American diplomacy after World War II exemplified the soundness of this principle. We put our power at the disposal of all who cherished freedom and peace. We did things for others they couldn't do for themselves. We defended others, yes, but we also forgave our former enemies and helped reconcile old adversaries, such as France and Germany. We advanced common prosperity by building institutions to promote trade. All this magnified the attractive qualities of American power and legitimated our power in the eyes of others. We were the rainmaker of international politics.

And we still are. The standard rap against this administration's supposed unilateralism and self-absorption is well known, but it simply does not fit the facts of recent U.S. foreign policy. Did we not work hard to build coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq? Dozens of nations stand with us in each of those countries. And do we not put our power at the disposal of others, including the dozens of nations with whom we cooperate in the war against terrorism? Do we not still do for others things they cannot do for themselves—organize regional coalitions, for example, to bring relief to shattered countries such as Liberia and Haiti? We still embrace old enemies who have attained new perspectives, as in Afghanistan and Iraq, and we still work to reconcile old adversaries, as our efforts in the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and elsewhere show. We are certainly no less committed to free trade than we ever were. And we are no less dedicated to our allies either, despite the shifting of the circumstances that gave rise to our oldest and most cherished alliances.

Now, allies are not always easy to get along with, in war or in peace. But when there is trouble among friends, as we have had over the past year or so, it does not follow that the fault always lies on one side. Some speak as though the United States is to blame for the inability of the Security Council to agree to act on the eve of war in Iraq. But the president went to the United Nations on September 12, 2002, and we initiated and secured Resolution 1441 in November 2002 by a 15-0 vote. In our view, that resolution (and several precursors) furnished sufficient justification for the use of force in light of Iraq's clear failure to respond to its demands.

But we went the extra mile, proposing yet another resolution. It did not pass because *others*, particularly one old and dear ally of the United States sitting permanently on the Security Council, prevented it from doing so. How then are *we* "unilateralist"? How then did *we* harm the credibility of the Security Council?

Disagreements among friends are unpleasant, but they should not surprise or overly excite us. Nearly every year since 1949, someone has predicted the end of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, whether over Berlin, Suez, Vietnam, the 1973 Middle East war, the Euromissile debates of the 1980s, or some other pretext. But NATO hasn't ended; it has grown larger, teaching us two valuable lessons. First, don't fall for the transatlantic hysteria du jour. Second, and more important, alliances based on principles rather than momentary needs have the ability to adjust when circumstances change.

NATO is such an alliance. In the late 1940s, we worried that Western Europe might be overrun by the Red Army, or subverted by local Soviet-supported Communists. We no longer worry about the dangers that confronted us in the late 1940s, or even the late 1980s. If NATO were only a military coalition, it should have expired victorious, from old age, at least a decade ago.

But American statesmen were just as concerned in the late 1940s that we not be dragged into a third world war over new European squabbles. That is why we were determined that postwar Europe sprout stable and prosperous liberal democracies, because liberal democracies do not produce disasters on the scale of world wars. That's what the Marshall Plan and then NATO, along with consistent U.S. support for greater European cooperation and integration, were all about.

So NATO has never been just a military alliance. It's been a compact of political principles, too, which is why it can now transform itself from an alliance devoted mainly to the defense of common territory into an alliance devoted to the defense of common interests and ideals. That is also why it can apply its irreplaceable experience in common defense to dealing with new kinds of threats.

Transformations can be tricky, however. Our common security challenges are no longer as fixed and vivid as they were in the face of Soviet power. The new threats we face are less sharply defined, more unpredictable in their targets and methods, so that we and our allies no longer share common perceptions of threat to the same extent as in Cold War times. That has been true in recent years even of mass-casualty terrorism, though it should now be clear to all that this threat is not aimed only at America.

But though NATO members today may not formulate identical definitions of threats and interests, we more than make up for the differences through a mature recognition that we share the same vision of a good society and a better world. Transatlantic ties are as flexible as they are unbreakable. So are those of America's alliances in Asia and elsewhere, particularly as those alliances become ever-stronger partnerships among democratic nations. We should not let the natural stress of dealing with change mislead us. Our partnerships are growing stronger as they adapt to new realities.

That said, I will not trivialize the disagreements that arose during the debate over whether to go to war with Iraq last year. What happened was not classical military balancing against the United States; such behavior would be senseless, for Europeans know that the United States is not a strategic threat to Europe. We witnessed instead a form of symbolic balancing in the withdrawal of consent by some of our allies to the uses of American power.

It is true that we did not need those allies in a strictly military sense. But the withdrawal of their consent from the uses of our power undermined the author-

ity of American power in the world, and if that withdrawal were to persist and spread, it would be a troubling development. But that is unlikely to happen. On neither side of the Atlantic is there a taste for such trouble, so we now see NATO closing ranks and working well on a range of issues, notably in Afghanistan. Everyone knows that Europe and America need each other, that we are wrapped up in each other like family, and have been for centuries. We argue in proportion to how much we care about each other, and we care a lot—enough to keep our differences in perspective.

A third core principle of diplomacy is this: Success in diplomacy is often most advantageous when it is incomplete. Much of the time, less is more.

This principle may sound a bit strange at first blush, but it merely points out that it is possible to overdo things, that there are ways of winning that can turn victory into defeat. Examples of over-reach as well as under-reach fill history books. Fortunately, there are also examples in those books of getting it right.

Another way to put this principle is that an adversary needs an honorable path of retreat if we are to achieve our main policy goals through the *reputation* of our power rather than through the actual use of force. A cornered adversary may lash out, and our eventual success at arms, if it comes at all, may be Pyrrhic.

The diplomacy of the Cuban Missile Crisis famously illustrates this principle. By offering to withdraw U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey (weapons that we had already planned to remove for entirely different reasons), President John F. Kennedy gave Chairman Nikita Khrushchev an honorable way out—and Khrushchev took it. We thus removed a mortal threat to the United States and transformed the dynamics of Cold War risktaking in a positive way. Nevertheless, our success was incomplete. We did not get the Soviets altogether out of Cuba. Nor did we get Fidel Castro out of power. But given the risks and probable costs of seeking more, our success was the most advantageous one achievable.

This third principle of diplomacy remains very much in play. We now have a problem with North Korea. The leadership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been trying to generate a crisis atmosphere on the Korean peninsula, using behavior that conforms to a pattern of extortion the government has exhibited over many years. It would not be diplomatic for me to lay bare all our tactics in dealing with North Korea, which remains very much a live issue. But it would be telling no secrets to say that we have employed the first two core principles of diplomacy. The president has been very patient. All options remain on the table, but we have focused our efforts on persuasion. The president has also gathered allies. The main interests and principles of four of our five interlocutors in the Six-Party Talks run parallel to our own: the complete denuclearization of North Korea. By working to pull Japan, Russia, China, and South Korea into our Korea diplomacy, we advance those states' interests and principles with our own, legitimate our power, and give our power added authority. We also enhance the prospect that a solution will endure, and we improve our relations with important countries in ways that transcend the stakes in Korea.

If we are to succeed in Korea, however, principle number three is key. There

has to be an exit through which the DPRK leadership can move if it makes the right choices. That exit is marked, "Embark here for the 21st century, and an honorable place in the world community." If North Korea's leaders *do* embark for the 21st century, and if our diplomacy achieves the dismantling of the DPRK's nuclear programs, we will have gained an important success. It would still be an incomplete success—but deliberately so. As with Cuba in 1962, we will have achieved the most advantageous success available under the circumstances.

This approach to Korean issues does not mean that we will ever reward the North Korean regime for oppressing its people and threatening its neighbors, any more than we have rewarded the Cuban regime since 1962. Those regimes will change, either because they themselves will seek transformation or because their peoples will change them. Just as the Soviet Union was running against the flow of history, so, too, are these two relics of 20th-century totalitarianism.

Clearly, not every instance of political progress in the world, whether in northeast Asia or anywhere else, can or should be accomplished by force of arms, certainly not American force of arms. Of course, we stand for universal ideals—for liberty, for freedom, for government of, by, and for the people under the rule of law—but we cannot just wave our hands and turn these ideals into reality everywhere at once. Just as clearly, then, our policy priorities must be based on our national interests. We must deal with the world as it is if we are to have any hope of making the world more as we would like it to be.

Equally obvious is that our policy is anchored in a sound method that connects our interests to our ideals. If we want American power to endure, and the reputation of that power to achieve the ends we seek, we must be patient and wise, as well as strong and bold, in the face of danger. That is ultimately how our ideals and our interests are best served: when power and persuasion combine in advancing our objectives, when we seek partners through whom our power can be legitimated and used for the greater good, and when we distinguish between what is both desirable and attainable and what is only one or the other.

I have seen enough of U.S. foreign policy—its formulation and its impact—to know that it is much easier to speak of ideals, interests, and methods than it is to render the judgments that connect them in just the right ways. Foreign policy is difficult under the best of circumstances. It is harder still when decision makers sense high stakes and more than the usual degree of uncertainty in the world, as has been the case for the past two and a half years.

So distinctions notwithstanding, it is helpful to think of diplomacy as a species of statecraft, for diplomacy is a craft more than it is either a science or an art. In science, both material and method are beyond the free choice of the scientist. In art, neither material nor method is beyond the free choice of the artist. A craft lies in between: The material is given in the world as we find it, but the methods by which the statesman can shape that material offer wide if not unbounded choice.

That in-between state puts a special premium on the good judgment of the craftsman to shape a reality he can neither choose nor ignore. His aim is efficacy. Have this administration's judgments been basically sound? Does American statecraft work? I believe the answer to both questions is yes, and I am confident that future generations will believe so too. ❑

Empires
Ancient and Modern

What two eloquent Frenchmen, Voltaire and Montesquieu, had to say in the 18th century about the forces that sustain or shatter great powers remains surprisingly relevant.

by Paul A. Rahe

Three centuries ago, an event took place that is today little remembered and even more rarely remarked upon, though it signaled the beginning of a political and ideological transformation that was arguably no less significant than the one marked in our own time by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. In the late spring and summer of 1704, two armies made their way from western to central Europe. The first, led by the Comte de Tallard, marshal of France, sought to upset the balance of power in Europe by establishing Louis XIV's hegemony over the Holy Roman Empire, installing a French nominee on the imperial throne, and securing the acquiescence of the Austrians, the English, the Dutch, and every other European power in a Bourbon succession to the Spanish throne. The second army, led by John Churchill, then Earl, later Duke, of Marlborough, with the assistance of Prince Eugene of Savoy, sought to preserve the existing balance of power, defend Hapsburg control of the Holy Roman Empire, and deprive Louis of his Spanish prize.

At stake, as Louis' opponents asserted and his most fervent admirers presumed, was the establishment of a universal monarchy in Europe and French dominion in the New World. At stake as well for Englishmen, Scots, Irish Protestants, and Britain's colonists in the Americas, were the supremacy of Parliament, the liberties secured by the Glorious Revolution in 1688 and 1689, the Protestant succession to the English crown, and Protestant hegemony in the British Isles and much of the New World.

The reign of Louis XIV (1643–1715) defined European splendor and scientific and cultural achievement, but the Sun King's ambition to make the Continent a French empire was never fulfilled.

There was every reason to suppose that Louis XIV would achieve the goal he seems to have sought his entire adult life. After all, on the field of the sword, France was preeminent. The French had occasionally been checked, but on no occasion in the preceding 150 years had a French army suffered a genuinely decisive defeat. Imagine the shock, then, when all of Europe learned that on August 13, 1704, the army commanded by Marlborough and Prince Eugene had captured Tallard and annihilated the French force at the Bavarian village of Blenheim.

Of course, had the Battle of Blenheim been a fluke, as everyone at first assumed, Louis' defeat on this particular occasion would not have much mattered. In the event, however, this great struggle was but the first of a series of French defeats meted out by Marlborough's armies. If we are today astonishingly ill informed about the once-famous battles fought at Ramillies, Oudenarde, Lille, and Malplaquet in the brief span from 1706 to 1709, it is because we have become accustomed to averting our gaze from the fundamental realities of political life. In the United States, despite the leading role in the world our country long ago assumed, not one history department in 20 even offers a course on the conduct and consequences of war.

Yet Winston Churchill was surely right, in his biography of Marlborough, in observing that "battles are the principal milestones in secular history," in rejecting "modern opinion," which "resents this uninspiring truth," and in criticizing historians who so "often treat the decisions in the field as incidents

More than 100,000 troops took part in a momentous battle on August 13, 1704, near the Bavarian village of Blenheim. The victorious English and Austrian armies kept Vienna from falling into French hands and checked Louis XIV's territorial ambitions on the Continent.

in the dramas of politics and diplomacy." "Great battles," he insisted, whether "won or lost, change the entire course of events, create new standards of values, new moods, new atmospheres, in armies and in nations, to which all must conform."

It would be an exaggeration to say that, in comparison with the Battle of Blenheim, the French Enlightenment and the French Revolution were little more than aftershocks. But there can be no doubt that Marlborough's stirring victories over Louis XIV's France exposed the weakness of the ancien régime, occasioned the first efforts on the part of the philosophes to rethink in radical terms the political trajectory of France, and called into question the assumptions that had for centuries underpinned foreign policy as practiced by all the great powers on the continent of Europe.

Events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union have a way of altering the terms of public debate. Before 1989, Marxist analysis thrived in and outside the academy. After 1991, it seemed, even to many of those who had once been its ardent practitioners, hopelessly anachronistic, at best a relic of an earlier, benighted age. Something similar happened in France after 1713, when the Treaty of Utrecht brought an end to the War of the Spanish Succession. By diplomatic skill and a canny exploitation of the partisan strife that erupted between Whigs and Tories in Marlborough's England, Louis XIV had managed to preserve his kingdom intact, and even to secure the Spanish throne for his grandson. But the Sun King's great project of European domination proved unattainable. By 1715, it was perfectly clear to anyone with a discerning eye that the French monarchy was bankrupt in more ways than one.

At this point, young Frenchmen began to look elsewhere for workable models. Before the first decade of the 18th century, the French had demonstrated little serious interest in England. The Sun King is said to have once asked an English ambassador whether, in his country, there had ever been any writers of note. Of Shakespeare and Milton, Louis had apparently never heard, and he was by no means peculiar in this regard. To 17th-century Frenchmen, England was nothing more than an object of idle curiosity, if even that. Hardly anyone on the continent of Europe considered England, the English, their language, their literature, their philosophy, their institutions, their mode of conduct, their accomplishments in science, and their way of seeing the world to be proper objects for rumination.

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After Marlborough's great victories, however, attitudes changed, and young Frenchmen of penetrating intelligence thought it necessary to read about, and perhaps even visit, the country that had put together, funded, and led the coalition that had inflicted so signal a defeat on the most magnificent of their kings. The first figure of real note to subject England and the English to extended study was an ambitious young poet of bourgeois origin named François Marie Arouet, whom we know best by his pen name, Voltaire.

Voltaire spent two and a half years in England, arriving in May 1726 and departing abruptly, under suspicious, perhaps legally awkward, circumstances, in October or November 1728. His sojourn was occasioned by a scrape he had gotten into in Paris, where he insulted a member of the nobility who exacted revenge by luring the poet from a dinner party and having his minions administer a severe cudgeling to the bourgeois upstart. When word got around that Voltaire intended to challenge the noble master of his less-exalted assailants to a duel, a *lettre de cachet* (arrest warrant) was elicited from the authorities and the poet was thrown into the Bastille. He was released on condition that he leave the country, which he did forthwith.

Voltaire had been thinking of visiting England in any case. While there, he dined out, circulating among poets such as Alexander Pope, John Gay, and Jonathan Swift and hobnobbing with both Tories and Whigs. In time, he was

presented to King George I, and before he returned to France he dined with George II, then quite recently crowned.

Voltaire did not limit himself to the world of poets, politicians, and princes. He attended the funeral of Sir Isaac Newton and sought out not long thereafter the great man's niece. He made a point of calling on and becoming acquainted with the dowager Duchess of Marlborough, widow to the warrior and statesman who, 20 years before, had very nearly brought Louis XIV's France to its knees. Much of the rest of his time Voltaire devoted to mastering the English language. By the time he left Britain, he had published two essays in English, he had begun writing a play in the language, and he had penned in vibrant and compelling English prose more than half the chapters that would make up his celebrated *Letters concerning the English Nation*.

To 17th-century Frenchmen, England was nothing more than an object of idle curiosity.

This last work deserves attention. In London, it appeared in August 1733 to great acclaim, and it was reprinted in English again and again in the course of the 18th century. In April 1734, when a French version was published clandestinely in Rouen under an Amsterdam imprint with the title *Lettres philosophiques* (*Philosophical Letters*), it caused a great stir. To his English audience, Voltaire had offered an elegant satire appreciative of their virtues but by no means devoid of humor and bite. To his compatriots, he presented, by way of invidious comparison, a savage critique of the polity under which they lived. As the Marquis de Condorcet would later observe, the *Philosophical Letters* marked in France "the epoch of a revolution." It caused a "taste for English philosophy and literature to be born here." It induced "us to interest ourselves in the mores, the policy, the commercial outlook of this people."

This was all precisely as Voltaire intended. He devoted the first seven of the book's 25 letters to religion, intimating throughout that the great virtue of the English was that their devotion to Mammon rendered them decidedly lukewarm as men of faith. "Go into the Royal-Exchange in London," says Voltaire. It is a "place more venerable than many courts of justice." There, he asserts,

> you will see the representatives of all the nations assembled for the benefit of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian transact together as tho' they all profess'd the same religion, and give the name of Infidel to none but bankrupts. There the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptist, and the Anglican depends on the Quaker's word. At the breaking up of this pacific and free assembly, some withdraw to the synagogue, and others to take a glass. This man goes and is baptiz'd in a great tub, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That man has his son's foreskin cut off, whilst a set of *Hebrew* words (quite unintelligible to him) are mumbled over his child. Others retire to their churches, and then wait for the inspiration of heaven with their hats on, and all are satisfied.

Voltaire's compatriots can hardly have missed the significance for Catholic France of the lesson he drew in the end: "If one religion only were allowed in England, there would be reason to fear despotism; if there were but two, the people wou'd cut one another's throats; but as there are 30, they all live happy and in peace."

In much the same spirit, Voltaire then examined England's government, tacitly juxtaposing it with the absolute monarchy ruling his native France. Though the English liked to compare themselves to the Romans, he expressed doubts as to whether this was apt. He judged 18th-century Englishmen far superior to the pagans of ancient Rome:

> The fruit of the civil wars at Rome was slavery, and that of the troubles of England, liberty. The English are the only people upon earth who have been able to prescribe limits to the power of Kings by resisting them; and who, by a series of struggles, have at last establish'd that wise Government, where the Prince is all powerful to do good, and at the same time his hands are tied against doing wrong; where the Nobles are great without insolence and Vassals; and where the People share in the government without confusion.

Voltaire was even willing to celebrate the bourgeois character of English society. "As Trade enrich'd the Citizens in England," he contended, "so it contributed to their Freedom, and this Freedom on the other Side extended their Commerce, whence arose the Grandeur of the State." Commerce enabled a small island with little in the way of resources to marshal great fleets and finance great wars. The role the island's commercial classes played in funding the victories of Marlborough and Prince Eugene "raises a just Pride in an English Merchant, and makes him presume (not without some Reason) to compare himself to a Roman Citizen." To those among his compatriots inclined to treasure aristocratic birth, Voltaire throws down an unanswerable challenge: "I cannot say which is most useful to a Nation: a Lord, wellpowder'd, who knows exactly at what a Clock the King rises and goes to bed; and who gives himself Airs of Grandeur and State, at the same time that he is acting the Slave in the Antechamber of a Minister; or a Merchant, who enriches his Country, dispatches Orders from his Compting-House to Surat and Grand Cairo, and contributes to the Felicity of the World."

Needless to say, not everyone in France was as pleased with such bons mots as the author of the *Philosophical Letters*. Upon first reading the book, Abbé Jean-Bernard Le Blanc, who was otherwise on excellent terms with Voltaire, protested in a letter to a common acquaintance that he was "shocked by a tone of contempt which holds sway throughout. This contempt pertains equally to our nation, to our government, to our ministers, to everything that is highly respectable—in a word to religion." In his little book, Le Blanc added, Voltaire displayed "an indecency truly horrible."

François Marie Arouet, better known as Voltaire

The authorities were similarly disposed. Paris had recently been in an uproar, in part as a consequence of the ongoing struggle within French Catholicism between the Jesuits and the predestination-advocating Jansenists, and it was not yet certain that the crisis had passed. Neither party was amused by the antics of a libertine who evidenced a desire to dance in the ashes of both, and the civil magistrate was, for understandable reasons, hypersensitive to any criticism of the established order. Within a month of the book's appearance, a *lettre de cachet* was issued ordering the author's arrest. Voltaire's house and that of a friend in Rouen were searched; the printer was arrested; and the remaining copies of the book were confiscated. Soon thereafter, the *parlement* of Paris, the most prestigious judicial body in France, denounced the *Philosophical Letters* as "scandalous, contrary to religion, good morals, and the respect due to authority," and it instructed the public hangman to lacerate and burn the book with all due ceremony in the courtyard of the Palais de justice—which he did on June 10, 1734.

Voltaire had anticipated the storm. By the time it broke, he was far from Paris, in Champagne, near the border of Lorraine, safely and comfortably ensconced at the chateau of his mistress, the Marquise du Châtelet. There, in a species of exile, he was to spend the better part of the next 15 years.

As Voltaire's drama unfolded, another French visitor to England looked on with deep concern. He, too, upon his return from London, had written an ambitious book modest in its dimensions. He had arranged for its publication in Holland, and, now that Voltaire's *Philosophical Letters* had been turned over to the public hangman, he wondered whether it was wise to usher into print some of the more controversial opinions he had very much wanted to convey.

Voltaire was a bomb thrower. Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, was nothing of the kind. Montesquieu was trained in the law, a profession inclined to justify decisions by appealing to precedent, and he was respectful of the dictates of long experience. When called upon for advice in crises, such as the one that threatened French finances at the death of Louis XIV, he was prudent and tended

to opt for modest reform. In no way was he attracted to extremes. But he was no more a traditionalist inclined to subject reason to the dead hand of the past than was his rival Voltaire.

Montesquieu had been born in 1689, Voltaire in 1694. Both had witnessed the War of the Spanish Succession. Both had recognized the significance of Marlborough's victories. And both thought it essential to come to an understanding of the political regime that had so humiliated the nation of their birth. "Germany was made to travel in, Italy to sojourn in, . . . and France to live in," but England was made "to think in." The sentiment is attributed to Montesquieu, but the words could just as easily have been uttered by Voltaire.

Montesquieu was an aristocrat by birth. As a writer, he had no special need for the passing applause of his contemporaries. He could afford to be patient, and he generally preferred to be indirect, which is why, in the spring of 1734, as he contemplated the fate meted out to the *Philosophical Letters* and visited upon its author, his hapless friend in Rouen, and the book's printer, he chose to censor a volume he had submitted the previous summer to his publisher in Amsterdam, even though the type had already been set.

On his return to France, in 1731, after a stay of a little more than a year in England, Montesquieu had retreated to his chateau in Bordeaux and had devoted two years to writing. In this period of self-imposed solitary confinement, he composed his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline*. There is no work of comparable length on Roman history, written before its author's time or since, that is as penetrating.

VOLTAIRE'S *PHILOSOPHICAL LETTERS*, SAID ONE OBSERVER, DISPLAYED "AN INDECENCY TRULY HORRIBLE."

It is not obvious, however, why Montesquieu thought it worth his while to write this particular book at this time. It barely mentions England, and it has neither a preface nor an introduction to inform us concerning his intentions. Moreover, while it foreshadows in some respects the themes of his most famous work, *The Spirit of Laws*, it evidences little to suggest a pertinence to public policy of the sort that was so central to the concerns that inspired the latter work. It would be tempting to conclude that in the early 1730s Montesquieu was an antiquarian and a philosophical historian, intent on establishing his reputation within the republic of letters by writing a scholarly work on a noble theme.

More can be said, however, for in the quarter of a millennium that has passed since Montesquieu's death in 1755, scholars have gradually become aware that the *Considerations* was but one of three essays that Montesquieu wrote at this time for inclusion within the pages of a single volume. The third of these, which dealt with England, Montesquieu began drafting and then, upon reflection, set aside. In 1748, he inserted in *The Spirit of Laws* a revised version of what he had drafted, giving it

the title "The Constitution of England," thereby earning for himself great fame, especially within the English-speaking world.

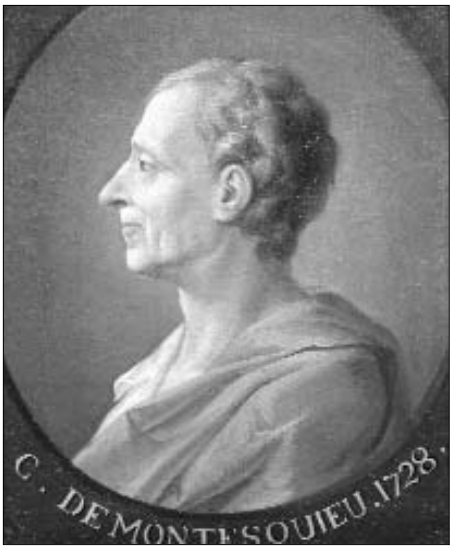
The second essay, titled *Reflections on Universal Monarchy in Europe*, Montesquieu drafted, polished, and dispatched to his Amsterdam printer in 1733 along with his treatise on the Romans. It was not until after he had received a printed copy of the two that he chose to suppress his little work on universal monarchy, for fear that it would cause him the sort of difficulties that had befallen Voltaire. Fragments of it he subsequently inserted in various places within *The Spirit of Laws*, where they passed virtually unnoticed. The original essay eventually found its way into print in 1891.

> Had the Sun King won at Blenheim, Montesquieu wrote, "nothing would have been more fatal to Europe."

These philological details have been known for some time, but to date no one has bothered to join together once again what Montesquieu put asunder. Yet it is obvious that the *Considerations*, the *Reflections*, and the "Constitution of England" form a single work and cannot properly be understood in mutual isolation. When one reassembles the original book, one realizes immediately that this work was intended as a meditation on the larger significance of Marlborough's victory on the battlefield at Blenheim. From perusing Montesquieu's ruminations one gains an unparalleled perspective on the world order emerging in his day and still regnant in our own.

"It is a question worth raising," Montesquieu writes in the first sentence of his *Reflections*, "whether, given the condition in which Europe actually subsists, it is possible for a people to maintain over other peoples an unceasing superiority, as the Romans did." For this question, Montesquieu has a ready and unprecedented answer: "a thing like this has become morally impossible."

He gives three reasons. First, "innovations in the art of war," such as the introduction of artillery and firearms, "have equalized the strength of all men and consequently that of all nations." Second, "the *ius gentium* [law of nations] has changed, and under today's laws war is conducted in such a manner that by bankruptcy it ruins above all others those who possess the greatest advantages." "In earlier times," Montesquieu explains, "one would destroy the towns that one had captured, one would sell the lands and, far more important, the inhabitants as well. . . . The sacking of a town would pay the wages of an army, and a successful campaign would enrich a conqueror. At present, we regard such barbarities with a horror no more than just, and we ruin ourselves by bankruptcy in capturing places which capitulate, which we preserve intact, and which most of the time we return."



Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu

Third, Montesquieu argues, because of the changes dictated by technological and moral progress, in modern Europe money has become the sinews of war and the only secure foundation of national strength. Power, once more-or-less fixed, is now subject to "continual variation" in line with the trajectory of the economy of the realm. "To the extent that a state takes a greater or lesser part in commerce and the carrying trade," Montesquieu contends, "its power necessarily grows or diminishes." Under these new conditions, the vast expenditures demanded by war and the disruption it occasions for trade produce economic ruin at home, "while states which remain neutral augment their strength," and even the conquered recover from defeat.

It is not difficult to see why Montesquieu judged it imprudent to publish the *Reflections*. In the 17th chapter, with his tongue firmly in cheek, he piously denies the charge that Louis XIV had aimed at universal monarchy—and then he discusses events in a manner suggesting that this had been Louis' aim after all. "Had he succeeded," Montesquieu writes, "nothing would have been more fatal to Europe, to his subjects of old, to himself, to his family. Heaven, which knows what is really advantageous, served him better in his defeats than it would have in victories, and instead of making him the sole king of Europe, it favored him more by making him the most powerful of them all." Had Louis won the Battle of Blenheim, "the famous battle in which he met his first defeat," his "enterprise would have been quite far from achievement": The establishment of a universal monarchy would have required a further "increase in forces and a great expansion in frontiers."

BY THE 18TH CENTURY, VICTORY IN WAR OFTEN LED ONLY TO BANKRUPTCY.

What the Sun King had failed to recognize was that "Europe is nothing more than one nation composed of many," and that the rise of commerce had made his rivals for dominion his partners in trade. "France and England have need of the opulence of Poland and Muscovy," Montesquieu argues, "just as one of their provinces has need of the others, and the state that believes it will increase its power as a consequence of financial ruin visited on a neighboring state ordinarily weakens itself along with its neighbor."

Even in peacetime, Montesquieu insists, the policy pursued by the various powers in Europe is self-destructive. "If conquest on a grand scale is so

difficult, so fruitless, so dangerous," he adds, "what can one say of the malady of our own age which dictates that one maintain everywhere a number of troops disproportionate" to one's actual needs? We are not like the Romans, he notes, "who managed to disarm others in the measure to which they armed themselves." In consequence of the arms race taking place in Europe, Montesquieu concludes, "we are poor with all the wealth and commerce of the entire universe, and soon, on account of having soldiers, we shall have nothing but soldiers, and we will become like the Tartars."

When examined in light of its original companion piece, *Reflections on Universal Monarchy in Europe*, Montesquieu's *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness of the Romans and Their Decline* reads like an extended introduction. It was, after all, the image of Roman grandeur that fired the ambition of Europe's greatest monarchs. Had it not been for Caesar's ruthless exploitation of the revolutionary potential inherent in his office as an imperator within the *imperium Romanum*, there never would have been a monarch who styled himself an emperor, a Kaiser, or a czar. In the European imagination, the idea of universal monarchy was inseparable from a longing for imperial greatness on the model of ancient Rome. To find and apply an antidote to "the malady" besetting his own age, Montesquieu had to come to grips with the attraction exerted on his contemporaries by the example of Rome.

In Montesquieu's judgment, there were two reasons for the Romans' success. To begin with, they looked on "war" as "the only art" and devoted "mind entire and all their thoughts to its perfection." In the process, they imposed on themselves burdens and a species of discipline hardly imaginable in modern times. "Never," writes Montesquieu, "has a nation made preparations for war with so much prudence and conducted it with so much audacity."

THE IMAGE OF ROMAN GRANDEUR FIRED THE AMBITION OF EUROPE'S GREATEST MONARCHS.

Of equal importance, in Montesquieu's opinion, was the fact that Roman policy was no less impressive. The Romans employed their allies to defeat the foe, then laid their allies low as well. In the midst of war, they put up with injuries of every sort, waiting for a time suited to retribution. When a people crossed them, they punished the nation, not just its leaders, and on their enemies they inflicted "evils inconceivable." As a consequence, "war was rarely launched against" the Romans, and "they always waged war" at a time and in a manner of their own choosing on those whom they regarded as most "convenient." The statecraft practiced by the Roman senate matched in cunning and ruthlessness the skill of the generals and soldiers it sent into the field.

Montesquieu's Rome may have been successful, but it was not a benefactor conferring peace and prosperity: It was a predator. It "enchained the universe," and in the process established a "universal sovereignty." But from this sovereignty came no good. Rome's far-flung subjects suffered more from its rule, Montesquieu tells us, than they had from the horrors of their original conquest. And Rome's citizens suffered as well. That they lost their liberty was by no means an accident—it was a natural consequence of their project of conquest: "The greatness of the empire destroyed the republic." Rome's grandeur produced Roman decadence. In subjecting and enchaining "the universe," in achieving "universal sovereignty," the Romans subjected and enchained themselves.

MONTESQUIEU'S ROME WAS NOT A BENEFACTOR CONFERRING PEACE AND PROSPERITY: IT WAS A PREDATOR.

"As long as Rome's dominion was restricted to Italy," Montesquieu explains, "the republic could easily be sustained." But once Rome's legions crossed the Alps and passed over the sea, and the republic was obliged to post its warriors abroad for extended periods, the ranks of the army grew through the enrollment of noncitizens, soldiers were no longer soldiers of the republic but loyal instead to the generals who paid them, and "Rome could no longer tell whether the man who headed a provincial army was the city's general or its enemy." At this point, on the horizon despotism loomed.

Montesquieu asks us to contemplate and even admire Roman grandeur: "How many wars do we see undertaken in the course of Roman history," he asks, "how much blood being shed, how many peoples destroyed, how many great actions, how many triumphs, how much policy, how much sagacity, prudence, constancy, and courage!" But, then, after giving classical Rome its due, he asks us to pause and re-examine the trajectory of the imperial republic:

> But how did this project for invading all end—a project so well formed, so well sustained, so well completed—except by appeasing the appetite for contentment of five or six monsters. . . . [The] senate had caused the disappearance of so many kings only to fall itself into the most abject enslavement to some of its most unworthy citizens, and to exterminate itself by its own judgments! One builds up one's power only to see it the better overthrown! Men work to augment their power only to see it, fallen into more fortunate hands, deployed against themselves!

Gradually, unobtrusively, as Montesquieu weans us from the enticement of Rome, our admiration gives way to horror and disgust. And gradually and unobtrusively, he thereby lays the groundwork for the argument against continental empire that he intended to advance in *Reflections on Universal Monarchy in Europe*.

We should not want to imitate the Romans, and in the *Considerations* Montesquieu shows us why. And if for some perverse reason we *wanted* to imitate the Romans, he then demonstrates in the *Reflections* that we could not succeed. After reading the first two parts of Montesquieu's original book, we are left to wonder what alternative to the policy hitherto followed by the states of Europe there might, in fact, be. At this juncture, Montesquieu originally intended to direct our attention to the polity that, as a consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and 1689, had emerged on the other side of the English Channel.

In his *Considerations*, Montesquieu set the stage for his third essay by drawing the attention of readers to what was apparently the only modern analogue to classical Rome:

> The government of England is one of the wisest in Europe, because there is a body there that examines this government continually and that continually examines itself; and such are this body's errors that they not only do not last long but are useful in arousing in the nation a spirit of vigilance.

> In a word, a free government, which is to say, a government always agitated, knows no way to sustain itself if it is not capable of self-correction by its own laws.

In the part of this third essay that he managed to draft, Montesquieu then set out to show what it was that occasioned this process of self-correction by discussing in detail the English constitution's institutionalization of a separation of powers, and by exploring the consequences of the rivalries and tensions that this separation introduces within what he elsewhere called "a republic concealed under the form of a monarchy."

When, however, he first began sketching out what came to be called "The Constitution of England," it cannot have been the French philosophe's intention to stop where, apparently, he did. Empire was, after all, the focus of the *Considerations* and the *Reflections*. To finish a work of which these two essays were to form so signal a part, Montesquieu would have had to discuss at some point the imperial policy adopted by the English. He would have had to demonstrate that, by the very nature of its polity, England was committed to a foreign policy that was viable in modern circumstances in a way that the Roman policy followed by the continental powers was not. As it happens, this is one of the issues he addressed in a chapter of *The Spirit of Laws*.

In speaking of the spirit that guides the English polity's conduct abroad, Montesquieu demonstrates that England is free from the malady that so threatens the powers on the Continent with bankruptcy and ruin. He helps us to understand why it is that, in modern times, a well-ordered Carthage, such as England, could defeat Louis XIV's ill-ordered French Rome.

Britain's vigorous economy assembled "the representatives of all the nations . . . for the benefit of mankind," Voltaire marveled. The theme was celebrated in this 1743 British painting,* Allegory of Trade, *which shows Mercury, the god of merchants and travelers, presiding over peacable traders from far-flung lands.

The chief passion of the English is their fondness for liberty, which, Montesquieu says, they "love prodigiously because this liberty is genuine." In defending their freedom, he intimates, they are inclined to be no less resolute than were the citizens of classical Rome. For liberty, this nation is prepared to "sacrifice its goods, its ease, its interests." In a crisis, it will "impose on itself imposts quite harsh, such as the most absolute prince would not dare make his subjects endure." Moreover, possessing as they do "a firm understanding of the necessity of submitting" to these taxes, the English are prepared to "pay them in the well-founded expectation of not having to pay more." The burden they actually shoulder is far heavier than the burden they feel.

ENGLAND, MONTESQUIEU WROTE, HAS ALWAYS MADE ITS POLITICAL INTERESTS GIVE WAY TO THE INTERESTS OF ITS COMMERCE.

In this chapter, Montesquieu refrains from observing, as he repeatedly does elsewhere in *The Spirit of Laws*, that the monarchies on the European continent find it well-nigh impossible to inspire the confidence that would allow them to borrow the great sums of money needed to wage war in modern times. It suffices for him pointedly to remark that, given its laws, England has little difficulty sustaining the credit required to cover the costs of war: "For the purpose of preserving its liberty," it will "borrow from its subjects; and its subjects, seeing that its credit would be lost if it was conquered, . . . have yet another motive for exerting themselves in defense of its liberty."

Though inclined, like Rome, to defend itself with a resoluteness and a vigor that beggar the imagination, England is by no means a nation bent on conquest. The reason why it is so unlike Rome in this particular is simple. Blessed with an island location and a constitution favorable to the freedom of the individual, England is a seat of "peace and liberty." Moreover, once it was liberated from the "destructive prejudices" attendant on religious fervor, England became thoroughly commercial and began to exploit to the limit the capacity of its workers to fashion from its natural resources objects of great price.

Commerce is the distinguishing feature of English life, and Montesquieu's Englishmen conduct it as other nations conduct war. This people has "a prodigious number of petty, particular interests." There are numerous ways in which it can do and receive harm. "It is apt to become sovereignly jealous and to be more distressed by the prosperity of others than to rejoice at its own." Its laws, "in other respects gentle and easy," are "so rigid with regard to commerce and the carrying trade . . . that it would seem to do business with none but enemies."

In England, commerce is dominant in every sphere. "Other nations,"

Montesquieu remarks, "have made their commercial interests give way to their political interests; this one has always made its political interests give way to the interests of its commerce." When England sends out colonies far and wide, to places such as North America, it does so "more to extend the reach of its commerce than its sphere of domination." In keeping with its aim, it is generous with such distant colonies, conferring on them "its own form of government, which brings with it prosperity, so that one can see great peoples take shape in the forests which they were sent to inhabit."

Safeguarding its liberty and its commerce does not require an island nation such as Montesquieu's England to spend vast sums on "strongholds, fortresses, and armies on land." But this nation does "have need of an army at sea to guarantee it against invasion, and its navy [is] superior to those of all the other powers, which, needing to employ their finances for war on land [do] not have enough for war at sea." England's supremacy at sea enables it to exercise "a great influence on the affairs of its neighbors." Moreover, because England does "not employ its power for conquest," neighboring states are "more inclined to seek its friendship," and they fear "its hatred more than the inconstancy of its government and its internal agitation would appear to justify." In consequence, although it is "the fate of its executive power almost always to be uneasy at home," this power is nearly always respected abroad.

> The simple fact that Great Britain withstood Napoleon proves the prescience of Voltaire and Montesquieu.

Montesquieu was prepared to concede that this England would someday fail. "As all human things have an end," he observed, "the state of which we speak will lose its liberty, it will perish. Rome, Lacedaemon, and Carthage have, indeed, perished." But Montesquieu did not think that England would perish in the foreseeable future. When an Anglo-Irish admirer wrote to express dismay at the licentiousness of his own compatriots and to ask whether Montesquieu thought that England was in any immediate danger of succumbing to corruption and of losing its liberty in the process, the philosophe responded that "in Europe the last sigh of liberty will be heaved by an Englishman," and he drew the attention of his correspondent to the intimate connection between English liberty and the independent citizenry produced and sustained by English commerce. Nowhere did Montesquieu ever suggest that England suffered from a defect comparable to that which felled Rome. Nowhere did he contend that the commercial project on which England had embarked carried within it the seeds of the nation's destruction. Nowhere did he trace a link between English grandeur and English decadence.

Voltaire and Montesquieu had a considerable impact on the thinking of their contemporaries, but in the end they failed fully to persuade their compatriots in France of the superiority of English policy. Perhaps because Voltaire's *Philosophical Letters* was so quickly and thoroughly suppressed, perhaps because the critique Montesquieu directed at imperialism on the Roman model was buried, and thereby rendered inconspicuous, within his *Spirit of Laws*, perhaps because in the 1750s and 1760s Jean-Jacques Rousseau mounted a scathing and rhetorically compelling assault on commercial society, ancient Rome retained its allure. In subsequent generations, the most influential Frenchmen, and those Germans and Russians who looked for inspiration to Paris, rather than to London, failed to take heed. Napoleon tried to establish a universal monarchy in Europe, and, when opportunity knocked, Hitler and Stalin followed suit. Even today, when Europeans appear to have abandoned war as an instrument of foreign policy and frequently speak, and sometimes act, as if Montesquieu was right in suggesting that "Europe is nothing more than one nation composed of many," in some circles the dream of imperial grandeur persists. One need only peruse the book on Napoleon published in February 2001 by Dominique de Villepin, foreign minister of France, and ponder his assertion that, at Waterloo, Europe lost the most splendid opportunity ever to come its way.

The simple fact that Great Britain withstood Napoleon's repeated attempts to extend his dominion over all of Europe proves the prescience of Voltaire and Montesquieu. Despite its diminutive size and limited resources and population, Britain was able to put together, fund, and lead the various coalitions that ultimately inflicted on this would-be Caesar a defeat even more decisive than the one suffered by Louis XIV. Moreover, in 1940, there was once again reason to recall Montesquieu's bold claim that "in Europe the last sigh of liberty will be heaved by an Englishman," for it was Montesquieu's England that stood up to Hitler, and for a time it did so almost entirely alone.

If, in the end, Great Britain did not put together, fund, and lead the coalition that eventually defeated the Nazi colossus, if it did not put together, fund, and lead the alliance that later contained, wore down, and ultimately dismembered the Soviet empire, it was because the British lost their commercial supremacy and came to be overshadowed by another, kindred people, which took shape, as Montesquieu had predicted, "in the forests" of the New World. This great people was endowed by Britain with a "form of government, which brings with it prosperity," and to this people one could aptly apply nearly every word that Voltaire and Montesquieu wrote concerning the England they visited roughly a quarter-century after Marlborough repeatedly demonstrated in battle—at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Lille, and Malplaquet—the superiority of modern to ancient statecraft. ❑

The Periodical Observer

Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

Who Are We Now?

A Survey of Recent Articles

Collective identities were once thought to be more or less timeless. It meant one thing to be an American or an Italian, and that thing changed very little over the years. But that old self-assurance has been dissolved. Today, we are acutely aware that what it means to be an American now is rather different from what it meant in George Washington's day. Some thinkers believe that the change runs even deeper than that. For Americans and Europeans, and their common civilization, these people believe, this is a time of massive identity crisis.

Just a half-century ago, it was widely said that the United States was the heir of Western civilization, notes James Kurth, a political scientist at Swarthmore College, writing in *The Intercollegiate Review* (Fall 2003–Spring 2004). "Today, Western civilization is almost never mentioned, much less promoted, in political and intellectual discourse, either in America or in Europe. When it is mentioned among Western elites, the traditions of the West are almost always an object of criticism or contempt."

Invented by a few Europeans in the early 20th century, the term "Western civilization" was regarded, given the rise of America, as a necessary revision of the older idea of "European civilization." America's intervention in World War I lent power to the more inclusive coinage, which was invoked again in World War II and the Cold War.

Until recent decades, Western civilization was widely understood to be derived from three traditions: the classical culture of Greece and Rome, Christianity, and the Enlightenment. But the only tradition today's Western elites embrace is that of the Enlightenment, according to Kurth. For American political and economic elites, that mainly means the British Enlightenment, with its stress on individual liberty, institutionalized in liberal democracy and free markets. For European elites, as well as American intellectuals, it largely means the French Enlightenment, "with its emphasis on the rationalism of elites, institutionalized in bureaucratic authority, and the credentialed society." The old belief in Western civilization has given way to a commitment to "a global civilization, in which multicultural and transnational elites will administer (or impose) their notions of human rights."

But can—or should— the past be so easily jettisoned? The preamble to the text of the proposed European Union constitution makes no mention of Christianity's historic role in "educating and spiritually unifying" Europe's tribes and nations, notes Louis Dupré, a Belgian-born emeritus professor of the philosophy of religion at Yale University. Yet the continent's identity is in part spiritual, he writes in *Commonweal* (March 26, 2004). "Europe's identity has never been primarily geographical: Its boundaries re-

mained vague in antiquity, and even today they appear not quite settled. Ever since the Greeks, its name has referred to an ideal entity."

Political and economic unification is thus not enough for Dupré. Europe also needs "a strong awareness of a distinctive cultural and spiritual identity." That doesn't mean trying to resurrect the ideal of a Christian commonwealth. "Although the majority of Europeans, in contrast to the writers of the new EU constitution, do fully recognize their debt to the Christian tradition, many no longer consider themselves believers." Moreover, those nostalgic for "the medieval *res publica christiana*" should face the fact that it never was hospitable to outsiders, such as Muslims, who now make up a significant part of the European population. The new Europe needs a more inclusive base.

France, acting in accord with its own national identity, is a leader in the secularist drive at work in the drafting of the new EU constitution, observes Dupré. "The French tradition of *laicité* [public secularism] dates from the 18th century and was sealed in the revolutions of 1789 and 1848." In keeping with that republican tradition, President Jacques Chirac recently banned Muslim headscarves, conspicuous Christian crosses, and other religious symbols in his country's public schools.

But France needs to revise the tradition of *laicité*, suggests John R. Bowen, a professor of arts and sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. "Neither the much-weakened Catholic Church nor the millions of Muslim citizens deny the authority of the French state. There are real dangers to the Republic, but they are to be found in growing intolerance and disrespect, not in the desire to dress and act consistently, in public and in private, as a Muslim citizen of France," he writes in *Boston Review* (Feb.–March 2004). If France "shows itself to be openly intolerant of the free expression of religious beliefs and norms in public life," it is hardly likely that "teachers' tasks of encouraging open dialogue across religious lines and instilling respect for the French Republic" will have been made easier.

In the controversy over Muslim girls' wearing headscarves in school, "a certain 'Jacobin' fundamentalism comes to the surface," says Charles Taylor, an emeritus professor of philosophy at McGill University, in Montreal, writing in *The Responsive Community* (Fall 2003; Winter 2003–04). "The general principle of state neutrality, indispensable in a modern diverse democracy, is metaphysically fused with a particular historical way of realizing it, and the latter is rendered as nonnegotiable as the former." It's "a panic reaction," he says, "understandable [but] disastrous."

"Debates over national identity are a pervasive characteristic of our time," observes the noted Harvard University political scientist Samuel P. Huntington in *The National Interest* (Spring 2004). In the United States, elites and the general public are more and more at odds over such questions. While the public overwhelmingly remains nationalistic, the business, professional, intellectual, and academic elites increasingly prefer "cosmopolitanism." Philosopher Martha Nussbaum, of the University of Chicago, for instance, deems patriotism morally suspect, and maintains that people should pledge allegiance to the "worldwide community of human beings."

Intense controversy has erupted over Huntington's argument elsewhere (see p. 97) that Hispanic immigrants threaten to undermine America's core identity. Taylor notes that it's not only in the United States that immigrants "seem to be operating now with the sense of their eventual role in codetermining the culture, rather than this arising only retrospectively, as with earlier immigrants."

Whether in America or France, the dilemma is the same, Taylor observes, and it is built into democracy itself: On the one hand, a democracy needs "strong cohesion around a political identity," which provides "a strong temptation to exclude those who can't or won't fit easily." On the other hand, such exclusion, "besides being profoundly morally objectionable," runs counter to the idea of popular sovereignty, of government by *all* the people.

The way to resolve the dilemma is to work toward "a creative redefinition" of political identity, Taylor argues. "Political identities have to be worked out, negotiated, creatively compromised between peoples who have to or want to live together under the same political roof." The resulting identities "are never meant to last forever, but have to be discovered [or] invented anew by succeeding generations."

The Democracy Deficit

"Voice and Inequality: The Transformation of American Civic Democracy" by Theda Skocpol, in *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2004), American Political Science Assn., 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

When it comes to the making of government policy, the decades-long shift in America's civic life from large, broad-based membership organizations to professionally run advocacy groups has had definite benefits: It has brought to the fore fresh voices (female, minority) and expertise and raised important issues. But, argues Skocpol, director of Harvard University's Center for American Political Studies, it has also marginalized masses of Americans and caused their interests to be represented less well.

This unfortunate result can be seen in the contrasting fates of the GI Bill of 1944, which provided educational benefits and other entitlements to veterans, and the proposal for universal health insurance put forward by the Clinton administration during 1993–94. Both measures were popular with the public, but only the first became law. The American Legion, a fellowship federation with a nationwide network of chapters, drafted, lobbied for, and helped to implement the GI Bill, "one of the most generous and inclusive federal social programs ever enacted." But in the case of the Clinton proposal, "highly specialized professional and advocacy associations influenced the drafting of the legislation." They

EXCERPT

Mugging Jefferson

The discrediting of the Enlightenment, the debunking of great white men, intellectual fortune hunting—all play a part, but these causes cannot explain why Thomas Jefferson has become the greatest target in the politicized history of recent times. I understand that the more greatly admired a figure is, the more likely he or she is to come under attack; but the American pastime of scandalmongering and idol crushing has not extended itself as viciously to Washington or Franklin or the Roosevelts, let alone to Lincoln. Why Jefferson?

By his best examples and his worst, he still eats at American consciences. Among the founders of this democracy, Washington was its father and Madison was its mind, but Jefferson was its conscience. That he could not live up to his own high principles, at Monticello as well as in the President's House, is not the same as saying that he betrayed those principles, or that the principles themselves embodied some hidden evil. Failure, or hypocrisy, always attends high ideals. The imperfection of the morally ambitious is not surprising; it is only the most rudimentary information about how the moral life is actually lived.

Jefferson articulated an egalitarian standard that neither he nor the early Republic matched, and that the nation is still struggling to match. He is, in other words, an abiding torment. The progenitor of American egalitarianism, he is the lasting messenger of the bad news about ourselves, the stubborn monitor of our truancies, the hard if human teacher against whom we sin, collectively and individually. His is a stringent and reproaching legacy. Who would not wish to have it complicated or qualified or (mis)interpreted out of its stringency and its reproach? I tremble for my country when I reflect that Jefferson is right.

—Sean Wilentz, a historian at Princeton University, in *The New Republic* (March 29, 2004).

made it "far too complex" for ordinary understanding—and thereby sealed its doom.

According to Skocpol, the great transformation in American civic life between the 1960s and the 1990s, often attributed chiefly to Americans' individual choices, was crucially brought about by "elite, well-educated Americans." The Vietnam War, opposed by the "highly educated" young, drove a wedge between the generations; most traditional fellowship organizations ("racially exclusive and gender-segregated") were hit by the civil rights and feminist "revolutions"; and, as women came to do more paid work, they had less time for volunteer activities.

Distrustful of bureaucratic, majority-rule institutions, "rights" activists created liberal advocacy groups—among them, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, founded in 1960; the National Organization for Women, founded in 1966; the Women's Equity Action League, founded in 1968; and the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (now called NARAL), launched in 1973. The formation of such groups in the 1960s and 1970s led to the rise in the 1980s of opposing conservative groups and business associations.

Instead of raising money from a broad array of members who pay modest dues, advocacy groups seek support from foundations and through computerized direct-mail appeals to affluent adherents, who are "heavily skewed toward the highly educated upper-middle class." The groups' leaders have "little incentive to engage in mass mobilization" or to develop state and local chapters. Their lives are "more socially enclosed" than were those of their counterparts of previous generations, who tended to regard themselves as "trustees of community."

As fellowship federations, unions, and farm groups fade in importance, says Skocpol, the opportunity is being lost for people in blue-collar and lower-level white-collar occupations to learn civic skills and political knowledge and, in some cases, to move into leadership positions at the district, state, or national level. Today's advocacy groups "are not very likely to entice masses of Americans indirectly into democratic politics." Or, as the botched Clinton health plan demonstrated, to represent well their values and interests.

Civic Slackers?

"Civic Education and Political Participation" by William A. Galston, in *PS* (April 2004), American Political Science Assn., 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036–1206.

We all know that the younger generation is falling down on the job of citizenship: not voting, not reading newspapers, not caring what the government does. What slackers—so unlike us! Yet there's another side to the story, writes Galston, a professor of civic engagement at the University of Maryland, College Park.

"Today's young people are patriotic, tolerant, and compassionate. They believe in America's principles and in the American dream. They adeptly navigate our nation's increasing diversity." Volunteering for community service is on the rise (though it drops off when youths get paying jobs in their mid-twenties). But the volunteering doesn't seem to lead to a broader civic engagement. The young tend to see volunteering as an alternative to political participation, which they distrust. One reason for this is simple ignorance. "They understand why it matters to feed a hungry person at a soup kitchen; they do not understand why it matters where government sets eligibility levels for food stamps," says Galston.

He faults the schools. A 1998 national test showed that 35 percent of high school seniors had virtually no civic knowledge, and 39 percent met only a "basic" standard. "Most high school civic education today comprises only a single government course, compared [with] the three courses in civics, democracy, and government that were common until the 1960s." Only half the states have "even partially specified a required core of civic knowledge."

Recent research indicates that thoughtfully designed civic education efforts in schools can be effective. The big obstacle to their succeeding may be that adults disagree about "the kind of citizenship they want our schools to foster." Should education emphasize loyalty to existing institutions or criticism of them, national unity or demographic and ideological diversity? Galston is hopeful that there's enough flexibility in America's radically decentralized education system to accommodate a variety of views.

Civics lessons were once a staple of American classrooms.

What Ails the States

"State Government Finances: World War II to the Current Crises" by Thomas A. Garrett and Gary A. Wagner, in *Review* (March–April 2004), Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Research Division, P.O. Box 442, St. Louis, Mo. 63166–0442.

Feverish California, running an estimated $17.5 billion deficit last year, may have been the sickest state in the Union, but it was hardly the only patient in the fiscal ward—during what was probably the worst year for state budgets since World War II. And this year isn't expected to be much better. How did so many states fall into this lamentable condition? Short answer: by cutting taxes when the going was good. But according to economists Garrett, of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and Wagner, of Duquesne University, simply hiking taxes again as a one-time quick fix is no real cure.

Over the past half-century, states have become much more dependent on the personal income tax and the general sales tax, both of which are very responsive to the boom-and-bust business cycle. By 2001, income taxes supplied about 37 percent of states' revenue, up from only 9 percent in the early 1950s. Over the same period, revenue from general sales taxes increased from 22 percent to about 32 percent. So, during the boom years of the 1990s, states' coffers filled with revenue, and many governors had the pleasant task of announcing budget surpluses—and huge tax cuts, mostly in the rates on personal and corporate income. Then came the stock market collapse, and the recession that began in March 2001.

"Over the past decade," say the authors, "state budgets have been under considerable pressure from rapidly rising Medicaid expenditures, unfunded federal mandates in the area of health and human services, and a growing prison population." Roughly half the states have made or are making drastic cuts in spending on education, Medicaid, and corrections. But fear of voters' opposition has kept all but a few states from raising taxes significantly.

Inevitably, an economic rebound will restore fiscal health to the states, at least until the next bust. But the authors doubt that the basic problem—the states' increasing dependence on taxes tied to the business cycle and their refusal to save enough for the inevitable rainy day—will change, so long-term fiscal solvency remains only a dream.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The World vs. America

"The Anti-American Century?" by Ivan Krastev, in *Journal of Democracy* (April 2004), 1101 15th St., N.W., Ste. 800, Washington, D.C. 20005.

The anti-Americanism now so much in vogue around the globe is not simply a response to the Bush administration or the war in Iraq, and it's not a passing phenomenon either, says Krastev, chairman of the board of the Centre for Liberal Strategies, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It has various sources, comes in different guises, and has arisen in an age when democracy and capitalism are without powerful ideological rivals. Anti-Americanism has become a conveniently empty vessel into which can be poured all sorts of anxieties and discontents. "People are against America because they are against everything—or because they do not know exactly what they are against."

To Islamic fundamentalists, America embodies a hateful modernity; to Europeans, America, still clinging to religious faith and capital punishment, is not modern enough. In the Middle East, America is accused of hostility to Islam; in the Balkans, of being pro-Islamic. "The United States is blamed both for globalizing the world and for 'unilaterally' resisting globalization."

What's new is not anti-Americanism as such, but the fact that "blaming America has become politically correct behavior even among America's closest allies." The French pattern of anti-Americanism, expressed by elites in search of legitimacy and the young in search of a cause, has become common throughout Western Europe. There, the elites challenge America as a way to buy public support for making the welfare state more market oriented—better able to compete with America.

In Eastern Europe, however, the reformist elites have sided with the United States, because blaming America only strengthens the local anti-democratic opposition, foes of capitalism. "Lacking any positive vision for an alternative future," they see anti-Americanism as a way to attract protest votes from the disenchanted.

The U.S. response to anti-Americanism has been aggressive promotion of democracy, though in return for their support in the global "war on terrorism," the United States reserves comment when certain less than fully democratic regimes brand their domestic opponents "terrorists." That may possibly undermine democratic movements in some countries. But in many places, those who favor democracy and capitalism have opposed the rise of anti-Americanism. Perhaps America's best strategy for countering anti-Americanism in the world lies less in trying to export democracy than in bolstering its homegrown proponents.

Dealing with Devils

"Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice" by Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri, in *International Security* (Winter 2003–04), Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Univ., 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

When the goal is to prevent war crimes, genocide, and political killings, how much should principle yield to pragmatism? Political scientists Snyder, of Columbia University, and Vinjamuri, of Georgetown University, argue that human rights advocacy groups may do more harm than good in the long run by insisting on the application of universal standards to the prosecution of individuals responsible for atrocities: "Preventing atrocities and enhancing respect for the law will frequently depend on striking politically expedient bargains that create effective political coalitions to contain the power of potential perpetrators of abuses." In other words, deals must sometimes be struck with devils—by providing amnesty, say, for past abuses, or even by ignoring them. For

example, in September 2002, to avoid undermining progress toward peace and stability in Afghanistan, United Nations administrator Lakhdar Brahimi resisted calls from outgoing human rights commissioner Mary Robinson to investigate alleged war crimes by key figures in the new UN-backed government there.

The first order of business in countries where atrocities occur—and where those who committed abuses may remain powerful—should be to establish, through bargaining and negotiation, the fundamental political and institutional conditions that will make justice possible. Absent those conditions, attempts to implement universal standards of criminal justice may actually weaken norms of justice by revealing their ineffectiveness.

Snyder and Vinjamuri examined 32 civil wars fought since 1989. Of the nine instances in which "human rights abuses were reduced, peace was secured, and the degree of democracy was substantially improved," only three—East Timor, the former Yugoslavia (except Macedonia), and Peru—involved trials for individuals accused of atrocities. In general, say the authors, trials helped to end abuses only where local criminal justice institutions were already fairly well established. Like tribunals, amnesties "require effective political backing and strong institutions to enforce their terms." And truth commissions, another favorite instrument of human rights advocates, "have been useful mainly" when, as in South Africa, they have made amnesties politically acceptable.

In Iraq today, a trial of the captured dictator Saddam Hussein appears to be in the works. But, the authors warn, extensive use of war crimes trials there, "in the midst of ongoing instability and powerful potential spoilers, as well as in the face of efforts to rebuild the basic institutions of the state," would be an ill advised move.

Neodivide

"The Neoconservative Moment" by Francis Fukuyama, in *The National Interest* (Summer 2004), 1615 L St., N.W., Ste. 1230, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Neoconservatives have come under intense criticism for their role (real and imagined) in taking the United States to war in Iraq. Now, one of their own, writing in the premier neocon foreign-policy journal, joins the critics. Fukuyama, author most recently of *State-Building* (2004), attacks the "emblematic" neoconservative strategic thinking of columnist Charles Krauthammer as "fatally flawed."

As early as 1990, Krauthammer began propounding a doctrine of American "unipolarity" in the post-Cold War world as an alternative to the ideas of isolationist, realist, and liberal-internationalist thinkers. Fukuyama contends that he and other conservatives ("neo" and otherwise) around *The National Interest* tried to build another sort of approach based on the same critiques, but it was Krauthammer's thinking that prevailed in the upper echelons of the George W. Bush administration.

Fukuyama says that the lack of reality in Krauthammer's doctrine was evident in a speech he gave this past February championing democratic globalism, which Fukuyama describes as "a kind of muscular Wilsonianism—minus international institutions." While defining U.S. interests so narrowly "as to make the neoconservative position indistinguishable from realism," as advocated by Henry Kissinger and others, Krauthammer's strategy is "utterly unrealistic in its overestimation of U.S. power and our ability to control events around the world." (Making "not the slightest nod" to such setbacks as the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, Krauthammer spoke as if the Iraq War were "an unqualified success.")

In Krauthammer's view, the United States should commit "blood and treasure" to democratic nation-building only in "places central to the larger war against the existential enemy." But neither Iraq nor Al Qaeda ever threatened the existence of the United States, says Fukuyama. Strangest of all, he

says, is the Krauthammerian "confidence that the United States could transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, and go on from there to democratize the broader Middle East." For decades, neoconservatives had warned of "the dangers of ambitious social engineering" at home. What made them think they could avoid those dangers abroad?

Fukuyama also writes that Krauthammer's ideas about how the United States should deal with the Arab world are colored by the experience of Israel, which is surrounded by "implacable enemies." But Arabs neither surround the United States nor implacably oppose it (though U.S. policies could solidify widespread hatred of America).

What now? Fukuyama thinks that Washington should continue to promote democracy, particularly in the Middle East, but that it must be more realistic about its ability to succeed at nation-building and needs to create a permanent U.S. organization to carry it out. And if existing international institutions aren't able to meet today's global challenges, U.S. leaders, like their post-World War II predecessors, must create new ones to do the job. That, says Fukuyama, should have been the neoconservative agenda from the beginning.

The Fog of Quotation

"Can Reading Clausewitz Save Us from Future Mistakes?" by Bruce Fleming, in *Parameters* (Spring 2004), 122 Forbes Ave., Carlisle, Pa. 17013–5238.

"No military strategist shall fail to deploy quotations from *On War* when engaging in verbal battle." The author of *On War*, Prussian army officer Karl von Clausewitz (1780–1831), never said that, but America's military strategists seem to revere what he left unsaid almost as much as his actual words. And why shouldn't they? asks Fleming, an English professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. After all, Clausewitz can be used to justify almost any point of view.

Karl von Clausewitz

Take his most famous pronouncement, popularly rendered in English as, "War is a continuation of politics by other means." To many commentators, the statement means that civilian authorities should set the goals of a war and then allow the military to determine the strategy. But other analysts, such as Bernard Brodie, author of the magisterial *War and Politics* (1973), reject that reading, contending that Clausewitz favored "genuine civilian control" over the conduct of the war.

In criticizing the much-publicized "shock and awe" campaign at the start of the Iraq War last year, Mackubin Thomas Owens, a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, said that such effects should not be presupposed because, as Clausewitz pointed out, "war takes place in the realm of chance and uncertainty" (what the famous theorist called "the fog of war"). On the other hand, Owens noted that Clausewitz also developed a theory of war with "universal and timeless" elements that offer "a guide for action."

Owens is right about these contradictory aspects of Clausewitz, says Fleming. He was "as wedded to the theory, his need to see war as predictable, as he was to his admissions that it was not. The interest of the work is precisely the tension between the two."

Which is why Fleming believes that invoking Clausewitz "at every turn is both so satisfying and ultimately so pointless": "When

war turns out according to his 'timeless theories,' Clausewitz told us to expect it. When it turns out otherwise, Clausewitz told us to expect that too."

On War is a great work, Fleming concludes, but it should not be used as a rhetorical bludgeon. Rather, it should be taught "as poetry, even in the staff colleges, an expression of the intrinsic contradictions of the human condition."

Economics, Labor & Business

Murk at the WTO

"The Safeguards Mess: A Critique of WTO Jurisprudence" by Alan O. Sykes, in *World Trade Review* (Nov. 2003), Cambridge Univ. Press, 100 Brook Hill Dr., West Nyack, N.Y. 10994–2133.

When the Appellate Body of the World Trade Organization (WTO) upheld the European Union's case against American steel tariffs last November, the decision was hardly a surprise. Since the WTO was created in 1995, the appeals court has thrown out *every* "safeguard" protectionist measure that has come before it. The problem is not that all safeguards were meant to be illegal under the WTO, but that the law lacks any coherent guidance as to when they are permissible, argues Sykes, a law professor at the University of Chicago.

The WTO Agreement on Safeguards lets nations temporarily impose tariffs to protect domestic industries threatened by "serious injury" resulting from a surge in imports. The 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) did the same in cases in which "unforeseen developments" after a trade concession led to increased imports and "serious injury." But over time, as the practical meaning of the GATT provision proved elusive, it fell into disuse, and countries resorted to extralegal direct negotiations with one another to "voluntarily" limit exports.

The WTO safeguards agreement was designed to end that practice. Yet the text is murky. (What does "serious injury" mean? And how do you determine that increased imports "caused" it?) The WTO Appellate Body's decisions haven't clarified the "conceptual muddle." Since the WTO agreement isn't likely to be renegotiated, it would take a dose of judicial activism by the Appellate Body to clarify matters.

Is that necessary? Sykes himself is agnostic. "Purist" advocates of free trade say that the only thing safeguard measures really safeguard is wasteful protectionism. Others warn that trade negotiators will be reluctant to agree to future free-trade measures if they lack the political cover afforded by the ability to protect certain industries. Then there are the "somewhat cynical" observers, who argue that the current system provides sufficient political cover by allowing national political leaders to noisily announce trade restrictions that are only later struck down by the WTO. Today's illegal but temporary trade barriers, these observers say, are better than yesterday's long-lived and extralegal "voluntary" agreements.

Over the Rainbow

"The Economics of Happiness" by Richard A. Easterlin, in *Daedalus* (Spring 2004), Norton's Woods, 136 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

Most Americans cherish family and health, but few will turn down a higher-paying job even if it cuts into their time at home or in the gym. The extra money, most people believe, will buy additional happiness. Presented in one opinion poll with a hypothetical job that would give them higher pay but less free time than their current job, none of the 1,200 respondents said that it was "very unlikely" they would take the job.

Americans hold no monopoly on materialism, notes Easterlin, an economist at the University of Southern California. In the early 1960s, social psychologist Hadley Cantrill con-

ducted a poll that asked people in 14 countries what would make them happy. The number one answer everywhere: more.

When asked how much money it would take to make them completely happy, Americans typically name an income about 20 percent higher than their current one, reports Easterlin. It's true that people with higher incomes report higher levels of happiness, on average. The problem is that increasing their wealth doesn't make them any happier. That's because we tend to compare our material situation with our peers, the proverbial Joneses. A study that began tracking a group of Americans who were in their twenties in 1972 found that their incomes had more than doubled by 2000. But the measure of happiness they reported changed not at all.

All of this confounds the predictions of Easterlin's fellow economists. Yet psychologists don't have a better grip on the sources of happiness. In psychology, the vogue is for a "set-point" theory, which holds that each individual has a fixed level of happiness, determined by genetics and personality. Events such as marriage or divorce make only a temporary difference on the individual's happiness meter. Before long, the old self, happy or sad, reappears.

Some studies lend support to this idea, according to Easterlin, but a lot of others (and common sense) contradict it. Marriage, for example, really does make most people happier over the long term.

Easterlin's advice: If you're offered that higher-paying job, ignore the economists and psychologists and strongly question your own "commonsense" impulse to go for the money.

Castoff Cornucopia

"Reverse Supply Chains for Commercial Returns" by Joseph D. Blackburn, V. Daniel R. Guide, Jr., Gilvan C. Souza, and Luk N. Van Wassenhove, in *California Management Review* (Winter 2004), F501 Haas School of Business #1900, Berkeley, Calif. 94720–1900.

You're back at the mall again. That racy purple peignoir you hurriedly bought for your wife's birthday got the classic icy smile. Or maybe a knob fell off that sleek new television. Whatever the reason, Americans are returning goods in ever-greater numbers. Product returns now amount to about $100 billion annually.

So what happens to all that stuff? Only 20 percent of returned merchandise is put back on the shelf as new. Fifty-five percent is refurbished, repaired, or "remanufactured" in some way and sold at a discount. Ten percent is salvaged for components. And 15 percent winds up at the local dump. In the end, the sellers recover only 45 percent of the value of the returned goods. That's a loss of $55 billion.

The authors, all business professors at different universities, report that retailers haven't paid much attention to what they call "the reverse supply chain." Mainly, sellers try to minimize costs. It would be smarter to focus on speeding up the process. A returned computer loses one percent of its value every week, and at one company the authors studied, the opened boxes sat around for more than three months. Other items age much more slowly because the technology and styles don't change quickly. A power drill, for example, depreciates by one percent per month.

The authors make a number of suggestions to help cope with the problem, but some seemingly obvious ones aren't mentioned, such as selling better products—or providing aesthetic counseling to taste-impaired men.

The ABCs of CEO Success

"What Makes an Effective Executive" by Peter F. Drucker, in *Harvard Business Review* (June 2004), 60 Harvard Way, Boston, Mass. 02163.

The legendary management guru Peter Drucker has known a remarkable number of chief executives in his 65 years as a consultant, and he concludes that no single personality type characterizes the most effective of them. The best CEOs have "ranged from

extroverted to nearly reclusive, from easygoing to controlling, from generous to parsimonious." But what they all had in common was adherence to eight simple rules:

1) *Ask, "What needs to be done?"*—not "What do I want to do?" The effective executives concentrated on the most urgent task (or, at most, on the two most urgent tasks). When it was completed, they didn't move on to the next task on the list; they drew up a new list.

2) *Ask, "What is right for the enterprise?"*—not, "What is right for the owners (or the stock price, the employees, or the executives)?" A decision that is not right for the whole enterprise ultimately won't be right for any of its stakeholders.

3) *Develop action plans*. But the plans should be statements of intention, not straitjackets, and they should be revised often.

4) *Take responsibility for decisions*. Make sure that everyone knows who's affected, who needs to be informed, and who's accountable. "One of my clients, 30 years ago, lost its leadership position in the fast-growing Japanese market because the company . . . never made clear who was to inform the purchasing agents" that its new partner defined specifications in meters and kilograms, not feet and pounds. Effective executives also review their decisions periodically, including those about hiring and promoting. When the latter decisions prove wrong, the executives should acknowledge that *they*, not the employees, are at fault—and then they should remove the employees from the positions.

5) *Take responsibility for communicating*. Share action plans with all colleagues, and ask for comments.

6) *Focus on opportunities rather than problems*. Problem solving, however necessary, merely prevents damage. Change brings opportunities, and exploiting opportunities produces results.

7) *Run productive meetings*, and recognize that follow-up activity is no less important than the meetings. Alfred Sloan (1875-1966), the longtime head of General Motors and "the most effective business executive I have ever known," understood this well. It was through his postmeeting memos, summarizing the discussion and conclusions and spelling out any work assignments, that he made himself so outstandingly effective.

8) *Think and say "we," rather than "I."* The rule is not as simple as it sounds, and it needs to be strictly observed.

And one more rule (a bonus): *Listen first, speak last*.

SOCIETY

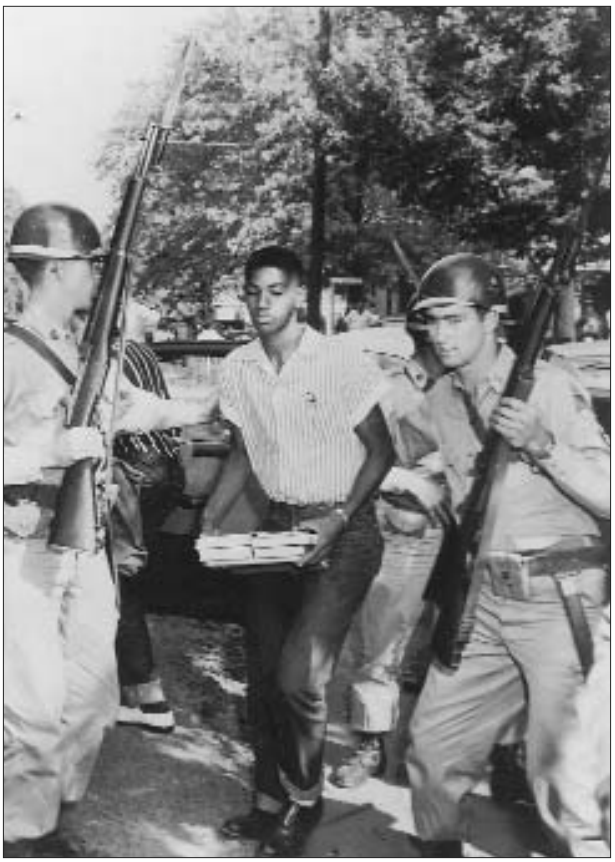
A Mixed Verdict on Brown

A Survey of Recent Articles

When the Supreme Court issued its landmark school desegregation ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* 50 years ago this past May, liberals enthusiastically hailed the decision and conservatives deplored what they regarded as the Court's reckless judicial activism. A half-century later, there's been a remarkable reversal: Many liberals now disparage *Brown*'s significance, and many conservatives applaud the Court's action.

In unanimously finding state-sponsored school segregation unconstitutional, the justices in 1954 had to substitute their own moral convictions for the guidance they would normally have found in the text of the Constitution and subsequent Court interpretations of it. Their ruling had the unfortunate effect of encouraging the "abandonment of constitutional reasoning," writes conservative commentator George Will in *The Washington Post* (May 16, 2004). But it also had the salutary effect of accelerating "the process of bringing this creedal nation into closer conformity to its creed."

Gerald Rosenberg, of the University of Chicago Law School, writing in the American Political Science Association's *PS* (April 2004), insists that *Brown* actually accomplished "not very much." The "all deliberate speed" with



National Guard troops escort a student to class at a desegregated school in Sturgis, Kentucky, in September 1956.

which desegregation was ordered to take place proved not very speedy at all. A decade later, "virtually nothing had changed" for southern black students: Their schools were still segregated. Change did come eventually—two decades after *Brown*, 46.3 percent of black students in the South were attending white-majority schools—but only after the 1964 Civil Rights Act and other actions by Congress and the executive branch. It wasn't action by the courts that led to desegregation, Rosenberg maintains.

Attempts to end de facto segregation elsewhere in the nation "were less successful," and they came to a halt in the mid-1970s, when, among other developments, resistance to forced busing "reached a fever pitch," says Leo Casey, a former inner-city high school teacher in Brooklyn, New York, writing in *Dissent* (Winter 2004). More recently, "there has been a trend toward resegregation." In the nation as a whole, about 33 percent of black students were in "intensely segregated" schools (i.e., those whose student population was at least 90 percent non-Anglo) in 1988; that figure has since risen to 37 percent. In the South, the 44 percent of black students in white-majority schools in 1988 has fallen to 31 percent. "To a degree that few would have predicted a half-century ago, courts, communities, and civil rights advocates have all largely accommodated to racially segregated schooling," Christopher H. Foreman, Jr., a professor in the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs, observes, also in *PS*.

Brown is "a testament not just to the reaches but also to the limits of judicial action," says Neal Devins, a law professor at the College of William and Mary, writing in *PS*. The Court's ruling also owed less to the "masterful" litigation strategy pursued for decades by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People than it did to "good timing": Seven years after Jackie Robinson desegregated major-league baseball, and six years after President Harry Truman ordered the armed forces and the federal civil service desegregated, the attitudes of many white Americans had changed. Only one third of white adults opposed segregated education in 1942; slightly more than half opposed it by the time of *Brown*. The popular verdict on the ruling: 54 percent approved, 41 percent did not.

The "major value" of *Brown*, writes Derrick Bell, a visiting professor at New York University Law School, in one of several articles on the decision in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 2, 2004), may be that it provoked white resistance—violent and well publicized—in Birmingham, Alabama, and elsewhere. The violence "appalled many who otherwise would have remained on the sidelines." It wasn't *Brown* that produced the Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, says Bell, author of *Silent Covenants*, a new book on *Brown*; it was thousands of courageous black

and white demonstrators. For Bell and other disenchanted liberals, the lesson is that advocates of racial justice should rely less on judicial decisions and more on political activism. Because of the continuing resistance to "any but minimal steps toward compliance," writes Bell, *Brown* is now only "a magnificent mirage, the legal equivalent of that city on a hill to which all aspire without any serious thought that it will ever be attained."

But to Richard Kluger, author of *Simple Justice*, a classic narrative history of *Brown* first published in 1976 and reissued this year, the historic importance of the decision remains clear. "At the least," he writes in the *Chronicle*, "we can say it brought to an end more than three centuries of an officially sanctioned mindset embracing white supremacy and excusing a massive and often pitiless oppression."

The New Border Wars

"The Hispanic Challenge" by Samuel P. Huntington, and replies, in *Foreign Policy* (March–April and May–June 2004), 1779 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In 2000, Mexican immigrants made up some 27.6 percent of the total foreign-born population in the United States, and Hispanics overall constituted 12 percent of the total U.S. population. Perhaps, in this nation of immigrants, these facts don't come as much of a shock. But political scientist Huntington, Harvard University professor and author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996) and *Who Are We?* (2004), writes in the March–April issue of *Foreign Policy* that the "immense and continuing immigration from Latin America, especially from Mexico, and the fertility rates of these immigrants" represent "the single most immediate and most serious challenge to America's traditional identity."

Marshaling his figures, Huntington suggests that the Hispanics who began to settle in the United States in the 1960s are unlike previous waves of immigrants: They reject "the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream." Because they come from nearby, many only "visit" the United States to earn money and then return to their home countries; even those who stay tend to concentrate in cloistered communities and not become part of the society at large. As an example, Huntington cites the "enclave city" of Miami—the "most Hispanic large city in the 50 U.S. states." Faced with the influence of the powerful Cuban-American community, 140,000 Anglos left the city in the decade between 1983 and 1993; by 2000, some 65 percent of the city's residents spoke Spanish at home. Huntington wonders whether the present state of affairs in Miami is also "the future for Los Angeles and the southwest United States," where many of the new immigrants have settled.

Because so many Hispanics do not join the societal mainstream, and because their fertility rate is high (3.0 live births per women of childbearing age, compared to 1.8 for whites and 2.1 for blacks), Huntington fears that, both passively and actively, they will weaken the bedrock Anglo-Protestant culture: the English language, the work ethic, "English concepts of the rule of law . . . and dissenting Protestant values of individualism." Though increasing numbers of Hispanics arrive in the United States each year, Huntington concludes that they will share the American dream "only if they dream in English."

In the May–June issue of *Foreign Policy*, critics of Huntington's views were quick to take exception. "The insistence that American culture is 'Anglo-Protestant' is not only offensive but false," says Roger Daniels, an emeritus professor of history at the University of Cincinnati. Addressing Huntington's fear of a language divide, Roberto Suro, director of the Pew Hispanic Center, invokes data showing that, among immigrant Latinos, "the transition from Spanish to English is virtually completed in one generation." As for a cultural division, Tamar Jacoby, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, insists that "we have never demanded that newcomers adopt any particular cultural habits, Anglo-Protestant or otherwise. As long as they adopt our ideas about freedom, tolerance, and equality before the law, we have left them to do as they please in the private sphere."

No Exaggeration Left Behind

"Exploring the Costs of Accountability" by James Peyser and Robert Costrell, in *Education Next* (Spring 2004), 226 Littauer North Yard, 1875 Cambridge St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed by Congress in 2001 requires states to bring virtually all their students up to academic snuff by 2014. Critics charge that, in implementing the law, the federal government left behind most of the billions of dollars needed to accomplish the task. But the financial shortfall is greatly exaggerated, contend Peyser, chairman of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and Costrell, an economist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Even before NCLB, most states had committed themselves to "a standards-based reform strategy." And between 2001 and 2004, federal spending on schools in extremely poor neighborhoods—the chief concern of NCLB—increased from nearly $8.8 billion to $12.3 billion.

Peyser and Costrell estimate that the $391 million appropriated to the states for the new math and English tests mandated by NCLB this school year (in grades 3 to 8 and once in high school) is nearly enough. In contrast, the $230 million in grants available to the 8,500 schools that failed last year is far from the needed minimum ($430 million). But states can easily tap other federal sources (e.g., the more than $380 million in grants for "innovative programs") to make up the difference. One recent critic, William J. Mathis, a Vermont school superintendent writing in *Phi Delta Kappan* (May 2003), contends that total public school spending would have to jump at least 20 percent—by $85 billion a year—to meet the NCLB goals. But his claim, say Peyser and Costrell, makes no attempt "to tie the observed spending levels to actual student outcomes."

Other critics base their estimates on the spending levels of schools whose students do well on the tests. But those schools' success may be due less to their high spending than to their students' family backgrounds, the best predictor of academic success.

The authors suggest looking instead at the spending levels in school districts that show the greatest *gains* in student scores over a period of years. They calculate that per pupil expenditures of about $6,300 a year—less than the average already spent in Massachusetts—are needed for adequate progress under NCLB. Only 11 states fall below that level. That means that the real national shortfall is only about $8 billion, and almost half of it is in California. Though "not trivial, [this] is only five to 10 percent of the projections claimed by critics."

The Rockets' Red Glare

"Fireworking Down South" by Brooks Blevins in *Southern Cultures* (Spring 2004) Journals Dept., Univ. of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27515–2288.

"There is nothing inherently southern about fireworks—they were, after all, invented by the Chinese some 1,200 years ago," writes Blevins, a professor of regional studies at Lyon College in Arkansas. But fireworks have had a special appeal for southerners ever since the end of the Civil War. Unwilling to celebrate the "Yankee holiday" of Independence Day, southerners chose instead to shoot off their fireworks during the Christmas season—a tradition that lingers still in parts of the Deep South. The region has pretty much refused to yield to the American Medical Association's campaign to ban fireworks. They're legal—and loosely regulated—in two-thirds of the southern states, where laws allow citizens to ignite big, bright, and dangerous displays in the comfort of their own backyards: "Among the litany of rights cherished in the South is the right to endanger oneself and anyone else who happens to be in the vicinity."

But fireworks, says Blevins, don't appeal only to "off-kilter, small-town characters" who've memorized "instructions for building a bomb using only duct tape and a box of sparklers." Their attraction is widespread. In 2002, the pyrotechnics industry earned more than $725 million, most of it on the 3rd and 4th of July, when 90 percent of sales take place—some, no doubt, above the Mason-Dixon line, but the majority below.

Enjoying a dangerous but cherished right down South.

Blevins believes that the pyrotechnics industry has its roots in Jeffersonian ideals: Fireworks in the South are "populist and Protestant—taking the goods, and the dangers, directly to the people, no interceders needed." At the fireworks stand, many southerners probably think more of the Dixie Thunder, the Battle of New Orleans, the Nuclear Meltdown, the Cape Canaveral, and the Enduring Freedom than they do the Founding Fathers. Still, for them the smell of burnt saltpeter and the roar and rumble of the Dixie Thunder—whether in July or December—are the peculiar sensations of home.

EXCERPT

Ready, Set, Read.

Fifty years after the introduction of television . . . the number of titles published worldwide each year has increased fourfold, from 250,000 to 1 million—from 100 books for every million humans to 167. A book is published somewhere in the world every 30 seconds.

—Edward Tenner in *The Boston Globe* (April 25, 2004)

PRESS & MEDIA

Getting Iraq Wrong

"Misperceptions, the Media, and the Iraq War" by Steven Kull, Clay Ramsay, and Evan Lewis, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 2003–04), 475 Riverside Dr., Ste. 1274, New York, N.Y. 10115–1274.

Last summer, with (1) no Iraqi weapons of mass destruction unearthed, (2) no clear evidence found of any link between Saddam Hussein's regime and Al Qaeda, and (3) world opinion decidedly against the U.S.-led war (which was then officially over), 60 percent of Americans were still in the dark about one or more of those three facts. Were the news media falling down on their job—or were Americans not paying attention?

Apparently, they were paying attention,

but it mattered a great deal what they were paying attention *to*. Surveys conducted for the University of Maryland's Program on International Policy Attitudes, with which the authors are associated, showed that a narrow majority of Americans who said they got their news chiefly from the print media got none of the three facts wrong. Not surprisingly, those readers who said they paid close attention to the news were more inclined to get those facts right.

That wasn't the case, by and large, with the 80 percent of Americans who got most of their news from radio or television. In fact, among viewers who said they chiefly relied on Fox News (which set the theme for its war reporting with an American flag in a corner of the screen), the level of misperception *increased* the more closely they watched. For example, 80 percent of the close watchers thought that clear evidence had been found linking Iraq to Al Qaeda. Only 42 percent of more casual Fox viewers got that idea.

Overall, 80 percent of Fox viewers got at least one of the three facts wrong. Other networks did not produce sparkling results either. The viewer "failure" rates: CBS, 71 percent; ABC, 61; CNN, 55; and NBC, 55. Among the small minority of Americans who got their news chiefly by watching PBS or listening to NPR, only 23 percent did not have all three facts straight. So the quality of news coverage did matter. Some news organizations, the authors say, failed "to play the critical role of doggedly challenging the administration" in power.

And news coverage wasn't the largest factor involved in misperceptions. People who said they intended to vote this year for President George W. Bush were 3.7 times more likely than others to misperceive at least one of the three facts. One explanation: Bush and other high officials made statements that could be construed as encouraging the misperceptions.

Stop the Presses?

"My *Times*" by Howell Raines, in *The Atlantic Monthly* (May 2004), 77 N. Washington St., Boston, Mass. 02114.

Is the day nearing when *The New York Times* will be no more? That prospect—and not the scandal over reporter Jayson Blair's deceptions that led last year to Howell Raines's resignation as the paper's executive editor—is one of the more interesting subjects of this much-noted article.

When Raines took the helm of the *Times*, six days before the events of September 11, 2001, the paper's circulation had fallen by 100,000 or more from its early 1990s peaks of 1.8 million on Sundays and 1.2 million on weekdays. (Roughly a third of the papers are distributed in New York City, another third in the rest of New York State, New Jersey, and Connecticut, and the balance in the other 47 states.) Readers and potential readers—40 million of them, by one count—had become "smarter, more sophisticated, and broader in their range of curiosities and interests than the *Times* had," writes Raines. Though he assumes that newspapers will one day migrate entirely to the Web, the rivals he seems to fear the most all exist currently on paper; they include not just traditional daily competitors such as *The Wall Street Journal* but publications as various as *The New York Review of Books*, *The Economist*, and *Entertainment Weekly*.

In the top spot at the paper, Raines saw himself as a "change agent," and he engaged in a titanic struggle with "the newsroom's lethargy and complacency," its chronic slowness in anticipating the news, and its indifference to competition. The *Times*, he argues, remained strong in traditional areas, such as foreign-affairs reporting, but about culture, social trends, and business it had become stultifyingly dull: "One of our dirty little in-house secrets was that even we, who were paid to read it, often couldn't hack the Sunday paper."

The fall of the twin towers sparked a "magnificent" months-long effort at the *Times*, but the "culture of complaint" among certain segments of the staff was unrelenting. (Raines contributes some bitter complaints of his own about entrenched

mediocrity at the paper.) The Blair scandal brought staff members' unhappiness with Raines and his leadership to a head, and that discontent was at least as responsible for his downfall as the scandal itself.

The print version of the *Times* is the company's "economic engine." But ad revenues peaked at $1.3 billion in 2000 and have since fallen to about $1.1 billion. What Raines fears is that the Sulzberger family might eventually be tempted to sell its controlling interest in the paper to an owner more interested in the bottom line than in journalistic quality. The *Times* "is the indispensable newsletter of the United States' political, diplomatic, governmental, academic, and professional communities. . . . And yet a harsh reality of our era is that if the *Times* ever ceased to exist, it would not be reinvented by any media company now in operation, in this country or in the world."

EXCERPT

The Newsroom's New Gods

Never so many newspaper investigations of newspapers: internal investigations, outside investigations, hand-wringing, soul-searching. All of it important. And yet, I'd like to suggest, there has been one investigation that has been left undone, one phenomenon left unexamined, even though it has reshaped the entire culture of newspapers—some might say the entire media culture itself. And might bear some responsibility for the mindset behind the scandals.

I'm speaking about the culture, indeed the cult, of management theory, about the management theory gurus who have become, as a rare outside study of the subject calls them, the "unacknowledged legislators" of American business culture. Who have been given a virtually free hand to "re-engineer" the way newspapers define their mission.

Could it be that little or no investigation of these consultants appears in newspapers because newspaper executives are so in thrall to consultant culture that reporters and editors fear to offend them by pointing out that the consultants have no clothes? Do newspaper management consultants enjoy the same immunity from examination that [former USA Today *reporter] Jack Kelley's fabrications did?*

—Ron Rosenbaum, columnist, in *The New York Observer* (May 3, 2004)

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Lingering Doubters

"'Godless Communism' and Its Legacies" by Stephen Bates, in *Society* (March–April 2004), Rutgers—The State University, 35 Berrue Circle, Piscataway, N.J. 08854.

Why are so many Americans so hard on atheists? In a poll last year, a majority (52 percent) took a dim view of those who deny God's existence, and—in the crucial symbolic test—more than 40 percent said they would not vote for an unbeliever for president. *WQ* literary editor Bates, who is writing a book about secularization in the United States, contends that Americans are suffering a hangover from the 1950s.

During that Cold War decade, he says, "a common enemy seemed to draw God and country closer together." Many Americans believed that what differentiated the Soviet Union from the United States was not the communist state's totalitarianism and terror, or its denial of basic freedoms, or even its command economy, but rather its rejection of God. Senator Joseph McCarthy warned in 1950 that the "final, all-out battle" would

be between "communistic atheism and Christianity."

"If Cold War communism imperiled religion, then religion needed to be part of the counterforce," says Bates. The 1953 presidential inauguration of Dwight D. Eisenhower featured a parade float depicting scenes of worship and a prayer composed and recited by the new chief executive (who was "the spiritual leader of our times," at least according to the Republican National Committee). Ike scheduled the first "National Day of Prayer" for July 4, and declared belief in a Supreme Being "the most basic expression of Americanism."

Before about 1950, few besides clergymen advanced religious arguments against communism. When *Look* magazine in 1947 gave its readers nine characteristics by which to identify an American Communist, disbelief in God was not among them. But after the Communists won China in 1949, and the Soviets exploded an atomic bomb that same year, religious anticommunist rhetoric "crossed over to the secular culture."

Today, the phrase "godless communism" seems as antiquated as the Edsel, and Americans are more tolerant of religious diversity. "Yet the antipathy toward atheists endures," at least in part because atheists are assumed to be aggressively hostile toward religion. It may well be that they should seek to soften their image by adopting a new name. But the term "Brights," recently adopted by some high-profile disbelievers, Bates notes, is hardly likely to do the trick.

EXCERPT

Doing Without Metaphysics

Plato argued along the following lines: Truth is a matter of correspondence to reality. Propositions are made true by things that are as they are, independent of human desires and decisions. This goes for propositions like "Kindness is better than cruelty" as much as for those like "Annapurna is west of Everest." Relations of moral preferability are no more up to us to decide than are spatial relations between mountains. The claim about kindness is as obviously true as the one about Annapurna, and so there must be something out there (something metaphysical, something that philosophers know more about than most people) that makes it true. If you deny that there is anything like that, the Platonist argument goes, you are denying that there is a rational way to choose between Athens and Sparta. . . .

The most dubious premise in this argument is the one that says that truth is correspondence to reality. As everybody who has ever taken a philosophy class knows, it is hard to specify what the correspondence relation is supposed to be. What, for example, does "There are no unicorns" correspond to? What entities make "There are infinitely many transfinite cardinal numbers" true? If you do not believe in the mysterious things that Plato called "the Forms," what exactly is it that you think moral truths are made true by? . . .

Nietzsche and Heidegger thought that once one rejected the Platonic claim to provide rational foundations for moral truth, all things would need to be made new. Culture would have to be reshaped. James and Dewey, by contrast, did not think that giving up the correspondence theory of truth was all that big a deal. They wanted to debunk it, and so help get rid of Platonist rationalism, but they did not think that doing so would make that much difference to our self-image or to our social practices. The superstructure, they thought, would still be in good shape even after we stopped worrying about the state of the foundations.

—Richard Rorty, a professor of comparative literature and philosophy at Stanford University, in *The Nation* (June 14, 2004)

DDT to the Rescue

"What the World Needs Now is DDT" by Tina Rosenberg, in *The New York Times Magazine* (April 11, 2004), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Ever since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) sparked the environmental movement, DDT has been seen as one of the world's most terrible toxins. Surely, America, which banned the notorious insecticide in 1972, shouldn't now encourage its use in poor nations such as Uganda and Kenya? Indeed it should, argues Rosenberg, a *New York Times* editorial writer and author of several books on the developing world.

DDT is the single best weapon against malaria, which is one of the world's deadliest diseases. In Africa, malaria is the leading killer after AIDS, taking the lives of one in 20 children. Because it's been eradicated in richer countries, the mosquito-borne disease has become virtually invisible to them. But it kills two million people worldwide every year. An additional 300 to 500 million are afflicted. "During the rainy season in some parts of Africa," writes Rosenberg, "entire villages of people lie in bed, shivering with fever, too weak to stand or eat. Many spend a good part of the year incapacitated, which cripples African economies."

When *Silent Spring* alerted Americans to the devastation DDT could wreak on bird and fish populations as it traveled up the food chain, it was being sprayed in huge quantities on crops, mostly cotton. But fighting malarial mosquitoes requires spraying very small quantities every few months on the interior walls of houses. (The mosquitoes tend to bite at night, when people are mostly indoors.) Such limited use is "unlikely to have major negative environmental impact," according to the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). "Most environmental groups don't object to DDT where it is used appropriately and is necessary to fight malaria," reports Rosenberg. Yet because of DDT's hypertoxic image, AID and other major donors have not financed its use anywhere except in one country, Eritrea. It's therefore "essentially unavailable" to poorer countries.

Something more than fear motivates the aid-givers. The fashion in development assistance today is to bypass the government and work through the private sector at the local level, and house spraying tends to be government sponsored. Donors such as the World Health Organization favor the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets—a "useful" but much less effective tool, says Rosenberg, and one whose modest cost is still too high for rural Africans. Yet she has no doubt about the root problem: "DDT killed bald eagles because of its persistence in the environment. *Silent Spring* is now killing African children because of its persistence in the public mind."

Is Dr. Freud In, Again?

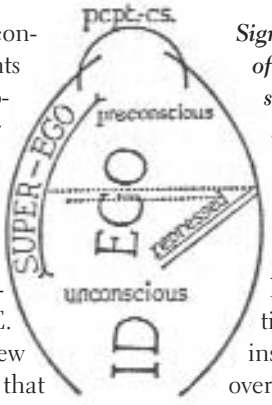
"Freud Returns" by Mark Solms, and "Freud Returns? Like a Bad Dream" by J. Allan Hobson, in *Scientific American* (May 2004), 415 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017–1111.

Once so influential, Sigmund Freud and his metaphorical ideas about the unconscious and repression were history by the 1980s in the eyes of most neuroscientists. But their biological and chemical approaches to the human mind have failed to provide a "big picture," and now "Freud is back," reports Solms, a neuropsychologist who is director of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute's Pfeffer Center for Neuro-Psychoanalysis.

Setting aside past antagonisms, neuroscientists and psychoanalysts are now working together in most of the world's major cities. Neuroscientists are proving some of Freud's theories true and gaining glimpses of "the mechanisms behind the mental processes he described," according to Solms.

In line with Freud's central idea of the unconscious, research confirms that "a good deal of our mental activity is unconsciously

motivated." Some patients can't consciously remember particular events that occurred after certain memory-encoding structures of their brains were damaged, yet their behavior is clearly influenced by those events. "Neuroscientists have also identified unconscious memory systems that mediate emotional learning." In 1996, Joseph E. LeDoux, a neuroscientist at New York University, demonstrated that under the conscious cortex exists "a neuronal pathway" that lets current events trigger unconscious memories of emotionally potent past events, causing seemingly irrational conscious responses, such as "Men with beards make me uneasy." Freud's claim that humans actively repress unwelcome information also has been gaining support from case studies.



Sigmund Freud drew his final model of the mind (left) in 1933, but some researchers believe that the brain's physical structures correspond to many of the psychologist's divisions.

Of course, some things Freud said are not panning out. "Modern neuroscientists do not accept Freud's classification of human instinctual life as a simple dichotomy between sexuality and aggression," Solms notes. "Instead, through studies of lesions and the effects of drugs and artificial stimulation on the brain, they have identified at least four basic mammalian instinctual circuits, some of which overlap." The "seeking" circuit, which motivates the pursuit of pleasure and is regulated by the neurotransmitter dopamine, "bears a remarkable resemblance to the Freudian 'libido.'" It might also be "the primary generator of dreams"—a possibility currently under investigation.

However, Hobson, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, says that Freud's defenders are doing a little dreaming themselves. Scientific investigations show that "major aspects of Freud's thinking" were probably wrong. "Psychoanalysis is in big trouble and no amount of neurobiological tinkering can fix it."

Future Fish

"The Bluewater Revolution" by Charles C. Mann, in *Wired* (May 2004), 520 Third St., 3rd fl., San Francisco, Calif. 94107–1815.

The world's appetite for fish is growing so fast that the catch will have to increase nearly 50 percent by 2020 to meet rising demand. Yet almost 30 percent of the world's fish stocks are "overfished" or nearing extinction. The futuristic solution: robotic fish-farming in the open seas.

"Already, a third of the annual global fish harvest comes from farms, both on land and in shallow water just offshore," writes Mann, a *Wired* contributing writer. "But today's methods won't be able to produce the volume of fish needed for tomorrow—they're too dirty, costly, and politically unpopular" (because the farms spoil waterfront views).

Nine miles off the New Hampshire coast is a fish farm on the open ocean, an experiment run by the University of New Hampshire. A metal cylinder crammed with electronics and extending 10 feet above the surface of the Atlantic is "the antenna, eyes, and brain of a sprawling apparatus suspended [below] like a huge aquatic insect, its legs of thick steel chain tethered to the ocean floor. The creature's body is a group of three cages," inside of which swim multitudes of halibut, haddock, and cod.

Similar experiments are underway in other countries. "In the future, ocean ranches will be everywhere, except they'll be vastly bigger and fully automated—and mobile," Mann predicts. "Launched with lab-bred baby fish, these enormous motorized pens will hitch months-long rides on ocean currents and arrive at their destinations filled with mature animals, fattened and ready for market."

It's not all clear sailing ahead. Obstacles include a "paltry" federal research budget ($780,000 this year), legal questions about such ocean-roaming objects, and environmentalists worried about the risk of genetic

pollution from the interbreeding of escaped farmed fish and wild fish.

Like the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, this oceanic one "will probably have some negative environmental effects," says Mann. "But it will also feed countless millions—and possibly stop humankind from plundering the seas bare."

ARTS & LETTERS

Confessions of a Flower Picker

"Remaking a Norton Anthology" by Jahan Ramazani in *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Spring 2004), 1 West Range, P.O. Box 400223, Charlottesville, Va. 22904–4223.

The intense demands of literary scholarship can often dull the pleasures many of us associate with literature. Such was the sad case for Ramazani, a professor at the University of Virginia, when he was offered the chance to edit a new edition of *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry*—the book that delivers *the* poetic canon to tens of thousands of college English students each year. Ramazani was to write overarching introductions, copious footnotes, and the nearly 200 headnotes that outline each poet's particular literary-historical context, distinctive formal attributes, and biography. Above all, he was to select "the best poems written in English in the last century from across the world." Faced with this gargantuan task, he turned "pallid."

He started by reading and rereading the previous edition, which had appeared in 1988. Were the poems still relevant? Imaginative? "Formally skillful? Historically and socially responsive?" Were they too American? Too British? Too postcolonial? After months of deliberation, Ramazani had created a "grand anthological structure—its proportions carefully balanced and calibrated."

Then he was told to cut $40,000 worth of permissions costs from his $500,000 budget. His artful structure gave way to a spreadsheet and a new question: "Should I dump one overpriced poem and buy 10 at a discount?" Even after these reckonings, questions persisted. Which "Nat"—King Cole, Adderley, or Turner—was Amiri Baraka referring to in his poem about Thelonious Monk? Only the poet could answer.

Two years later, in 2003, the anthology—195 poets, 1,596 poems—was ready. Ramazani had excised nearly half of the previous edition and added an entire second volume to make room for additional long poems and essays. He had even changed half the title to *Modern and Contemporary* to highlight the expanded selection of more recent poems. Ramazani had reconceptualized the canon. Though

EXCERPT

Tips for Writers

I was recently asked what it takes to become a writer. Three things, I answered: First, one must cultivate incompetence at almost every other form of profitable work. This must be accompanied, second, by a haughty contempt for all the forms of work that one has established one cannot do. To these two must be joined, third, the nuttiness to believe that other people can be made to care about your opinions and views and be charmed by the way you state them. Incompetence, contempt, lunacy—once you have these in place, you are set to go.

—Joseph Epstein, author of *Fabulous Small Jews* and other books, in *Commentary* (April 2004)

this was serious work, it had a lighter side. In Greek, as Ramazani learned, *anthos* means flower and *logia* means gathering. Though built on a foundation of research and political and economic calculation, the anthology provided an opportunity for its editor—and its readers—to stop and smell the poesies.

The Birth of Theater

"The Invention of Theater: Recontextualizing the Vexing Question" by Steven F. Walker, in *Comparative Literature* (Winter 2004), 1249 University of Oregon, Eugene, Oreg. 97403–1249.

Who invented theater? Tradition—supported by considerable archaeological evidence—has always awarded that honor to the ancient Greeks, but scholars have long debated whether their invention was unique. Certainly, theater has long existed in other parts of the world, notably India, China, and Japan, but did the Greek invention somehow migrate to these other cultures?

That theory was first suggested by Albrecht Weber in 1852, and endorsed by Ernst Windisch 30 years later; they believed that during Alexander the Great's conquest of Bactria (in present-day Afghanistan) in 328 B.C., the invading troops brought with them examples of Greek New Comedy, such as Menander's *Epitrepontes* (*The Arbitration*). In the German scholars' view, these Hellenistic plays provided the inspiration for early Indian Sanskrit plays, particularly ones known collectively as *prakarana*, which include *Daridracarudatta* (*Carudatta in Poverty*), which was written by Bhasa in the second century A.D.

Walker, a professor of comparative literature at Rutgers University, supports the Weber-Windisch thesis, but admits some obvious difficulties. Almost 500 years elapse between Alexander's incursion into India and the earliest surviving Sanskrit plays, and the connections seem tenuous at best. (However, many ancient plays did not survive to be found by archaeologists.) Many scholars attacking the Weber-Windisch thesis have also pointed out that, although *prakarana* share some thematic elements with Greek New Comedy—"the love affair between a man of good birth and a courtesan, with a depiction of their contrasting social worlds"—the textual overlap is almost nonexistent. Certainly, it is not as evident as in the various Latin versions of Greek New Comedy written by Plautus and Terence. Walker suggests, however, that "the existence of a language barrier may account for the fact that Sanskrit theater, unlike Roman comedy, did not rely on the 'blueprint copying' of Greek New Comedy—that is, on translation and close adaptation." He considers it plausible, even likely, that the Greek *idea* of theater—the form, if not the content—filtered into India, and eventually spread beyond, to China, where fully formed plays appeared around A.D. 960, and, by the 11th century, to Japan. There is a model for such transmission in the migration of a "Greek-derived Gandharan sculptural style from India to early Buddhist statuary in China and eventually to Japan."

Given the lack of surviving ancient manuscripts, it may be impossible to prove conclusively whether theater followed the same path. In any case, there's another intriguing question: "Why has theater apparently been such a late invention in the history of world literature?" Even among the Greeks, it flowered relatively late, emerging several centuries after Homer. Evolving, as most scholars now believe, out of the patterns of religious ritual, theater had two distinctive elements. It required "breaking the natural bond with one's fellows and with one's own social persona in order to become someone else," as well as "fellow human beings who agreed to look on without intervening." Walker believes that while "the originality of each dramatic tradition in the global context is hardly debatable," theater itself "may have been a difficult invention—so difficult, in fact, that, like the wheel, it may have been invented only once."

Capitalism Shrugged

"Who Was Ayn Rand?" by Gene H. Bell-Villada, in *Salmagundi* (Winter–Spring 2004), Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866.

Alyssa Rosenbaum, an obscure Russian-Jewish immigrant coming of age during the early Stalinist years in Leningrad, would seem an unlikely figure to found a cult promoting unfettered capitalism in America. Yet in the period following the publication of her two massive novels, *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), the woman we know better as Ayn Rand held sway over millions of ardent followers. Next year marks the centennial of her birth.

Raised in a comfortable St. Petersburg household that was impoverished after the Russian Revolution, Rand emigrated to America in 1926 at the age of 21 to live with relatives in Chicago. She was bent on becoming a writer—taking her pen name from her treasured Remington-Rand typewriter. Aided by a chance meeting—in true Hollywood fashion—with movie director Cecil B. DeMille, Rand spent the 1930s and early '40s working in low-level studio jobs and penning obscure and mostly ignored plays, stories, and movie scripts. (A marriage to a movie extra, Frank O'Connor, resolved her uncertain immigrant status.) It was not until the publication of *The Fountainhead* that Rand's career took off, and with it her philosophy of objectivism.

Ayn Rand hated big government but was honored nonetheless with this commemorative stamp in 1999.

As Bell-Villada, a professor of Romance languages at Williams College, explains, objectivism "is the idea that selfishness is good, greed is admirable, and altruism is evil. Unfettered capitalism is the only true moral system in history. The successful businessman is the ideal hero of our time." Reason—really a kind of hyper-rationality—is the highest value; emotion, kindness, and compassion get nothing but scorn in the Randian scheme of things. She reviled the kind of social welfare system embodied by the New Deal. Her protagonists—brilliant, principled Howard Roark, the unyielding architect in *The Fountainhead*, and John Galt, the *übermensch* inventor in *Atlas Shrugged*—are portrayed as godlike heroes dragged down by the unthinking masses.

The Fountainhead attracted hordes of admirers, and Rand organized the closest of these into a group she dubbed "The Collective" (which included a young Alan Greenspan). Today, her books sell in the hundreds of thousands, especially among the young, and her ideas are influential in some conservative circles. Gore Vidal once quipped that she's the only writer everyone in Congress has actually read.

Yet the novels "failed to garner the intellectual prestige and respect Rand hungered for." She longed to create novels of ideas in the mold of Dostoyevsky; indeed, Bell-Villada believes that *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* are essentially "Russian novels with U.S. settings." But Rand was no Dostoyevsky. *Atlas Shrugged* in particular suffers from "relentless speechifying." Its climax is a 70-page speech by her hero Galt.

Rand's steely, self-reliant individualism and contempt for the "weak"—such as the "emotional parasites" who give up work for family life—seems hollow in light of her own experience. She was, after all, helped by many people, including her devoted followers, who cared for her as she was nearing her death from cancer in 1982.

Rand's books still sell strongly, but Bell-Villada doubts they will have the same kind of revolutionary appeal now that global capitalism has triumphed. Fifty years from now, he wagers, her name will have the antique resonance of Horatio Alger's.

OTHER NATIONS

Britain's Progressive Dilemma

"Too Diverse?" by David Goodhart, in *Prospect* (Feb. 2004), 2 Bloomsbury Pl., London WC1A 2QA, England.

After three centuries of striving to forge a common identity among the various groups in the United Kingdom, the British in the past half-century have become more diverse, not only ethnically but in their values and lifestyles. For progressives especially, that poses a dilemma: Multicultural diversity can reach a point where it endangers the communal solidarity that sustains the welfare state, the foundation of the progressive vision.

Goodhart, the editor of *Prospect*, sees this "progressive dilemma" lurking beneath many of Britain's current debates, from tax and redistribution policies to European Union integration. Among the country's progressive intellectuals and politicians, the underlying dilemma itself is increasingly the subject of debate.

Two British academics, Bhikhu Parekh and Ali Rattansi, have argued that ethnic diversity is no hindrance to social solidarity, noting that the expansion of the British welfare state in the late 1940s occurred even as the first big wave of nonwhite immigration from the West Indies and Asia began. Yes, says Goodhart, but the welfare state was formed after a century of experience and agitation, and the immigrants were few at first.

"Scandinavian countries with the biggest welfare states have been the most socially and ethnically homogeneous states in the West," Goodhart points out. "By the same token the welfare state has always been weaker in the individualistic, ethnically divided U.S." Today, about nine percent of British residents belong to ethnic minority groups. As that percentage approaches America's 30 percent (which it already has, more or less, in London), there is a probable "tipping point" at which Britain would become "a wholly different U.S.-style society—with sharp ethnic divisions, a weak welfare state, and low political participation." So "it is important to reassure the majority that the system of entering the country and becoming a citizen is under control."

Replacing ethnic kinship with the more abstract concept of citizenship as the basis of national identity goes some way toward reconciling solidarity and diversity, but citizenship still requires common commit-

Sikhs gather outside 10 Downing Street in 2002 demanding recognition as a separate ethnic group.

ments, Goodhart says. Immigrants can hold on to "some core aspects of their own culture," but as in the American melting pot, being a good citizen means "learning the language, getting a job and paying taxes, and abiding by the laws and norms of the host society." Welfare benefits should be denied to "people who consistently break the rules of civilized behavior."

When diversity and solidarity come into conflict, Goodhart concludes, public policy should favor solidarity. Diversity is now so strongly reinforced by social and economic forces that it can take care of itself.

EXCERPT

The Arabs of Israel

Israel's decision to keep out terrorists by constructing a security fence separating itself from three million West Bank Palestinian Arabs will also work to keep in 1.2 million Arab citizens of Israel and tie their fate more closely to that of the Jewish state. Less foreseeable are the precise consequences for the Arab minority, now almost 20 percent of the population and growing, and for Israel's character as a state that is both Jewish and democratic.

Is there in the end a fatal contradiction between Israel's Jewish character and its democratic form of government? Only if you accept the idea—rooted in Rousseau, promulgated for more than a century by Marxists, and embraced by left-leaning intellectuals throughout the Western world—that the aim of democracy is to reflect in its institutional forms peoples' highest hopes, overcome individual alienation, and make all its citizens whole in heart and soul. But there is a more reasonable understanding of liberal democracy, one more in keeping with its first principles and classical formulations and less bound up with utopian hopes and communist nightmares.

In this understanding, majorities are given wide latitude to legislate, circumscribed principally by energetic protection of the individual rights that belong to all citizens. In this understanding, states do not have an obligation to affirm equally the grandest aspirations of all citizens, but they do have an obligation to ensure that all are equal before the law and that none fall below minimum or basic requirements for education, health, and material well-being. And in this understanding, there is no reason in principle why a Jewish state—one which is open to Jews throughout the world, and gives expression in its public culture to Jewish history, Jewish hopes, and Jewish ideals—cannot protect the political rights and civil liberties, including religious freedom, of all its citizens, provide them with equal opportunities, and require that they take their fair share of responsibility for maintaining the state.

—Peter Berkowitz, a law professor at George Mason University, in *The Weekly Standard* (April 12–19, 2004)

Lifeline to Mexico

"Scoring Free Trade: A Critique of the Critics" by Sidney Weintraub, in *Current History* (Feb. 2004), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

In the decade since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect, Mexico has endured serious economic woes: weak economic growth, insufficient new jobs, and continuing widespread poverty. Things would have been a lot worse without NAFTA, argues Weintraub, director of the Americas program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The trade agreement with the United States

and Canada had hardly gone into effect when the peso collapsed in December 1994. Having depleted its foreign reserves to protect an overvalued peso, Mexico could not pay its dollar-indexed foreign debt. Its economy went into a tailspin. But NAFTA eased the impact and helped with the recovery. As their domestic market shrank, Mexican producers were able to expand exports to the United States by 28 percent in 1995. Economic growth returned the following year.

"In its own terms—the expansion of trade and the attraction of more foreign investment—NAFTA has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations," says Weintraub. Between 1993 and 2002, Mexico's exports to the United States increased by 14 percent annually, while exports to the rest of the world increased at an eight percent rate. Oil once dominated Mexico's exports; today, as NAFTA's architects intended, manufactured goods make up almost 90 percent of the total. Foreign investment has flowed into Mexico at a rate of $13 billion annually, more than two and a half times the rate in the 13 years before NAFTA.

But foreign trade can do only so much. Mexico's economy has grown by an average of only three percent annually since 1994. One cause of the mediocre performance is a low level of tax collection—only 11 percent of gross domestic product, compared with Brazil's 37 percent, for instance—that leaves the government starved for resources: Up to half of Mexico's population remains in poverty.

There is one Mexican problem, though, that NAFTA has aggravated: regional inequalities in wealth. The trade pact has fostered stronger growth in the country's central valley and in the north, while other regions have languished. NAFTA should have followed the European Union's example by providing for subsidies to these poorer areas, Weintraub believes. But Mexico's fundamental economic problems do not lie with NAFTA. On the contrary, NAFTA is "the one policy initiative that has worked."

Two Cheers for Russia

"A Normal Country" by Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, in *Foreign Affairs* (March–April 2004), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Alas, poor Russia: no longer the Evil Empire, but now a near basket case with criminals riding high, the long-suffering populace economically worse off, and democracy still a distant dream. That's a common assessment these days—but it's far too gloomy, maintain Shleifer, an economist at Harvard University, and Treisman, a political scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Russia "began the 1990s as a highly distorted and disintegrating centrally planned economy, with severe shortages of consumer goods and a massive military establishment. It ended the decade as a normal, middle-income capitalist economy." By then, too, "its political leaders were being chosen in generally free—if flawed—elections, citizens could express their views without fear, and more than 700 political parties had been registered." Yet Freedom House gave Russia a lower rating for political freedom in 2000 than it gave to Kuwait, where political parties are illegal and criticism of the hereditary ruler is punishable by imprisonment.

With a gross domestic product per capita of $8,000, Russia now is like other middle-income democracies, such as Mexico, Malaysia, and Croatia. These democracies "are rough around the edges: Their governments suffer from corruption, their judiciaries are politicized, and their press is almost never entirely free. They have high income inequality, concentrated corporate ownership, and turbulent macroeconomic performance. In all these regards, Russia is quite normal."

Because Soviet-era data were distorted, today's harder data exaggerate the perception of decline. During the 1990s, average living standards may even have improved; private ownership of cars nearly doubled (to 27 per 100 households).

Why is there such despair about Russia? In part because the West once saw it as "a highly developed, if not wealthy country." That it proved otherwise seemed "a disastrous aberration."

Current Books

Reviews of new and noteworthy nonfiction

Contested Terrain

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE AND NEW MEXICO: A Sense of Place.
By Barbara Buhler Lynes, Lesley Poling-Kempes, and Frederick W. Turner.
Princeton Univ. Press. 143 pp. $39.95

GEORGIA O'KEEFFE.
By Bice Curiger, Carter Ratcliff, and Peter Schneemann.
Hatje Cantz. 200 pp. $55

Reviewed by Roxana Robinson

Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) is one of the great American artists. Her powerful, evocative images—flowers, bones, shells, and languorous, rose-colored hills—have become part of our visual repertory. She was a member of the American modernists, innovators who embraced the liberating power of abstraction and the mechanical innovations of photography, but her work looked like no one else's. A colorist who reveled in lush and exuberant hues, she produced mysterious, semiabstract compositions, spare but full of emotional resonance.

From the beginning, O'Keeffe's art drew a powerful response. Her work received enthusiastic critical attention and sold rapidly. Her private life was considered news—she modeled for, then married, her dealer, the famous and influential photographer Alfred Stieglitz. O'Keeffe was important at once.

In the normal course of things, once an artist is seen as important, she becomes the focus of scholarship. The facts of the life and the art will be established and documented, and subsequent scholars, as well as popular writers, can rely on this dependable foundation.

The case of Georgia O'Keeffe is different. At one of her earliest exhibitions, in 1917, she was described by an enthusiastic but uninformed critic as "the offspring of an Irish father and a Levantine mother, [who] was born in Virginia and has grown up in the vast provincial solitudes of Texas." So began a pattern of erroneous information about O'Keeffe. Her father's family was indeed Irish, but her mother's was Hungarian; she was born in Wisconsin, lived there until the age of 15, then moved to Virginia. Nearly 120 years after her birth, a bewildering array of confusing and contradictory versions of O'Keeffe's story still confronts the public.

The responsibility for this lies partly with O'Keeffe herself. At the start of her career, the intimacy of her work (not to mention that of Stieglitz's nude photographs of her) evoked similarly intimate responses from the critics. In 1921, one wrote that "her art is gloriously female. . . .

Georgia O'Keeffe poses outdoors beside an easel in Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1960.

Her great painful and ecstatic climaxes make us at last to know something the man has always wanted to know. . . . The organs that differentiate the sex speak. Women, one should judge, always feel, when they feel strongly, through the womb." O'Keeffe found all this intrusive, and wrote that she had "a queer feeling of being invaded" when she read about herself. She disliked having her work placed in the critics' contexts.

Her private life was open to public commentary as well. A few years after she married Stieglitz, he began a highly visible liaison with a younger woman. In the early 1930s, O'Keeffe suffered a severe breakdown and was hospitalized. Increasingly thereafter she shunned scrutiny and refused interviews, though her fame continued to grow.

A few years after Stieglitz's death in 1946, O'Keeffe moved to New Mexico, where she lived the rest of her life in professional seclusion. Her work still received acclaim, though she lapsed into relative obscurity during the late 1950s and the 1960s. In 1970, "rediscovered" through an excellent retrospective at the Whitney Museum, she became a public figure again. Still deeply protective of her privacy, she announced, in her own book, *Georgia O'Keeffe* (1976), "Where I was born and where and how I have lived is unimportant. It is what I have done with where I have been that should be of interest."

O'Keeffe had long refused most interview requests and had never designated a biographer. More significant in terms of art history, she had denied most requests to reproduce her paintings in articles, dissertations, and books: She refused to have her work defined by other people. The dearth of available images made art history studies of her work problematic, and scholarship languished. All of this resulted in an odd paradox: At the time of her death, at 98, O'Keeffe was one of the best-known artists in the country, but virtually no scholarly work had been done on her.

One popular biography had appeared, *Portrait of an Artist* (1980), by Laurie Lisle. Intrepidly, Lisle took on the task despite the fact that O'Keeffe and her friends and family refused to cooperate. The biography suffers from these lacks, and its subject—O'Keeffe herself—is

oddly inert, but the book delivers a good deal of basic information correctly.

After O'Keeffe died in 1986, a spate of books appeared (a biography by this writer among them). A posthumous memoir by her friend Anita Pollitzer was published, *A Woman on Paper* (1988), followed by *Lovingly, Georgia: The Complete Correspondence of Georgia O'Keeffe and Anita Pollitzer* (1990). Unfortunately, both are rife with errors, including a misidentified Stieglitz photograph on the memoir's cover, misdated letters in the collection of correspondence, and a misleading quotation in Benita Eisler's introduction to the letters.

Eisler went on to publish a relentlessly unsympathetic biography, *O'Keeffe and Stieglitz: An American Romance* (1991), which presents O'Keeffe as cold hearted, mean spirited, and manipulative. Eisler's gloss of contempt covers every aspect of O'Keeffe's behavior, and she misquotes and quotes out of context to support her view. Particularly vivid is her alteration of a 1929 letter from Beck Strand (wife of photographer Paul Strand). Strand describes an uproarious dinner at which she and O'Keeffe teased the prim, rather shy artist John Marin. In Eisler's version, O'Keeffe is aggressively and unpleasantly sexual: "'I'm going to put your little bit of a thing in my pocket,' Georgia taunted him." The actual quote, however, is merely playful: "You little bit of a thing, I could put you in my pocket."

Without an established body of scholarly work, there seemed to be no standard for reviewers assessing these books; mistakes and poor scholarship went unremarked. The unreliable books passed unchallenged into the O'Keeffe literature. Today, excellent scholarly accounts do exist of both O'Keeffe's work and life, but the others are still in circulation, offered to the public by libraries, museums, and bookstores. In the absence of critical accounting, it seems that anyone can say anything about O'Keeffe. Scholars compound the confusion by using as sources the unreliable texts as well as the reliable ones.

Two new books—both museum catalogues with essays and handsome illustrations, both presented as scholarly—occupy opposite ends of the spectrum of reliability. *Georgia O'Keeffe and New Mexico: A Sense of Place* is on the reliable end. The illustrations are beautifully reproduced, and the book's three essays are intelligent, carefully researched, and elegantly presented.

Barbara Buhler Lynes, a distinguished O'Keeffe scholar and the curator of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, compares the New Mexico landscape paintings to photographs of the actual sites. Accompanied by Lynes's articulate text, the images reveal the ways in which O'Keeffe worked her transformations—how her brush smoothed and burnished, how she turned a bare and nondescript hill into a mysteriously powerful presence, lush, intense, and full of mythic resonance. In the second essay, Lesley Poling-Kempes, a historian, describes O'Keeffe's arrival in the region and its particular appeal to her. She also discusses the spectacular geology of the area (though without crediting earlier work done on this). Finally, Frederick W. Turner, a Santa Fe writer, provides a thoughtful meditation on the landscape and O'Keeffe's response to it through her art.

Georgia O'Keeffe, by Bice Curiger, Carter Ratcliff, and Peter Schneemann, is an exhibition catalogue from the Zurich Kunsthaus that reveals the peculiar relationship between O'Keeffe's work and Europe. Historically, this relationship was nearly nonexistent: After the carnage of World War I, Stieglitz deemed Europe unsafe as a repository of art. He would not sell to European museums or collectors, and as a consequence, the artists he represented were all but unknown outside the United States.

It's encouraging to see European scholarship focusing on O'Keeffe, but the three essays in this book—one by an American scholar and two by Swiss scholars—are marred by Eurocentrism, unfamiliarity with American scholarship on O'Keeffe, and many factual errors: It's untrue that "O'Keeffe had no qualms about [making] commercial art"; there is no evidence that

O'Keeffe and Stieglitz "became lovers soon after" they met; Stieglitz's photos of her in the 1921 exhibition were not "always unnamed"; O'Keeffe first traveled to Santa Fe not in 1929 but in 1917; a blurred snapshot of O'Keeffe in Texas is misattributed to Stieglitz, who never went there, and so on. Moreover, the translations from German are remarkably poor. O'Keeffe is quoted as saying, "A hill or a tree don't make a good picture, just because they are a hill or a tree." Her actual words, before translation into German and back, are: "A hill or a tree cannot make a good painting just because it is a hill or a tree."

So—two more books on O'Keeffe, full of sumptuous illustrations, billowing with speculative commentary, and each one, like all those before it, offered as the latest word on the artist. There never will be a last word, of course, but it would have been nice to discover one patch of level ground, a place where *all* the facts were laid out clearly and unmistakably, so that ensuing discussions could be informed as well as imaginative.

>Roxana Robinson *is the author of* Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life *(1989), a* New York Times *Notable Book of the Year and a nominee for the National Book Critics Circle Award. A Guggenheim fellow, she is the author most recently of the novel* Sweetwater *(2003).*

Old Toxin, New Vessels

RISING FROM THE MUCK:
The New Anti-Semitism in Europe.
By Pierre-André Taguieff. Ivan R. Dee. 203 pp. $26

THE RETURN OF ANTI-SEMITISM.
By Gabriel Schoenfeld. Encounter. 193 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by Samuel G. Freedman

When Pope John Paul II visited Damascus in 2001, the Syrian dictator Bashar Assad welcomed him with an invocation of shared beliefs. The Jews, Assad told the pontiff, seek to "kill the principles of all religions with the same mentality in which they betrayed Jesus Christ." Perhaps it had escaped Assad's notice that the Roman Catholic Church disavowed the charge of deicide against Jews nearly 40 years earlier, amid the Second Vatican Council's reforms. Perhaps Assad overlooked the pope's remarkable personal efforts to reconcile Rome with Israel, culminating in his pilgrimage to the Western Wall and Yad Vashem. Or perhaps none of these realities mattered much to Assad, a Muslim only too eager to adopt an anti-Semitic doctrine that Catholicism had repudiated.

Both Pierre-André Taguieff and Gabriel Schoenfeld recount the Assad episode in their new books on the resurgence of anti-Semitism, for that moment concisely and vividly represents a passing of the torch of Jew hatred from its traditional home in Christian Europe to its contemporary base in the Muslim world. And because the Muslim world stretches from the immigrant slums of Paris through the Middle East and eastward to Malaysia, this bigotry has burgeoned into a truly global phenomenon. It is indulged by the Western European intelligentsia, accepted by the antiglobalism movement, and tolerated on American college campuses. It is bound

ever more tightly to opposition both to Israeli policies and to the American invasion of Iraq.

The revival of anti-Semitism as a lethal force barely a half-century after the Holocaust plainly merits examination and analysis. But the first wave of books and essays to take on the task, such as Phyllis Chesler's *The New Anti-Semitism* (2003), betrayed haste and settled for predictable indignation. In articles and public statements all but prophesying a second Holocaust, such normally excellent journalists as Ron Rosenbaum and Nat Hentoff played to the most primal Jewish fears.

These two new books—*Rising from the Muck*, by Taguieff, and *The Return of Anti-Semitism*, by Schoenfeld—outshine their predecessors and effectively complement each other. A French political scientist, Taguieff directs his attention to anti-Semitism in Europe; Schoenfeld, a senior editor of *Commentary* magazine, surveys the United States and the Muslim world as well as Europe. Taguieff writes from the standpoint of a supporter of the Oslo peace process, Schoenfeld from the political right. And while Schoenfeld proves himself the superior stylist, Taguieff presents the more supple analysis.

To remark on those differences is not to diminish the congruence of the authors' theses. Both demonstrate how the trappings of Christian Judeophobia—from the blood libel to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—have found avid exponents and audiences in the Islamic world. Pop songs, television series, religious schools, and intellectual journals traffic in stereotypes and conspiracy theories that would be laughable if so many Muslims did not take them so seriously.

Consider one emblematic example, which Schoenfeld cites from the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh*: "The Jewish people must obtain human blood so that their clerics can prepare the holiday pastries. . . . The victim must be a mature adolescent who is, of course, a non-Jew—that is, a Christian or a Muslim. His blood is taken and dried into granules. The cleric blends these granules into the pastry dough; they can also be saved for the next holiday."

Police investigate a World War I memorial to French Jewish soldiers defaced with Nazi slogans and swastikas in May 2004.

Such libels pervade not only Muslim countries proximate to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but those such as Pakistan and Malaysia that practice what Schoenfeld pungently calls "anti-Semitism without Jews." Most disturbingly, the flow of

Muslim immigrants into Western Europe has raised the scale of anti-Jewish agitation and violence there. According to Taguieff, the number of attacks on Jewish people or institutions in France leaped from nine in 1999 to 200 in the 12-month period starting in October 2000. These incidents, he persuasively maintains, were enabled by the French elites with their tut-tutting.

"Here were 'young people' living in France who said they were at war with the Jews, who said they hated the Jews and—to all appearances—really did hate them," Taguieff writes. "What do the new *bien-pensants* think about this? They say it is not their fault if 'young people' behave that way: Such attitudes or actions are, of course, regrettable, but they are also understandable if we remember that those involved are victims of 'exclusion' and 'discrimination.' To listen to their lawyers, and sometimes members of their family, these 'young people' spontaneously identify with Palestinians suffering from the arrogance and cruelty of a 'racist,' 'colonialist,' or 'fascist' Israel. It is necessary to understand them, to enter into dialogue with them, and above all not to humiliate them—to avoid at all costs provoking their just 'anger.'" A paragraph later, Taguieff goes on to conclude, "Indulgence therefore becomes the most widespread virtue, and it tends to lapse into a kind of hazy condonation."

Schoenfeld covers similar ground, and tries to extend the argument to the United States. He wisely avoids sounding the second-Holocaust alarm, even as he correctly points to the latitude given anti-Semitic activity on American campuses, from physical intimidation of Jewish students at San Francisco State University to the coddling of bigoted poet Tom Paulin at Columbia University. Like Taguieff, Schoenfeld shows how anti-Semites have taken on the slogan of "anti-Zionism" as a sort of protective coloration.

Still, Schoenfeld rounds up so many enemies that he weakens his argument. One can agree with him that Michael Lerner of *Tikkun* magazine made a noxious allusion to the Nazis when he disparaged Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories for just "following orders." Still, when one looks at the body of Lerner's life and work, including his son's service in the Israeli Defense Forces, does it really meet the litmus test of anti-Semitism or even Jewish self-hate? A more preposterous target is *The New Republic*'s Leon Wieseltier, whom Schoenfeld accuses of "dismiss[ing] fears of a new wave of anti-Semitism as nothing more than 'ethnic panic.'" Schoenfeld misrepresents an essay Wieseltier wrote—not swatting away all concerns about renewed anti-Semitism but, rather, taking issue with writers such as Rosenbaum and Hentoff who deem America capable of a Nazi-like assault on Jews. One cannot help but think that in targeting Wieseltier and Lerner, Schoenfeld seeks to identify not unpatriotic Jews but Jews who publicly supported the Oslo peace process and a negotiated two-state solution.

In a broader way, Schoenfeld does not grapple with the statistical evidence that incidents of anti-Semitism have increased markedly since late September 2000, when the Al-Aksa intifada began. Those facts are inconvenient, and so he ignores them. One need not blame the upsurge in anti-Semitism on Israeli policy to acknowledge that the anti-Semitism is deeply entwined with the internationalization of the intifada.

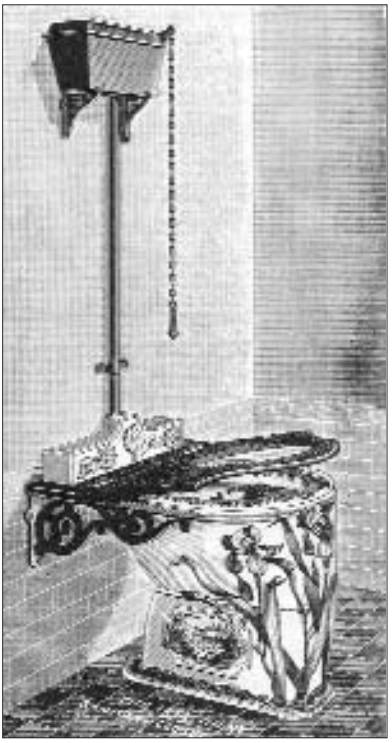
Schoenfeld is quite right that classic forms of Jew hatred took root in the Muslim world well before Yasir Arafat spurned peace at Camp David and Ariel Sharon paid his ill-considered visit to the Temple Mount. But that preexisting hatred was like a water table that would rise and fall depending on the climate. The public acceptability of Israel bashing in polite society, an acceptability that plainly has increased in the past four years, has allowed the latent Muslim anti-Semitism to emerge into public view and public violence. To say this is not to blame the victim but to comprehend the villain.

>Samuel G. Freedman, *a professor of journalism at Columbia University, is the author most recently of* Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry *(2000).*

INSIDE THE VICTORIAN HOME: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England.
By Judith Flanders. Norton. 499 pp. $34.95

We use "Victorian" as a synonym for "old-fashioned," but the strait-laced era between 1850 and 1890 was also a time of extraordinary progress. *Inside the Victorian Home* examines this buttoned-up but tumultuous period through the keyhole of each room in the middle-class British house.

Readers whose vision of Victorian domestic life derives from the aristocratic mansion of *Upstairs, Downstairs* will be taken aback by Judith Flanders's picture of the bourgeois home. In contrast to the industrial workplace, the Victorian house, presided over by Charles Dickens's "ministering angel to domestic bliss," was meant to be a clean, orderly sanctuary. For a middle-class woman, who often worked alongside her one or two servants, maintaining this ideal was a Sisyphean task.



An elaborate Victorian-era commode bearing a popular iris pattern.

By the end of the first chapter, which focuses on the bedroom, readers will have a new appreciation for their vacuum cleaners and washer-dryers. Simply protecting the bed from omnivorous vermin and omnipresent soot required constant, backbreaking vigilance: In addition to the ordeal of soaking, boiling, washing, bluing, and drying linens, Victorian homemakers were burdened with the task of turning and airing heavy horsehair mattresses. Considering the rigors of merely adequate housekeeping, Flanders concludes that, like most readers of *Martha Stewart Living* today, most Victorians regarded the daunting standards of the hugely popular *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1859–61) as "aspirational in nature."

The average Victorian kitchen was "a dark, miserable basement space, running with damp," writes Flanders. The scullery, where pots were scrubbed, was, well, Dickensian—and left largely to servants, including workhouse children, like the Orfling in *David Copperfield*, and an unfortunate third of the population of young London women. The dirty, brutal labor of the 12-hour days increasingly drew women away from domestic service to jobs in factories and shops.

The Victorian mistress had her own trials. Many a lady was sickly and subject to "nerves," surely not least because she wore up to 37 pounds of constricting clothing; the Rational Dress Society campaigned to limit the amount to a mere seven pounds. Female minds as well as bodies were cruelly corseted at puberty, when girls' home education mostly ceased.

Victorian men ruled the world. Even in the home, women's power was mainly confined to social spaces such as the drawing room, a formal place for the important business of receiving callers and impressing them with status symbols—the hostess's fern collection, for example, or her piano. The Victorian version of our family room was the dining room, used for after-dinner activities such as reading books and writing letters—the latter a major occupation before phones and e-mail.

Advances such as indoor plumbing and the microbe theory enabled the Victorians to link a hygienic home with high status

and morals. As Flanders observes, evangelist John Wesley's assertion that cleanliness is next to godliness "before the 19th century would simply have made no sense." Victorian children were the first to have their own rooms and furnishings, and many sanitary measures focused on the nursery. Domestic hygiene's sine qua non, however, was the new bathroom. Following the flush toilet's triumph at the Great Exhibition of 1851, fine china manufacturers such as Wedgwood and Doulton produced "lavatories" as gorgeous as dinnerware.

Inside the Victorian Home is an engaging, informative book. Its strength is Flanders's research, which encompasses the motto of Thomas Crapper's eponymous product ("A certain flush with every pull"), the sometimes-lethal use of opium for teething, the domestic observations of eminent Victorians such as Jane Carlyle and John Ruskin, and much else. Picky readers might sometimes wish for less matter and more art, but even they will never again see a Victorian house in the same old cozy, comfortable way.

—Winifred Gallagher

STALIN:
The Court of the Red Tsar.
By Simon Sebag Montefiore. Knopf.
785 pp. $30

In 1935, enchanted by Grigory Alexandrov's cheerful films (*The Jolly Fellows* left him feeling as if "I'd had a month's holiday"), Joseph Stalin decided to get personally involved in the director's work. Alexandrov had planned to call his next film *Cinderella*, but the Soviet dictator proposed 12 alternative titles. His favorite, which Alexandrov wisely adopted, was *Shining Path*. Stalin also decided to compose new lyrics for a song in the film, producing this verse:

> A joyful song is easy for the heart;
> It doesn't bore you ever;
> And all the villages small and big adore the song;
> Big towns love the tune.

Since Stalin had an excellent voice—one memoir suggests that he might have become a professional singer—the old brute can be imagined singing the lyrics to himself at his Kremlin desk.

Joseph Stalin

"The foundation of Stalin's power in the Party was not fear: it was charm," writes Simon Sebag Montefiore, a novelist and biographer. The father of the Gulag "worked hard to envelop his protégés in an irresistible embrace of folksy intimacy that convinced them there was no one he trusted more." The charm seems to have worked on the ladies, too. Stalin told one woman, "You should teach Soviet women how to dress!" This is Stalin unzipped, as it were, and for the first time a credible human character begins to emerge.

The book's mid-1930s vignettes provide all the more grisly a contrast to the period immediately after, when the purges get under way and we are back in the familiar territory of Stalin the psychopath. Montefiore develops this murderous phase in numbing detail, but his long interviews with descendants of Kremlin survivors and his excavations in family archives and memoirs manage to bring the horror to life. Some people seem to have been purged merely for their housing. When internal security commission chief Genrickh Yagoda fell, his successor, Nicolai Yezhov, took his apartment and Stalin assistant Vyach-

eslav Molotov took his dacha. The odious prosecutor Andrei Vyshinsky, having long envied a dacha owned by one Leonid Serebryakov, prosecuted him and took it. After Stalin's death, Serebryakov's relatives petitioned for the property's return and were granted half of it. The families of prosecutor and victim have been unhappy neighbors ever since.

Montefiore's tight focus on Stalin and his court produces some flaws of context. It is interesting to learn that when Mao Zedong visited Moscow in late 1949, on the eve of the Korean War, Molotov patronizingly quizzed him about Marxism and found that he had never read *Das Kapital*. But Montefiore wrongly assumes that Stalin didn't assist when the Chinese advanced against American troops in 1950. He provided air cover, and both Moscow and Washington conspired to hush up the consequences, including a U.S. Air Force raid on the Soviet base from which the MiG-15s were flying.

On the whole, though, Montefiore has produced a remarkable and riveting work, one that reminds us of the extraordinary continuity of Soviet life, despite the bloodletting. "The families of the grandees who remained in power, Mikoyans, Khrushchevs, and Budyonnys, are regarded as a Soviet aristocracy even now," he notes. Politics hardly seem to matter: "Nina Budyonny, still a Stalinist, is best friends with Julia Khrushcheva, who is not."

—Martin Walker

Contemporary Affairs

EMERGENCY SEX AND OTHER DESPERATE MEASURES: A True Story from Hell on Earth.
By Kenneth Cain, Heidi Postlewait, and Andrew Thomson. Miramax. 304 pp. $25.95

In the 1990s, as the number of United Nations peacekeeping and observer missions ballooned, hundreds of young people from the United States and elsewhere signed on. Some sought escape, adventure, and a substantial paycheck; others aspired to serve God by serving humanity; and a fair number—reciting "new world order" like a mantra—wanted to be part of the big effort to spread democracy.

At first, making peace seemed to be all about making love under an intense tropical sun, trying on different cultures like so many exotic outfits, living in colonial houses with cooks and maids, and partying with abandon and guiltless pleasure, secure in the knowledge that they were serving a righteous cause. Then came the spectacular failures of UN peacekeeping in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

The three authors—Kenneth Cain, a Harvard-trained lawyer, Heidi Postlewait, a New York social worker, and Andrew Thomson, a New Zealand doctor—met and became friends during their UN service. They tell of first arriving in conflict zones in half-disbelief. "I'm in a movie," Cain marvels as a Black Hawk helicopter takes him to Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. When UN colleagues there start to die, "it's not real," he thinks. "It's *M*A*S*H*; it's *China Beach*." Within weeks, several U.S. Black Hawks are shot down, and the United States and the United Nations recoil rather than retaliate. Illusions crumbling, the friends race to Haiti, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Liberia, where the United Nations and its most influential member, the United States, repeatedly place the safety of UN troops and workers over the needs of the people they have come, ostensibly, to serve. Hundreds of thousands of civilians die.

In vivid and intimate first-person accounts that range from a few paragraphs to 15 pages, the authors sequentially limn and reflect on experiences rarely exposed publicly. Cain arrives with a legal team in post-genocide Rwanda and, knowing that the UN had pulled out in the midst of the Hutus' massacres of the Tutsis just months earlier, finds himself ashamed to be there, assigned to beseech the survivors to treat genocide suspects more humanely. Postlewait describes the unsound security practices that

she believes led to the death of a colleague, contradicting the account in an official UN report. A year after UN peacekeeping forces stood by as thousands of men were killed in Srebrenica, Bosnia, Thomson arrives under the same UN flag to exhume the dead as evidence for war crimes prosecutions. He introduces himself to widows and other relatives. "When I tried to comfort them," he writes, "they turned on me screaming, spraying spittle into my face."

Although the three enjoy small victories and develop intense and rewarding relationships, they battle a sneaking suspicion that, in the absence of forceful intervention against brutality, the standard UN peacekeeping offerings—training human rights workers, documenting atrocities, setting up courts, and providing medical aid—only make matters worse. (Indeed, the UN commissioned an expert panel in 2000 to study its peacekeeping work and has subsequently adopted a number of reforms.) The authors' initial enthusiasm for international peacekeeping turns into a passion for bearing witness, and the ultimate verdict is not a pretty one. No wonder United Nations muckety-mucks are displeased with this book, and not only for its revelations of ineptitude, corruption, and hedonism in UN ranks.

"For me there's only one lesson," Thomson writes. "If blue-helmeted UN peacekeepers show up in your town or village and offer to protect you, run. Or else get weapons. Your lives are worth so much less than theirs."

—Sheri Fink

Arts & Letters

MYSELF AND STRANGERS: A Memoir of Apprenticeship.
By John Graves. Knopf. 235 pp. $24

First, a confession: I know John Graves, we sprang from the same Texas soil, we're in the same business, and I admire both the man and his work. So *Myself and Strangers*, based on a journal Graves kept from the mid-1940s through the 1950s, has a particular appeal for me. But even if you've never heard of John Graves, you're likely to enjoy his youthful preoccupations, worries, loves, searches, and encounters with a world not much with us anymore. "Old John"—now 83—occasionally breaks into a comment on "Young John," but fortunately he doesn't overuse that device or attempt to prettify his youthful actions and opinions.

In 1946, not long discharged from the U.S. Marines, in whose service he had lost his left eye in a firefight, Young John went to Mexico, "mainly because it was unconnected with my own personal background and it seemed to be a likely environment wherein to start getting my head straightened out," an effort that would "endure sporadically for another 10 long years." Graves didn't think of himself as a writer then, but he soon had the bug. While getting a master's degree in English at Columbia University, he started turning out short stories, the first of which "was taken, unbelievably, by *The New Yorker*." (In time, a failed attempt at a novel and a distaste for writing formula fiction for slick magazines turned him toward nonfiction.) He taught English at the University of Texas, found little pleasure in academia, and in 1953 began anew his roaming in Spain, France, England, Scotland, and elsewhere.

"What do I really have to say as a writer or a person?" Graves asked in his journal in 1954. "This era of suspended breathing and fright in which we live—how can you say anything worth saying about it? You'd be better off ranching or farming or doctoring or in some other of the unquestionable occupations. This mood will pass but it is relevant. I would like so God-damned much to write something worth writing, and if I had the conception I am now competent enough with words to do it. But the conception is hard to come by."

Graves didn't know it, but he had stated in his frustration a couple of the occupations he would both practice and write about: ranching and farming. What would make them possible was a book he would publish in 1960, the now-classic *Goodbye to a River*. Some of the royalties paid for 400 acres of land close to Glen Rose, Texas, not far from his

native Fort Worth. Graves named his acquisition Hard Scrabble; he wrote a book by that name in 1974, and later a collection of essays about making the place productive, *From a Limestone Ledge* (1980). He told of raising goats and cattle, clearing brush, keeping bees, mending fences, and the thousand and one other chores that I, as a Texas farm boy, considered agrarian torture and fled for good at age 13, but for which he had more tolerance.

Merce Cunnigham (in air) rehearsing with his dance troupe in 1957.

Graves wrote *Goodbye to a River* after paddling up the Brazos for three weeks with his little dachshund to bid farewell to a river he had explored all his life—both on the water and by land—before much of it was to be flooded out of existence by the construction of seven dams. He blended in history, folktales, Indian wars, the hardships of settlers, his youthful memories, and his mournful sense of loss. Ironically, much of what worried him never happened: The bureaucrats decided to build but one dam, not seven. Even so, John Graves got a fine book out of it, as well as the money to buy the hard-scrabble acres he still occupies four decades later. They don't call him "The Sage of Glen Rose" for nothing.

—Larry L. King

MERCE CUNNINGHAM: The Modernizing of Modern Dance. By Roger Copeland. Routledge. 304 pp. $26.95

"The high carriage, the flexible head, the level gaze, the ultra-articulated feet, the aura of sang-froid. . . ." This is not a description of classical ballet but of the first Merce Cunningham dance company, founded in 1953. Roger Copeland, professor of theater and dance at Oberlin College, sees in Cunningham an updated classicism and a welcome respite from the overwrought romanticism of modern dance as exemplified by Martha Graham.

For Graham, modern dance was a quest for "wholeness," the physical-emotional state of harmony presumed to exist among "primitive" people and to lie buried in the civilized unconscious. Its guiding spirit was Carl Jung, and as Copeland notes, it pervaded both modern dance and abstract expressionism—they shared a cult of spontaneous gesture and a commitment to art as an inner journey.

Toward abstract expressionism Copeland maintains a certain objectivity, but toward Graham's version of modern dance he is unapologetically dismissive, recalling his youthful aversion to its "primitivism": "The very *names* of [Graham's] characters, so literary, so burdened with overly generalized Meaning, tended to put me off: 'He Who Summons'; 'She of the Ground'; 'The One Who Speaks' . . . all of which made me feel like 'The One Whose Head Ached from Allegory.'"

Copeland's cure was "the icy, dandified virtuosity" of Cunningham, who, collaborating with composer John Cage, eschewed instinct, intuition, and inspiration in favor of random procedures, what Cage called "chance operations." The two men also severed the connection between movement and music: Cunningham's rigorously trained dancers moved in ways unrelated to Cage's music.

If Graham is the foil for the first half of Copeland's book, the foil for the second is the aesthetic that has largely supplanted Cunningham's high modernism: the diverse

impulses that fall under the heading of postmodernism. Many of the ideas and devices associated with postmodernism were actually part of modernism, such as collage (dating back to cubism) and the use of mass media (dating back to futurism). In this sense Cunningham, who, in 1989, at age 70, became the first modern dancer to use computer imaging, is both a modernist and a postmodernist.

Cunningham's distinctive way of working produced many beauties, not least because his dancers were so virtuosic. Copeland is at his eloquent best when defending the sheer aesthetic power of this "modernized" modern dance. Unfortunately, he also feels obliged to defend Cunningham against critics who fault him for insufficient political engagement. Apparently, it's not enough to create works of grace, clarity, and intelligence; the artist must also liberate human perception, illuminate the future of technology, reconcile the human soul with the fragmented universe, and dispense wisdom in the wake of 9/11. So intent is Copeland on crediting Cunningham with that menu of accomplishments, he accepts the postmodernist maxim that an art of feeling is no longer possible because our psyches have been fatally "conditioned" by advertising and corporate-controlled media.

Of course, as Copeland points out, this postmodernist distrust of emotion does not extend to identity politics, in which issues of race and gender provide a pretext for dancers to wallow in depths of subjectivity unplumbed even by Graham. Distaste for such excesses is no doubt what drives Copeland to place so much emphasis on the "icy" aspect of Cunningham. But as this fascinating book also shows, it takes emotional maturity, even wisdom, to create an art that is deadpan without being dead, cool without being cold. Surely this will be the true legacy of Merce Cunningham.

—Martha Bayles

DANTE IN LOVE: The World's Greatest Poem and How It Made History.
By Harriet Rubin. Simon & Schuster. 274 pp. $23.95

With an approach that is at once historical and incantatory, Harriet Rubin, author of *The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women* (1998), matches the notoriously meager facts of Dante Alighieri's life to his composition of the *Divine Comedy*. In 1302, age 37, Dante—a statesman and a relatively unknown poet—was banished from his home in Florence because of a factional feud. He spent the remaining 19 years of his life on an endless journey and never returned to Florence.

Exile was an agony. Cities were walled and unwelcoming, the paths between them dangerous, and much of Italy without a common language. "The dialects were fiercely different, sometimes from city to city, sometimes from neighborhood to neighborhood," writes Rubin. The grace of Dante's Florentine tongue, which had won him power and influence at home, was worthless.

Early in his wanderings, he decided that "we are all exiles" from God. His journey became allegory, and the *Comedy* began to take shape. In Paris, the astounding cathedrals of the High Middle Ages—these "books in stone," with their ornate architecture climbing into the sky—provided a model for his work. Ravenna, Italy, where exile was sweetened by a comfortable home, helped him imagine an earthly paradise. But it was the dialects of exile that exerted the greatest impact. They encouraged Dante to create a new language, at once literary and broadly accessible. The *Comedy*, the first major work written in this "illustrious vulgar," would change the trajectory of literature, paving the way for vernacular authors from Chaucer to Whitman.

But what's love got to do with it? Yes, Dante loved Beatrice—a well-to-do Florentine who became "the goddess of [his] imagination"—but she had died a dozen years before his banishment. His enduring devotion to her, Rubin contends, is what induced Dante to write. This weak echo of *Shakespeare in Love*, in which only Gwyneth Paltrow can inspire the Bard to finish *Romeo and Juliet*, is hardly as compelling as Rubin's taut reading of the influence of exile on the *Comedy*.

The real love here is Rubin's passion for Dante. She follows him relentlessly and imagines what he saw, from the "hallucinatory sputter of a monastery candle" to his beatific vision of paradise. Combined with her erudition and wit, this love makes Rubin a trustworthy Virgil to guide us through Dante's exile.

—Nicholas Hengen

Science & Technology

DEGREES KELVIN: A Tale of Genius, Invention, and Tragedy.
By David Lindley. Joseph Henry Press. 366 pp. $27.95

Although no longer celebrated, William Thomson (1824–1907) was widely hailed in the 19th century as Britain's greatest scientist. A mathematical prodigy, he published original work at the age of 16. He was knighted a half-century later as Lord Kelvin—the first British scientist elevated to the peerage—and at his death was buried in Westminster Abbey alongside Isaac Newton.

William Thomson, Lord Kelvin

The dust jacket predicts that *Degrees Kelvin* will become the "definitive biography" of this brilliant man. But David Lindley, the author of *Boltzmann's Atom* (2001), reveals little about Thomson's day-to-day existence and does not try to dramatize his personality. Of Thomson's two marriages, the reader learns little more than that his depressive first wife wrote graveyard verse and that his second wife seems to have been cheery. Tellingly, Thomson left behind some 150 green notebooks full of scientific ideas and mathematical calculations—"but nothing personal," reports Lindley. Likewise, *Degrees Kelvin* records not so much Thomson's life as his thinking.

As Lindley impressively shows, however, Thomson thought incessantly and productively. A founder of thermodynamics—the study of the relationship between heat and work—he gave this fundamental science its name and established the existence of an absolute zero of temperature. (A thermometric calibration system based on absolute zero is called the Kelvin scale.) His purchase of a yacht, in 1870, meant not only boating pleasure but a new range of scientific questions to investigate, particularly the compass deviations caused by the ever-increasing amounts of iron used in ship construction. A technologist as much as a scientist, Thomson invented what was eventually adopted as the official compass of the Royal Navy. As a professor at Glasgow University—for 50 years—he coauthored the first undergraduate textbook on classical physics, which was also the first textbook to address such subjects as sound, light, heat, and magnetism as parts of a single discipline.

Lindley treats with lucid precision Thomson's part in scientific debates and projects of the time. Thomson traded published charges and countercharges with geologists and biologists in the heated controversy over the age of the planet Earth. Active in the years-long international effort to establish transatlantic telegraph communications, he worked on a theory of the transmission of a pulse of electricity through an insulated underwater cable. During several visits to the United States he lectured, met Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse, and was invited to head a commission to study the practicality of generating electricity from Niagara Falls.

Lindley thoughtfully evaluates the "tragedy": Thomson's decline into relative obscurity. He sees the scientist's ever-active imagination as constrained by an unwillingness to take risky leaps. Living into a new era of physics that brought intimations of quantum theory and relativity, Thomson clung to his outdated view of a strictly mechanical universe, continued to maintain that the Earth was no more than a hundred million years old, refused to accept James Clark Maxwell's universally recognized theory of electromagnetism, and expressed reserva-

tions about the existence of atoms. In growing intellectual isolation, this once-celebrated scientist became "something of a crank," Lindley concludes, "a living fossil."

—Kenneth Silverman

OPENING SKINNER'S BOX: Great Psychological Experiments of the Twentieth Century.
By Lauren Slater. Norton. 276 pages. $24.95

In the 1940s, psychologist B. F. Skinner put his daughter in a Plexiglas box he called the "Heir Conditioner." His theory, which launched one of the longest-running debates in psychology, was that scientists could shape human behavior through controlled environments and rewards. Skinner conditioned rats to press levers and cats to play piano, and he's reviled for trying to control humans through science. As the story goes, he was somehow connected to the Nazis, and his daughter Deborah, raised in the box, lost her mind at 31, sued him, then shot herself in a bowling alley.

But according to Lauren Slater, a psychologist and the author of *Prozac Diary* (1998), that story is mostly myth. With her new book, she hopes to set the record straight about Skinner and other experimental psychologists. In 10 seamlessly woven essays, she outlines the history of well-known, mostly infamous studies and explains what they have taught us. And she does so with writing that alternates between stunningly original (people go into "moral overdrive"; the sun is "lanced of its light") and downright annoying (rivers go "smash smash"; her heart goes "clippety clop").

As always, Slater weaves fascinating stories: an adrenalin-junkie lobotomist "rid[es] high with his knife, not bothering to sterilize his instruments"; Stanley Milgram studies obedience to authority by directing subjects to administer what they think are electric shocks to screaming victims (actually actors). In the book's strongest essay, Slater—a former institutionalized patient—repeats a 1970s experiment by faking psychiatric symptoms to see whether she can get committed. (She can't, though she gets prescribed a total of 25 anti-psychotics and 60 antidepressants.) In another essay, she takes morphine daily and then stops cold turkey to test whether it's physically addictive (she decides it's not).

Unfortunately, when not writing about herself, Slater relies heavily on speculation that smacks of shoddy reporting. An example: She sets out to find Skinner's daughter Deborah (who didn't kill herself) but gives up after a few calls and then speculates wildly about Deborah's life and mental stability. This approach does nothing to right the historical record, but the debate it has inspired might actually do so: Shortly after the book's publication in March, an infuriated Deborah Skinner wrote a scathing rebuttal in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Since then, several scientists have written articles, reviews, and letters charging Slater with "outright fabrications." Some of the "fabrications" are indisputable errors, while others are simply the author's interpretations of controversial people and events.

Along with recounting the psychologists' experiments, Slater aims to address "the boldest questions" that they raise. If you follow orders to inflict pain on someone, she wonders, are you immoral? Are you not free? Good questions, but others also demand attention: What does morality dictate when questionable experiments produce valuable findings? And are human research subjects ever truly free?

In defending many of the controversial psychologists and their experiments, Slater takes some daring stances—such as saying that Antonio Egas Moniz, who plucked subjects from mental wards to try out his new procedure, the lobotomy, "gave us a way out of pharmacology," for which we should thank him. But it's just not that simple. Historically, many important scientific advances, including some recounted in this book, have been made at the cost of human dignity, human sanity, and human lives. It's impossible to dismiss the results, but it's critical to take account of the darkness of their origins. Slater illuminates the history and the importance of psychological research, but she leaves to readers an assessment of the ethics.

—Rebecca Skloot

SECRETS OF THE SOUL: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis.
By Eli Zaretsky. Knopf. 429 pp. $30

According to a widely told if unconfirmed story, Sigmund Freud, while on the boat to America in 1909 to deliver a series of lectures at Clark University, discovered a cabin boy reading *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901). Freud had an epiphany: He was about to become famous. He spent the rest of the voyage simplifying his planned lectures on *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) so that they might appeal to the masses, "at times condensing his theories almost to the point of caricature," writes Eli Zaretsky, a professor of history at New School University. Something similar might be said of Zaretsky's own book, which simplifies ruthlessly—at one point summarizing a thousand-page work in a half-page—without quite lapsing into caricature.

Zaretsky aims not merely to recount the tumultuous history of psychoanalysis, from before Freud coined the word in 1896 to the present, but to explore its relationship to the larger sociopolitical world. "Almost instantly recognized as a great force for human emancipation," he writes, "it played a central role in the modernism of the 1920s, the English and American welfare states of the 1940s and '50s, the radical upheavals of the 1960s, and the feminist and gay liberation movements of the 1970s." Art, architecture, philosophy, foreign affairs—all, he argues, were influenced by psychoanalytic concepts, most notably the idea that a person's inner life is organized through symbols, narratives, and motivations particular to that person alone. To Zaretsky, such concepts reflect the era of their birth, which saw the Victorian family crumble, class-based identity weaken, and individualism and consumption become paramount.

In the United States, the practice of Freudian psychoanalysis peaked around 1950 and then began a slow decline. The introduction of cheap and effective psychotropic drugs—above all, Prozac in 1987—proved all but fatal. In 1988, the psychoanalytically oriented Chestnut Lodge in Maryland was found liable for having unsuccessfully treated with analysis a depressed patient who was later cured with medication. By 1993, a *Time* magazine cover was posing the question, "Is Freud Dead?" Though it's tempting to say yes, remnants of Freud's thought actually survive all around us. To take but one example, Michel Gondry's recent film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* is built on Freud's theory of the unconscious: Memory fragments are most powerful and enduring when the incident that left them behind is not perceived.

Freud's ideas remain more vital in Europe. "Every intellectual in France today reads Freud seriously," Zaretsky writes, perhaps overstating the case. This continued popularity is largely attributable to Jacques Lacan, whose seminars on Freud, starting in 1951 and continuing until his death three decades later, attracted Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Foucault. Such was Lacan's charisma that many of his disciples were evi-

dently untroubled by his methods as a psychoanalyst, which ranged from the unorthodox to the unethical: He tried to explain the psyche mathematically, ate dinner while seeing patients, and conducted five-minute sessions while billing for a full hour.

In the introduction to *Secrets of the Soul*, Zaretsky writes that modernity promised autonomy, the emancipation of women, and democracy. He sees little basis for hoping that the three promises will be fulfilled anytime soon. "When we search for optimism today, we need to look inward," he writes. It's at once good advice and bad: We may discover the formula for freedom but be left emancipated only in the realm of thought.

—Erica Crowell

Religion & Philosophy

PREACHING EUGENICS: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement.
By Christine Rosen. Oxford Univ. Press. 286 pp. $35

There's a special thrill of disgust that comes from contemplating how close one's own society came to adopting ideas later identified as among history's most repellent. Christine Rosen, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, courts this thrill in her account of how some American clergymen in the first decades of the 20th century took up, preached, and ultimately discarded a range of ideas that went under the name *eugenics*. The linking of clerics, particularly liberal clerics, with eugenics is certainly provocative. Even more provocative is Rosen's thesis that liberal clerics were especially susceptible to eugenic ideas because they had forsaken solid theology in favor of the Social Gospel—the idea that religion should strive not just to change individual hearts but to combat social injustice. A belief in the perfectibility of society, this argument runs, led naturally to an interest in perfecting the human material that composes it.

But did American preachers endorse anything like the eugenics that the Nazis later made notorious, or for that matter the eugenics that enthusiastic laypeople were espousing in the United States? Rosen's otherwise interesting book suffers badly from its vagueness on this point. On the one hand, we are told, American eugenicists "called for programs to control human reproduction. They urged legislatures to pass laws to segregate the so-called feebleminded into state colonies . . . they supported compulsory state sterilization laws aimed at men and women whose 'germplasm' threatened the eugenic vitality of the nation; they led the drive to restrict immigration from countries whose citizens might pollute the American melting pot." On the other hand, branches of the eugenics tree "grew to include . . . health reform, sex hygiene, radical sex reform, marriage counseling, antivice campaigns, 'fitter family' contests, the child-rearing advice industry, and, eventually, the birth control movement."

In the vast majority of Rosen's examples, it's these latter, milder "branches" to which the clergy clung. She's not entirely forthright in distinguishing root from branch, either: A whole chapter is devoted to clergymen's support for mandatory health certificates for couples wishing to marry, a measure not only not "eugenic" (Rosen eventually concedes in passing that it's closer to "hygienic"), but still considered unremarkable today. She catalogues prominent liberal ministers, Reform rabbis, and even a few Catholic priests who lent their names to organized eugenics groups or took part in a national "eugenics sermon contest"; again, though, they seem mostly to have confined themselves to the gentler forms of social direction and the scientific-sounding flourishes that the eugenics vocabulary gave their rhetoric.

"Unlike the pitched battles over evolutionary theory," Rosen observes, "in the eugenics movement, religion and science met on common ground." But that common ground, the desire to purge society of

human imperfection and human suffering, was—as she rightly notes—illusory. Trying to link eugenics and religion, some divines were led into strange contradictions, wondering, for instance, whether traditional Christian charity actually hurt humanity by helping the weak survive. By 1930, an improved understanding of genetics had undercut the basic concepts on which eugenics relied, and the movement ran out of steam in the United States well before Hitler and hindsight made the very word radioactive. The preachers in Rosen's story abandoned the eugenics vocabulary as well—more evidence that most of them had simply been parroting conventional wisdom.

Rosen never does draw a convincing link between eugenics and the liberal Social Gospel. The political landscape she sketches might have been fuller had she discussed the more conservative-leaning doctrines generally referred to as social Darwinism. But she tells an intriguing story nonetheless, a useful counterpoint to the standard narrative of science and religion at perpetual loggerheads.

—Amy E. Schwartz

CONTRIBUTORS

Martha Bayles, who teaches humanities in the honors program at Boston College, is writing a book about how aesthetic standards are developed and sustained in democratic culture. **Erica Crowell** is writing a brief biography of the psychoanalyst Otto Will and a novel based on the life of Indian mathematician Srinivara Ramanujan. **Sheri Fink**, the author of *War Hospital: A True Story of Surgery and Survival* (2003), has worked with humanitarian organizations in the Balkans, Iraq, and elsewhere. **Winifred Gallagher** is the author of *The Power of Place: How Our Surroundings Shape Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Actions* (1993) and the forthcoming *No Place Like Home: A Psychological House Tour*. **Nicholas Hengen** is a former researcher at *The Wilson Quarterly*. **Larry L. King** is writing a biography of his late *Harper's* magazine editor, friend, and fellow writer Willie Morris. **Amy E. Schwartz** writes about cultural issues for *The Washington Post* and other publications. **Kenneth Silverman** is the author most recently of *Lightning Man: The Accursed Life of Samuel F. B. Morse* (2003). **Rebecca Skloot**, a contributing editor of *Popular Science*, is the author of the forthcoming *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. **Martin Walker** is editor in chief of United Press International.

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PORTRAIT: The English Garden

"How fair is a garden amid the trials and passions of existence," Benjamin Disraeli once remarked. More than one writer has looked for insight into Britain behind its garden walls. Jenny Uglow writes, in *A Little History of British Gardening* (North Point Press, 2004), "The shape of gardening history is like a cone balanced on its end. To begin with the circle is narrow, a mere drop, a handful of British and Roman gardeners who cleared a space to grow things for pleasure as well as produce. Up through the centuries the circle widens, like the growth of British society itself. . . . And if you filled the cone with plants instead of gardeners, century by century the same would be true—this second cornucopia would gradually be filled, layer by layer, with flowers and shrubs and fruit and trees and vegetables brought here by trade and empire and looting, from Europe, the Americas, the Cape, Australasia, and China."

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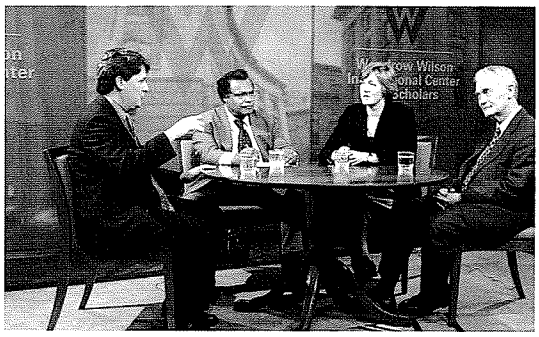

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