

strengthen the decision? Or would *Brown* have been a stronger opinion had the Court simply asserted a constitutional principle without seeking the additional ballast?

Critical commentary has increasingly endorsed the latter view, partly because, as Jackson notes in his valuable new book, “the idea that social scientists’ testimony in *Brown* was unfounded has become the dominant understanding.” But Jackson, a professor of communication at the University of Colorado at Boulder, wants to correct that understanding. He argues that “the social scientists made very limited claims” in their testimony—stressing, for example, “that the problem of [psychological] damage arising from discrimination was exceedingly complex, and that it undoubtedly was intertwined with countless other aspects of society”—and that almost all of the claims were fully justified.

The one exception arose in testimony by Kenneth B. Clark, a professor at City College of New York. In a series of “doll tests,” Clark gave African American children black and white dolls, identical except for skin color, and asked them to choose the “nice” doll, the “bad” doll, and so on. Clark was “only one of dozens of expert witnesses” who testified in the four cases that together made up *Brown*—from South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and Kansas—and his *Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development* (1950) was only one of seven social science studies that the Court cited. But the doll tests ended up symbolizing, and tainting, all of the social science evidence.

Ordinarily a rigorous and objective social scientist, Clark “stepped over the bounds of proper scientific procedure and into the realm of advocacy,” Jackson writes. Testifying in the Delaware case, he misrepresented his findings. Elsewhere, he seemed capable of construing contradictory responses on the part of his African American subjects—choosing either the black doll or the white doll as the “bad” one—as proof of psychological damage. “The doll tests became the lightning rod for criticism of the social scientists’ role,” Jackson observes, “and were perhaps the weakest part of the social science evidence in the *Brown* litigation.”

Despite a few troubling errors—for example, a reference to the equal protection clause of the Fifth Amendment (only the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees equal protection)—*Social Scientists for Social Justice* is a thoughtful and original book. Early chapters trace how social scientists were galvanized by “Hitler’s rise to power, the struggle against Nazi ideology, and the perceived need to unify the nation behind the war effort.” These self-described “social engineers” grew convinced that racial prejudice threatened the democratic order. Their most important contribution to *Brown*, a statement filed with the Supreme Court in late 1952, was persuasive because of its neutral, dispassionate tone. Indeed, the doll tests notwithstanding, these social engineers succeeded in their task by functioning “as both objective scientists and effective advocates.”

—DAVID J. GARROW

ARTS & LETTERS

HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND ALIENATE PEOPLE.

By Toby Young. Da Capo Press. 340 pp. \$24

“When *The Front Page* was first produced in 1926,” Young writes, “the *New York Times* theater critic Walter Kerr described the essence of Burns’s appeal as”—stop there: The sentence already contains two factual errors. *The Front Page* premiered in 1928, at which time Walter Kerr was 15 years old. In a one-sentence footnote on the same page of

his memoir, Young tops himself with three mistakes: “When Harold Ross originally conceived of *The New Yorker* in 1922 it was going to be subtitled: ‘Not for the little old lady from Dubuque.’” The magazine was planned in 1924; the phrase was a characterization in the prospectus, never a potential subtitle, and its actual wording was “*The New Yorker* will be the magazine which is not edited for the old lady in Dubuque.”

I break with convention and point out some of Young’s tangential errors at the beginning

rather than the end of this review because they seem germane to the argument. In 1995, Young, an Englishman then 32 years old, was hired to come to New York and join the staff of *Vanity Fair*. The magazine's editor, Graydon Carter, fired him after about two years, a period in which, Young readily acknowledges, he contributed next to no writing, messed up nearly all the administrative tasks he was assigned, and committed a series of other blunders, including bringing in a stripper on Take Your Daughter to Work Day. He does not seek to absolve himself completely from responsibility for his flame-out, but mostly he blames *Vanity Fair* (in his view, an upscale supermarket tabloid under the thumb of publicists for the celebrities it covers), New York journalists ("pinched and hidebound careerists who never got drunk and were safely tucked up in bed by 10 p.m."), and America itself (in the grips of a politically correct tyranny of the majority, much as Alexis de Tocqueville predicted).

But a reading of the book suggests an alternate view: that Young failed because he turned out to be a lazy and undistinguished magazine writer. True, *Vanity Fair* prints its share—more than its share—of celebrity nonsense. But the readers, and consequently the ads, pulled in by the fluff have allowed the magazine to be one of the few in the world with a commitment to the long, exhaustively reported narrative. That isn't Young's kind of thing—if he couldn't be bothered to spend 17 seconds on the Internet checking the opening date of *The Front Page*, how could he be expected to hunt through dusty archives, travel to war zones, or hound stonewalling sources? No, he came to America in order to cover and hang around with celebrities. It's just that he wanted to do it *the right way*, which in his mind had something vaguely to do with the Algonquin Round Table, *The Front Page*, and Jimmy Stewart's character in *The Philadelphia Story*. The trouble is, there *is* no right way to cover celebrities, or rather, to the extent that there is, it has nothing to do with good journalism, good writing, or being able to take a good look at yourself in the mirror.

I don't want to give the impression that Young is unfailingly self-righteous. His first impulse is always to make himself the butt of the joke, and most of the book consists of entertaining anecdotes about his spectacular and mundane failures in the workplace and else-

where. (My favorite ends with Diana Ross screaming at him for hogging a pay phone at the *Vanity Fair* Oscar party.) After much pain and humiliation he eventually acquires a bit of self-knowledge, which he sketches in a deft shift from comedy to something like introspection.

Indeed, Young gets into trouble only when he tries to make a point about something other than himself. So enjoy *How To Lose Friends and Alienate People* for the comic set pieces, but as soon as you encounter the words *Tocqueville* or *Algonquin*, skip to the next chapter.

—BEN YAGODA

ME AND SHAKESPEARE:

Adventures with the Bard, A Memoir.

By Herman Gollob. Doubleday. 341 pp.
\$26

Gollob's epiphany about William Shakespeare came rather late in life. But when it did come, it hit with great force, making him feel what Celia feels in *As You Like It*: "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all hooping!"

Gollob spent his career with words, first as a theatrical agent, then as a literary agent, and finally as a book editor, but only after retiring did he become a serious student of Shakespeare. And, soon, a teacher of Shakespeare as well, as a part-time instructor at Caldwell College in New Jersey. In this "out of all hooping" book, his grace in writing, excitement in discovery, and adoration—"the passion I'd begun to develop for Shakespeare was a mystical experience, a religious experience"—most resemble those of another great Bardologist, British columnist Bernard Levin, author of the similarly enthralling *Enthusiasms* (1983). Both men are blessed with an abundance of life force, and both know how to write a terrific book.

Along with his stimulating and contagious enthusiasm, Gollob provides insights into Shakespearean characters that are sound and often stunning, as when he compares Coriolanus to Douglas MacArthur. He notes that Shakespeare's main characters leave the stage different—usually broader, deeper, kinder—than they entered it. In this sense, Gollob himself becomes a Shakespearean character. Like Hamlet, Portia, Petruchio, Henry V, Antony, Prospero, and others, he suffers, learns,