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ON THE COVER

A Canada goose family nested on the English Coulee that flows through the campus of the University of North Dakota. Unlike typical ducks the male and female geese are similar in appearance, and both parents help to protect and educate their goslings.

Rick Tonder of the University took this photograph in June 2009.

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North Dakota Quarterly

Higher Education

Volume 75, Number 2 Spring 2008

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John Chapman Crawford
1926 - 2009
Colleague, friend, scholar

REMINISCENCE

During the Summer
After the Spring
Before Autumnal endings
Winter here,
I rest in the endless comfort
Of a pomegranate tree
In southern Mexico
With you.

By John C. Crawford

Introduction:
Lower Education

Of course "Higher Education" doesn't exist apart from "Lower Education" on which its higher relative builds and from which it emerges. One might assume that the label of that second category exists, apart from its being a logical counterpart and complement to its "higher" related modifier. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* does include and define *higher education* as postsecondary or college and university education. But neither I nor presumably any of that prestigious dictionary's editors have heard or read of *lower education* in common usage. Perhaps you and I, dear readers and contributors, have herewith begun to qualify that term and concept for future dictionaries. If so do we not need to accept some responsibility for this lexical addition, including social, intellectual, historical, and philosophical bases for its heretofore omission or neglect? Merely to deny *its* need in our language (we've got along well enough without it?) seems lazy and obviously ignores the histories of how languages continually grow by adopting or adapting new words that denote new things like *computers*, *AIDS*, and *atom bombs* or new ideas or phenomena like *evolution*, *egocentrism*, *equality*, and *consilience* (as in Edward O. Wilson's contribution here).

If higher education is *postsecondary*, what is *presecondary* if not lower?—at least as a complement to *primary* and *secondary*?—as *junior high* was pre-senior high until it was replaced by *middle school* probably for the same reason including a hierarchy of importance and need. Lower education functions as a rudimentary introduction to reading, writing, and arithmetic and leads on in progressive stages to the genuine article deserving of impressive buildings (with laboratories and libraries), faculty (with assorted degrees from notable and prestigious universities), and a circle of adventitious and parasitic activities such as fraternities and sororities, athletic teams and facilities, alumni events and promotional (not educational) publications. Such higher institutions can achieve distinction and contribute in many progressive if usually indirect ways to humanity at large through research and the advancement of learning in many fields, but not through the investments in the generally anti-intellectual and increasingly expensive settings of American colleges and universities with their split personalities in which what we might agree is clearly and centrally educational and yet clearly and decentrally peripheral to *learning* (that simple word rich in subtle power).

This division no doubt has historical sources in the higher learning of the past, and certainly the division should in no way be judgmental of the potential worth of, for example, fraternal and athletic activities of

assumed relevance for affective and physical development of minds and bodies. Yet are not such activities really "lower," even lower in intellectual and educational terms to the basics of "reading, writing, and arithmetic" that in their elementary and subsequent variously named fields become truly higher, superior, more deserving of our time, effort, and support than the adventitious?

Perhaps the question would be moot if our common divisions into "higher" and "lower" were reflective of truly different, even independent, categories and not two parts of a whole organic process of ideal education for a culture, a country, a citizenry encompassing all of our lives. And what the ideal and ideals should be are not given (already understood and agreed to) but should be part of an ongoing subject of *education* itself and its ongoing eternal pursuit.

Here is a contemporary instance illustrating our indifference and how we often address specific educational issues piecemeal and in irrational ways. It is based on a 2009 California AP report but seems to have national relevance as many other States face similar concerns centering on the closing of small public schools for solely *economic* reasons. The bases are dwindling enrollments because of population shifts from rural to urban areas. *Costs* per pupil thus mount in rural schools, but busing can transport students to consolidated schools, class sizes can be increased, the school year can be shortened, teachers can be laid off, libraries can be closed, sports reduced or eliminated, electives such as music and art scrapped, and education (on the lower end at least) will be more *cost effective.*

The first chapter of Henry Thoreau's *Walden* is "Economy." Works like it contain wisdom probably not in MBA curricula, but critics of targeting rural schools for elimination or reduction note that alternatives such as busing not only put students on longer commutes but also lead to parents being less involved in school matters. More importantly, studies conclude that students in small schools have better grades and lower dropout rates than those in larger schools. But administrative and legislative educational decisions seem comically irrelevant to what is most important to the long-term health and growth of our lives and our hopes for our people, our nation, our culture.

Bob Wells, executive Director of the Association of California School Administrators, said, "If we really cared about raising student achievement, we'd be creating more small schools, not less" (*Grand Forks* [ND] *Herald*, March 14, 2009, B-1). But Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the California legislature reduced K-12 budgets by 10% as prelude to the rural cutbacks. Very likely the citizenry outside the rural areas will support the *economy* as *cost effective*, if not quality effective. How cost effective is the NCAA annual March Madness basketball tournament? The

NASA space program? U.S. military involvements worldwide? Incarceration rates and prison budgets that are reportedly the highest per capita in the world? One may conclude that our hope for high quality (lower) public education is not, unlike some other public programs such as these, cost effective. We can at least hope that by considering our public education as (potentially, at least) an organic whole and deserving of study and action within a broad cultural and holistic context, this journal's small but sincerely conceived assortment of views may contribute to an ongoing dialog. Perhaps we could next address other language sleights-of-hand like "the bottom line" and "supply and demand" and "the American Dream" that hypocritically stand in for and defy reason and morality.

THOMAS VAN NORTWICK

Living in the Moment:

A Teacher's Thoughts on Higher Education

Every teacher knows the moment. Your student's face lights up as the idea you've been nudging forward for weeks suddenly settles in. The world inside her head is rearranged to make room for this new thing. She turns to look at you, and the idea travels back, transformed by her experience of it. It doesn't matter what the idea is, a chemical formula, how metaphor works, string theory. In this moment, all knowledge is one thing, the vehicle for sharing a new world, created in the matrix of you, your student, and the idea. Well into my fourth decade of teaching, I feel with increasing force that finally this experience powers everything I do at Oberlin. The rest, curricula, committees, letters of recommendation, meetings, talking, talking, talking, all pile up over its glowing ember. If they should ever snuff it out, I'll be finished with my work here.

Sometimes the connection is fragmented by time and circumstance. You make your way through the stories, asking, listening, weaving the tapestry with your students, bright with the colors of their curiosity and excitement. They write the papers, you read them, and they drift out of sight. Years pass, and then you get a letter. He lives in New York or Boston now, has married and begun a family. Something he's read prompts a memory of the course he took with you those many years ago, something the two of you discovered that has suddenly reignited and he wants to tell you how important it was to him then, is perhaps now. In his thoughtfulness, the moment comes to fruition, the idea traveling back to you across the years, a new world of then and now.

The "state of higher education," my assigned topic, would seem to be some distance from these musings. What about the impact of the Internet on literacy? Socio-economic factors influencing student learning? The crushing cost of a college education for all but the wealthiest families? All those children left—or not—behind? These things color my work as a teacher, to be sure. The flattening out of the cultural landscape on the Internet, for instance, presents major challenges. Facts and factoids float

alluringly in cyberspace, beckoning paper-writers. The entire concept of plagiarism loses definition in such an amorphous milieu. If everyone's life and thoughts are available on Facebook, what's the big deal about borrowing a few helpful phrases? *Wikipedia* looks just like *Encyclopedia Britannica* online. Spelling and syntax are expressions of personal taste.

But now I am channeling the Cranky Old Person, someone I'd prefer to leave out of this essay. Get over it, gramps. Instead, let's think about whether anything has changed in the past three decades to imperil the arrival of that moment. Since I have only worked in one place (with the exception of a lovely interlude in the Pacific Northwest), I'll have to keep my focus local, here at Oberlin College, in my classroom.

Well, I'm a lot older and less hip than I was in 1974. But looking like their grandfather is maybe not such a bad thing for me. Standing in front of them as an insecure 27-year-old could stir competitive juices in all of us, something not conducive to the kind of connection that accompanies the moment. And tapping, in middle age, into their feelings about parents has its own dangers. But now if I say something hopelessly dated or forget what we were supposed to be doing in class, it's cute. Every student has a personal relationship with each of his or her teachers, however skewed by ignorance or unexamined emotions on either side. Teachers may cherish the illusion that they are neutral purveyors of information, but that delivery system floats in a bath of subjectivity, many of its effects beyond our control. I loved every course I took from Lionel Pearson, a transplanted Englishman who taught at Stanford from 1940 to 1973. He was a brilliant man, with an international reputation as a historian of classical Greece. I studied with him as both an undergraduate and later in pursuit of my doctorate. And if I am honest about what drew me to him, I would have to say that first of all it was his voice, the timbre, the fruity-sounding Oxbridge accent, the cadence. As soon as he opened his mouth, he had me.

So it was with all the men who drew me out of my anxious insouciance into the world of ideas. That they were all men is partly a matter of the demographics of higher education—there's something that has changed—but also because I was looking for models. Looking for ways *to be* in this world was, for me, not a matter of gathering objective information, but of finding men who embodied a certain engagement with and passion for something beyond money and sex (though I wouldn't have said no to either, if they were forced on me). Charles Beye, my Latin professor sophomore year and another hypnotic talker, could not have been much more different from Lionel, in affect at least. Mercurial, uninhibited, worldly, Charley was often at his most mesmerizing to me when he was *not* talking about Virgil, but rather expatiating on the flesh tones in a

Rubens painting or dismissing the first astronauts as robots. Here, I said to myself, is a life lived to the overflowing. Of course ideas were carried along in the flood of his conversation, coated with sophistication, with irrepressible *joie de vivre*.

The point here is that Lionel and Charley, along with Mark Edwards, Ron Mellor, Dale Harris, and many others, were the teachers—and the men—they were *for me*, and not necessarily for anyone else in quite the same way. These relationships were personal, which brings me back to "the state of higher education." My work, though I would often wish otherwise, takes place within the larger venue of American culture. The cost of an Oberlin degree, as a percentage of family income, has risen dramatically since 1974. The pressure on students and their families to "get your money's worth" is ever-increasing. At the same time, and not coincidentally, new systems for quantifying value in higher education have arisen with generally pernicious results. Now everyone who works at a college or university knows about the ranking that *U.S. News and World Report* publishes each year. Oberlin College was usually thought to be among the top five liberal arts colleges in the United States when I arrived here. In *U.S News*, we are ranked somewhere around 19 or 20. What happened?

The criteria for ranking that the magazine uses shift a little from year to year, but basically the idea is that measurable resources are directly related to academic excellence. Thus, schools with a high ratio of endowment dollars to students are thought to be "better." Graduation rates and retention are also important, as are faculty salaries and alumni giving. Oberlin is at a disadvantage in some of these categories, since although the college has a large endowment, around 700 million right now, it also has more students than some of its chief competitors, such as Amherst, Williams, and Swarthmore, which also have even higher endowments. Oberlin students also tend to pursue academic careers at a higher rate than other liberal arts colleges. Indeed, Oberlin graduates more students who go on to get the Ph.D. degree than any college *or* university in the country, and as we all know, this path is not one that leads to great wealth.

Oberlin's Conservatory of Music, one of the best undergraduate music schools around by any measure, is a separate operation with its own dean, which, along with the College of Arts and Sciences, forms Oberlin College. Having all those wonderful young musicians around enriches all of us. Many pursue degrees in both parts of the College, a special program that takes five years, and I have taught many people over the years who now perform in leading symphony orchestras, professional chamber groups, or opera companies. But recruiting these stars is expensive: the tuition "discount rate" (full tuition minus financial aid) in the Conservatory is somewhere around 55%, compared to around 40% for the

College as a whole. This expense strains the budget in ways that pull us down in the rankings. So I ask myself: does the presence of these talented young people in my classes have a positive or negative effect on the teaching and learning? If they are expensive to have around, is the quality of an Oberlin education lower?

A lot of measuring and quantifying here. Oberlin is presently in the midst of a major effort at "self-assessment." Sounds laudable enough, I suppose—an examined life ought to be something to aim for—but the premise behind this exercise is less attractive, to me at least. Assessing ourselves is in fact only in preparation for someone else's—in this case the North Central Association—assessment of us, to take place this spring. This latter group is a voluntary association, formed by private colleges in the vicinity to help us win accreditation as a legitimate degree-granting institution. That process didn't use to provoke much anxiety here, since we thought we could assess our work in various traditional ways. Could we not measure our success as an institution of higher learning in the usual manner, with grades that record student achievement, by observing how our students do in getting into graduate schools or in pursuing various careers after they graduate?

That has all changed in the last twenty-five years or so. As part of the conservative tide that swept over much of the country in the 1980s, state legislatures began adopting what they called "business models" to rate the performance of their public universities. The idea is that a university ought to be able to assess "educational outcomes," a deceptively bland phrase. Supposedly, a university, like a corporation, ought to be thought of as delivering a product to its "customers," the students. Once that model is accepted, then we pass quickly to the assumption that the product can be measured, along with the success of the employees at delivering it to the market.

Oberlin's assessment process is meant, at least in part, to head off any attempts by these legislators to widen their field of vision to include private colleges and universities. I hear you saying to yourself, "Isn't there something a little, um, cynical about this exercise in self-scrutiny?" Well, it looks that way from a certain perspective, I would agree. The thing is, Oberlin at least has a lot of conscientious people working in administrative offices who are trying their best to see the positive side of this whole phenomenon: if we have to do it, let's try to get something out of it. And these people are our friends, neighbors we see at the supermarket and soccer games, not distant blowhards in the state capital. So we too look for ways to invest the process with some meaning beyond the obvious desire to run our own shop.

At this point, we arrive at pieces of paper in files or digitally stored. In my department (considered, by the way, to be a leader among departments at Oberlin in establishing a "culture of assessment") the entire process begins in a box on the top of my filing cabinet, containing files of "assessment rubrics." These pieces of paper have five lists of phrases on them, such as, "Shows an awareness of Classical Culture," or "Uses primary sources/evidence effectively," followed by more phrases that further specify the qualities listed. Beside each main category is a box in which the teacher is to record a number from, say, 14 (poor) to 20 (excellent). When senior majors hand in a paper or take a test, they receive a grade and some comments from the teacher, like other students. But in addition, the teacher must make a copy of each such paper/test, to which is to be attached a sheet of paper with "rubrics," measuring (again) how the student did on the assignment. (Or, more to the point, I suppose, how the faculty did in helping the student to learn.)

Our department views all this extra measuring as a necessary evil, and we do the best we can to be thorough. For the legislators—and so for us indirectly—the point of quantification is to provide some kind of basis for distributing finite resources. The better your "outcomes," the more goodies you get. This motive would be more comforting to me if it led to awarding resources to those schools who need it to improve their curricula, facilities, and staffing. In practice, however, education is not open to all equally in our country, and those with more money get better educations at primary and secondary schools with more resources to begin with than those open to the less advantaged. The rich schools at the next level (this would include Oberlin College) then enroll more students from schools with more resources and get richer, while the rest struggle with the leftovers. Viewed at this level, the whole exercise looks like another way to valorize greed and keep resources away from those who need them most.

The Cranky Old Man has crept back in. Let's leave aside my political views—correct and irrefutable though they might be—and return to the classroom. There we will find me and my students demonstrating every day the fundamental fact, so inconvenient for business purposes, that teaching and learning are inherently subjective and difficult to quantify. As I am no businessman, this aspect of my life's work has never much bothered me. Indeed, just lately I find myself embracing it. In the everlengthening perspective of my life, so much of what I thought I wanted and had to have seems distant and unimportant. Most of it required measurement: How many articles and books written? How many prizes won, citations framed on the wall? Is my list longer than yours? My own process of "assessment" has been underway for forty years.

But most of the writing is now sitting on shelves gathering dust, or has already returned to the earth, perhaps to feed a new tree. I enjoyed doing most of it, and hope somebody got something out of it. Increasingly, though, the classroom draws me. Next week, I will begin teaching the plays of Sophocles in English and the last six books of Virgil's *Aeneid* in Latin. I know most of the students from other classes I've taught. They will be nervous at first, but soon we will settle into the rhythm of our shared excitement. Every day some idea will rise among us, juicy and full of promise. What was Sophocles up to when he created his *Philoctetes*, a play about a hero with a wound so repellent that others abandoned him on a desert island? How do we understand this shattered creature as heroic, chosen as the instrument of the gods or inscrutable fate to bring down the city of Troy? Listening to the music of Virgil's hexameters, we will be carried toward the final, dark moment when Aeneas plunges his sword into the upturned chest of his rival Turnus. The verb for this merciless act will be *condit*, "to bury," or "to lay a foundation." What will it mean to us that the same act can represent burying a sword—and soon, a human body—and founding a city?

What happens, and how and when, as we travel through the next weeks together will elude any attempts at measurement. Think of it rather as a community garden, seeded with the wisdom of men long dead, fertilized by many young minds and one rather ripe one. As spring arrives here in Ohio, ideas will bloom. I, meanwhile, will wait for that moment when understanding comes circling back to me from one of my fellow students, and the world is made new again.

EDWARD O. WILSON

The Promise of Consilience

If contemporary scholars work to encourage the consilience[1] of knowledge, I believe, the enterprises of culture will eventually devolve into science—by which I mean the natural sciences—and the humanities, particularly the creative arts. These domains will continue to be the two great branches of learning in the twenty-first century. Social science will split within each of its disciplines, a process already rancorously begun, with one part folding into or becoming continuous with biology, and the other fusing with the humanities. Its disciplines will continue to exist but in radically altered form. In the process the humanities, embracing philosophy, history, moral reasoning, comparative religion, and the interpretation of the arts, will draw closer to the sciences and partly fuse with them. . . .

In education the search for consilience is the way to renew the crumbling structure of the liberal arts. During the past thirty years the ideal of the unity of learning, bequeathed to us by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, has been largely abandoned. With rare exceptions American colleges and universities have dissolved their curricula into a slurry of minor disciplines and specialized courses. While the average number of undergraduate courses per institution has doubled, the percentage of mandatory courses in general education has dropped by more than half. Science was sequestered at the same time; as I write, only a third of colleges and universities require students to take at least one course in the natural sciences. The trend cannot be reversed by force-feeding students with some of this and some of that across the branches of learning; true reform will aim at the consilience of science with the social sciences and the humanities in scholarship and teaching. Every college student should be able to answer this question: What is the relation between science and the humanities, and how is it important for human welfare?

Every public intellectual or political leader should be able to answer that question as well. . . .

A balanced perspective cannot be acquired by studying disciplines in pieces; the consilience among them must be pursued. Such unification will be difficult to achieve. But I think it is inevitable. Intellectually it rings true, and it gratifies impulses that arise from the admirable side of human nature. To the extent that the gaps between the great branches of learning can be narrowed, diversity and depth of knowledge will increase. They will do so because of, not despite, the underlying cohesion achieved. The enterprise is important for yet another reason: It gives purpose to intellect. It promises that order, not chaos, lies beyond the horizon. Inevitably, I think, we will accept the adventure, go there, and find what we need to know.

Note

[1]I prefer [consilience] to "coherence," because its rarity has preserved its precision, whereas "coherence" has several possible meanings. William Whewell, in his 1840 synthesis *The Philosophy of Inductive Sciences*, was the first to speak of consilience—literally a "jumping together" of knowledge as a result of the linking of facts and fact-based theory across disciplines to create a common groundwork of explanation.

—From "Back from Chaos," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 281, No. 3 (March 1998): 41-62. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Manifest Ecology

The central issue for America is sustainable development. Somehow we, and other countries, have to find a way to continue raising the quality of life without wrecking the planet.

Let's not kid ourselves that the United States is blessed by God. Our mostly European forebears were not given this land as a gift. They conquered it, and in the process they swept aside one race and enslaved another. They took possession of the world's richest remaining store of natural resources and set out to use it up as fast as possible. We inherited from them, and still possess, a rich and bountiful country. Although we're halfway down the barrel of nonrenewable resources, we have enough time remaining to learn the prudence necessary for sustainable development.

The problem, simply put, is this: Long-term thinking is for the most part alien to the American mind. We have to change that. To look far forward and to acquire enough accurate vision requires better self-understanding. That in turn will depend on a grasp of history—not just of the latest tick of the geological clock that transpired during the republic's existence, but of deep history, across the hundreds of millennia when genetic human nature evolved. Our basic qualities may seem a crazy jumble of tribalism, piety, ambition, fear, envy, exaltation, and spirituality, but they make sense in light of humanity's deep history. They are our essence, and now, unfortunately, a few of them also present the greatest risk to the security of civilization.

Conservation and environmentalism are not hobbies; they are a survival practice. America invented conservation; we launched the environmental movement. Now we need a stronger ethic, one woven in more effective ways from science and poetry. The foundation of it will be the recognition that humanity was born within the biosphere, and that we are a biological species in a biological world. Like the other species teeming around us, we are exquisitely adapted to this biosphere and to no other—in anatomy, physiology, life cycle, mind, and, perhaps in us alone, spirit.

An allegiance to our biological heritage will be our ultimate strength. If we ignore that reality and continue to degrade the world that gave us birth by extinguishing natural ecosystems and species, we will permanently harm ourselves. By cutting away our own roots, we risk losing the dream of sustainable development.

—From *The Atlantic Monthly,* Vol. 300, No. 4 (Nov. 2007): 30.
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FRED WHITEHEAD

The Citadel Revisited

When I was young, growing up in a small rural town in western Kansas, the University of Kansas seemed to me exactly what Christminster meant to Thomas Hardy's character Jude in Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure*—it was a distant place illuminated by knowledge, and its remoteness in terms of geography and social class suggested a great opportunity that might never be attained. I knew there must be a fine library there and professors from whom I might learn much. But unlike late 19th-century Britain, mid 20th-century America was a democratic society. The GI Bill of my father's generation had meant that the citadels of higher education suddenly threw open their doors. Sadly, unlike some of his friends, my father never used the benefits he could have drawn from the GI Bill, but both my parents drove their two sons in schoolwork, and we accepted their direction gladly. I didn't need much driving actually, because I liked books, no I loved and craved them, and that opened the road to Mount Oread, the limestone escarpment on which the University of Kansas is located in Lawrence.

The only entrance requirement was a high school diploma; I also was awarded a place in a Scholarship Hall, where students did all their own cooking and other housekeeping. It was very inexpensive, a few hundred dollars per year. My fellow students in the Hall were also working-class, though the fathers of many of them were employed in the Bendix plant in Kansas City, Missouri, which made non-nuclear parts of atomic weapons. To a man, these students from Bendix families believed in what we came to call in the Sixties "The System."

The month after I arrived in Lawrence, the Cuban Missile Crisis suddenly erupted. It seemed for a few weeks that the whole world could go up in flames via a nuclear exchange. After that crisis mercifully passed, we had long bull sessions about what it meant, what we should do, what was the role of educated people in avoiding some cataclysmic disaster. I will always remember that those students from a Bendix background who intended to go into engineering fields all declared: "We don't care what

we do, as long as we are well paid." That is, they had literally *no* notion of social responsibility, even for their own survival. The only exception in the Hall, aside from me, was a Mennonite from central Kansas. He later went into sanitation engineering and, to avoid the draft during the Vietnam War, moved to Canada.

I realized that something was badly amiss in American education in that we could produce highly trained and proficient scientists and engineers for whom moral questions were simply irrelevant. But I had no structure by which to define what was wrong. In the course of the Sixties, having made a transition to a year in England as a Fulbright scholar and graduate work at Columbia University when student opposition to the Vietnam War burst forth, I and a whole generation of young people began to define this thing called rather vaguely "The System." I got to know students who did "power structure" research into corporations, exposing complex interlocking directorates of trustees. We didn't depend on faculty to guide us, though we did have a few at hand, like Columbia's Seymour Melman. Graduate students at Columbia were a remarkable, lively lot—we had our own standards for intellectual work, which were demanding and elevated. C. Wright Mills, also a Columbia professor, was dead of a heart attack by that point, but his call for a "New Left" still resonated. The undergraduates were more mixed; I got the impression that most of them were opposed to the War because they did not want to be parachuted into Cambodia. Some of them with a more ideological background—many "red diaper babies"—actually rejected the need to learn anything from the past. It was not surprising, therefore, that they went the way of the Nihilists of 19th-century Russia who had burned themselves out trying to kill the Czar. Ted Gold, a Columbia undergraduate student whose parents were members of the Communist Party, died when a bomb he was making blew up in a Greenwich Village townhouse on March 6, 1970. And soon the Weatherman faction of Students for a Democratic Society to which he belonged disintegrated.

By that point, some of us had resolved to continue learning about corporations, "the power structure" that ruled all. It became clear that citadels like Columbia, situated on Morningside Heights in Manhattan, just like the University of Kansas on Mount Oread in Lawrence, were intimately connected to corporations. They had ties to large banks, investment firms, and the like. A contradiction, therefore, emerged: on the one hand, universities were supposedly open to free inquiry, without restrictions; academic freedom was the guiding mantra. On the other hand, outfits like the Central Intelligence Agency were "connected." We found that there were secret contracts between Columbia and the CIA. During the Columbia uprising, the *Columbia Spectator* published a famous photograph of

Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski standing in the entrance to the School of International Affairs, calmly munching an apple as he predicted that the police would take the whole thing in hand soon. Which they did, arresting hundreds of students engaged in peaceful sit-ins.

Meanwhile, I was concentrating on my field of 18th-century English literature, under the direction of Professor James Clifford, the well-known and respected biographer of Samuel Johnson. The English Department at Columbia was so structured that students usually did a concentration in a specific period, such as the Renaissance. Indeed, we commonly asked our fellow students: "What century are you in?" Some of them never emerged from whatever century they *were* in. At any rate, I was trying to proceed in graduate school at the same time all this political chaos against the War was rising everywhere.

One day I happened to be reading Edward Gibbon's 1796 *Autobiography*, a genial and erudite memoir, when I came across his description of the universities of his own day:

> The schools of Oxford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science, and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks; and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy.

I was immediately struck by this passage, so penetrating an analysis of what was *really* going on, intellectually speaking, in those ancient venerable colleges. Gibbon continued:

> The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of public instruction, and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive. Their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists, and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival and below the confession of an error.

Now, to be sure, I recognized that the feudal charters that incorporated those universities were different from the corporate business models of contemporary American universities, but they were linked by ties to social power relations which functioned quietly, steadily, and subtly behind impressive and ornate facades. Gibbon summed up:

> The fellows or monks of my time were decent, easy men who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder. Their days were filled by a series of uniform employments—the chapel and the hall, the coffee-

> house and the common room—till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience, and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public.

Professor Brzezinski could not be accused of any such sloth; on the contrary, he avidly sought and exercised power. In his role as National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, his main legacy to posterity will be engaging Islamic fanatics to destroy any progressive hope for Afghanistan for generations to come.

Gibbon had revealed to me the history of academe's underside—how it could provide a haven for genteel repose, and intuitively, I recognized that many professors in America were quietly enjoying life without overly bothering themselves about anything important. From that point on, I tried to grasp what was really going on in any given institution of higher education in which I found myself.

Later on, I became familiar with Thorstein Veblen's acerbic descriptions of American "Higher Ignorance." I learned that even in our own country, perceptive and resolute critics had produced an analysis of "The System." In 1990 the historian Page Smith produced an overview of the development of our colleges and universities in which he probed all kinds of inner stresses and strains, between the "ideals" of these institutions and their unhappy and even sordid realities. Robber barons like Cornelius Vanderbilt, Leland Stanford, and John D. Rockefeller endowed new universities named for themselves. Smith documented numerous instances in the early 20th century when principled and progressive teachers were simply driven out by businessmen trustees. Smith cited John Jay Chapman's critique of Harvard's cultivation of millionaires a hundred years ago: "The chest-thumping, back-slapping, vociferous and cheap emotionalism, done to get money . . . is too much like everything else. . . . Everything seems to be a baseball team-jollying, tough good feeling, and thoroughgoing belief in money and *us*" (83).

The oft-lamented "corporatization" of American higher education is nothing new at all. By this point, in the early part of the 21st century, the process is merely well-advanced. It is worth noting a few trends. Colleges and universities and schools in general are not somehow "exempt" from the social conditions that surround them. More and more, students are intent on just getting their ticket punched, and thus is it any wonder that once proud institutions have regressed into trade schools? Furthermore, we have a paradoxical surplus of teachers and scholars—hundreds of thousands can find no employment anywhere in academe, or if they do find it, it is often as hapless part-timers, with no possibility of tenure or

any sort of security. Estimates vary, but it is likely that 50-60% of all college teachers are in this category, and maybe more. In the Thirties, when people were literally starving, or nearly so, the government itself destroyed food because of an "over-supply." Today, teachers themselves are a surplus, and the slogan now appears: "Will Teach for Food." And of course, the sorry spectacle of rich people giving millions for "naming rights" of buildings and stadiums continues everywhere. Most recently, ousted Sprint executive Gary Foresee, who received $40 million from his company in 2007, became the new president of the University of Missouri system with no academic credentials whatsoever. And Texas oilman T. Boone Pickens donated $100 million to Oklahoma State University for 150 new endowed chairs. A former administrator at the University of Kansas deemed such chairs there as "the club of the truly greedy." The hockey stadium at the University of North Dakota was paid—and named—for Ralph Engelstad, a former graduate who made millions as owner of the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas.

I recently gave a couple of talks at a large public university in Florida. It now has more than 40,000 students, and in the student center complex there's a *mall*, with shops for pizza, sandwiches, and a bookstore mostly devoted to regalia and apparel advertising the university. The new dormitories look exactly like expensive apartment complexes. Students were pleasant enough, but satisfied and complacent. To intrude a call for critical thinking, for untrammeled inquiry, seemed somehow out of place.

One of our most trenchant contemporary critics is Winchester, Virginia, native Joe Bageant. In a pungent essay entitled "A Feral Dog Howls in Harvard Yard" and subtitled "Hang the Professors, Save the Eunuchs for Later," Bageant writes:

> So it is the American intellectual's gig to weave some philosophical and ideological basket of American Truth out of mercantile folklore and smoke in such a way as to appear to hold water when viewed at great distance by the squinting millions out there in the burboclaves, office campuses, construction sites and fried chicken joints. If the result were not so abysmally eye glazing, tedious and predictable, it would be an act of pure alchemy. . . .
>
> Most born into the establishment's intellectual class are born blind, rather like kangaroos or possums inside safe dark middle or upper middle class marsupial pouches where they experience nothing except what feels good as defined by the moist darkness of their nurture. And when they emerge they feel entitled to be where they are and honestly cannot see the system itself, never giving it a thought until they go off to college and, between spring breaks and beer parties, learn to experience and define reality through texts.

Today's students have arrived at the contented moribund condition of the Oxford professors of Gibbon's day, 250 years ago.

Are there any signs of hope? Of course, any thoughtful person could outline a program of reform and democratic renewal, but are there any historical instances of a people who became an Empire reversing its fatal trajectory? It is just possible that some of the smaller, more rural colleges and universities, those willing to be modest but solid workaday schools, might survive under this enveloping imperial paradigm, but they will need to do so consciously, clearly and firmly, resisting every blandishment to sell out their teachers and their students and their people.

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STEINAR OPSTAD

University of North Dakota Commencement: August 1, 2008

Dr. Steinar Opstad introduced his commencement address by thanking and recognizing the many educators, students, and administrators in Norway and in North Dakota who over the years have given their ideas, hopes, and talents in founding and continuing the American College of Norway in Moss.

I initiated the American College of Norway in 1991 because I know how important the international focus is in higher education and not only because I feel that some academics are less internationally focused than in my opinion they should be, but also because I have seen how important international knowledge has been in my own life. With the aid and encouragement of many good people, the American College of Norway was created to give students visions and hopes.

I understand that people who are considered as great speakers nowadays are those who are the most concise. I cannot be as direct as Sir Winston Churchill when he was once a commencement speaker.

One of his conclusions was "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in anything, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense."

My message is similar. Take care of your future.

My best advice to you is to settle on your own goals and work hard to reach them. Understand that your home town, your state, or even your country are only parts of the world—and be concerned by the future need for everyone to be world citizens. Do what you can to be a world citizen as you understand that it is not enough to be by yourself. As John Donne wrote in a Meditation in 1624, "No man is an Island, entire of itself, every man is a piece of the Continent."

Last year the world famous New York-based author Thomas

Friedman from Minnesota published, in my opinion, his most important book *The World Is Flat*. His basic message is that national borders no longer have the same cardinal importance that they once may have had. I learned that lesson through my own international experience of many years.

Our world is flattening because of our ability to automate more work with computers and software and to transmit work by the Internet anywhere in the world more efficiently or cheaply. The flatter the world gets, the more essential it is that you do what gives you satisfaction. The boring, repetitive jobs are going to be automated or outsourced in a flat world. The good jobs that will remain will be those that cannot be automated or outsourced; they will be the jobs that demand or encourage unique human involvement, passion, and imagination; in other words, jobs that can be done only by people who love what they do and give it their full effort.

My educational life brought me to Japan about 35 years ago, then a very different Japan, and to the USA, in many ways a very different USA then too. My professional life has given me the great fortune to travel to 113 countries. This travel shaped my life and taught me the realities of the world. I wish all of you will also have a chance to learn and experience the international world.

I learned that understanding and respect for other cultures is necessary for world citizenship and that unrest and conflicts exist and develop because of poverty, limited international knowledge, and lack of human understanding. Education in three continents gave me a more interesting life than I would have had if I had stopped learning at the University of Oslo.

As an educator and journalist I have always wondered how we can motivate citizens to take the reality of lives outside our country seriously. Citizens of the entire world must be committed to compassion and justice for the millions who suffer, not only from war, but from daily preventable tragedies such as malnutrition, disease, and poverty.

A child born in the USA today has a life expectancy at birth of 79 years; we Norwegians can expect to live on average 82 years, but for people in Zimbabwe the life expectancy is only 33 years. In some African nations 40% of the population is HIV positive, a situation imposed since there are no affordable medications and healthcare infrastructure. In approximately one third of the world's nations less than 50% of women can read and write. How can we use education to rectify such problems and limitations?

Most of us are brought up to believe that all human beings have equal value. At least the world's major religions and most secular philosophies tell us so. But our emotions don't believe it. We mourn for those we

know, not for those we don't know. And most of us feel deep emotions about our own country, emotions we don't feel about Bangladesh, Afghanistan, or Sierra Leone, unless we have personal ties there.

Travel is therefore my message: get out, take the chance, and remember that your world is not only here, it is everywhere. See and understand how people live and think in other parts of the world, and you will have a richer life and be a better citizen of your own country as well as of the world.

We Europeans felt relieved when the Berlin wall fell in 1989 and the Iron Curtain from the Baltic to the Adriatic crumbled, but it took only months before we again felt uncomfortable. The new threat did not come from a Russian Bear but from unpredictable individuals and terror oriented people living far away. Early on September 11, 2001, we also witnessed passenger planes crashing into buildings in New York and Washington, D.C. After that this international malaise grew worse for us.

I think one difficulty is that social problems are so complex and demanding for "the man in the street" that it is hard to understand them. Furthermore, despite 9/11 the people of this country are distant from the troubled areas in the world, and I understand it is as hard for you as it is for me to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions from unfortunate people in developing countries. But remember, to remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all.

Despite poverty and ignorance there is one sin we should never commit. That is to humiliate another person or allow people to be humiliated in our presence. For many of the poor, poverty feels like humiliation. There is no good reason that some people should be poor when collectively we have so much. There is no good reason why we fortunate souls should be happier than anyone else. We have received an education enabling us to change the world to be a better place for all. We should use our fortunes to give the less fortunate a helping hand as citizens of one of the most blessed nations in the world.

And remember to forgive. It is when the world needs us for better reasons that we must demonstrate nobility and grant forgiveness. Even when we are humiliated, we must do our best to forgive and to try to understand the Other. In so many ways, large and small, we have experienced the generosity of decent people. Even in our culture, which sometimes is characterized as hard-nosed and cynical, we have felt how good well-meant understanding and forgiveness feels.

I learned about the thinking of poor people in the developing countries in Asia and South America when I rested in black tropical nights and listened to them describe their conditions. I understood their admiration for the lives we can live in our wealthy countries, and I recognized when

admiration turned to jealousy and hate. I also understood how a good education can balance human problems, not only for the poor, but also for us.

One can wonder if the spirit which motivated the Norwegians, Swedes, and others to travel from Europe to North Dakota a hundred years or more ago has left their descendents of today. We were told that Norwegians had to emigrate or die, but that was not quite true. We were not a wealthy country 120 years ago when Norwegians gathered their belongings in homemade chests and left for a dramatic ride across oceans to an unknown land, but neither were we much poorer than the average European.

Different from some other immigrant groups, however, the Norwegians and the Swedes built schools and churches right after they had planted their fields. As opposed to many other European emigrants the Norwegians did not escape from repressive political or religious systems. Norway had introduced public grade school already by 1739. The immigrants therefore had the spirit and understanding to focus on education. They went west to create a better life. It is no accident that the University of North Dakota was founded by the homesteaders 125 years ago in 1883 before North Dakota was a state. They knew the value of a good education for their sons and daughters.

Right after food, clothing, and shelter the creed was education, education, education!

It is not enough to say "I am doing my best." You have to succeed in doing what is necessary. More than a hundred years have passed since those immigrants came. Today there are few jobs for people with only enthusiasm, willingness, and muscles. Today's society expects and demands education and continually better education. This trend is universal. Even in the wattle and daub cottages in Sri Lanka young people want better education. Their dreams are to attend high school, not to mention a university.

You have already lived their dreams; with your college degrees you have already entered the new international upper-class. Now use that learning, develop yourself further, and help others to be as lucky and fortunate as your achievements have empowered you. Accept nothing as "unchangeable" until you have tried to change it.

Education is not only an academic achievement. As spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is also about understanding, tolerance, and friendship, in other words the basis for *peace*. One main reason for me to start the American College of Norway was to preserve the strong ties between the United States and Norway despite the unsteadiness in politics and our international relations. Education is the tool, and we shall hope that understanding is the result.

Whatever you plan to do, don't just listen to your head; listen also to your heart. Happiness is a journey, not the destination. Bringing joy, passion, and optimism to your work are ends in themselves even as you may strive for other goals. *How* you get to them is important; the process has its own value, which is why I leave you with some wisdom from Mark Twain:

> Always work like you don't need the money.
> Always fall in love like you have never been hurt.
> Always dance like nobody is watching.
> And always—always—live like your heaven is on earth.

Walk into the sunshine and be happy with what you see. Albert Einstein said that *the significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them*. We need new ideas, attitudes, and ways of thinking. Don't forget to change the world for the better as you live in your sunshine.

I wish you a good life and an exciting future, and remember: never, never, never, never give up!

LEE SLONIMSKY

Charlemagne

So capillary-like, twigs merge with air;
slow wind massages wood like blood does flesh;
all union is the size of molecules,
as is the earth's most vital history:
amino acids, living cells combined
in spheres that make bright leaves gargantuan,
a branch or two almost a universe,
and one black worm the Charlemagne of mud.

And what does size make us, so self-content,
observing all this richness from a bench?
Not much, it seems, for time's a bigger size
than space or wealth or all the stars that burn,
one in which we're less stable than the wind,
minute as motes a fall wind loves to spin.

The worm does not give up. Time and again,
it wriggles past pebbles and goes on home.

Camel

The zookeepers worried that if Patsy were left alone she would forget how to be a camel. —David Sedaris, *The New Yorker*, March 24, 2008

Without compatriots, identity
is vexed. The freedom in vast solitude
includes shaping one's self, so Patsy broods
on stars reflected in a puddle. She
imagines them her eyes, her body, light
of moon or sun, her movements fire, flames
bequeathed to her by Big Bang (so we name
our essence, reasoned back to ancient night).
Cosmology has chilly limits, though;
she's still alone; a sleepless squirrel bounding through
her black zoo bars might be the mirror of
a truer self, and also one that loves.
She lumbers to be closer now, although
he flees. Just once before, she loved a thrush who flew
away to be with flesh. So no more dreams.

Professor (Emeritus)

The most precocious of his students are
these hummingbirds, geometers of flit,
savants of hover, scholars of June air:

their formulae can stabilize a breeze,
triangulate sunlight and gnarls on trees,
calculate a worm's trajectory
as it divides muck in its sluggish surge.

Pythagoras, impressed, cannot compete
with how they gauge swift raysplashed angles, merge
feathered scholarship with dart and dance.

He tries

to count their wingbeats on his abacus,
divide into warm wind, except his eyes
have trouble following the emerald blur,
which makes more difficult a measurement
of ratio of glide to how wings whir.

CAROLYN RAPHAEL

The Chambermaid

ROME

She finds their leavings when the guests have left:
one sock, a hairbrush, condoms, used or not.
She did take home the purple Polo shirt,
her husband's size, a camisole for her.
All jewelry must be handed in—besides,
there is the promise of a cash reward.
She strips the bed, her fingers touching sheets
still warm with someone else's memories,
then smoothes new linens, bedspread; dusts and vacuums.
The bathroom's nasty work is left for last:
eight soggy towels, toilet, and bidet.
A few guests greet her in the hall; most act
as if she were invisible. She smiles.
She catalogues the souvenirs they steal
(the management expects a list each day):
towels, of course, the hotel's name in blue,
wood hangers, ash trays in the smokers' rooms.
And tips—sometimes the Modest Shoes leave bills
while Fur Coats leave a little pocket change,
including foreign currencies. Or nothing.
They'll never know her story; she knows theirs.

Unsent Letters

1. **Psyche to Eros, Who Arises Early**

Brought by Zephyrus' gentle breeze
to share your palace (and taboo),
in solitude, I wait for you
to end my dreary matinees.
Eclipsed by night, you come to bed
from gods know where you go by day;
undressing silently, you lay,
near mine, your soft-lipped, smooth-cheeked head.

At dawn, I touch your empty place—
sheets sweetly rumpled, pillow flat—
and long to see the secret face
that complements your eager heart.
Tonight I'll light a lamp so that
my soul may rest when you depart.

2. **Poet to Her Husband, Who Comes to Bed Late**

I dreamed of couples exiting
to bed. Some glided, others raced
toward sanctuary in their nest.
Beak to beak and wing on wing,
they murmured notes of anything
that tuned the day or tore the breast,
then turned to rapture or to rest,
as close as twins remembering.

But you and I, an owl and lark,
in harmony but out of phase,
denied the comforts of the dark,
sing anthems in Apollo's praise
before preparing to embark
upon our amorous matinees.

Shy Poet

Head down, he shambles to the microphone.
A nod, a sigh before he starts to read.
He wishes he were at his desk, alone
with only cats and metaphors to feed.

His first words race to reach the exit door
but stumble. As they languish, wan and flat,
he perseveres, attempting to ignore
two women who have just begun to chat.

He meant to mark the pages; now he wanders
to find the poem that coaxed a laugh last year.
Some listeners fidget, others doze. He ponders
the cloister, suicide, a new career.

At last, the mercy of his closing poem.
Polite applause. He'll sell no books. Then home.

PAUL T. BRYANT

Academic Comparisons

Americans love comparisons. Every fall we get involved in an elaborate process of deciding which football team is number one in the nation. This despite our unspoken knowledge that on a given Saturday there might be a half dozen teams around the country who might beat the then current number one team. Every spring we have "March Madness" to determine which college basketball team is to be designated national champion, even though the winner may have been beaten a few times during the season. We like competition and believe that it brings out our best. At the same time, we like the clarity and simplicity of a 1-2-3 rating, even when such ratings are clearly questionable.

Among colleges and universities, this enthusiasm for comparisons has carried over into areas beyond athletics. We see magazine ratings of colleges and universities in terms of the quality of what they offer their students. We see rankings based on research grant dollars, numbers of National Merit Scholars enrolled, graduation rates, numbers of students who become Rhodes Scholars, quality of programs compared with tuition and fees (bang for the buck), national reputation of individual academic programs or departments, and on and on. The AAUP publishes ratings of colleges and universities on the basis of average faculty salaries. Phi Beta Kappa, in considering institutional applications for establishing a campus chapter, considers, among many other factors, average faculty salaries as an indicator of quality. Some of the older, elite universities like to list the number of presidents, senators, and other distinguished people they can count among their alumni. In short, faculty and administrators swim in a sea of comparisons.

So what are we poor faculty members to do? We want to be associated with excellence, of course, and contribute to it. Yet only a relative few are on the faculties of the schools that can claim leadership in any of the various categories listed above. Must we concede that our institutions are only second or third rate? That can be a bitter pill to swallow. It can affect our

attitudes toward ourselves, our work, our colleagues, even our students. Not a good influence.

The problem lies in determining which of these various criteria for comparison are valid and significant. Every college or university president is duty bound to proclaim categorically his or her institution to be "great." I suppose only the president of a college in Lake Woebegone could get away with proclaiming the institution "pretty good." So how can we develop some idea of how good a given school really is?

We should begin by reminding ourselves that universities are very complex, multifaceted institutions, with all the variability and unpredictability of any enterprise that involves human beings. Trying to establish absolute hierarchies of excellence in a one, two, three order is a fool's errand at best, even though it may sell a lot of magazines. Chaos theory comes into play here. There are just too many variables to allow for such a simplistic hierarchy. We might group schools according to how well they fulfill their intended function: those that play their intended role well, those that are adequate, and those that are weak or marginal.

Of course, this process has to begin with determining what the school is trying to be. Not every school is trying to be Harvard (thank goodness). Institutional mission statements are notoriously vague and general, somewhat like the political candidate who comes out foursquare for prosperity. But most faculty and administrators at an institution have a fairly clear idea of what their school is all about.

A heavily endowed private university may take an elitist role, admitting only top students and maintaining a faculty that includes some of the nation's best known scholars and teachers. Once the tradition is established, of course, there may develop a kind of circularity in its reputation: if the school is known for attracting top students, anyone admitted is assumed to be a top student, and if it is known for outstanding scholars on its faculty, anyone on the faculty is assumed to be an outstanding scholar. Thus academic reputations sometimes outlive the substance that created them, but that is another story.

Some—usually large—institutions place emphasis on graduate study and research. Some of these emphasize the number and quality of graduate degrees produced, and some may regard graduate students as cheap labor and emphasize the number of research grant dollars generated. Small liberal arts colleges, on the other hand, will usually place almost all of their emphasis on undergraduate teaching. Indeed, a faculty member at such a school who turns out significant published scholarship or research may be suspected of neglecting students. Again, the schools at these two ends of the academic spectrum may be highly selective in admitting stu-

dents, and, accordingly, may come to have an impressive list of distinguished alumni.

Most state supported colleges and universities, however, operate in a different context. They are "public" institutions in a very real sense of the word. Even though, in recent years, the proportion of the budgets of such schools that comes from state appropriated (taxpayer) funds has dropped dramatically, these schools are still subject to some form of "public" control. That is, they may be governed by a board that is elected or politically appointed, and their budgets and policies may be subject to legislative scrutiny. These schools are constrained to respond to the felt educational needs of the public, and, perhaps too often, the current political exigencies of the state government. Thus they can attempt to become elitist only at their peril. Their admission standards may vary with their budgets and with the political and demographic times, but they are generally broad.

There are many other variations, but these obvious differences among schools are sufficient to illustrate the point that each school must be evaluated in terms of its specific mission. Schools with different missions cannot be rated on the same scale. We can evaluate schools only in terms of how well they perform in their particular mission and economic and political context. How well do they do what they are intended to do?

For example, the careers of a school's alumni might be a good indication of the value of the education they have received. But such an evaluation, to be fair, must use some concept of value added. A school that can be highly selective in admissions can safely expect a good proportion of distinguished alumni. It is dealing with a student body that would probably produce a number of distinguished alumni no matter what the school does to them, or for them. On the other hand, a school that by law must admit every high school graduate in the state may produce some distinguished alumni, but the proportions will be lower. If most of its graduates are good citizens who go on to have useful, productive careers, the institution will have met its reasonable goal with those students. How far a university can take its students is greatly influenced by where the students are when they come to school. That is the value added.

You may not be able to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, but if you can make a good leather purse of it, you have accomplished something useful. Society has need of lots of good leather purses. If, figuratively, making good leather purses is a part of your mission, you may be among the best for that purpose. It need not keep you from turning out a first-class silk purse from time to time, but both results should be honored for their value to society. After all, the supply of raw silk is always somewhat limited.

Similar problems arise with the comparison of faculty salaries and, for that matter, university budgets. A faculty member at a state school in the Midwest may look with envy at the salaries of colleagues in large urban universities in New York City, or perhaps San Francisco, or other large urban centers. The AAUP listings or the Phi Beta Kappa comparisons, for example, would lead to such feelings. But they may be mistaken. A professor in New York who lives in a cramped urban apartment, cannot afford an automobile because of exorbitant parking and other fees, and regards a crowded beach in New Jersey as an escape to the out-of-doors, may make a far higher salary than the Midwestern professor, who owns a car and a pickup truck, lives in a comfortable, spacious house on a pleasant acreage near campus, dines on fresh vegetables from his or her own little garden, and would feel terribly hemmed in on that beach in New Jersey. The quality of everyday life should be factored into comparisons of compensation. Prices are just much higher in big cities, one of the more obvious contradictions of the myth of universal "economy of scale."

University budgets face similar problems. A large urban university may have millions more in its budget than a school in a smaller city or town, but its costs will be substantially higher, also, from the cost of land and buildings to the cost of utilities, security, parking garages, and so on. Hence a higher budget may not provide any more real resources in a big city than a lower budget will in a different setting. To paraphrase a religious expression, the city giveth and the city taketh away. In any case, no department, college, or university in any setting ever thinks it has a large enough budget, and that is probably correct in most cases, but we must remember that the larger budgets of others may be swallowed up by higher costs.

Comparisons of colleges and universities are difficult at best. Creating 1-2-3 hierarchies is almost certainly an invalid exercise. To use an ecological analogy (beware of analogies, but sometimes they are useful), a golden eagle is admirably equipped to fill the ecological niche in which we find it, and the African lion is also well equipped for its ecological niche. Both fulfill their function in nature quite effectively, but would we attempt to rate them first and second on some kind of biological scale of excellence? Silly.

So we must ask what a given school has set out to do. Take top students and make them leaders? Take reasonably competent students and make them good citizens and productive members of society? Develop new knowledge and make it available to society? Produce advanced scholars and teachers to carry on the university's work? All of the above and more? Which of these functions are most important for our school?

We must answer such questions as these before we can even decide if a school is doing its job, much less rank it against other institutions. In particular we should be careful about comparing a school with another that is trying to fulfill a different function. If we follow this approach, most faculty may be able to find satisfaction, even pride, in their own institution's particular kind of excellence. Like the children in Lake Woebegone, perhaps all of our schools are above average. We just need to see in what ways.

Now, about those football teams . . . .

SHERYL O'DONNELL

University, Inc.:
Transforming the Groves of Academe

Mary Burgan, *What Ever Happened to the Faculty? Drift and Decision in Higher Education.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

Profession 2006. Ed. Rosemary Feal. Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2006.

"Faculty *are* the university." Columbia University professor correcting President Dwight D. Eisenhower's address to the faculty as "employees of the university" (quoted in Burgan, xvi).

Centuries-old critiques of anti-intellectualism in American culture have sharpened in the past two decades, as higher education in the United States shifts from serving the public good to marketing a private commodity. Analysts on all sides of the political and cultural divides within higher education are studying how campuses have turned themselves into various kinds of business "incubators" and profit-generating Centers of Excellence to counter falling state and federal support. They note the changing language of academe: students and their families are now "customers" and "stakeholders." Multinational corporations and private laboratories "partner" with researchers on campus who do the "real" work of the university while a growing number of contingent faculty do the teaching. Because faculty often identify with their professional organizations and with colleagues in their disciplines, "service" rarely means community activism or university committee work in one's home institution. "Service," these days, means writing letters of evaluation and book reviews for colleagues, running for office in professional organizations, carefully building strong networks of like-minded scholars by proving oneself ever more productive in one's chosen research speciality. Of

course, dozens of recent studies have traced the growth of this patently commercial phenomenon within American higher education. Bill Readings' *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996) may be a most comprehensive study of the effects of mindless careerism upon academic life and the public welfare of our country. But Mary Burgan's book is more readable, more hopeful, and, ultimately, more witty and pragmatic than most studies to date.

In the main, critics of the "new" corporate university trace its emergence to economic forces tied to privatization in other "service sectors" of our culture: health care, food production and distribution, social services, and the Office of Education's policies of school reform. But Mary Burgan gets to the heart of the matter in higher education by showing how faculty have "drifted" away from the power of making any "decision" about the academic purposes of their colleges and universities. Faculty are now just employees in a managerial system which affords them responsibility but no power to govern. A pervasive and ever-growing bureaucracy of vice presidents and directors, consultants and public relations officers, enrollment managers and facilities specialists have turned the academy into a marketable brand which must fight for customer recognition and consumer loyalty to stay alive.

As an English professor and a Dean at Indiana University, with a ten-year stint as Executive Director of the American Association of University Professors as well as years of serving as General Secretary of the organization, the recently retired Burgan has spent her entire career thinking about the issue of faculty governance. Her work with the American Council on Education, the Higher Education Secretariat, and Education International is a sign of her respect for people whose policies she sometimes abhors. And she offers example after example of ways in which faculty members themselves have internalized the "new" corporate model by seeking money, power, and status only for themselves, by abandoning a sense of core curriculum for all students, and by valuing "productivity" over teaching and service. Burgan is too wise and too wary to indulge fantasies of romantic alienation. And she is far too intelligent to let the opponents of academic integrity dismiss her views as outdated, laughably purist, or irrelevant to modern university life. She is as impatient with nostalgia for the good old tweedy days on campus as is any Vice President for Productivity or Chief Officer of Campus Development and Information Services. And she is quite aware that there is a good reason that most academic novels and, lately, films, are satires.

Each book chapter of *What Ever Happened to the Faculty?* offers a brisk overview of various myths used to justify turning the academy into a marketplace. Nobody wants to listen to "bloviating professors" in this

postmodern age, say focus group managers. Not true, counters Burgan. In fact, students of all ages need responsible intellectual guides even more urgently, since they often come to school with poor preparation and multitudes of other responsibilities, including jobs and families.

In subsequent chapters Burgan takes up illusions of humanities degrees as useless, the nightmarish wonders of online education, the alarming shrinkage of teachers' unions, and the dubious advantages of the academic star system. One by one, these features of academic management are briskly examined for their workable features, not summarily dismissed. Burgan concludes her analysis with three exemplary cases of faculty who have regained control of their schools by working in concert, enacting their values in the hiring of new faculty and the provision of a general curriculum, and by using their suspicion of commerce to curb short-term institutional decisions and excesses. In each of the cases Burgan offers, some striking features emerge: senior faculty and chairs joined upper administration to shape tenure and promotion procedures. Faculty did not leave public relations to the officials, but spoke early, often, and consistently about the academic mission and educational values important to students and their families. Faculty also insisted upon access to budgetary information and project planning by their institutions. Finally, faculty addressed policies, not personalities, in their move to regain control of their schools.

The same kinds of practical guides to action appear in the Modern Language Association's *Profession 2006*. Prepared by the MLA's Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature, this volume places literature and literary studies in an international context. Reports include data on numbers of undergraduate majors and minors in Comparative Literature (they are stable) and foreign-language programs in AA-granting institutions (they are successful, especially if these two-year institutions offer study abroad and community internships). But foreign language requirements in English doctoral programs are declining. "'The linguistic incapacity of American PhDs has always been a joke,'" writes literary scholar Hazard Adams, and "'in the present intellectual situation it has become a scandal'" ("Definition and/as Survival," *ADE Bulletin* 80 (1985), 6. Qtd. in *Profession 2006*, 215).

The instrumental view of language which these reports point toward pervades American culture, including our colleges and universities. Language programs are often developed for commercial reasons only, with little attention to enlarging understanding, let alone appreciation, of the cultures these languages produce. But a section in *Profession 2006* called "Reports from the Field: Models of Learning in the Humanities" sheds light on how foreign language learning can be a vital part of the

humanities curriculum if departments collaborate to develop curriculum, study abroad, and immersion programs featuring language proficiency as an important cultural and aesthetic goal, not merely a skill.

The most interesting section of *Profession 2006* takes up questions of what language and literature professors might be doing as global citizens and public thinkers. The MLA 2005 Presidential Forum on the Role of Intellectuals in the Twenty-First Century, organized by past MLA President Dommna Stanton, featured four world-famous cultural and literary writers from various continents and countries. Julia Kristeva (Europe), Ratna Kapur (India), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (South Korea), and Ariel Dorfman (Chile) addressed the MLA's national convention in Washington, D.C. Like Mary Burgan, these writers examine the contradictions which intellectuals must live out as citizens whose work may be devalued or, worse, placed in service to despots and imperialists of all kinds. Like Burgan, they reject the romantic notion of the intellectual as the isolated, exiled figure cultivated by North American professors at the same time that their colleagues in other parts of the world are jailed, tortured, and killed. When Dorfman performed his fantasy of the role of the public intellectual by claiming that his paper had been confiscated by Homeland Security, the MLA audience, missing the satiric point of Dorfman's fable of his "Lost Paper," eventually changed Dorfman's own notion of how we perform in these times of universal surveillance.

Julia Kristeva's "Thinking in Dark Times" is the most compelling essay in *Profession 2006*, primarily because it captures the general challenge of all other essays (including the section on "Collegiality" prepared by Heather Dubrow, Chair of the English Department at the University of Wisconsin, Madison). Kristeva, a Professor in the Institute Universitaire de France, directs the "Langue, Litterature, Image" doctoral program at the University of Paris. She is also a practicing psychoanalyst working tirelessly as a public intellectual who is both deeply suspicious and utterly committed to the Enlightenment notion of secular humanism. She considers the current plight of Muslim adolescents in Paris who are burning the suburbs of the city. Adolescents, Kristeva argues, suffer the "malady of ideality" all over the world. Kristeva reminds professors that they teach adolescents, "difficult youth" who are not fighting a religious battle but a deeper psychic one:

> Contrary to the polymorphous perverse child who wants to know where children come from and who constructs himself as a theoretician, the adolescent is starving for ideal models that will allow him to tear himself from his parents and meet the ideal being, the ideal partner, the ideal job and to turn himself into an ideal being. Seen from this angle, the adolescent is a believer. . . . This malady of ideality confronts us with a prereligious and prepolitical form of belief;

> it is a matter of needing an ideal that contributes to the construction of the psychic life but that, because it is an absolute exigency, can easily turn itself into its opposite: disappointment, boredom, depression, or even destructive rage, vandalism, and all the imaginable variants of nihilism that are but appeals to the ideal. . . . It is to this space that the parent, the teacher, and intellectual are called. While demanding pragmatism and generosity from the political spheres, we must come up with ideals adapted to modern times and the multiculturalism of modern souls. (20)

The ramifications of Kristeva's remarks are profoundly important to faculty struggling for real presence and power in the modern university. Real learning and real teaching are not connected to commercial goals of American business and of multinational corporations: efficiency, practicality, and profitability. These goals produce what Bourdieu calls "an increasingly depoliticized, aseptic, bland view of the world" (*Profession 2006*, 8) which, in its denial of the unconscious, the irrational, and the ideal, must be called into question. The place of learning, i.e., colleges and universities, and those responsible for governing its presence there, i.e., the faculty, are one.

DAN RICE

Higher Education: Where We've Gone Wrong[1]

I begin by identifying an assumption: the one who defines the issue has the advantage. This insight has been vividly illustrated in our national politics. The one who is successful at defining the issue has a huge advantage. The more we allow others to define us, the more likely we are to find those definitions to be both inadequate and troublesome. I believe that this assumption applies to higher education as well.

Higher education has plenty of shortcomings, but I wish to identify three of the interrelated ways in which we've gone wrong. These three shortcomings are *acquiescing to the business model*, *overemphasizing the individual benefit of higher education*, and, as a result, *losing the moral high ground.*

Acquiescing to the Business Model

At the outset I want to say that I am not anti-business. Obviously, a strong, vibrant business sector is absolutely essential. Our way of life depends on it, our retirement plans depend on it, higher education depends on it. I am not anti-business. But public higher education is not a business, at least not yet.

To provide a frame for this discussion, let me state up front that universities in this country did not begin as businesses. American universities began under the wing of churches in the colonial period. Most colleges and universities were still church sponsored or affiliated in the 19th century. As time passed, more colleges and universities were established as secular, not-for-profit, public educational entities sponsored and supported by the States. Early efforts to establish a national university were defeated. More recently, in the late 20th century we witnessed the growth of the for-profit higher education sector and that has pushed us even further down this road toward higher education as a business. One could argue today that public higher education in this country, in the eyes of many citizens and policy makers, is just one more "business enterprise."

Patrick Callan and John Immerwahr, who have been conducting public opinion research about higher education for over fifteen years, reported the findings from their most recent study:

> We have also seen erosion in the public's appreciation of the altruistic mission of higher education. In our recent focus groups we were surprised by how many people spoke of higher education as "a growing business" with "money coming in from everywhere." Today 52 percent say that colleges mainly care about the bottom line, while only 43 percent see colleges as focused primarily on education. (A56)

In my view, this is a serious problem. How have we come to this point in our history?

Christopher Lucas, author of one of the standard histories of American higher education, in writing about changes in higher education in the post World War II era, used the term "Corporate Academe." He made this point:

> The key to understanding what had occurred, as analysts saw it, was the degree to which academic institutions in many fundamental respects had come to differ but little from traditional business enterprises seeking to survive in the marketplace. (238)

Many find this movement to be good. Here in North Dakota we are well aware of the Higher Education Roundtable, a creation of the legislature, the business community, and the North Dakota University System. A major thrust of the Roundtable is that in exchange for more autonomy and better funding the higher education system must direct its efforts more fully and successfully to enhance the economic development of the State and that it will be accountable for the extent to which it meets that goal. It seems clear to me that higher education has kept its part of that bargain but not at all clear that the State government has kept its part. But that is another story.

My thesis is that the pendulum has swung too far in that direction. Those of us in higher education have acquiesced too much in allowing others to define us as mostly an economic or business enterprise.

During the 1980s the Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching published a series of reports about higher education, including one titled *The Control of the Campus* (cited in Lucas) in which this concern was expressed:

> The connection between higher education and major corporations . . . imperils colleges and universities in much the same way as the church and the state have threatened university integrity in the past. And preoccupation on the part of the academy with the priorities of

> business and industry may mean that . . . larger social mandates . . . will be compromised. (307)

More recently, John Saltmarsh, formerly of Campus Compact, expressed this concern:

> Higher education has been led down a path of corporate restructuring and management, instilling a privatized, consumerist vision of the academy. While there has been an equilibrium that historically defined the purposes of education in the United States, with preparation for democratic citizenship balanced by job preparation, the dominance of the corporate model has created a pervasive imbalance. (vi-vii)

I will further argue that, at some point, if this is essentially how the public comes to see us, we have lost what is most valuable and important to society, our educational purpose. To put it in even starker terms, we will have lost our soul.

Some will remember when higher education was urged to adopt the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach to business practices developed by W. E. Deming (qtd. in Seymour). Many of us went along with various degrees of skepticism and trepidation. We were encouraged to think of students as our customers.

It occurred to me one day why the "customer" metaphor for students was and is so inadequate. Have you heard of any customer who has established a trust so that when she dies her estate will go to Wal-Mart? Or any other business, for that matter?

Why is that? I believe it is because we don't expect business to change our lives. There is a fundamental difference between employees of businesses who serve customers and faculty who serve students in colleges and universities. There is a powerful difference between the relationships we want faculty to have with students and what we expect of our relationships with the people we interact with in the business sector. The problem with the "customer" definition of the student-faculty relationship is that it grossly understates the nature of that relationship.

The for-profit sector of higher education has enrolled large numbers of students, mostly in Internet based programs, and some of these companies are now traded on the stock market. But the for-profit universities have exhibited some of the same problems that have plagued the corporate world. It is not unusual to see stories of for-profits being investigated for improper or illegal practices involving recruitment of students, inappropriate use of federal student aid, and other questionable practices (as, for example, in the feature "Chronicle Index" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*).

A recent study of some of the larger for-profits found that their graduation rates were in the mid-teens (15-18%), rates that would shame the

worst public university. Ironically, the members of Congress who criticize public universities with graduation rates in the 50% range, and who recently approved the use of federal student aid for students attending for-profits, have been silent about this revelation.

I want to remain optimistic about the future of these good and wonderful public places we call universities, but I am growing more pessimistic as I see universities taking on the behaviors and the thinking of the corporate world. The discourse about public higher education seems to be dominated by this corporate perspective. Our understanding of the noble and altruistic origins from which universities came, and our commitment to those values, seem to be receding ever further into the past and out of our memories.

When we allow others to define universities as essentially businesses, we do so at our peril. There is a second way in which we have gone wrong that accounts for much of our current situation.

Overemphasizing the Individual Benefit of Higher Education

From the beginning, the purpose of higher education in the United States was to provide for the public good. The "new world" was in desperate need of an educated clergy and magistrates to run the government. The benefits that came to those who attended college were secondary to this larger public good. Frederick Rudolph, a Williams College historian who wrote the classic history of American higher education, agreed when he wrote, "From the beginning the American college was cloaked with a public purpose . . ." (177). In writing about the founding of Harvard College, Samuel Morison made this important point:

> . . . the two cardinal principles of English Puritanism which most profoundly affected the social development of New England and the United States were not religious tenets, but educational ideals: a learned clergy, and a lettered people. (45)

Frederick Rudolph agreed with Morison when he observed:

> Central to these ideals was the development of Harvard College, the college which would train the schoolmasters, the divines, the rulers, the cultured ornaments of society. . . . Of course a religious commonwealth required an educated clergy, but it also needed leaders disciplined by knowledge and learning. . . . (6-7)

The founders of this country recognized that they needed to have educated people as leaders in order to make our form of government possible. Unfortunately, they did not think that everyone needed to be educated; not women, slaves, native peoples, or the poor. The broadening and extension

of the concept of public good has continued to evolve and expand, even to this day.

James Angell, who served as the president of the University of Michigan in the 1870s, was an outspoken advocate for the public purposes of higher education. He said in an address, recorded in his *Selected Addresses* (qtd. in Rudolph), that he could not conceive ". . . anything more hateful, more repugnant to our natural instincts, more calamitous at once to learning and to the people, more unrepublican, more undemocratic, more unchristian than a system which should confine the priceless boon of higher education to the rich" (280).

This view of the purpose of higher education prevailed well into the 20th century as the nation supported a remarkable growth of public colleges and universities, supported essentially by the States, to prepare teachers, lawyers, physicians, nurses, engineers, and the other professionals necessary to an ordered, good, and modern society.

The Morrill Act of 1862, establishing the Land Grant universities, stands as a dramatic example of the public purpose of higher education, and in it there were many such purposes:

> –Providing for the disposition of public land (taken from native peoples).
> –Creating opportunities for the working class to be educated.
> –Promoting science and its application to the needs of society, including agriculture.

None of these purposes were achieved without a struggle. The Morrill Act was vetoed by President James Buchanan when first passed by the Congress and was vehemently opposed by the presidents of the Ivy League colleges, including President Eliot of Harvard, a betrayal Frederick Rudolph called one of the shabbiest moments in the history of American higher education (254).

Nor was the public fully behind the effort to greatly extend the opportunities for higher education to the common person. In Philadelphia during this time an agricultural newspaper (qtd. in Ferrier) wrote: "Instead of introducing the student of agriculture to a laboratory and chemical and philosophical apparatus, we would introduce him to a pair of heavy neat's leather boots and corduroy pants and learn [sic] him how to load manure" (62-63).

One cannot speak about the public purposes of higher education without speaking of what is known as the GI Bill, Public Law 346, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which passed in 1944 by a single vote. Many observers believe this to be one of the most important events in the history of U.S. higher education. There were several reasons for the passage of the bill, and a sense of moral obligation to returning veterans was

only one. There was great fear about massive unemployment after the war. What would all of these returning service people do? U.S. industry needed time to retool and to convert from producing the materials of war to the products of peace.

John Thelin, historian of higher education, writes that, at the time, very few expected much from this bill. By 1945, 88,000 veterans were participating, but by 1946 the numbers had grown to over one million, and by 1950 over two million (263). The program was a true entitlement, open to anyone who was qualified. It had an enormous and lasting impact on higher education. More importantly, it had a huge impact on the entire nation for the next generation as thousands of teachers, engineers, nurses, physicians, business majors, and all sorts of professionals were prepared to transform our society and our economy. This was one of higher education's finest hours. It is difficult to imagine how anything could have accomplished more public good.

The dramatic shift from the public good to the individual benefit perspective gained momentum after the dramatic success of the GI Bill began to fade from the public memory. Presidents Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon Johnson held the "public-good" view, for the most part. During this postwar period the National Defense Education Act was passed, as the result of the Cold War, and the federal government began to pour millions into the research activity of universities.

Some observers have concluded that the student unrest and demonstrations of the 1960s and '70s made this shift in perspective more appealing to legislators and many in the general public who saw universities as "hot beds" of radicalism and disorder. From this perspective, young people who were enjoying the opportunities of higher education because of the public largesse were no longer worthy of that support and should be forced to pay more of the cost themselves. Ronald Reagan rode this wave of backlash into the governor's office in California by attacking Clark Kerr, President of the California higher education system, perhaps the finest in the world at that time, and then firing Kerr who was the architect of that system.

Perhaps the most dramatic indicator of this shift in perspective from public good to individual benefit may be seen in the shift in federal financial aid policy for students. Thelin describes this shift in financial aid policy and its consequences as follows:

> Starting in 1978, however, the focus of federal programs for student financial aid changed, from an emphasis on grants for students with financial need toward an emphasis on readily available student loans. The Guaranteed Student Loan Act was especially attractive both to banks and to students from relatively prosperous families. As such, it extended the net of participants. The price of this short-run populari-

> ty, however, was that in the coming decades the emphasis on federal loans meant that an increasing number of recent college graduates would be saddled with large amounts of debt. (326)

One of the great ironies about this shift in federal policy, in my view, is that many of the members of Congress who engineered or supported this change had been beneficiaries of the GI Bill. As reported by Smith, the load of student debt for college students has become a major problem for many students who wish to enter what we call the "helping professions," i.e., teaching, social work, counseling, and similar fields, because the entry-level salaries make it very difficult for them to service the student loan payments they will have when they graduate.

Another example of this shift in emphasis from public good to individual benefit might be seen in the level of state support for higher education. At one time, as much as 70% or 80% of the budgets of public universities came from the State. In California in the 1960s, public universities charged no tuition. Today, about 24% of the budget at the University of North Dakota comes from the State. The share of the budget for universities in some States is around 15%. One has to be careful with these numbers because contemporary universities are doing so many other things that generate revenue. Even so, this decline is dramatic.

There are several reasons why public universities are receiving a decreasing share of their budgets from the States. During the 1970s, the federal government began to shift more of the costs of Medicare and other entitlement and human services programs to the States. Some States have an aging population. Prisons are bursting at the seams. But one reason, I believe, is this shift from viewing higher education as primarily bestowing individual benefit rather than seeing it as primarily serving the public good.

Allowing others to define the purpose of higher education as primarily an individual benefit, rather than a public good, is costing us in more ways than financial.

Losing the Moral High Ground

Of the several consequences of allowing higher education to be overly identified as an economic or corporate entity, one in which students are simply customers, and thus an institution which largely serves to benefit individuals rather than primarily serves the public good, is the loss of whatever moral high ground we might have held. I am not suggesting that the business or corporate world is immoral or unethical, by definition. Someone once said that "business ethics" is an oxymoron. It shouldn't be. But the truth is that the corporate world has not helped its reputation in recent times. The names Enron, Haliburton, and many others have become code words for corporate greed and wrongdoing. This is not com-

pany we should want to keep. It's not that all corporations are unethical, but their basic purpose is to make a profit for the shareholders, their administrators included.

If higher education is viewed as simply another corporate entity in society it will and should deserve no more deference than any other aspect of the corporate sector. In fact, higher education will become the subject of the same suspicion, skepticism, and even scoffing that is directed at much of the corporate sector. University presidents will be regarded as hucksters or sales people attempting to sell their product in the marketplace rather than as leaders of our society who can speak to the moral challenges of our day. Excessively high presidential salaries contribute to this image of university presidents as corporate executives.

During the politically intimidating period of the late 1940s and '50s, Presidents Robert Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago and Nathan Pusey of Harvard stood up to Senator Joseph McCarthy and his anti-Communist fear mongering. There was a time when university presidents were regarded as national leaders, advocates for civil rights, the reform of public education, and ambassadors for world peace. Presidents Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame, Kingman Brewster of Yale, and Clark Kerr of the University of California come to mind. They defended the right of faculty and students to be engaged in the civil rights and anti-war movements of that period. University presidents were routinely asked to serve on national commissions and interviewed by the media. One has difficulty naming a university president today who fits this description.

In my more cynical moments, I suspect that there are those who have this result as their aim because they do not like the influence that higher education has had in making our society more progressive and more just. There are those who are doing whatever they can to hasten the day when higher education is viewed by nearly everyone as just one more business enterprise slurping at the public trough. We should take great care not to add fuel to that fire.

Here are some of the consequences of our losing the moral high ground.

–The loss of the university as an arbiter of knowledge in all its forms.
–The loss of the university as a social critic.
–The loss of the university as a model for the larger society in terms of justice, respect for persons, civility, and best practices.

As a moral agent in society, the university must be viewed as independent, not a wholly owned subsidiary of the corporate world. The university must be free of conflicts of interest. When pharmaceutical companies pay for and control the dissemination of the results of university research, the university is not independent and free from conflict of interest. It has

betrayed a fundamental purpose—the discovery, development, and dissemination of knowledge.

When the Department of Defense provides huge contracts to universities, universities risk the ability to stand as critics of our foreign policy. To believe that the financial interests of the university, including the substantial indirect cost returns, could have no chilling effect on the faculty is naïve.

This problem reaches into every sector of the modern university. Recently, as reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (LIII, 2007), it was discovered that consultants who worked for the U.S. Department of Education to promote its efforts to require a specific, privately owned approach to teaching reading to children, were also university professors who participated in the development of that program, "had relationships with the publishers" and urged States to purchase the program ("Consultants" A16).

If the university has any commitment to or hope to regain the moral high ground, it must turn away from this sort of behavior.

Here are some of the consequences I fear if this trend continues:

–Continuing decline in the share of university budgets provided by public funding.
–Difficulty in securing private funding.
–Further reliance on student loans for financial aid, thereby further restricting access to a college degree.
–Further decline in the role of the university as a moral leader for the larger society.

What should we do to recover? Here are some suggestions:

1. Language matters. Let's insist that the university presidents be called presidents, not CEOs. That provosts and vice presidents for academic affairs be called that, not CAOs (for Chief Academic Officers). And so forth. A few years ago the president of the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education referred in writing to faculty as "employees." It seemed to some of us that this was not an appropriate term, given the nature of governance in higher education, another difference we have from the corporate world. We should take care that our language does not foster the image of higher education as just another business.

2. Protect our autonomy. The university needs to have a healthy relationship with the corporate world, just as it does with the government. The challenge, as Clark Kerr warned, is within both of these essential relationships to maintain a significant degree of autonomy for the university. I have provided examples of how the university sells its autonomy to the corporate world. We must resist inappropriate encroachments from state and federal governments. To do so we must persuade policy makers why this independence is in the public good.

3. Emphasize our contributions to the public good. We need to persuade the public that higher education is an investment in the "Commonwealth," our States, our peoples. We must emphasize the broader public purposes that we serve, our contributions to the physical and mental health of the public, our leadership for improvement of the public schools, our support for the fine arts and the humanities, the preparation of students for informed and responsible citizenship—the full array of the ways in which we contribute to the public good.

4. Lead by example. Every week *The Chronicle of Higher Education* includes examples of wrongdoing and ethical lapses by people in higher education:

> –Presidents who have misused university funds for personal gain or pleasure.
> –Athletic programs that have violated NCAA rules.
> –Administrators or faculty who have engaged in sexual harassment.
> –Researchers who have falsified data or engaged in conflict of interest behavior.

These incidents add up to more than individual failings because, in the public mind, they undermine the moral standing of higher education. We must lead by example and demand the highest ethical conduct from the members of the university community and in our institutional practices.

Conclusion

Earlier I made reference to Clark Kerr, the architect of the California higher education system, the person who is considered by many to be one of the most important leaders of American higher education in the 20th century. He died in 2003. Kerr was invited to give the Godkin Lecture at Harvard in 1963. Later he expanded the lecture to become his book, *The Uses of the University*. Since 1963 there have been five editions published with Kerr writing an update nearly every decade until the last edition in 2001. In the book, Kerr identified the confrontations he thought higher education faced, and one of those he called the confrontation over the "definition of the soul of the university."

> One common definition (and my own) of what is most important is high concern for student access, for faculty quality, and for institutional autonomy. The main alternative is a gradually diminished status quo in each area—and overall of the soul of the university. (182)

I am content to align myself with Clark Kerr on this issue, and that is what this paper has been about, the struggle for the soul of the university.

Note

[1]This paper was first given for the University of North Dakota Faculty Lecture Series, in a slightly different format, on February 14, 2008. My thinking about the "public good vs. public benefit" as a dichotomy for the purpose of higher education has been influenced by my reading over many years, yet I have not been able to identify a specific source for it. If one exists, my apologies.

The title of the paper, "Higher Education: Where We've Gone Wrong" could be explained in the same way that William Sloan Coffin, Jr., Yale's charismatic and former chaplain, explained his criticisms of the organized church as a "lover's quarrel"! He spoke, not as an enemy from outside, but as a constructive critic from inside.

I care deeply about higher education. I see it as the last and perhaps the only institution in our society whose unique purposes are to discover, develop, and disseminate knowledge; protect scholars who tell us what we need to hear when we don't want to hear it; and create solutions to our most vexing challenges.

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LAUREL REUTER

Wise Counsel, Glorious Company

"Through the arts we learn to make difficult decisions based upon abstract and ambiguous information." Those words come from the North Dakota Museum of Art Mission statement. Recently they were given substance by a North Dakota controversy.

The New York Times periodically runs a story about how "North Dakota is becoming a barren land as the population dies or drifts away," citing population figures, running photos of empty houses and closed up towns. In January 2008, *National Geographic* ran its version of the same story. Even before the issue arrived in many rural mailboxes, the *Grand Forks Herald* ran a rebuttal by Opinion Editor Tom Dennis:

> Start with the alcoholism rate. Drop in the suicide rate. Support both numbers by a telling detail: a battered mobile home, maybe, in a yard surrounded by stray dogs and junked cars, a reservation license plate dangling by a single screw from one of the cars.
>
> For decades, that's the portrait too many writers have offered of reservation life. And for decades, tribal members have shaken their heads and said, "No, that's not right. The problems are real, but this zoom-lens focus on them offers a terribly distorted picture of American Indian life."
>
> Non-Indians in North Dakota now can share that frustration because the current issue of *National Geographic* gives a similar treatment to the state. "The Emptied Prairie," the story is called, and if you haven't read it, just the headline is probably enough to call the whole thing to mind. You could write the piece yourself: The abandoned barn. The empty schoolhouse. The wind whistling through the windows of what was once a prairie home. . . .

A month later, Grand Forks photographer Rick Tonder's *Under the Endless Sky: Images of the Drift Prairie and the Red River Valley* was published. In the introduction Clay Jenkinson wrote: "That which is most remarkable in North Dakota is dying," and he goes on to lament the loss of earlier ways, the abandonment of rural life for the urban amenities

found in the consumerism of thriving Grand Forks and Fargo, Bismarck and Minot. And again, he supports his premise with statistics.

Clearly, North Dakota, like much of the Northern Plains, has gone through a significant population shift in the last 25 years. In 2000, as Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art, I decided to commission a group of artists to respond to the "Emptying Out of the Plains" theme—words that proved great for fundraising outside the region but simplistic back home. As Mary Lucier, Robert Polidori, Jon Solinger, Kathryn Lipke, Aganetha Dyck, and Jim Dow began their work, a larger but unspoken goal gradually emerged: we North Dakotans need to consider what it is that we cherish, what it is that we must hang on to as we go through this inevitable time of change.

Mary Lucier took on the subject directly in her five-channel video installation: *The Plains of Sweet Regret*. Eighteen minutes long, the images, the electronic score, and George Strait singing "I Can Still Make Cheyenne," wash over the viewer with waves of longing, regret, mystery, hope, dreams of the past, and promises of the future. Traveling across seasons and time, venturing into the far northwest corner of the state, almost to Montana, almost to Saskatchewan, Lucier creates the experience of moving through the landscape, across the Prairies and the Plains, into the birthing pens and the rodeo arenas, and, finally, back into the West of the imagination—the West, which, if it ever existed, lies in ruins. Certainly she filmed images of abandoned houses, but houses teeming with the remnants of earlier lives.

Rick Tonder's photographs, Jenkinson writes, "suggest that all the people of North Dakota have departed and not cleaned up after themselves as they fled away." Mary Lucier's art, however, records a different truth. She implies that the empty houses are left standing because they are the keepers of family histories—not unlike the small spirit houses that are constructed as roadside memorials to traffic accident victims throughout Chile, which, in turn, echo the crosses and plastic flowers placed along highways in the United States. Seemingly abandoned, these haunting farmsteads and deserted homes are treasured, revered, and revisited. Unknown family members of succeeding generations continue to make pilgrimages back, seeking an earlier part of themselves, until a final storm blows away the fragile structures.

In Robert Polidori's photographs the once carefully tended woods, gardens, and orchards planted to grace those early dwellings continue to flourish, but in a wilder state. Today they are home to billions of honey bees in a North Dakota that leads the nation in honey production. Abandoned farmsteads have become the aviaries of the 21st century.

Aganetha Dyck takes it further by placing the Plexiglas model of an abandoned house within a bee hive where the bees cover it with honey comb.

Jenkinson writes that "The history of North Dakota is the history of departure." The artists commissioned by the Museum suggest otherwise. Jon Solinger in his photographic study of the history of the shelterbelt, and thus land usage, captures the evolution of agriculture in the 20th century from the small family farm of yesterday to the medium-sized corporate family farm of the early 21st century. In his photographs, as in Kathryn Vigessa Lipke's documentary film *Shadows on the Land*, neither is better or worse, they just are.

Jim Dow in his nuanced and tender photographic series examines the creative life of rural North Dakota through the stuff people make with their hands. Ultimately published as *Marking the Land: Jim Dow in North Dakota*, this artist offers a slice out of time to both those who left and those who stayed. According to Tom Rankin, Director of Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies, "I can think of no eyes I trust more to photograph the cultural landscape and creativity expressed in daily life than Jim Dow's. These images reveal the eloquent complexity of the human story in North Dakota, rendered so powerfully and with such profound respect."

It is the role of artists to peel back the surface, to expose ambiguous, conflicting information that allows the viewer to grapple with the complexity, the ambiguity, and the conflict inherent in life. Humans take in visual information in a scattered rather than a linear way. It is layered, seemingly unrelated, abstract. The human mind is left to construct the raw information into a coherent, albeit complex, reality.

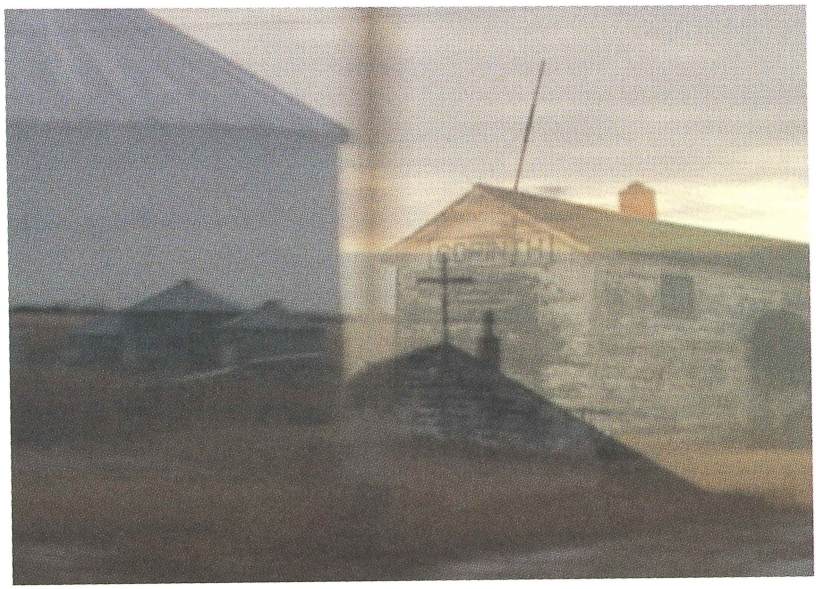
In the early 1970s, Ray and Charles Eames experimented with how humans process information. They asked a group of people to view a single-screen film and a control group to view the same information simultaneously presented as small bites of information on nine screens. Each group was tested for retention immediately after viewing. The first group who saw the linear film tested much higher, but a month later they had forgotten almost everything. On the other hand, during the intervening month the second group recaptured the bits and pieces of information and formed them into a cohesive but personal whole.

The Eameses reached several defining conclusions. Visual art emerges from a chain of discontinuous ideas which allows the viewer to synthesize conflicting possibilities and layers of meaning. Thus a work of art is not simply a presentation of ideas but a way of working out, developing, and enlarging those ideas.

Beauty itself is riddled with such ambiguity. For eons humans have struggled to understand or define its essence. The poet Rainer Maria

Rilke, who created object poems in order to describe with utter clarity their physical being,[1] fully recognized that "beauty is . . . the beginning of terror."[2] Even when dealing with physical objects, the arts allow the viewer to accept and understand that conflicting components can coalesce into a greater whole, that a kernel of darkness, ugliness even, lies at the core of all loveliness.

For example, Mary Lucier's *The Plains of Sweet Regret* is visually gorgeous. It is haunting. It is utterly beautiful. And at its core is an overwhelming sense of loss, of longing for a place and time that has slipped away. The yearning is conveyed on an emotional level through the sound: an original electronic score written by the blind composer Earl Howard for the first two movements, followed in the third movement by George Strait's Country Western song, "I Can Still Make Cheyenne." The song folds back upon itself, over and over, lingering, replaying in one's mind long after leaving the work of art. Brilliantly, the sound binds the work into a whole, underpins the sense of movement through time and weather, and gives voice to the aching sense of loss at the core of the work of art.



Mary Lucier, video still of "Corinth" from *The Plains of Sweet Regret* (2004).

Robert Polidori also creates gorgeously beautiful photographs at the scene of decay, be it a grand mansion in Cuba or an empty house standing alone in the vast prairie landscape. His monumental photographs of devastated New Orleans speak to the aftermath of all floods. They might just as well have been taken in Grand Forks, North Dakota, in the wake of the 1997 flood of the Red River. It is that terror of loss that transports his pictures beyond the elegant into great beauty. These works of art lodge themselves into the human subconscious, to be revisited for years to come.

Do we in the United States keep the past alive in the present the way other parts of the world do? Seemingly, the answer is no. The American Civil War was settled within twenty years of the cease fire whereas countries like Bosnia are still fighting over 800-year-old issues (although certainly issues of segregation and slavery plagued this country for the next century, maybe finally approaching resolution in the 2008 election of Barack Obama as President of the United States). Because North America is the bastion of the individual and much of the rest of the world defers to the will and good of the collective, individual stories from the past do keep it alive.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, droves of artists made art about their own lives. In 1996 the North Dakota Museum of Art mounted the exhibition *Autobiography: Words and Images from Life*. Three artists, all Canadians, made their art from memory, from images lodged in their minds. "They not only remembered, but through the process of translating the fleetingness of memory into visual form, confronted larger issues of how memory functions, how much the present is ruled by the past" (*Autobiography*).

Kal Asmundson grew up in the Bohemian section of Winnipeg, Manitoba. He writes,

> My earliest memory is of trying to walk and my father pushing me on the chest until I fell down . . . [when] my sister Karen was born. I can remember disliking her intensely. I would get into her carriage with her and shake it until it tipped and we fell out. One time she laughed and that made me change my mind about her. My mother liked to tell me that I wanted to kill my sister. . . . From age fourteen on I don't remember much. . . . I feared my father and I hated my mother. (*Autobiography* 11)

Years later, after many attempts, Karen committed suicide. One day Kal ran into one of her girlfriends who confronted him with the circumstances that had driven Karen to her end. Kal couldn't remember them. He denied them. Finally, he made himself turn back to the childhood he didn't think about. It was not repressed memory, or forgotten experience—just experience set aside in order to live. Once begun, drawings

and paintings poured forth in rapid succession. Today they are in the collection of the North Dakota Museum of Art, intensely personal artistic records of a life experienced by many.

The other two artists in the same exhibition also used art to navigate life. Caroline Dukes, a child of Middle Europe, suffered all that Jewish children of the Holocaust had to suffer. She managed to leave with part of her family intact and to make her way to Canada. It was only when her mother died, and after she had reached her sixth decade, that she turned her thoughts to her past, to her parents, to the part of her that was formed in Hungary during its bleakest years.

Like Kal, Caroline tells a private story. And also like Kal, her story becomes the story of everyone's search for the parent lost early, remembered in a couple of photographs, in the inscribed and worn pages of a cherished family book, or in a few fleeting memories lodged in the mind. Caroline sought lost memories through hypnosis. The viewer is left with the sense that hypnosis came to little. Instead of finding new memories, she ended up making art about the poignancy of memory, and of the enduring constancy of human relationships (*Autobiography* 10).

Caroline Dukes, "Memory Image # 3," charcoal on paper, 84" x 120" (1992).

Stephen Andrews created a body of work that appears less personal than that of either Dukes or Asmundson. Like the art of the other two, his installation "Facsimile" came into being as Stephen confronted death, both personally and on an epidemic scale. It was in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and AIDS was sweeping Toronto. Although living under the same death sentence, he was working in France. There, across the Atlantic, he waited for word of the mounting death toll. It came to him across the telephone lines via the new fax technology. Stephen collected the faxed photographs. In an act of mourning, he transformed each faded, pixilated picture into a contemporary icon (*Autobiography* 8).

Years later, I curated a major international exhibition titled *The Disappeared*, again drawing together the work of 25 artists who, over the course of the last thirty years, have made art about the "disappeared."[3] These artists have lived through the horrors of the military dictatorships that rocked their countries in the 20th century. Some worked in the resistance; some had parents or siblings who were "disappeared"; others were forced into exile. The youngest were born into the aftermath of those dictatorships. And still others live in countries maimed by endless civil war. The art, born of the need to tell, delved deeply into the nature of human memory. And importantly, through art such as this, viewers come to understand their own times.

Sometimes art is stripped down to its most fundamental, formal features, as Minimalism evolved in the late 20th century. It is about seeing, not feeling, not thinking. At other times art serves as a celebration of life. *New York Times* art critic John Russell's obituary stated that "art, for him, remained a glorious love affair and a lifelong adventure." "'When art is made new, we are made new with it,' he wrote in the first volume of *The Meanings of Modern Art*. 'We have a sense of solidarity with our own time, and of psychic energies shared and redoubled, which is just about the most satisfying thing that life has to offer.'"

Like great works of literature, the visual arts allow the viewer to enter at his or her own level of experience, of openness, of knowledge. The layers of meaning exist only to be peeled away, one at a time, as the viewer becomes ready. For not only do the arts allow us to make difficult decisions based upon abstract and ambiguous information, they also can make our hearts wise, the highest of human goals.

Just when we think we have defined the real essence of art, it takes another turn. The next generation of artists make what they will of it, much to the astonishment and discomfort of their audiences. Ultimately, art is a path that one might choose to follow into understanding, into pleasure, into expanding one's visual language, and into wisdom.

Notes

[1]Rainer Maria Rilke. Illustration of his object poems, from *New Poems*, "Archaic Torso of Apollo," 1908.

We cannot know his legendary head
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet his torso
is still suffused with brilliance from inside,
like a lamp, in which his gaze, now turned to low,
gleams in all its power. Otherwise
the curved breast could not dazzle you so, nor could
a smile run through the placid hips and thighs
to that dark center where procreation flared.

Otherwise this stone would seem defaced
beneath the translucent cascade of the shoulders
and would not glisten like a wild beast's fur:

would not, from all the borders of itself,
burst like a star: for here there is no place
that does not see you. You must change your life.

[2] . . . For beauty is nothing
but the beginning of terror, which we still are just able to endure,
and we are so awed because it serenely disdains
to annihilate us.

— "The First Elegy"

[3]The exhibition was organized by the North Dakota Museum of Art where it opened March 29, 2005.

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JOAN RUDEL

On Becoming a Teacher

On a warm July morning twenty prospective teachers sit around a conference table at a suburban school of education twenty-five minutes from the South Bronx where many may begin teaching careers. They have recently enrolled in master's degree programs, and their first course, the history and philosophy of education, is one I have been teaching for twenty years. I ask them to write for a few minutes on why they want to be teachers. Their responses are disappointing but not surprising. Over the years, I have read so many nearly identical writings. With a few exceptions, my students want to become teachers because they *love* children. "I have a genuine love and concern for children." "I love children of all ages." For a few others, teaching provides a means of *giving back to society*. "I want to give back to my community." "I want to make a difference in the lives of others." Love and caring are reasonable and even touching motivations, but they hardly seem adequate when one considers the serious responsibilities teachers have to produce literate and knowledgeable citizens.

In this class as in many others, a few are inspired to be teachers after a teacher helped them with a subject that was, and may still remain, a challenge. Subjects that most often caused difficulty are reading and math, and one might wonder why someone who had trouble learning to read or do arithmetic would want to or should teach others; but in my experience many, for whom school was an academic challenge or even a disappointing series of remedial classes and failed expectations, want to be teachers to save children from unhappy learning experiences. In theory this may sound noble, but more often than not, it risks the halt leading the blind. In fact, in each graduate class of 20 to 25 students, there are two or three who still struggle with basic reading and writing skills, unable to think beyond the most concrete ideas. These students are often defensive about any suggestion that academic prowess might be an important quality for a teacher.

A few write about less than successful academic experiences but are proud to have conquered reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. These stu-

dents may be wonderful models of determination and accomplishment in the face of learning obstacles, but they can hardly be considered examples of the best in academic proficiency or achievement. In each class, a majority of students express anger and disdain for tests and in concert declare, without any proof, and as if it is obvious to everyone, that tests are unfair. "I always did terrible [sic] on standardized tests and I graduated [sic] college." "Tests don't prove anything." Then another student chimes in: "I remember always doing just fine on the weekly spelling test, but I read real slow [sic] and was scared of taking those long comprehension tests."

I question, "Well, you're a good speller then?"

"Oh, no," she admits shyly, "I always failed the unit tests."

Ironically, poor skills and limited content knowledge to which my students are willing to admit are the best evidence that the tests they disdain and on which they did poorly are valid.

Many pledge to save children from tests that embarrass or challenge. This is an interesting promise, especially now as we plod through No Child Left Behind (NCLB) where test mania thrives as it did one hundred years ago in what psychologists then declared an *orgy of tabulation*. Clearly not all tests are fair; but it seems reasonable to expect that valid, reliable assessments might well help reverse the low level of academic achievement we find across the nation. Almost without exception, those I meet in college and graduate school classes are thoroughly convinced that tests are evil.

Some students write that teaching fits "nicely into the family situation"; they consider teaching in part because it offers some relief from childcare problems. In a country that offers inadequate child care for all but the most wealthy, it is no wonder that some see a teacher's limited work hours as a job perk. "I can be at home when my kids are home." Deciding to be a teacher because school attendance in the Unites States is required for fewer and shorter days than in any other country in the developed world may be a wise family decision, but wanting to teach because you don't have to do it too much doesn't seem like a strong recommendation for a career choice.

More recently, several students write about teaching as a second career. And while there are a few who come to teaching after years as business professionals, most who claim to be starting a second career are not. After working a year or two in corporations, a few write that they didn't like the long hours or stiff competition. Occasionally one remarks that his company downsized, and an outplacement counselor mentioned a teacher shortage. Several in their late twenties write about trying several jobs without success and deciding to give teaching a try because they *like*

kids. These people are not in any sense establishing a second career; they never had a first career. With few marketable skills, teaching often becomes the career of next resort. In this summer's class, while six students claim to be leaving careers in other fields to become teachers, there are really only two who are. One man, with an impressive education in the biological sciences, "went to work as a police officer and then as a private investigator"; after more than fifteen years, he has come back to school to teach science and math. The other is a woman in her mid-forties who spent twenty years as a hospital administrator and now wants to be an elementary school teacher.

Many choose teaching in part because it provides a high degree of job security. In business there are sales and marketing goals, in law there are billable hours, but measuring the competence of one teacher in comparison to another or even against an agreed upon standard has rarely been explored. Recently, some school districts have attempted to tie teacher compensation to student test results. However, such accountability is vigorously fought by teachers' unions and fraught with pitfalls, the least of which is figuring out how to evaluate a teacher, usually the most inexperienced, expected to teach children who come into the classroom reading several grades below level. Where is there a profession where fun and love determine compensation? But when other criteria are not clear or agreed upon, how much fun a teacher creates in her classroom may become by default the currency for determining her competence. There is also too little supervision of teachers. In fact, some teachers' unions have negotiated contracts that limit observations by supervisors to once or twice a year, and then only after the teacher, notified in writing, agrees to day and time. Within three years, most teachers receive lifelong tenure. After tenure is granted, removing a teacher for any cause, even harm to children, can cost a school district upwards of a quarter of a million dollars. Few if any occupations can boast such protection for probable incompetence.

After reading about my students' reasons for becoming teachers, I longed to hear from someone who wanted to share a passion for books and learning. Why was there only an occasional student who wrote about a desire to provide opportunities for children to better know and understand history, literature, mathematics, or the wonders of our natural world? Where were those who loved books and wanted children to share in that enthusiasm? Richard Hofstadter, in a 1962 book on anti-intellectualism in American society, suggests that the schoolteacher "is, or least can be, the first more or less full-time professional representative of the life of the mind who enters into the experience of children" (309). According to H. A. Giroux, teachers should be the "transformative intellectuals" in a

society, "helping students acquire critical knowledge" (138). In the 1940s Isaac Kandel argued for testing teachers' knowledge of content. He thought it was "inconceivable that a teacher could be both ignorant and effective" (qtd Ravitch 318). But most people I have met in my classes do not view the teacher as the intellectual leader of the classroom, the informed guide to learning and study. Most see the teacher as a well-meaning, state-credentialed babysitter whose job it is to make the "kids feel good about themselves," "make learning fun," and "help children deal with tests" the state has mandated.

When I question in class why no one has mentioned the life of the mind, intellectual pursuits, or love of learning as reasons for wanting to be teachers, I receive quizzical looks, defensive and sometimes unpleasant comments. I am convinced that if a vigorous mind were the currency required for becoming a teacher, a large number of those who sit in teacher-training programs would need to find the nearest exit. While so many argue about how to fix our bent and, in too many cases, broken schools, I often wonder if demanding that, above all else, teachers be models of academic excellence, much of the mediocrity we find in our schools would gradually cease to be.

When I posit in my classes that one authentic way to demonstrate love and caring for children is to assist them in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding through books and ideas, many are puzzled. But after reading Susan Gebhard, I am not surprised. Her research uncovered at least one critical reason reading instruction in our schools is not meeting with success. The autobiographies of her prospective teachers contained descriptions of "reading only in terms of a chore or academic mandate. They did not remember favorite texts or authors. Rather, their autobiographies reflected convictions that reading was an obligation" and one done only when required for a specific purpose. "I only read when I have required class material." "I've never been a reader" (Gebhard 454-63). The results of a 2004 study that surveyed four hundred prospective teachers about their attitudes toward reading uncovered a lamentable truth: more than half of those who will be teaching reading to our children are *unenthusiastic* readers themselves (Applegate 58-65).

Several times over the years, in response to my query about the possible importance of the teacher as a model of the life of the mind, students have insisted that it isn't important for teachers to be "experts in math or reading or science." What is important, they declare, is that teachers "can communicate with kids." When I ask how it is possible to communicate information about which one has not accurately and thoroughly read, I am told that teachers need to "know the stuff in the textbooks." I am often reassured that teaching young children isn't that difficult; after all, how

"complicated is a first-grade reader or arithmetic book?" I suspect these comments are very much in keeping with messages my students have received from others. A study conducted by Laurence Steinberg, Professor of Psychology at Temple University, makes it painfully clear that the prevailing attitudes about school, as communicated by parents, teachers, student peers, and the media leave students believing that academic excellence is a relatively unimportant part of life. Steinberg exposes schools where "parental disengagement and peer culture . . . are scornful of academic excellence" (188). He declares

> . . . our high school graduates are among the least intellectually competent in the industrialized world. Contrary to widespread claims that the low achievement of American students is not real—that it is merely a "statistical artifact"—systematic scientific evidence indicates quite compellingly that the problem of poor student achievement is genuine, substantial, and pervasive across ethnic, socio-economic, and age groups. (Steinberg 183-84)

In a recent book, journalist Martin Gross describes the school establishment "as a conspiracy of ignorance, one with false theories and low academic standards." Gross calls this a conspiracy without malice. "Teachers and educators are, by and large, humane and well-meaning people. Their major sins are that they have discarded traditional scholarship as a major goal and have adopted the psychologist/social work model" for schools (11). This conspiracy is reinforced time and again in college and university teacher-preparation courses and is clearly proving dangerous in the global intellectual and economic communities. Gross writes about an international mathematics competition at which 24,000 of the best eighth graders were pitted against one another in a math bee. While it was upsetting that the American children came in last, what was more distressing was that when the children were asked before the competition how they would rate their confidence in their math skills, the South Korean children categorized themselves as least confident yet they won, and the American children unanimously considered themselves extremely confident of their skills. Gross claims that our education system is doing a great job building confidence but a lousy job teaching math (1-3).

I suspect that there is good reason so many teachers do not consider academic expertise a most critical aspect of their jobs. They can't. Their own educational preparation and scholarship are limited; they are unlikely role models of academic achievement, often choosing to teach in order to spare children the slings and arrows of academic rigor. Perhaps they conclude, as much of American society does, that teachers are supposed to make school fun and children happy, and since learning can sometimes be difficult and may not bring immediate gratification, the more rigorous the

learning experience, the less fun it will be. Unfortunately, as a result too many classrooms focus on fun and happiness at the expense of learning.

Additionally, if academic excellence were a more important factor in admission to undergraduate and graduate teaching programs, many would be disqualified. Teacher-training programs are, above all else, big business, and having clients, in the form of prospective teachers, is the key to survival. In order for academic excellence to be the coin of the educational realm, it would have to be impossible to buy your way into the teaching profession. Much has been written about the fact that college students going into teaching score lower than any other group on standardized tests. In a recent *New York Times* education supplement, it was reported that those people going into teaching score lower on the SATs than any other group except agriculture majors ("Sunday" 26-29). My students are, almost without exception, vociferous in their objections to testing. They boast that they did poorly on standardized tests, yet they made it to graduate school. I suspect I'm supposed to be impressed. On the contrary, their presence in graduate school is most clearly an indictment of the low level of achievement tolerated and even celebrated in our schools, colleges, and society and is without doubt the consequence of tuition waiting to be collected by teacher-preparation programs.

Without debating the value of testing, there are those who could argue that being able to read, analyze, and write coherently about the content of a passage are skills we should demand, especially from those given the responsibility of shaping young minds. Several states have initiated basic reading and writing tests of general knowledge for prospective teachers. The passing scores are abysmally low, the tests requiring little more than an 8th- or 9th-grade knowledge of academic subjects; but it's a start. These tests regularly come under fire. In fact, in Massachusetts, the head of the State Department of Education was vilified when 65% of 1,800 aspiring teachers failed the State's basic knowledge test. The commissioner was forced to allow the candidates to retake the tests; improvement was minimal (Gross 91). In a recent book, Diane Ravitch notes that many critics of teacher testing claim such tests "would place too much emphasis on teachers' factual knowledge. . . . In defense of these tests, Kandel charged that the critics were asserting the 'teacher's right to be ignorant'" (319).

When I return to class the next day, I hope to inspire my students to find additional reasons for becoming teachers. "Let's share some words that best describe qualities of a good teacher. Call out words you feel are important, and I'll write them on the blackboard." The students begin with *kind* and *caring*. And then *patient*, *friendly*, *understanding*, *flexible*, *accepting*, *creative*, *loving*, *fair*, *open*. I continue: "Tell me which word or words on the board might just as easily describe a babysitter, a guidance

counselor, or a parent. I'll cross off that word or words." In less than a minute, a male student, planning to teach science, calls out, "You better cross them all off." A young woman pipes up, "Maybe we should focus on words like *knowledge* or *learning*." I slowly begin to cross off the first group of words and chalk new words they offer: *knowledgeable*, *expert*, *skillful*. Three or four students seem quite distressed with the change in our descriptors. "Are you saying that teachers don't need to be patient and kind?" "As far as I am concerned," one young woman declares, "I think being a good teacher means being loving and caring!" My students are beginning to grapple with what seems to be opposing views of what a teacher is: caregiver or scholar. It makes sense that prospective teachers who struggled through school, challenged by academics to the point of frustration or failure, want teachers to be kind and loving above all else. They cannot offer expertise or scholarship in subjects they have not studied or mastered.

"Let's look at our initial list, and tell me if these are the qualities you look for **first** when you need a medical specialist or a lawyer." A young woman clearly disturbed by the direction our discussion is taking calls out, "That's not fair! It's not the same. When you need a good doctor, you want him to know medicine the best!" A woman with two children in school in suburban Connecticut cuts in: "You're right, it's not the same. . . . It's worse. . . . You can choose your doctor or lawyer, and if you don't think he knows his specialty well enough, you can select another one. When your kids get a teacher who doesn't know her subject, they are stuck for the whole year. It's even more important to have teachers who know something."

Many in the class speak with great passion about one or more teachers who placed the highest value on effort and wouldn't lower their grades or hold them back if they failed a test or couldn't learn their times tables. It was effort that counted and effort that earned them passing grades. Now they pledge to let effort count most as well. Certainly a grading system based on effort would explain at least in part why many who graduate do so with inadequate academic skills. It would also explain why most colleges and graduate schools offer a myriad of courses to help students conquer basic reading, writing, and math skills—skills that should have been mastered in grade school. If effort is the driving force in student assessment, those who struggle the most, the longest, and the hardest might well wind up with the highest grades. If one were to carry this to its frightful conclusion, it would not be a good idea for a student to master lessons with ease and in a short time. If trying hard over and over again earns you the most points, the child for whom math comes most easily and most accurately better keep quiet and might even do well to pretend to struggle

a bit. Rewarding slow, inaccurate learning may not be the best way to prepare teachers we need to educate good citizens.

There are in this class, as there are in all of my classes, a few whose academic preparation is strong, whose skills and knowledge are solid. They are often more distressed and disappointed than I when these conversations begin. They seem unprepared for what they hear. After several hours of classroom discussion, they sense they are a minority: aspiring teachers with strong academic skills and high academic standards. They come to class thinking that becoming a teacher means having a chance to share knowledge and expertise with children. Often they leave disillusioned, looking for jobs in private schools where they hope their academic prowess will be appreciated. Several complete a master's degree only to continue on to a doctorate and college teaching, deciding to avoid the ranks of public school teachers altogether.

As our conversation continues, one student speaks of her desire to care for children; she tells us that her babysitting and coaching jobs "uncovered the special bonds" she has with children. "Helping children was natural to me." A muscled young man agrees. "I didn't think I could be a teacher because I had trouble with reading and math in school, but after coaching baseball for a few years, I realized that I had what it takes to work with kids." A young woman, who had up to now been silent stands up and says, "I have a lot to teach kids about earth science and geology; these are things I am very passionate about." Then a young man emboldened by her outburst chimes in, "I always loved math. I want to get students excited about learning math."

The disgruntled group is getting more agitated. A young woman who told me the first day of class that she still has trouble reading and writing but assured me that she would try very hard, speaks up. "Why are we spending so much time on what makes a good teacher? Can't we each have our own ideas? Isn't it okay for some of us to believe that a good teacher is a person who loves children?"

"Let's see if we can begin to understand more about what makes a good teacher as we watch a video about two teachers, one teaching in elementary school and the other in high school." All eyes focus on two teachers clearly expert in teaching skills and knowledge of subject. The teachers in the video are questioned about what makes a good teacher. The first-grade teacher speaks of "lighting her students' intellectual fires," setting them on a path of lifelong learning, and needing to be an avid reader and learner herself. The high school teacher is adamant. "A great teacher," he says, "is in love with his subject, knows and continues to learn his subject, honors his students, and has humility." Both teachers emphasize the seriousness of their work and how difficult it is. The high

school teacher speaks of putting in 12- to 14-hour days even after twenty years of teaching. This same teacher has a quote on his classroom wall on which two of my students comment. The quote by Michelangelo, "My best work is in my best interest," is one way this teacher communicates to his students the value of serious work. A teacher, he says, is "a model of human intellectual experience."

Every student in the class is impressed by the teachers in the video; not one word many had expected to hear was spoken. There wasn't one mention of understanding, love, or kindness; yet everyone agrees that both teachers' interest in their students was palpable. Both teachers have high expectations for all their students and share an almost fervent belief that all children can learn to read and write with competence and achieve success in math, history, and science. As my students listened to these two exemplary teachers, they were able to see that concern for student happiness was implicit in everything the teachers said and did. Both teachers worked to make sure no student was lost or confused; they wanted all children to be proud of their academic accomplishments. Both teachers stated their unwillingness to defend shoddy thinking or substandard performance in a misguided attempt to make children feel good about themselves. In fact, both made it clear that children can only feel good about themselves when they work effectively and efficiently toward academic excellence.

In a country where many complain about the state of education, most seem to focus on more testing, scripted curriculum, or computer access in classrooms, but few investigate the relationship between academic preparation of teachers and the probability that our children will succeed in learning. Lynda Darling-Hammond, Professor of Education at Stanford University, leads a research group that has investigated what teacher-preparation programs should look like and what qualities teachers must have in order to prepare students for a changing world. In many of her books and articles one theme returns again and again: "At a minimum, prospective teachers need a solid foundation in the subject matters they plan to teach and the requisite disciplinary tools to continue learning within the subject matter throughout their careers" (Grossman 206).

In a book on failed school reforms, Diane Ravitch declares that

> . . . it is a fundamental truth that children need well-educated teachers. . . . In 1998, only 38 percent of public school teachers had majored in *any* academic field of study. . . . Those with academic majors included only 22 percent of elementary school teachers, 44 percent of middle school teachers and 66 percent of high school teachers. (464-65)

Ravitch concludes, "Teachers who do not have a strong education themselves are not well-prepared to inspire a love of learning in their students." The group sitting around this summer's table is typical of those described by Ravitch. Only five of twenty had studied any liberal arts subjects in college, and one of those was educated in London at a prestigious school of economics. The remaining fifteen majored in fashion, advertising, business, marketing, and communication, including one who majored in electronic filmmaking and digital video design. Their college grades, even in nonacademic subjects, are generally unimpressive. The average GPA is B or below, and this in an age of rampant grade inflation. A few were admitted to the graduate programs with some provisions because of poor skills or grades. One provision is to complete a tutorial in basic grammar and writing. About to take on the responsibility of teaching history, mathematics, literature, and science, too many prospective teachers are products of nonacademic, inadequate educations. A few lack even the most basic literacy skills.

Several who struggled with academics during their school years seem confident that their unfortunate learning experiences will make them more empathetic, understanding, and patient with their students. That well may be. It seems more likely, however, that someone who avoided the study of science, math, history, and literature is not only ill-equipped to develop the necessary enthusiasm for those subjects, but simply does not have enough information to teach them. Without specific subject knowledge and academic skill, these new teachers will be hard-pressed to prepare academically accurate and rigorous curricula for their students. Most likely they will avoid anything but the most minimal exploration of these subjects.

So what to do? Is it possible to discourage those who see teaching as an occupation focused primarily on making school fun? Will people with inadequate academic preparation, who come to see teaching as an academically rigorous and intellectually demanding profession, drop out of teacher-preparation programs? I doubt it. Messages that contradict what they hear in my class have been reinforced for years by some teachers, parents, peers, and many school experiences. Those with weak academic preparation more often come to see me as an annoyance, a roadblock around which they must find a detour. They are determined to become teachers.

I doubt I am the Don Quixote of teacher education. There are those who share my views now and those who have in the past. In 1933, John Dewey described teaching as an "intellectual responsibility" and teachers as those filled with a desire to learn (17-18). Unfortunately, the prevailing winds in schools and teacher-education programs have not shifted. They still blow love and fun; and even if I am not tilting at windmills, my views

are those of a minority. I continue to encourage those with strong academic preparation and a child-focused demeanor to join the ranks of classroom teachers. I do this in part by demanding serious, high-quality work. When I do not provide weak students with A's or even B's simply because they try hard and pay for a seat in the class, they find many others who have and who will. Almost without exception, all students graduate from education programs, pass the unchallenging state tests even if they have to retake and retake them and find their way into classrooms. They will be teaching our children.

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GAYNELL GAVIN

Leavings

[A] journey refers to prolonged traveling; thus a sojourner is one who resides for a while in a place that is not her home among a people who see her as neither native nor alien. A sojourner is someone trying to go home again or trying to find a place and people that could become home.

—Lisa Knopp, *The Nature of Home*

The summer my son calls, a few months after the birth of his second child, to tell me he's getting married the first of November, I say, "Congratulations, Honey, but why now?"

"Well, Mom, it's what people who live together for years and have children together usually do."

"Yes, but do you have to do it during the middle of my first semester at a new job? Why not have the wedding over semester break?" I forget that not everyone organizes the world in terms of semesters, and I have just accepted a visiting faculty position moving me from Nebraska to southwest Michigan, a move that will separate me from the man with whom I've practically lived for nearly five years. I will be separated also from his children. I am a little distracted.

My son's voice is patient. "If we wait until your break, airfares to Hawaii will be so high for the holidays, practically no one from the mainland will be able to afford to come to the wedding."

"Okay," I say. "I'll try to show up and do what I'm told."

I have moved too many times, and I am undone by my latest move. In Michigan, I can see that the woods and lake are beautiful, but so little feels like home. Sometimes, in a group of people, I notice I don't even feel quite there; I don't feel quite like a participant in my own experience. I feel more like an outside observer, watching myself. Much of the time, I try to feel as little as possible, to stay as numb as I can. My brother and sister can tell I'm only semi-functional so they find a decent airfare to Hawaii, and my brother makes my reservation. People ask if I'm excited about going, but I'm not excited about anything.

I have not seen my son for over two years. For twenty of the previous thirty years, he lived with me, was my home, and even after that, until the last two years, I had gone only months between visits with him. I have not seen his three-year-old daughter, Kayla, since she visited the mainland with her mother over a year ago. I have never seen his six-month-old son, Liam. I am not excited about going because I have some sense already how hard it will be to leave.

I pack haphazardly and drive to the Grand Rapids airport early in the morning. It is dark, cold, and raining. From Grand Rapids to Chicago, from Chicago to L.A., even on the crowded, cramped flight from L.A. to Lihue, I grade papers and at last begin to enjoy the prospect of my trip.

Fifteen hours after I leave my apartment, Lihue is hot, sweaty, beautiful, palm trees, mountains, ocean. It is raining when I get there, but I don't particularly care. What I care about is my brother, David, at the airport, present, real. I can't tell if he has more gray hair than the last time I saw him, but his eyes are as blue as when we were small. I put my arms around him and feel happiness. I try to absorb his presence. As we make the short drive to Kapa'a, David tells me he has found the cheapest rental car on the island from a guy who operates his business out of a hardware store parking lot. I congratulate him on this consumer coup, although later I will notice the gear has a tendency to slip from drive into neutral with no help from the driver. The place we're staying has no paths from the small gravel parking lot to the cottages, and the lawn is rain-soaked, but I don't much care about any of that. I turn to see my son pull into our parking lot and step out of his car.

"Sweet Pea," I say, "I can't believe it's been two years." We put our arms around each other. He is skinnier even than when he was fourteen. "You're so thin. Why are you so thin?"

"High metabolism, Mom."

Two kids and two jobs, I think to myself. His dark eyes look a little tired to me.

"Leave him alone," my brother says. "We're all fat as ticks, and we waddle around moaning, *He's so thin*. It's crazy."

My brother gathers his girlfriend, our sister, and our mother into his car. I ride with Gabe. We leave both cars at the top of a steep drive and walk down in the rain, my mother between my brother and sister. Elaine greets us with hugs, and I notice she has let her dark hair grow long. The house has large windows looking out onto trees and hills with mountains beyond, invisible in the early evening mist.

Then I see Liam for the first time. Until this moment, when I fall hopelessly in love, Liam has not seemed quite real to me. Now, he is sit-

ting on the honey-colored hardwood floor wearing only a diaper, a golden baby, plucking at the strings of his father's guitar. I pick him up, and he laughs. I kiss his head, which is nearly bald, but the fuzz on it is gold and soft against my lips. I kiss him and kiss him. He laughs and laughs. There are little flecks of gold in his blue-green eyes. Gabe carries Kayla, who has fallen asleep, out of her bedroom, and she gazes shyly at me from his arms, wearing one of his T-shirts as a nightgown. Her sleepy eyes are not quite as dark as his, and her gold-brown curls are much lighter, but the resemblance between them is strong.

The next day, Elaine and I shop for the following night's rehearsal dinner. Liam laughs, babbles, and sleeps in my arms through much of the food shopping expedition. "Listen to him talk, Kayla," I say.

She gives me a disgusted look. "He can't talk. He's just a little baby. He can't say anything."

"Well, he talks baby talk. He has his own little language."

"Yeah." Kayla does not condescend to argue with my observation, perhaps because she is pleased by the distraction of a hot pink dolphin balloon I let her choose at Safeway. It's a perfect match with the pink princess Halloween costume she insists on wearing every day.

Our friend Tom, the judge who will perform the wedding service, has arrived from Illinois with his son Kristian and Kristian's girlfriend Jaque. When we meet for dinner, I am especially glad for Tom's calm presence because, despite happiness at seeing my family, I've begun to feel a little overwhelmed by the intensity of it all. Everything in the restaurant swirls around me, people, food, candles reflected in the windowpanes. I hold to the sound of Tom's quiet voice.

In the morning, I meet Tom, Jaque, and Kristian for breakfast before the rehearsal. Tom is tall, gray-on-blond, soft-spoken. We eat outside. While helping raise my son, he became another brother to me. I have not seen him for over a year, and I am glad he is here now, laughing as he asks me, "Do you remember when Kristian was little, how I would rush over with a paper towel if he got a single drop of milk on the floor? It was crazy." Kristian, taller than his father now and with darker hair, rolls his eyes. Tom looks at me. "You were a more relaxed parent."

I shrug. "Or more worn down."

The Peas arrive in their slightly battered silver Mazda van and lead us to the wedding site, which is beautiful, lush, a bit remote. I carry Liam down the wooded, heavily-shaded path, and when I step into the jungle clearing, everything is too much, too dazzlingly bright, vivid, too beautifully harsh—sky, dizzying flame-colored flowers, grass—a haunting excess with trees at the clearing's edges. I move toward the nearest edge,

feeling my arms tighten a little around the baby in spite of the heat, seeking small patches of shade, waiting to rehearse the part where I walk forward with Elaine's parents. I carry Liam, asleep against my chest. When anyone asks if he's getting heavy, if I need a break, I say no. What I need is to have him with me.

I hold Liam against me fiercely, regardless of the heat and sweat until he awakens, hungry, and apparently realizing mine is not the breast he's seeking, begins to cry. "Sorry, baby," I say, handing him off to his mom, who nurses him throughout the remainder of her wedding rehearsal. I amuse myself by mentally writing a society-page column about this wedding for the newspaper in the city where, before our diaspora, generations of my family lived, noting that the happy couple's first child is the recalcitrant flower girl, still in her Halloween costume—who, despite the gentle urging of her maternal grandmother, prefers to keep the yellow flower petals she is supposed to scatter among the guests—while the second child nurses as his parents rehearse their vows. Division of grandmother-labor has Elaine's mother in charge of Kayla-control while I'm in charge of Liam. I definitely have the easier task, but my sleeveless rehearsal shirt is soaked with his sweat and my own.

Elaine's parents have rented a house in Lihue. When I arrive there, Elaine and her mother have just had their nails done. Kayla is with them but has not had her nails done because all the manicurists were men, and she announced she wants a woman to do her nails. When her dad laughs at her, she shoves him.

"Hey," I say, "don't push my baby around."

She turns to me, pouting a little. "He is not your baby. He is my papa, and he is big."

"Yes, he is my baby."

"Uh-uh." She turns back to Gabe. "Are you? Are you her baby, Papa?"

Gabe smiles a little. "She's my mom."

Kayla laughs. "No, Papa, you're big, and you don't have a mom." She wanders off down a hallway, still laughing and murmuring her answer to her own question. "He doesn't have a mom."

We grill fish and vegetables before eating on the second floor deck off the kitchen. When Kayla starts to climb the deck railing, both grandmothers leap to pull her back. I take Liam inside and walk the floors with him so his parents don't have to trade him back and forth as they try to eat. While we walk, I tell him what a good, happy baby he is. He laughs and talks back to me until, once again, he sleeps in my arms, then awakens to join more laughter after dinner.

Next morning, the wedding site owner is at the trailhead with a promised golf cart to transport guests, most of whom choose to walk. I think the walk may be too much for my mom so I choose to ride with her. When the cart gets stuck in the mud, the owner's helper brings a second cart to pull the first cart out, but the second cart sticks in the mud too. My mother takes my arm, and slowly we make it down the trail.

Peopled now, the clearing no longer hits me with quite the previous day's force. The wedding is small, just family and very close friends in rows of chairs set up with a center "aisle" of grass between them. I take my place in a front row with my mother and sister next to me, my brother and his girlfriend behind us. I do not keep my seat for long as the bride hands me her son, who becomes restless. I walk behind the chairs, patting his back. He is wearing a red floral print shirt and shorts, which match the floral pattern of his sister's dress. She is no longer wearing her Halloween costume.

Tom stands in front, facing us, his reassuring voice starting the service. The recalcitrant flower girl is as reluctant to scatter petals as she was the day before, but no one minds. Gabe and Elaine, both dressed in white, walk up the grass aisle and stand before Tom. Their hair shines in the sunlight, his short and very dark, hers long and chestnut. My sister, Kim, comes to stand beside me, and just before it is time for me to go to the front, she takes Liam. She is tall, elegant, every short blond hair perfect, tears running from her blue eyes, streaking her pretty face. I do not cry.

I am sorry my father is not adequately recovered from surgery to be here. I am sorry also that Gabe's paternal grandmother is not able to be here. Once, years after my former husband and I had moved across the country from her, she said, "When you moved that grandbaby away from me, I thought I would die." I understand her words now. I am a little sorry too for Gabe that his dad has not come but relieved for myself because I don't enjoy seeing him; since he did not help me raise my son, it is right that I go to the front alone. I have been my son's father as well as his mother.

With Elaine's parents, I stand before Tom, Elaine, and Gabe for my lei and kisses, then return to the back of the small crowd. Kim gives the baby to me, and I give her the lei, knowing otherwise Liam will crush it, eat it, or both. I hear Tom's strong voice end the service. "May your days be good and long upon the earth."

I whisper Liam's name and look down. He is sleeping, the side of his face pressed to my heart, his rosebud mouth so like his father's in infancy. I whisper the wedding words to him, "May your days be good and long upon the earth, Liam." I know that someday, each of us must leave the earth, but why I wonder, in the meantime, do we leave each other? It is only a day now until I leave Liam, our time grows short, and I press him

to me as if we can each imprint the presence of the other. Someday, we will tell him how he slept through most of his parents' wedding in my arms. Liam, however, lives very much in each present moment, and what he wants in the moment he awakens and begins to cry at his mother's breast.

The bride rushes from her vows to nurse her son, then returns him to me. Everyone who wants to hold Liam gets a chance. He is glad to be passed around while his sister runs around. He is passed back to me. I look across the table at my mother, my sister, my brother, his girlfriend Jet, Kristian, Jaque, Tom, across the canopy to Gabe and Elaine. I hold to the happiness of this afternoon, cling to it in the early evening as I walk on the beach with Tom, pushing against impending sadness later when we gather for dinner.

It is the next afternoon I dread. In the morning, I push it away a little longer, Liam in my arms at breakfast while his parents eat, Kayla standing at the edge of our restaurant table, showing off a little tap dance she's made up. After, in the parking lot, as I tell Kristian, Jaque, and Tom good-bye, I feign composure when what I really want to do is hold to him and wail, "Don't leave me, Tom."

It gets worse. Back at the cottage, I pack and numbly say good-bye to my brother, Jet, my sister, and my mother. The Peas take me to the airport, pull up to the curb, Gabe, Elaine, and Kayla pile out, standing beside the van while I sit for a few moments beside Liam, who is in his car seat. We do our routine. I desperately need routine in my life right now, and I particularly love this routine: I kiss him; he laughs. I whisper, "Don't forget me, Liam. Don't forget that I love you and am always with you." He laughs some more.

Somehow, I get through the rest of it, Gabe, Elaine, and I hold each other; then I kiss Kayla good-bye. She looks at me in bewilderment from her father's arms. When she was Liam's age, the Peas lived in Ft. Collins. I was an eight-hour drive away and saw her every few months. Now, I see Kayla once a year, at most, and she hardly knows who I am. As soon as she starts getting used to me, I leave. I turn to walk away and hear her ask, "Where is she going?" I hear her mother answer, "Grandma has to get on the airplane now," and then I hear Kayla's voice again. "I don't want her to go."

Her words tear through me. I force myself to keep walking, and I do not let myself look back. I have had a lot of practice, having spent much of my life walking away, trying not to look back, but nothing has prepared me for this moment. Nothing.

There are few people in the world who care where I go or where I stay. A few but not many. I walk away, stand in requisite airport lines, time passes, I walk to the gate, sit down, and start to cry. On the crowded

Lihue to San Francisco flight, I make myself read and grade some papers; but my overhead light is burnt out, the sun sets, and flying east as the red-streaked night deepens to black, I cry some more, which is what I do also between San Francisco and Chicago—cry and grade, grade and cry. At O'Hare, my first flight to Grand Rapids is canceled due to weather. During my eight hours in O'Hare, I finish grading and cry some more. When I arrive in Grand Rapids, it is cold, dark, raining as it was when I left.

According to biographer Blanche Wiesen Cook, Eleanor Roosevelt once said to a friend, "I am a middle-aged woman. It's good to be middle-aged. Things don't matter so much. You don't take it so hard when things happen to you that you don't like." Recently, I quoted her words to a close friend of my own, thinking they summed up where I am in life, but I was wrong. When I quoted those words, I had not yet fallen in love with my grandson. Now, I feel the memory of him in my arms, his head against my heart. His small presence matters to me very much, I don't like his absence at all, and I take it very hard. Waves of longing rush, wash over me, pull me under. I have been traveling for over twenty-four hours and, unable to sleep on any of the planes, have not slept for over thirty. I reach my apartment, fall into bed, cry, finally sleep, get up the next day, and teach. Day after day, when I'm not teaching, I cry.

In her memoir, *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*, which I am teaching, Maya Angelou writes, "The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." In her meditation on interracial family life and place, *The House of Joshua*, which I am also teaching, social psychiatrist Mindy Fullilove notes, "The wrenching effects of uprooting a tree by force parallel the effects of upheaval and transplantation on other living creatures, including people." Examining the "violence of the color line" throughout her book, she goes on to observe that "Displacement will be the problem of the twenty-first century, more wrenching and more injurious to the human spirit than even the color line." As one familiar with the color line, displacement, and ways the two intersect, I am convinced she is right.

I believe one reason my mixed-race son has chosen to leave the continental United States is that Hawaii, while no paradise of racial harmony, is so multi-racial that he can blend in there in a way he cannot most other places. He has gone as far as he can go without actually quite leaving the country; he has nearly left. Although I am usually able to talk to him about almost anything, when I try to make myself ask him if I'm right about his choice, I cannot do it. For some reason, I cannot ask him this question; but my small existence plays out on a larger landscape of displacement and loss.

One of my cousins says all of human experience is about managing loss, and only those who learn to do so well have any chance at any sort of happiness. Another cousin says her husband's corporate employer has transferred them so often, she doesn't belong anywhere anymore, and I, having rarely, if ever, belonged anywhere, say she does belong—to us, to our family. She is ours; but our family members are increasingly scattered. Her sister, sad that her own son has moved far away, tells me she keeps my address and phone number penciled in her address book so she can change this information whenever I move. I don't tell her I live for the day she can write my address in ink because I am afraid that day won't come. Her mother, Katie, is my mother's sister.

When I was four, the first phone number I learned was that of my father's store. The second was Katie's. I can see, in my parents' old bedroom, the black rotary-dial phone on which I practiced carefully dialing the numbers. Both numbers remained the same for over forty years before the store was sold and Katie moved to assisted living. If I am still here in forty years, I will be older than Katie and my parents are now.

A friend says that when she finishes her Ph.D., no matter how bad the job market—and it is bad—she refuses to move ever again to a place where she doesn't know anyone. "I've done it too many times, and I'm tired. I'm not young, and I want a place to grow old." Another, much younger woman, who has just finished her Ph.D., makes a similar statement to me.

A wise mentor writes, "What kinds of lives have we chosen to keep us so far from our children? In my mother's generation, we'd have been the older generation of house slaves (if our daughters-in-law would have us), doing the cooking, child care, housework . . . better or worse?" I reply I don't know which is worse, house slave or harried academic, I'd hoped for some balance between the two extremes, the question makes me laugh, and of course, simultaneously cry. She tells me to write about it.

I find colleagues who, like me, are in "commuter" relationships or marriages, an increasingly common situation in academia. As some of us begin perhaps—tentatively—to build a little temporal community-in-exile, not one of us seems happy about this situation, although I admit the others do not appear to be hysterical as I have become. Across the miles of telephone wires, the voice of yet another casualty of academic displacement, a colleague and close friend of many years (the recent recipient of my Eleanor Roosevelt quote) says, "My goal for both of us is to find a way of living that is more than just coping. We must change our lives." I tell her not to be so nice to me because it will make me cry more, adding that I need to snap out of my undignified and unattractive regression from middle age to adolescence.

There is, of course, the backdrop of war, a landscape of violent displacement and loss so vast that my experience looks trivial in contrast. The radio awakens me each day with news of bombs, helicopters shot down, crashes, a hideous litany of suffering and death. One morning, a radio voice informs me that never before in the history of the world has a society simultaneously produced so much wealth and so much misery as ours.

Shortly after my return from the wedding, I awaken to the sound of a mother's voice on the radio. She is from a military family and is reading an essay she has written about her son, an Army Ranger who died in a helicopter crash after volunteering for a rescue mission in Afghanistan. She speaks of protecting her family's privacy, shielding the family from media attention after her son's death. A Ranger, who served with her son, tells her he appreciates and respects the decision to keep her family's grief private. She says she would rather have the respect of one Ranger than the sympathy of an entire country. While neither militaristic nor from a military family, having lived a long time with a Ranger, perhaps I have some sense of what she means.

Despite serious injury, the Ranger with whom I lived survived the times he was in helicopters that were shot down. Since my move, he calls every day, but after I return from the wedding, he calls twice a day. Now, because he knows I am in trouble, he calls not only each night but also each morning to make sure I get out of bed. Part of what I have learned from him is that—at least, in the kind of small, closely-knit units, which were home to him and his soldiers—a good officer leads from the front and loves each soldier. Although he inevitably fails at times, he tries anyway to help each soldier accomplish his or her mission and come home alive.

My sister calls almost every day too. She orders me to dress warmly and go for walks because it is good for me. I know she's right, and sometimes I make myself do what she says, but still I can hardly stop crying. She urges me to call my brother's girlfriend, whom she has nicknamed Jet due to her high energy level. Kim says Jet, a Buddhist, will chant to help me, which may be a good idea, but I can't stop crying long enough to call Jet and don't know her well enough to call her while I'm crying. Although I think Tom, who was not a soldier but a conscientious objector, can help me, I decide not to call him because another woman who has moved west while I moved east, calls him daily, sometimes twice a day, sobbing over her own displacement. I decide Tom doesn't need two of us. His court docket is crowded, and he is undoubtedly putting in twelve-hour days to get caught up after the wedding. Finally, instead, I call another friend, Matt, like Tom a conscientious objector, who in all matters spiritual is stronger than I, which is why I call him when I am in trouble. Crying, I tell him I have cried for three days and can't stop. His voice is calm and quiet.

"There is always a path out of the wilderness," he promises but adds, "Sometimes it is small and easy to miss. If you're crying, you may not be able to see through your tears, and you may miss that little trail."

It is night, and after our conversation, I go to bed exhausted yet unsleeping, but I do start to stop crying. Floods of tears dwindle to tiny trickles at the outer corners of my eyes, although I feel and think through a fogged haze of sadness so thick that I wonder if, in the morning, even with the Ranger's call, it will take all I have just to force myself out of bed. I try to imagine doing something radical like dishes, grocery shopping, or taking out trash. I need to do laundry, but the Laundromat brings back the most dispossessed, disempowered, impoverished days of my existence, and the Ranger tells me to just bring the laundry when I come home to visit. I am running out of clothes but decide to buy a few more rather than do laundry. I have other things to do.

I start writing to Kayla and Liam every week. I refuse to let my voice, my presence be erased from their lives. I write a path to them.

When I go home, I take a duffel bag full of laundry. Upon my arrival, the Ranger drags the bag from the garage to the laundry room where we empty it, and I put the first load in the wash, although he dislikes my interference with his laundry methodology and will do most of the rest of it himself. He tugs at his gray beard, looking like the fourth patriarch—preceded by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—surveying the chaos I've created in his laundry room, counting the twenty pairs of underwear and thirteen bras I pull out of the duffel bag. The kids are at their mother's for the weekend, but the dog, a ten-year-old blond Lab-Shepherd mix with puppyish energy, prances across the concrete floor strewn with my dirty clothes and dances around me, sniffing and licking my hands. I pat his head but then say, "Enough already, away, pest."

In the morning, the Ranger awakens me. I routinely sleep later while he is fixing coffee by dawn, after years of getting troops up and moving early. "Wake up." I feel his hand on my shoulder. "Something's wrong with the dog. He can't get up. You have to help me get him to the vet." I don't change the T-shirt I've slept in. I reach for the nearest pair of jeans and follow him downstairs. The dog lies on the laundry room floor, his breathing slow and labored. He smells like a dog. He is big and heavy. We roll him onto a camouflage-patterned poncho liner and use it to carry him out to the van where we lift him into the back.

I climb into the back seat and stroke the dog's head while I listen to my own voice, which is calm, saying, "Stay with us here, Dog Boy. Don't leave. Keep breathing." His brown eyes, framed by blond lashes, are clear, his gaze fixed on me. I can tell he sees me and hears my voice. The

vet's assistants are waiting to carry him in when we get there, and the vet arrives shortly. He is tall, slender, his gray hair cut short. I am glad his voice is quiet as he kneels on the floor, his hands gentle as he touches our dog.

"I don't know what's happened, but this dog is in shock. We need to get him on an IV and oxygen right away." He sends us home and says he'll call shortly. Outside, it is unseasonably warm, and the air feels good.

"I'm worried about Dog Boy."

In reply, I take the Ranger's hand for a second before he starts the van. "I think Dog Boy will be okay." I mean these words, but within moments after we walk in the house, the phone rings, and the vet says the dog is dead. I sit beside the Ranger, curl my legs up on our tattered floral dog-hair-covered couch, put my head on his shoulder, and my arms around his neck while we cry. I understand that we are not crying just for the dog or ourselves but also for our parents, our children, our grandchildren. I have known him well enough for long enough to know every death brings back Vietnam.

For the rest of my visit, I don't try to see many people but to be quiet and relax. Eventually, we talk tentatively about getting another dog because, in our long fight against death, when things fall apart, that is what human beings do. We resist and start over. We rebuild.

Soon I will leave Nebraska, and the radio instead of the Ranger will awaken me, although the Ranger will still call to make sure I get out of bed after I wake up. An interview with former South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky will awaken me, and I will hear him explain why, after nearly thirty years of exile, he has returned to Viet Nam with the words, "It's my home." Everyone, it seems, wants to go home.

The night before I leave, lying beside the Ranger I say, "I've just moved too much. It's made me like those Israeli soldiers, who had low rates of PTSD after the '67 war and high rates after having to fight again in the '73 war. I know it's a frivolous analogy since I don't have to face the physical danger, but it's the only analogy I can think of."

His voice is tired. "It's not frivolous. It's an apt analogy."

"How did you do it? How did you force yourself to go back to Viet Nam after that first tour?"

"Back here, I was training the kids we were sending over there. We were sending them way too fast. We weren't training them adequately, not long enough or well enough, and I couldn't stand it so I went back myself."

"I'm such a coward I can barely force myself to go to Michigan."

"You're not a coward. Stop it."

I stop. "I want to hear about the razor grass."

"I've already told you."

"Tell me again."

He begins. "It's called elephant grass too, I guess because it's so tall, taller than any of my men, and I had some pretty tall men. We tried to avoid it when we could. It would just cut you up. We wore long sleeves and gloves. It was thick. We'd use machetes to cut a trail through it. You couldn't get through it without leaving a trail. Sometimes it was mined."

He continues. Sometimes he speaks of the beauty of the A Shau Valley, and I see it in the distance as I fall asleep—a peaceful picture—the tall green razor grass so lovely, you would never know how tough, how dangerous, how sharp it is. You would never know the men who move through it are soldiers. The soldiers are young and afraid. It is so beautiful. You would never know.

The next morning, the Ranger brings me coffee, and I ask him to bring me some of his combat decorations, a request with which he is impatient; but he opens a dresser drawer, yanks out a plastic bag, and hands it to me. "Tell me what they all mean," I say.

"No. I've already told you, and I don't like to talk about them."

"I'm taking some of them with me," I say, "so I can make myself leave." He's lost a lot of them over the years; but sitting on the edge of the bed, from among what's left, I pick the medic's badge, the jump wings, the Jumpmaster's Badge, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. I tell myself if he could care for the injured, jump from airplanes, and endure thirty days of continuous combat, I can go to Michigan, which appeals to me about as much as Nineveh appealed to Jonah. I tell myself if I don't go, I will be swallowed, but going feels something like being swallowed too. Then I remember the words, *There is always a path out of the wilderness*, and I pick the Pathfinder's badge.

I leave very soon now, in only a moment, and it will be like a dream, leaving again and again, like I'm not really there in the car, like it's not even me driving into winter, past white-gold fields, pale in the morning sun through frost.

MICHAEL GRAHAM

Notes on Teaching in a Prison

My very first night as a poetry instructor at Larch Correctional Facility in Southwest Washington State started out like a tired and formulaic joke: A Catholic priest, Baptist minister, Buddhist monk, and a poet are all sitting around a table. . . . The closest thing to a punch line to be extracted from that first mandatory training session, however, wouldn't have anything to do with religion at all, but be provided by my very own presence as the one thing that was not like the others in the room. Throughout the four-hour training, led by the facility's chaplain, we were buried in handouts and watched exceptionally bad training videos on state policy regarding how religious volunteers were to conduct themselves. The topics ranged from not teaching against another's faith, to the types of artifacts that were safe to bring into the prison. Wine and sharp objects = bad. Small paperback Bibles = good. From time to time, instead of looking in the direction of one of the others and inserting "When Teaching Catholicism . . . " or "When conducting Bible study. . . " he would very admirably try to morph poetry into a rare faith of its own in order to make me feel more comfortable, say like Zoroastrianism or Shintoism, and advise, "Who better to teach the tenets of poetry than a poet?" If that were the case, I thought, then I should have taken that opportunity to politely excuse myself because if quizzed at that very moment on the definition of canzone, terza rima, or enjambment, I would have been outed as none other than a fiction writer masquerading as a poet.

So why would a fiction writer be teaching poetry? After all, the young woman sitting across from me in her long flowing crimson robe and shaved head presumably wasn't planning on teaching from the *Qur'an*. The previous year, as a graduate student in a master's program focusing on fiction, I had taught at another Washington state correctional facility just outside of Spokane. Within the first few months I had totally abandoned teaching fiction and never looked back. My decision wasn't merely because of the lack of resources, although at the time that was what I was telling myself. True, inmates don't have access to typewriters or photo-

copy machines, so we couldn't go through the motions of something resembling the almighty American workshop, but somehow I was still able to hash out the look and feel of that freshman undergraduate Intro to Creative Writing class I grew bored of and dropped. I went through a phase where I clung to the excuse that it wasn't enjoyable for me to sit for long periods of time listening to the inmates read bad prose. Yet nearly every poetry class I've conducted has had a long, weepy poem rear its ugly head, snarling out clichés further confined by the obsessive need to rhyme. I'm all out of excuses so I stop trying to come up with them, and when asked, either by an inmate or someone curious about what it's like to teach in a prison, I merely explain, "I teach poetry, but I'm a fiction writer."

During the mandatory, one-time training session, which because of bureaucratic reasons I've had to take twice now, I discovered that I apparently wasn't the only person in the room wrestling with demons. The Baptist minister, sitting directly to my left, had been steadily letting out snorts and scoffs as the chaplain explained that the prison was as religiously diverse a community as one could find anywhere. He told us that not only were all the major world religions represented, but there were nearly a dozen Wiccans and a handful of registered Satanists at the facility and that it was their constitutional right to be able to practice their faith. As the training delved deeper into the policy that one couldn't teach "against" any other faith or world view, something reiterated almost as many times as the regulation that it was a felony for us to have sex with the inmates, the Baptist minister muttered under his breath "Sell out." I was scared he had my number and wondered if I gave off a different smell or if poets were physically distinct in their differences, like a basketball center was from a football center, and he knew I was a fraud. There was a chance he had parked next to me in one of the visitors' spots and seen that my back seat was littered with the works of Don DeLillo, George Saunders, J. M. Coetzee, and Charles Baxter without so much as one poetry anthology to be seen. But, when the Baptist minister asked, "I suppose that means my sermon on the evils of Halloween will have to be trashed?" I knew he was barking up another tree, one in an altogether different forest. Just as I felt relief that I hadn't been outed, he began slamming his fists down on the table, causing it to vibrate. It was obvious we were in the middle of a melt down, one no one else in the room seemed to be aware was brewing. I looked in the direction of the Buddhist monk, her stunned expression probably matching mine, as he shouted, "Compromise, compromise, too much compromise, you're all sell outs," leaving us with one of the greatest farewells I've ever heard as he flung his coat over his shoulders: I'm gone like a ghost, baby. And just like that

he *was* gone. The chaplain must have seen this type of outburst before because he didn't even miss a beat as he continued on with the orientation.

When the training was finished we got our picture taken for our ID badges. I was the last in line and felt comfortable asking the chaplain a bit about the history of the facility itself. He told me the site had been a prison since the 1920s when it was more of a labor camp. Anytime a renovation or addition took place the labor force was comprised entirely of inmates.

"We have engineers here, skilled plumbers, carpenters, you name it, they're here, and they enjoy being able to practice their vocations again," he said.

"And the materials?" I asked.

"The Department of Corrections purchases those and rents whatever equipment we don't have to complete the job."

He pointed to one of the barracks which looked much less prison-like than the facility I had taught at in Spokane—for the most part because that was medium security, built by a government contractor specializing in prisons, and this was minimum, with a slightly different mission.

As he walked me out, the chaplain pointed to a large photograph of what Larch looked like in the 1920s, nothing more than a single strand of wire, rows of shacks and tents, and another in the 1950s with more permanent brick barracks. Back then it was forty miles from anything resembling a city, but with the current rate of suburban expansion, soon the mountain-top fortress would have neighbors—and not working class or even middle-class for that matter. As I descended the mountain, the first signs of life were almost a dozen or so McMansions set on one or two acre plots, probably homes valued at between $500,000-$2,000,000. The houses had no blinds or curtains drawn, and from time to time I caught a glimpse of an almost Rockwellian existence inside. It's a strange thing to walk out the front door of a prison with razor wire, bars, and bulletproof glass everywhere, to witness how the other half lives behind paned windows and intricately etched doors. I wondered if the residents had any idea they were no more than a few miles from Larch or if the real-estate agent left that part out. But I don't want to create a false sense of menace here. Larch is for offenders who have under two years left to serve, and they're only transferred to the facility—where they're part of daily work crews that fight fires, sculpt hiking trails, and clear mud slides—because they're relatively stable: no escape attempts and, as far as felons go, relatively well behaved, outside of the fights, stabbings, and sexual assaults that come with the territory.

Class started with twenty students. Fast forward to class six, and I was down to five, albeit a highly motivated and enthusiastic five. Although

losing 75% of my students had nothing to do with the quality of my teaching, the thought definitely crossed my mind. I wish I could blame it on the fact that at any given moment one of my students was in the hole (solitary confinement) for being involved in a fight or transferred to another facility, but this generally doesn't account for a lot of fluctuation. Even poetry outside the prison walls faces stiff competition, but instead of battling against technological eye candy such as the Internet, video games, and movies, I learned that I was up against a totally different breed of animal: bingo. I taught Wednesday nights, the exact same time and day as bingo, yes bingo, which offers the inmates cake and soda, double portions for winners. This was now a clash of cultures: poetry versus bingo. However, if I can tell a 6'4" 250-pound inmate with a neck covered in tattoos that his poem is infected by hyper extended and mixed metaphors that lose me, I could take the bingo by the horns. To get more students, I pressed the chaplain to put up more flyers and make several announcements over the prison PA system in the hours leading up to my class; after all this was a battle to give the inmates a chance to be better people.

By the next class, I came armed with a new strategy to put bingo in its place. The guard unlocked the tiny classroom, number ten, for me. This was a bit confusing because I've always been placed in the large meeting room, number one, where Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous meet and also where popular preachers hold good old-fashioned revivals where inmates are whipped into a state of ecstasy, often speaking in tongues.

"Is this going to be my classroom from now on?" I asked.

"For the time being. The Buddhists are in number two tonight, and they ring a lot of bells and do a lot of yelling, so I thought you'd prefer to be in here."

I thanked him and began surveying the room. There was a chalkboard, four nearly museum-piece computers and some motivational posters which, judging by the look of them, had been designed with junior-high kids in mind. My immediate favorite was one of a fluffy orange and white kitten that had stepped through an overturned bottle of paint. The message read "Stick around, I might just do something wonderful" at the bottom. Over the door, in wood letters I imagined had been crafted in the prison's woodshop, a sign read, "Dopeless hope fiend." I haven't seen the inside of very many prisons, and I know full well each and everyone, even within the same state, is probably very different, but this seemed like a scene from a David Lynch film.

Although I've been advised it's always a good idea to keep a barrier of desks between the inmates and myself, I pushed the desks together to make one big conference table. In approximately fifty visits to Washington state correctional facilities I've never had a single moment where I felt

like I was in even the slightest bit of danger, even after banning a particularly "hard" inmate from writing a single rhyming poem for several classes. Then there was the time I was alone with an inmate who asked me to edit his 200-page manifesto, which I refused to do because it wouldn't be fair to the others. He went on to confess that he "wasn't a bad person," but in the late 1970s he'd brought back his own little version of his experiences in Vietnam and butchered several people. Of course, I haven't had problems, in large part because of who I am, or depending on how you want to look at it, who I am not. First, I'm not part of the system nor am I one of them, so they don't have to size me up as a potential threat. As a religious or educational volunteer, you're seen as something in between the inmate and the system. The inmates that come to class know you're there because you care and you're not being paid or reimbursed for your time. Secondly, although I wear slacks and button up shirts, like many of my students my arms are covered in tattoos and I keep my sideburns long. In addition, from my years spent as an infantryman and what Philip Levine called in the intro to one of his books, a life spent in a series of "stupid jobs," such as working in a junkyard in Spokane or loading dock in Texas, I can have a slightly rough-around-the-edges look. Admittedly, my lack of participants is frustrating because I know if I were a woman, even a woman who looked like an unattractive man, my classroom would be overflowing with students, albeit sex offenders, armed with odes that they would read me, never breaking eye contact, but a full classroom nonetheless. I know because I've seen it first hand. The rail-thin, twenty-three-year-old young woman I inherited the poetry class from in Spokane was suspended for several weeks because she failed to report the fact that she had received multiple marriage proposals, one complete with a pawnshop ring passed forward with that week's assignment. No one had any idea how he managed to smuggle the ring inside since it was considered contraband. Two very large, middle-aged women who taught another class down the hall from me confessed several students had asked if they could write them and inquired if they'd consider "dating an inmate?"

It was seven o'clock, and one at a time the students filed in. The first to arrive was a man who I believed to be in his early forties with a shaved head, smart-looking glasses, sporting the grey sweats most of the inmates wear. Sometimes he became frustrated coming up with a simile or a line of poetry linking the abstract and the concrete; but he had a soothing reading voice, his breaths perfectly placed, and he never missed a class. I didn't know why he had been there for six years, but since he seemed generally respected by the others it led me to believe he was not a sex offender—more than likely an armed robber, dope dealer, murderer, or

any combination of those crimes. He sat directly under the orange and white kitten.

The second to arrive was a man in his late twenties who, judging by the relatively short length of his sentence and the state of his teeth has had problems with meth, or possibly black-tar heroin, which is big in Portland. He too never missed and always personally thanked me at the end of every class for making the long drive in order to teach them how to be better poets. Four more men trickled in, those who split their affections between poetry and bingo, or maybe a pool tournament and my class, but always had work to share and loved to talk about the poetry of Yusef Komunyakaa, Charles Simic, or Jim Daniels. As always, I'm informed that so and so is in the hole or the infirmary, and I struggle to match a face with a moniker, sometimes not a proper name at all but "Fishhead" or "I.O.B."

"Who has something to share from last week's assignment?" I asked, which was to rewrite a historical event or classic story everyone knows by heart, somehow altering the outcome or reshaping how we see the tale. It's a major goal of mine to get them to be able to think outside the box, recast their own world.

The man under the kitten raised his hand, and after an explanation of how he probably did something different with the assignment than everyone else, he starts. His work speculated what would have happened if the 9/11 terrorists had been captured at the airport and he wouldn't have watched the towers fall on a guard's portable TV sitting in a box protected by bars and bullet proof glass, no sound to go with the picture. He told me he remembered asking the guard what kind of crazy movie he was watching and the guard told him it wasn't a movie, which he temporarily blew off as the guard messing with him. He took a deep breath and delivered his work beautifully. He had some magnificent images, an undeniable energy in his poem I can only describe as "real," which more often than not was lacking in the poems I'd heard from fellow graduate students. Afterward, he went on a diatribe about how cheap and easy hate was, which, unfortunately, I had to break up by politely asking if anyone else had a poem to share. Often rants about how a poem reminds them of when they were shot five times—raising their shirt to reveal the scars—eats up large chunks of the class.

The next poem places Antony and Cleopatra in divorce court, and although its rhymes are so bad they make my stomach tighten and toes dance inside my shoes, it's a very funny poem. I make it a point to always find something positive about a poem, in the same way creative writing professors at universities do. I should be clear that I'm not play-acting when I do this; I never say I like something I don't or that an image is evoking and visceral if it isn't. Some of my favorite lines from students—

the ones that haunt me during my long, dark drive home—come from the most clichéd poems. Often what might be lacking in the polish that comes from years of higher education is made up for in authenticity.

Generally the formula of my class stays the same: the inmates and I read what we've crafted over the week, then we look at three eclectic poems that I brought and discuss them, followed by warm-up drills and an exercise that will, I hope, culminate in a poem for the following class. Sometimes the exercise is purposefully vague and wide open, based on a quote such as "Remember the future and predict the past" (Carlos Fuentes). Next I have them brainstorm ten historical or futuristic scenarios, pick their favorite, and write a poem based on it. But once this exercise sent a gangbanger into a mini-meltdown shouting, "I just want to understand!" Other times we'll learn about haikus or sonnets, complete with pretty little handouts like mathematical equations that allow them to plug in their lines about lost love, growing up in poverty, drug addiction, and the anxieties of trying to turn their lives around. Because some of the inmates have short attention spans and already spend several hours a day in classes trying to complete their GEDs, I can't dwell too long on educational topics such as the history of the sonnet or the definition of a euphemism or alliteration. The nights we deal with the formulaic are the most popular, in part because it's easy to know that when you've got fourteen lines, or a three-line poem with roughly five-seven-five syllables, your poem is finished. But also because, as many of the inmates have told me, they like thinking of themselves as following in the footsteps of Shakespeare. Since one of my major goals is to get the guys writing poems that don't rhyme and are image heavy, without any signs of a narrative, let alone a confessional narrative, I only work one of these formulaic classes into the mix around the fourth meeting, and then not again for at least a week or two.

After the laughter subsided from the Antony and Cleopatra poem, I shared my work. Some might think it's tacky that the teacher participates, but why not? The very first night they asked me if I'd ever had anything published and practically demanded to hear something I'd written, as if to test whether or not I was qualified to teach them anything. But, beyond proving myself to them, I've found that it's a great motivator to get me writing poems, stepping away from long nights of copyediting and actually have fun with writing again. Besides, what better way to discover if an assignment is lame?

On this particular day, I was nervous about sharing my work. My poem was inspired by growing up in the mid-1980s when Richard Ramirez, a.k.a. "The Night Stalker," was killing throughout Southern California. I imagined that my father fired the boogieman whom he used

to scare us into getting good grades or going to bed on time and replaced him with the Night Stalker. In my version of altered history, "The Night Stalker" was never apprehended, and a full generation later, I used him to scare my non-existent children. I'm sure at least one of my students has killed, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and I was afraid they might think I was lumping everyone who's killed into the same category as Richard Ramirez. In the end I opted to read it because I knew that the chances they had sunk to the level of barbarity of Richard Ramirez were slim, and they would know I wasn't making any wide sweeping statements about them. But I don't just run into this problem when I read my own work. No matter how well I know or like a group, I find myself thinking way too much about the poems I bring into class, often tossing out any works that have sexualized images of women or acts of violence aimed at an entirely different crowd. In the end, I remind myself that it's absurd to try to shelter people from a poem who have witnessed and participated in acts I can't even imagine.

When I finished reading, one inmate told me he liked a certain line, another how funny one part was. The truth of the matter was I couldn't stand the poem. It lacked a heart and was just too cute and easy, something I try to teach my students to detect in their own work. But then again, there's a good chance they've learned more from me than the rhyming scheme of a Shakespearian sonnet simply in the way they talk about poetry now. They could have learned to see a work in progress as just that, not all good or bad. As class winded down, the students hard at work on next week's poems, the excuses rolled in as to why they wouldn't be around to read them: my archenemy bingo, a volleyball tournament, shortened weight-room hours, or a new Bible-study group starting. I know that I can't hold back my most popular lesson any longer, the one that always leaves the students saying, "We should do this again before the class is over."

"It would be a shame if you missed next week, since we're doing haikus," I said.

One student tells another that haikus are cool; a third tells me that he writes them all the time. I've planted the seed.

When class was over a few of the students filed up to thank me, shaking my hand. This is a huge show of respect between prisoners and from prisoners to staff. Some staff have told me they won't shake hands; others say they will only if they feel it's genuine, and some, like the chaplain, do so frequently and warmly.

Driving home after class I looked for the lights of the McMansions. Generally after class I'm always filled with humbleness, and this night is no different. When I was young and dumb, by the grace of something out

there, I was steered in a direction that kept me out of a place like that. If I had joined a gang instead of that other, larger gang called the Army, or sold drugs instead of selling triple cheeseburgers, I could be there. Whether or not you're a fan of free will dictates whether or not you're even remotely willing to follow me down that road, the one not lined with McMansions. But when I wake up early the next day for work, my back sore from the three-hour round-trip drive, I question how many more weeks I can muster the motivation to continue teaching, especially when only one or two students show up. On top of that my Toyota has nearly three hundred thousand miles on it and deserves to be the subject of an ode for her steadfast service, which I worry will end one night on the unlit, rarely traveled mountain road leading to Larch.

Fast forward again, past Haiku Night, which incidentally was a flop that led me to change the class to Tuesday nights where my only competition was a Catholic Bible study, to the final class. Although there were many times I wanted to cut the twelve-week class short, I stuck it out, telling myself that if I empowered one ex-dope addict, who in turn wouldn't revert to being a window man eking out an existence by stealing and fencing the goods just to stay high, it would all be worth it. At my bequest, the six students arrived, most armed with their favorite poem that they had crafted in the class. Our chairs were in a circle, not unlike an AA meeting, and the orange kitten was there too. Everyone's work had massively improved; almost all the students possess the glow of having their learning lights turned on. Clichés still abound, some dominated by confessions of "The nightmare of being addicted to dope," or "Loving someone on the outside, hoping they'll be there in a few years," but some of the habitual rhymers have crafted some very tight, very non ear-rhyming works. When they speak about each other's work, they use the poetry lingo I've slowly tricked them into adopting: stanza has replaced paragraph, metaphor or simile has wiped away exaggeration, and I hear the occasional line break, couplet, or even the obscure trope, a word I've fallen more in love with over the years. The last student to leave is the young man in his twenties with bad teeth. He asked what community college was like and if I thought he could hack it there, like it was as tough a place to be successful as Manhattan or Hollywood.

"Without a doubt, just work hard and don't give up, even if you have a lot of trouble with a certain subject," and I went on to confess that I'd failed math three times and nearly dropped out of the University of Texas. We continued down the path that takes him back to his barracks and me to the main gatehouse.

"I'm also hoping that if I keep writing poems and getting better, I'll be a poet someday."

"There isn't any kind of regulation on who gets to call themselves a poet, you know," I said, hoping it didn't sound condescending or too feel-good. After all, I have no idea whether or not my poetry class has ever helped anyone stay out of jail, let alone develop into a writer of any kind.

When we reached an interior fence and a sign that read "Out of Bounds," I left him with a handshake and told him to keep writing poems.

Two weeks later a certificate of thanks arrived from the chaplain, looking something like the diploma I received for finishing junior high. On the front near a Department of Corrections seal was a brightly colored sticker intended for a pre-teen which read, "Keep up the good work."

The following day I started shopping around for another prison.

DONALD GUTIERREZ

Three Universities and Three Cities: A Memoir

I.

This memoir was preceded by two others and represents the end of a narrative that begins with my first year at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1950 and ends in the second memoir with my and my family's return from six years in Manhattan and Brooklyn Heights to Los Angeles where I began graduate English studies at UCLA in 1964. In the earlier memoirs, I attempted to give some sense of the texture and pulse of the place and time. The first piece offered a critical remembrance of an institution of higher learning—the University of California—in relation to a specific community, Berkeley bohemia. College as subject disappears in memoir II, the focus instead directed on both work life in two unusual venues and on the kind of odd, unforgettable personal yet impersonal experiences liable to be undergone by almost anyone in New York where most lanes are fast. The present and final remembrance once again focuses on academe, specifically UCLA, Notre Dame, Western New Mexico University, and, more briefly, on the surrounding community—Los Angeles, South Bend and Silver City, New Mexico, respectively.

In the past, returning to California (either to San Francisco or Los Angeles) from anywhere else always seemed like coming home, and it passionately did so as our plane brought Marlene, our son Hector and myself back to the lush, green, deliciously corrupt mini-cosmos of Southern California and L.A., with its turquoise-colored swimming pools, palm trees and stretches of ravaged desert, decimated orange groves and elegant homes, and then, as we got closer to the LAX, to miles of less elegant, closely aligned box houses.

I had lived in West Los Angeles from 1945 to 1947 with my mother, Alicia Ruiz y Chamorro y Crehan, my stepfather Hubert Crehan and my little sister Lolita, and I was stunned at the difference between L.A. mid-1940s and L.A. mid-1960s. I'll take for example the UCLA campus, as it served as my main focus in Los Angeles for the next four and a half years.

When I was a high-school kid, I used to walk across and play football and baseball on huge stretches of Uclan grass. And there were sizable spaces between campus buildings then, something almost bucolic about the widely spaced configuration of lawns, shrubbery, flower gardens, and buildings like Royce Hall and the Undergraduate (later, Powell) Library, one wall inside of which bore a portrait painting done by Hubert of the notable former Head Librarian Lawrence Clark Powell. Like many American college campuses, the growth and expansion, called "development," which met the requirements of the enlarging student populations and institutional research needs, devoured space, so that my 1940s teenage vast fields of green were now consumed not only by an elaborate track stadium and basketball court (the large Pauley Pavilion of John Wooden fame), but also by buildings representing a large medical center, the sciences, and other disciplines.

But what was true of UCLA's campus was true of Los Angeles and Southern California as well. It had become much more "filled in" and spread out during the past two decades with houses, commercial establishments, the defense-aerospace industry, and freeways. If from the air freeways looked like huge, long, intertwining scars, they were a seductively convenient way of getting around a monstrously enlarging city and region. Yet, despite this 1960s enlargement, Los Angeles still seemed attractive and livable, at least, in some areas. There might have been more freeways and far more cars on them, yet one didn't encounter the very heavy traffic one encountered there in the 1980s and of course the gridlock one meets today.

What stood out about Los Angeles, and especially West Los Angeles (which included such high-end, tony areas as Westwood, Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, and Malibu) was its sensuosity. This quality struck me as consisting of attractive Spanish-style architecture, palm trees here and there, a relaxed, cockily hedonistic life style to a large extent made possible by the generally sunny climate and the concentration of wealth in West Los Angeles, and a semi-desert environment turned green and flowery by massive amounts of water stolen in the early twentieth century from Owens River. The hedonistic beaches, beach towns, and beach culture a few miles west and southwest added to this sense, in part fantasy, of almost insolently sensuous ease. If I had to put it all in a single word, West L.A. and other parts of L.A. such as the hills around Hollywood and Beverly Hills and extending down to right-wing Orange County felt and looked voluptuous; the place seemed designed to engage all the senses in buildings, homes, flora, dress, car styles, and the elegantly laid-back appearance of financially comfortable people. The darker, devastated Southern California of Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* and *The Ecology of*

Fear simmered and sometimes erupted beneath the Southland's sensuosity, with its savage fires and landslides and police racist brutality and (yes) numerous tornadoes and history of successful anti-union stompings. But for a family fleeing the high-stone prison of Manhattan, Los Angeles looked inviting.

Our family of three (to become four with the second son Trajan being born in 1967) arrived in Los Angeles with little money but sizable help from Marlene's family. Her sister's husband—a high-paid engineer for Howard Hughes and then the government with a home in gorgeous, very expensive Palos Verdes—found us an apartment in a city housing development called Marianwood which was financed by and named after Hearst's kind and generous mistress Marian Davies. Most of the people living at Marianwood were lower class families hoping their stay there would be temporary. A few families in the housing project were UCLA graduate students who definitely had plans to exit the project as soon as post-graduate degrees got them a professional job. The project had a sensible and humane rent policy—one was charged rent based on income, starting at $35.00 a month. As six years of full employment as a librarian in New York City had not exactly made me wealthy, we qualified for the lowest rent rate offered, thus ironically making our living in Los Angeles and my going to graduate school possible at least for the first semester.

The accommodations of our apartment at the project were not elaborate, virtually one divided room on the ground floor perhaps forty feet long that served as kitchen, dining room, living room and study while two small bedrooms and a bathroom rounded out the second floor. The resident population was democratically mixed racially—whites, Latinos and Blacks all well represented and living cheek by jowl which perhaps explains why, during the Watts Riot, Marianwood was as peaceful as a Christmas Eve.

We were back in Southern California, then, so that I could get a Ph.D. in English, thus reversing my Berkeley undergrad ideals seeded by Hub and San Francisco poet, man of letters and left-wing radical Kenneth Rexroth about academe being corrupt and sterile. The new attitude, born of exasperation at being a librarian, fatigue with the atomizing, maddeningly pulsating life of New York and the realization that if I read every night after a day spent assigning Dewey decimals to books I'd rather be reading, led me to feel that I might as well be spending most of my time reading as part of taking literature courses that could result in an advanced degree and a job teaching in a college.

Even in 1964 UCLA had an attractive campus. Some of the traditional buildings, including the administration building, possessed a handsome,

quietly elegant Romanesque appearance. This pattern was undercut over the years by structures such as the Social Sciences building which, with its massive 10-12 stories and a grimly brown facade full of tiny windows, resembled some Ministry-of-Peace venue in Orwell's *1984*. Also, the campus, particularly from the top of a long red-brick stairway called Janss Steps, offered a marvelous view of very ritzy Bel Aire to the north nearby, a visual paradise of hills, trees, and luxuriant flowering bushes dotted with homes even then surely worth millions.

These attractions of campus and affluent surroundings certainly did not apply to the English Department digs which made the Berkeley English Department's nondescript Dwinnell Hall look almost beautiful. This three-story affair possessed absolutely no distinctiveness, voluptuous or otherwise. I had perhaps become more worldly since my 1950s Berkeley undergraduate days because the general atmosphere of the UCLA English Department, perhaps because of its pedestrian building, felt to me far less "arty" and affected than that of the Berkeley Department. But then UCLA was a commuter university; except for fraternities and sororities and sparse ex-World-War II veteran student housing on campus, there was no adjacent community through which a dissident or esthetic style and energy—even if it were an adversarial one, as in Berkeley—could exercise influence on the University. The nature of the school, surrounded by wealthy residential communities that virtually all grad students could hardly afford to inhabit, cut off campus life from the sort of student residential support system that had helped make Mario Savio's Free Speech Movement possible in 1960s Berkeley. In retrospect, I was glad to be at UCLA because the absence of an activist, politicized student culture made it easier for me to get through the doctoral graduate program in four and a half years.

UCLA had a fine English Department faculty. Perhaps not as famous as Berkeley's 1950s professoriat, it nevertheless included individuals like the Cockney medievalist William Matthews, the novelist, Pound scholar and raconteur John Espey, Richard Lehan, James Phillips II, Max Novak, Leon Howard, and other publishing scholars and teachers of distinction. A former UCLA grad student named Norman Grabo, who later taught on the Berkeley English Department faculty, told me once that in his opinion the graduate English program at UCLA was superior to Berkeley's.

What can one not say about the first time he enters a classroom as a *teacher*? Perhaps he wonders whether he will get through the class hour without having a nervous breakdown or the class realizing how little he knows. Before a new teacher develops a teacher persona, he might be trying to find some level of authenticity and authority in himself to justify his commanding the time and attention of some twenty either very young

adults or very old teenagers. In my case, hardly uncommon, the most compelling factor was that I needed the T.A. salary to continue graduate school and contribute to the very lean family economy. Brutal necessity pushes the beginning student teacher through that classroom door. As, at UCLA, there was little instruction in how to teach (aside from one or two meetings of all T.A.s with some tenure-track assistant professor), one had to teach oneself how to teach.

The UCLA English Graduate School program consisted of preparing for specialization in four areas or "competences" of one's choice, such as, for example, Old English, Renaissance, Victorian, Modern British, plus certain required courses like Introduction to Literary Criticism and Linguistics. After one took a certain number of prescribed courses, he took his Master's exams in his four area choices. If he passed those, then it was on to other course requirements like Middle English plus passing an insufficiently rigorous one-hour written exam in two foreign languages. For better or worse, there were no requirements in Neo-Marxism, Feminist Theory, Structuralism, and so on but I think the periodization approach, despite serious shortcomings, offered a comprehensiveness and flexibility not as readily found in the ideological proclivities of graduate curricula since the Sixties. Something one often hears is that since the 1970s grad students in literature are well read in theory but far less so in literature itself.

The final hurdle to a Ph.D. was selecting a thesis topic and writing a dissertation. This, as grad students and academics know, is usually the highest hurdle of graduate work and the one many doctoral aspirants fail to clear. Either they pick too complex a thesis topic, do too much research and can't order or master the resultant mountains of material, can't face the writing, fall in or out of love and drop out of school, get immersed in the raging political issues of the day, join a hippie commune, or become permanent ABDs (All but Dissertations) until the school finally kicks them out. I was fortunate in finding a subject I liked—the twelve-volume novel of Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time*, only eight volumes of which had been completed at the time. I had no problem with the writing (having scribbled long essays in my late teens about how to create a Utopian society and similar topics), and finished the dissertation in six months.

However, I had to look for a university post as a (very temporary) ABD because of the semester timing, and few job options were available to ABDs. I did get a job offer from (I felt then) an unlikely school—Notre Dame. Today, Our Lady is regarded by some college-appraiser sources as one of the top twenty universities in the country, but in 1968 its reputation, except for its football program and possibly a few other departments

such as its Theology Department, was not quite as lofty. Further, it was, obviously, a Catholic school, and though I was not a Catholic (or even a Christian), that, one gathered, would not be an impediment to receiving tenure.

II.

In any case, I didn't have much choice. A job offer was being made from a well-known university, and though I could have waited until my dissertation was finished, it would have meant another term or year living on a very meager income and perhaps a suitable job offer would not materialize. I took the job and in the late summer of 1968, we packed innumerable boxes, sent them off to "Notre Dame, IN," got in our VW Squareback, and took the long trip back to the northeastern midwest, going up California on two-lane Scenic Highway 1, then cutting northeast into barren eastern Oregon, up through Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and further east, all this to avoid the summer heat and, perhaps unconsciously on my part, to avoid my 1958 border "Migra" encounters narrated in my second memoir (forthcoming in *North Dakota Quarterly* 75.3).

There are northeastern midwestern towns more unlike West Los Angeles than South Bend but the contrast of the latter with the energy and texture of Southern California culture was sufficient to make me feel somewhat alienated in South Bend. One was moving from Southern California sensuosity and, at times, exhilarating openness to a milieu utterly different, a place that at first felt to me boxed-in, hard-nosed, blue-collar, occasionally mean-spirited. South Bend, with the shut-down of its Studebaker industry, was a depressed community; the only significant place thriving was the University. Small mansions adjoining a tree-lined street and the majestic St. Joseph River could be bought for a little over $30,000.00. Despite Notre Dame having contributed several million dollars to the town's financial restoration, that did little to diminish a certain hostility towards the "gown" from the town, notwithstanding the town's substantial loyalty towards the school's football teams.

This town-school enmity or, at least, coolness might have been partly a class divide, the sense among lower-middle and lower class South Benders that Notre Dame students, many from out of state, were a privileged and spoiled lot. Perhaps some hostility derived from the school being Catholic, though in view of the sizable population of Poles and Italians (especially in the adjoining town called Mishawaka), I doubt that religion was a significant element in the animosity.

The enmity was dramatized for me after I had been at the school three or four years. I was having a beer one Friday night in a rather seedy bar downtown when around eleven to thirteen of what looked like Notre Dame football players entered the premises as a group. For probably good

reasons, the bar authorities didn't want them in, and the situation rapidly grew ugly. I recall a squat, goateed bouncer all in black blocking the path of the team's "spokesman," himself not slender. The negotiations were not leading to a peaceful resolution, and, before long, some bar patrons began lining up behind the uncompromising bouncer, *his* "team." These patrons looked in dress and mien like various kinds of manual or low-level clerical workers as well as occupational bar flies who would like nothing better than to hit some "smart-ass" Notre Dame student over the head with a chair or beer bottle. As the students didn't look like James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus types in build or verbal artistry, this situation could have gotten seriously violent, significant wounds generously spread on both sides, a tenure-track N.D. professor very close to the line of scrimmage.

Fortunately, whether reason or perhaps the threat of police arrival prevailed, the football team gradually, if reluctantly, literally backed out of the bar. One needs to keep in mind as context that early in the 20th century not only students but even faculty priests were not allowed downtown at night—who knew what could happen to them or what they might do—especially at dives like the Hi-Lo Bar. During my time at Notre Dame, one highly distinguished department senior professor did in fact run into trouble at a downtown bar, gamely confronting but ending up getting decked outside a bar by a motorcycle-gang leader (accompanied by his gang) with whom he was in some sort of competition in regard to one of the stage-dancing women inside the bar.

So if South Bend seemed hard-bitten to me—despite also possessing some exquisite middle and stately upper-class homes and districts as well as miles of lush, fertile surrounding rural country—this appearance was intensified by the contrastive character of the Notre Dame campus. The campus in 1968 wasn't particularly larger than that of other major universities, but it had a kind of worn solidity and dignity due to many of its buildings having been around for well over a century. The long stretches of paved walks through expansive lawns and stately, huge trees added to the impression of a campus almost too heavy with tradition. Buttressing the entire campus were two of its most famous structures, the Golden Dome building and Sacred Heart Church, both within 30 yards or so of each other. The "Dome" was both the administrative center of the school and a venue for classes.

Was there a heavy sense of wealth, of opulence about the campus? Not that I could detect or even sense then, except for a Biology Department building, a massive sports complex, and the new library, a 12-13 story, rigidly square affair resplendent of glass and marble with an enormous image of Christ facing south towards the football stadium with

upraised arms. There were two lakes in the northern section of the campus, the larger one serenely quiet and surrounded by bushes, trees, and a few benches from which to watch the shimmering water surface and floating ducks.

The campus changed enormously, however, after the 1970s. There were so many new buildings during my last visit to the campus in 2001 that I temporarily got lost while wandering around on it. This "new" look also gave the impression of wealth, as numerous substantial newer buildings were to be found as well as one of the most elegant college bookstores I'd ever seen and a new and quite handsome art museum called the Snite. I felt a bit like Hardy's Jude the Obscure gazing with envy at inaccessible Christminster—rather ironic of course as I'd taught at the school.

Notre Dame did things in grand style. All the new faculty members in 1968 were greeted at a celebratory cocktail party and dinner in a campus building designed for special occasions. This initiatory party was a formal affair, all the Administration's religious brass present and presiding, everyone dressed to the pins as if for a key ritualistic event. And the cocktail-dinner party *was* an important affair because taking new faculty members into the Notre Dame "family" (that was the operative metaphor) was regarded and intended as a rite of passage. As such, it contrasted sharply with the total formal non-recognition my wife and I experienced at a subsequent college both from the school and its English Department in 1975.

There were four new academics in the English Department and the message circulating was that all getting tenure required was to keep breathing. That seemed encouraging. Just keep breathing. Of course decent teaching was expected. Not a lot was said, curiously enough, about publishing, although it was encouraged. "Encouraged?" At schools like UCLA, UC Berkeley, and other major universities, publication was not "encouraged"; it was *demanded*, and not just a few articles in respectable journals, but a book, a monograph, a full-length, scholarly production.

Turning out a scholarly book could be regarded as a large order, considering that junior professors probably need at least a year or two to consolidate their courses and professorial identity and style, as well as make their psychic adjustment from student (graduate) to professor (junior, untenured, which means tow-the-line, don't offend senior professors, as one or more of them just might end up on your tenure committee). Further, junior faculty and their spouses usually also have families with young children who take care to raise and time to be with, and need as well to find a rental or purchase a home on a modest salary (mine $9400.00 in 1968).

More than a few junior professors would try to get around turning out a scholarly book by revising their dissertation. This could be a sizable temptation. After all, the time involved between a manuscript's acceptance and its transcendence into a book might take several years (mine, not a revised dissertation, took at least three years). That left virtually three years, four at most, to produce a book manuscript, as tenure usually was decided on by the end of the sixth year if not earlier. These circumstances put young scholars—and their spouse and kids—in a pressure cooker. One could say it was an effective means of separating the wheat from the chaff, but it also suggested an idea long knocked around but, to my knowledge, seldom implemented: dividing faculty into those primarily adept at or interested in teaching and those mainly oriented towards research.

My first days of class posed a classroom problem I'd never faced before, certainly not at secular, hedonistic UCLA, and that was whether a professor was supposed to lead the class in prayer. This was said to be a traditional practice at Notre Dame, and I didn't at first know how to handle it, a problem intensified by a metal image of Christ on a cross mounted and centered above the main blackboard of each classroom, perhaps a foot or two above an instructor's head. I was not a Catholic nor had I been hired on the condition that I was one, the latter perhaps part of a 1960s liberal character descending on the school. I suppose I could have asked colleagues who had been on the faculty longer than I whether one was supposed to lead classes in prayer, but I don't recall asking. What is certain is that I didn't lead classes in prayer. I didn't bother, nor did the students seem to show any concern. Anyway, it was an impossibility because I didn't know all of the Lord's Prayer, felt no urge to learn it, and would have felt or looked foolish if not a sham reciting it from a text. In fact, when I looked at the average set of Notre Dame student faces, most of them didn't look noticeably more pious, holy, or religiously ascetic than students at UCLA except that classes at the latter school tended to have more kids with sun-bleached hair who looked like their religious life was surfboarding Malibu waves. I did create a stir once when intending to write "Christian" on the blackboard, I wrote "Xian" to save time, and suddenly became aware of a semi-suppressed communal gasp.

Notre Dame certainly harbored its share of tough or even brutal student types. To avoid my claustrophobic basement faculty office I occasionally sat in the student union coffee house where I read student papers while having coffee and listening to the latest juke box hits (the Beatles, Simon and Garfunkel, etc.). The seating arrangement was constricted and I found myself sitting on bench-like seats with students sometimes a few

feet away. On one occasion, sitting unnoticed or maybe just ignored in the same row near a few students, I heard the one closest to me telling the others about his Vietnam war experiences. At least one experience involved his killing a number of Vietnamese. I don't recall his mentioning how many he had killed or whether they were civilians or Viet Cong. What struck me was his tone, not really boastful but possessing a casual quality that was unnerving to witness. Suddenly, the coherence problems in the freshman paper I was correcting seemed lost in and belittled by a far vaster incoherence. Here I was sitting one, two feet away from a Notre Dame student perhaps in his mid-twenties who had been a military killer. No doubt his counterpart could be found throughout other colleges in the country but this was a NOTRE DAME student. One hears of many Vietnam veterans with inner lives agonized by their combat experiences but this student seemed immune to any pricks of conscience—and, who knows, perhaps he had taken life to save other lives or his own. But the brutality of his casual tone remained above and beyond all the possible contingencies of the war. It also emphasized the possibility that some students, generally younger, even much younger, than oneself, had undergone extreme experiences that might make one's own pale by comparison.

In a Southern California secular college, and certainly at UCLA, one would have had female as well as male students in class. Not so at Notre Dame, despite the Dame after Notre, until around 1972 or 1973 when the school went co-ed. Women students from nearby St. Mary's College (with its well-manicured, gracious campus) did take courses at Notre Dame; further, women were allowed to be Notre Dame students on the graduate level. But as undergrads, there were few St. Mary's women in classes, and often (all too often, for some male professors, including me) none at all. In my last visit to the campus in 2001, I gathered that the relations of the sexes on the faculty had changed considerably, as I heard on good authority that female faculty in the English Department had implemented women-faculty oversight on male-professor behavior towards female students. If so, this was a stunning turnaround from my years there when there were no female faculty in the English Department at all until around 1970 or 1971 at which time two were taken on to a department faculty of perhaps forty males.

It was a strange experience encountering a Notre Dame undergrad class in 1968, somewhat discomforting and disorienting after UCLA. One entered the rather drab and sterile classrooms of a huge, rectangular Arts and Letters building called O'Shaughnessy to encounter 20-30 male faces. What seemed paramount in the lower-division classes is the strong sense I had of enormous, yet somewhat repressed young male energy. I *never*

encountered anything quite like this in "mixed" classes elsewhere, the presence of females perhaps civilizing that raw male force. This energy was a force one could, like a jujitsu expert, use to one's pedagogic advantage—or manipulate, as one young colleague of mine was reputed to do, his staged eccentricities giving students the delighted impression that "Dr. ___ was "slightly mad!," a status that thrilled some students and helped to make his courses popular, as perhaps they deserved to be.

This male-energy trait became apparent during one session of an upper-division course I gave on D. H. Lawrence. It was near the end of the term and the class had arrived—surely with some anticipation—at *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The interest in the novel was considerable, class attendance 100% or close to it. On one class day a student I privately named Dennis the Menace (who I actually liked) claimed he had found a passage in *Chatterley* indicating the byzantine sexual practice termed 69. I doubt if there has ever been a more intense textual investigation in the history of research as the class combed page after page of Lawrence's once illegal erotic pastoral. Dennis, however, seemed to have trouble finding 69, and when he finally thought he did, the passage looked innocent of that particular, or any, sexual numerology, and one sensed a certain collective disappointment or, maybe, relief. The irony is that Dennis, not an unperceptive fellow, had failed to notice the notorious chapter which harbors an act more extreme and controversial than the alleged 69er. One couldn't blame students for this oversight, though, as more than a few readers (including some Lawrence scholars) had failed for years to detect the Chapter 16 buggery of Connie Chatterley.

On the other hand, there were, as at any college, classes in which students looked bored, especially in mandatory ones. And some classes, again, a universal phenomenon, could bore the professor. A history professor at the school was said to fall asleep during his own lectures. Sleep apnea might have been the cause here rather than radical boredom with the class or with his own pedagogy, but it seemed like a suitable response to certain classes, not only at Notre Dame but perhaps at almost any college in the country.

One way to wake a class up—if necessary—was to have an event occurring outside the class that by its noise or excitement could end up moving the entire class and the instructor to the window to see what was going on. This unique stimulus and antidote to class boredom took place sometime early in my first semester. One day as I was teaching either a freshman or a sophomore class, an enormous and ongoing commotion struck our ears. This din was not to be ignored. Going to the window and looking out at the huge strip of lawn and walks extending possibly 300 or more yards from O'Shaughnessy to (yes, Knute) Rockne gym (called The

Rock), the class and I saw a swarm of perhaps 100 or more students chasing two or three adult males. Not wearing priest skirts, these fleeing men were apparently "seculars" of some sort. They seemed to have something in their hand, something that apparently the African-bee-swarm of students very much wanted—or wanted back.

As it turned out, according to later intelligence, the men were South Bend detectives and what they gripped in their hands were porn film reels. The University, or I should say the Arts and Letters School, or, perhaps, more specifically, two English Department professors (one of whom had just published a serious study of literary pornography), were sponsoring a Pornography Arts Festival. This event was to include, among other things erotical, an art exhibit, a few lectures, and a viewing of, as old-fashioned ads used to coyly put it, films of an "exotic" nature. Apparently the showing of the films had been invaded by what could perhaps be called the South Bend Sex Police, or, more prosaically, its Morals Squad. How the cops even heard of the films or whether they violated University regulations by coming onto campus I couldn't say. What was undeniable is that they got wind of the films, took the reels, and ended up being chased by a virtual mob of infuriated Notre Dame students looking rather more like a lynch mob than well-ordered young gentlemen-scholars of the most prestigious Catholic university in America. Exactly what the films were I never found out. Whether the grainy but certainly excitingly novel black-and-white porn cinema of my freshman year at the Berkeley University Co-op or something more technically advanced and colorful was difficult to ascertain. It was a few years too early for Linda Lovelace's debut but whatever it was, it seemed to have captured the hearts and minds of the Notre Dame student body even more than the winning end-zone catch last Saturday. The University administration brought the festival to an abrupt halt either that afternoon or the next day, perhaps unaware of the festival until the chase and caught by surprise. In any event, according to one reliable student witness, the festival was a disappointment, too cerebral and boring, "no big deal," as he put it.

If publication at that time was not stressed as much as at other major universities, teaching certainly was. The department had a sizable number of fine teachers, among them Ed Vasta, Joe Duffy, Ernie Sandeen, Jim Robinson, Jay Walton (fine novelist and superb Joyce scholar), Tom Werge, and Paul Rathburn, not to mention others who drew large classes because of their reputation as teacher/scholars. During my seven years there (1968-75) the department also included significant scholars like Carvel Collins (a Faulknerian) and Walter Davis (a Renaissance scholar), Davis even getting a job offer from Harvard, and Collins working on a

definitive biography that he died before finishing and gathering such enormous amounts of Faulknerian data that—the story goes—his cabinet files had to be lowered into his new house *through* the roof. Ed Vasta was a well-known medievalist with significant scholarly publications who was also my chairman and was (along with his wife Geri) to become a very good friend to Marlene and me after I separated from Notre Dame. The department also harbored a significant poet in John Matthias who at the time was better known in England than in the United States.

One of the egregious habits at Notre Dame, at least, during my time there, was students—undergrads—possessing liquor in their dormitory rooms. Student drinking was not allowed on campus but that prohibition hardly prevented it. I recall walking by the dorms and seeing empty liquor bottles boldly set on student window sills. Whether that habit led to future alcoholism is anyone's guess; mine is that boozing is and has been so widespread throughout colleges that Notre Dame students weren't especially bigger drunks than students elsewhere. If, however, they were, it might in part have been due to the school consisting almost entirely of male students until the 1970s.

Be that as it may, how much could one blame Notre Dame students for drinking? After all, the campus faculty clubhouse on pre- and post-game Saturdays was positively packed and rocking with Hogarthian vigor, Notre Dame alumni (many looking well-heeled), faculty, staff, and virtually anyone over twenty having a boisterous good time, the liquor flowing plentifully. As if all that wasn't enough, there would be student parties all over campus, starting Friday night (or even afternoon) and ending Sunday night. Some of the parties, and partying, might even have started *Thursday* night, because a bar around one-third of a mile south of campus called Corby's (that Irish touch?) offered Corby's Thursday Night Specials, beer very cheap and martinis around forty cents. One did notice that Friday class attendance (especially morning classes) was lower than usual.

I don't want to give the impression that Notre Dame was awash with liquor and lushes. I would imagine that the bulk of Notre Dame students—and most certainly the grad students—were serious about their education; after all, it wasn't cheap either for them or for their parents. In fact, for courses and instructors that students especially liked, there was an intensity of appreciation, near worship, that one would expect for a rock star. I recall students telling me they'd waited years to take a course with this professor or that professor.

The intensity climaxed in a yearly event that began a year before I arrived called the Sophomore Literary Festival. This festival was indeed extraordinary in many ways. It lasted an entire week and was planned

mostly by sophomores, probably with some faculty-administration advice and oversight. But the students picked the famous writers to come and perhaps had a hand in the more practical details of lodgings, meals, remuneration, establishing the literary program itself and so on. A selective list of names during the years 1967-74 include Ralph Ellison, Norman Mailer, Joyce Carol Oates, Kenneth Rexroth, Robert Bly, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg (a huge hit with his theatrical Buddhist OOOMMMMing in the school's packed main auditorium), Arthur Miller, Diane Wakoski, Gary Snyder, Stephen Spender, and Michael McClure.

These writers were feted, wined and dined, and paraded around campus to various literature classes where they held forth or just answered questions about their work or about literature generally, as they did as well at forums and lectures held in campus auditoriums and, more informally, at parties at faculty homes in the evenings. It was an exciting experience for students, perhaps too exciting, as some seemed to be partaking of the sauce rather much. After all, it isn't every day that one encounters an Arthur Miller, an Allen Ginsberg or a Joyce Carol Oates. Fortunately, Gregory Corso never to my knowledge showed up at these Notre Dame affairs because had he done so, it might have been necessary to call in the South Bend Literary Police Squad to put the often unrestrained author of the powerful, long poem "The Bomb" in a straight-jacket. Snyder did come to my sophomore lit class and talked pleasantly and unpretentiously to the class for some time, but on our brief walk from the class afterwards, was unaccountably unfriendly. I wondered whether this was an ideological dislike for academics, just a "chemical" dislike for me personally or perhaps my appearing a bit uptight around such a celeb. He was friendlier at a party that night when I was accompanied by my wife but then Synder was in the presence of a very good-looking woman and that might have evoked the magical change. At another party (the parties seemed endless, assistant profs often dragooned into providing their own home as the venue), Stephen Spender proved he could be grossly inconsiderate, sitting in our kitchen by himself making an endless long-distance phone call to old buddy Christopher Isherwood out in Los Angeles without considering whether his modestly salaried host would be footing the immense bill. Other Sophomore Literary Festival writers and poets engaged in brief flirtations with a few faculty wives, but, to my knowledge, no serious breaches occurred.

All this literary glamour should have heightened even more interest in the English Department and its courses, for what other department could boast of such arrays, year after year, of luminaries? Could there have been a zoology festival? A theology carnival—the campus flooded with zoology or theology superstars? Perhaps the festival did help English Department

enrollments; it certainly should have. At any rate, a major in English was regarded at Notre Dame as an attractive route to law school, and some chose it for that reason, as well as for youthful love of literature or of famed department instructors.

But literature—hot, glamorous, sexy as it may be tricked out at a festival—is not football. Football is not queen at Notre Dame; it is king. It transmutes the upraised arms of the Hesburgh Library's huge Christ image to a referee's touchdown sign, especially apposite symbolically as the Christ image faces the football stadium. It turns the campus on Saturday not into a festival but into a carnival. There's a buzz and excitement throughout the entire campus, the Notre Dame band strutting throughout the campus blasting out the Notre Dame fight song, while, in the town, people are streaming towards campus on foot, by car, or flying in regionally and nationally, especially for the big games such as USC or Michigan. Anyone wanting to do academic work on campus on Saturday felt alienated, as if he were doing something illicit, a bit indecent, surely in poor taste. In short, Notre Dame campus on football Saturdays became a celebratory Philistinia, and if you were a Stephen Dedalus type or a sports-hating academic or just a person such as myself not too much taken with Notre Dame football glory, it was best to stay off campus and even away from the town's main routes, clogged as they were with red-faced gridiron enthusiasts.

However, it would be hypocritical of me to adopt a fully anti-athletic position on King Football, as I too had a little involvement in Notre Dame's omni-sports culture. I played full-court basketball at least three times a week with faculty, staff, and students including an occasional football player. Further, I not only had football players in my freshman classes (some weighing 100 to 150 pounds more than me), but even a few in advanced undergraduate lit courses, all of them good students academically. One memorable example was Eric Patton, a terrific linebacker but also an English major with an A- average in the two courses—one totally devoted to D. H. Lawrence—that Eric took with me. After playing professional ball for several years, Eric became a high-school English teacher and successful football coach at a school in Southern California and pursued and finally secured a doctorate despite a heavy work load, his current aim being to teach writing in college.

Combined with the significant money the football program surely brought in to the school from television contracts and faithful alumni, football created a problem for Notre Dame's sports-phobics, considering that their own jobs might have been made possible through such revenues. Indeed, being funded by Mammon gave Notre Dame a schizoid personali-

ty not uncommon at other big universities with major sports programs. However, some felt it more pronounced at Notre Dame because of its status as a religious school. Consequently, corruption has permeated not only the character of many major secular universities but especially that of the most famous religious university in the country when, as in the case with its current football coach, this individual (Charley Weis) has been granted an approximately $35 million eight-year contract, not to mention other perks. When an athletic coach is being paid perhaps 25 times as much money as even the highest paid faculty member, a grave ethical and psychological disconnection develops that is bound to subvert the morale and integrity of a university.

Tenure at Notre Dame was decided at the end of one's sixth year on the faculty. A few months before the end of the sixth year, a former office mate and friend who, despite no publications, had received tenure, told me he'd picked up rumors that tenure-granting was recently undergoing changes, and that there could well be some unpleasant surprises for junior professors soon up for tenure. This gave me concern, despite the fact, as it turned out, that my course evaluation grades during my sixth year were higher than the department average, and that I had five papers published with three substantial pieces accepted but not to be published for three years—as well as my first book (on the last works of D. H. Lawrence) finished and accepted by an academic press in 1977.

To make matters worse, the revered and permanent President of Notre Dame, Father "Ted" Hesburgh, was on leave this year (1974), temporarily replaced by a bright young theology scholar specializing in Family Culture named Father Jim Burtchaell. Burtchaell struck some as both hard-nosed yet sybaritic. Affected in his dress style, he would occasionally parade around campus dressed all in green, including hat, and was said, according to a nun friend of mine, not to be at all interested in D. H Lawrence. This didn't sound good, but I felt I had the credentials to achieve tenure and hoped that the "get-tenure-if-you're-still-breathing" rule had not yet, well, expired.

Early in May, a few days before final exams, I received a letter from Family-Culture Provost Burtchaell—"I regret to inform you that your contract will not be extended beyond 1975. . . . " I was in such a state of shock after getting this letter that I could hardly understand, let alone read, the student exams; the words simply danced before my eyes. When I got hold of myself and my dazed state turned into anger and I went around to some of the faculty members I'd gathered had turned me down, I couldn't get a straight answer. The closest one, from another tenured non-publisher, suggested that I hadn't been seen in the halls very much.

Apparently what this senior scholar meant was that I hadn't been "public" enough in the Department, whatever that meant. The real reason why I and my other three colleagues (all but one with families) were let go turned out to be quite different, as I found out in 1980 at another college under almost comically ironic circumstances.

At the time, however, I felt (and remain) shocked at how unprofessional the mode of tenure rejection was at Notre Dame, during a period long before many colleges began resorting to using (or exploiting) "temps" whom they could hire and fire on terms not so dissimilar to the treatment accorded entry-level employees by fast-foods employers. In Notre Dame's English Department, one just was not getting tenure, and that was that. Moreover, it was regarded by some senior—especially tenure committee—faculty as an embarrassing impertinence for these rejected junior faculty to be attempting to find out why they had failed to achieve tenure. One wondered just how widespread throughout academe such arbitrary tenure judgments obtained, and suspected it was perhaps widespread indeed. At least one wasn't escorted off campus by campus police the way some employees are in other areas of work after being fired the same day they came to work due to a ruthless cutback set up by CEO concern about the company's profit level.

A week or so after the tenure news, which hit Marlene far harder than it did me, I decided to pay a visit to Father Hesburgh to see what help he could provide in getting another job. This turned out to be one of the best moves I ever made in my life. I didn't appeal to him to help me get tenure at Notre Dame, feeling that was a lost cause. I asked him instead if he could help me get another academic post. Father "Ted," as he was popularly known, took my request seriously and became a crucial helper in my job search and later, as he once put it, a "pen pal."

But the last or seventh year, though a blessing for the time it provided to find another post, was also tedious, humiliating, and alienating. One's tenured colleagues seemed a bit embarrassed around one, and younger tenure-track faculty seemed slightly edgy (they had reason to be, as many of them were in a year or two to be let go as well). How hard would one want to work on courses knowing they would be the last courses one would teach at the school, and not knowing where one's next teaching job would be? Would it be *anywhere*? One of the four let go went into the U.S. Forest Service, two of the families underwent divorce, and a third taught in several prep schools for some years before finally stopping teaching altogether. Academe was entering a period when, unlike the Sixties, there were far more professors than posts available. Getting another job, especially as a non-tenured assistant professor with no glittering credentials, was a formidable difficulty. I might have had an advan-

tage had I spoken Spanish or had done some scholarly work in Hispanic literature—but then, I didn't know Spanish. It was bruited about that merely having a Spanish or Hispanic name could open department doors; perhaps it was to help in my case.

After going almost a year without a new job lined up, I received two job offers: Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran, and Western New Mexico University (WNMU) in Silver City (birthplace of Billy the Kid), New Mexico, a Normal or Teachers College going back to the late 19th Century. Luckily we chose the American school, as Iran a few years later exploded in a revolution against the United States-backed Shah, and any American in the country at the time could have been in grave danger, thanks partly to justifiable Iranian fury towards the criminal subversion of the democratic Muhamed-Mossadecq government by the CIA in 1953. Our family would have been Americans innocent of any attempt to overthrow the current Iranian regime, but that would have been irrelevant. Surely many thousands of Iranians tortured and murdered by the Shah's CIA-trained, secret security force, the SAVAK, were only guilty at most of being critical of the Shah, but criticism and dissent are of course viewed as treason by dictators.

III.

So one day late in August 1975, Marlene, our two young sons, Hector and Trajan (now 14 and 8, respectively), took off for New Mexico for the new college job. The town and school were located in the southwestern part of the state, centrally isolated, as a department wit at Notre Dame who knew the Southwest once put it. Surrounded on three sides by attractive but not spectacular mountains, Silver City (pop. 10,000) was a ranching and mining region. Compared to some towns of similar size and population in Eastern New Mexico, it had something going for it, encircled by austerely beautiful wilderness to the north and quite attractive but also squalid residential areas within the town itself. Those charms became apparent, however, only after years had passed. Compared not only to West Los Angeles but even to South Bend, Silver City appeared drab and was extremely limited in its offering of restaurants, bookstores, movie theatres, cultural venues, and so on. Although in 1975 hippies were not well received in some areas of the county, even getting beaten up in smaller outlying ranch towns like Cliff forty or so miles north, it was not long before the anti-hippies, bearded if not quite hippie hip, themselves resembled hippies, at least, from a distance. Some areas of the larger region surrounding Silver City, as well as the town itself, had a strong appeal to hippies, bohemians, artists, free-livers, and ne'er-do-wells, but also to small merchants and people who had made or inherited sizable money and lived

comfortably in remote hills or mountain preserves in or near the town. The town was emphatically bi-ethnic, the Hispanic almost as large as the "Anglo" (or white) population. Ethnic equality notwithstanding, the people who ran the banks and the two copper mines (Kennicott and Phelps Dodge) were usually white, and it was said that, whatever the democratic aspirations of the college's search committee procedure, no WNMU presidential candidate was accepted for Western without the affirmative nod of the local business, mining and banking moguls.

Such august authorities didn't concern themselves with my being hired by the University. What might have been involved in that enterprise were two college presidents—Notre Dame's Father Ted and Western's John Snedeker, the first of seven presidents who would preside over the school during my nineteen years of service there. My guess is that President Snedeker phoned up Hesburgh about me and got a strong recommendation, possibly very strong because I was later told by some informed individual in the University that there had been over 400 applications for the opening, which gives some idea of how tight the academic job market had become in the 1970s.

A choice had to be made by my wife and me, as we were running out of money, and Marlene's father had vowed, when we left for New York in 1958, never to help us out financially for leaving Southern California, a vow he kept. My father was not inclined at the time to help out either, and my stepfather (Hub Crehan) and mother possessed the income of bohemians. It finally occurred to me years later that if Hesburgh had put in a powerful good word with Snedeker, it likely resulted in the latter forcing me down the throat of the Language and Literature Department. This would explain a rather cool reception I experienced in the minute department of six individuals—no formal or even informal welcoming into the department despite the fact that the department was having a party the night of the day we arrived in town, quite the opposite of the formal, even slightly intimidating, acceptance by both the University and the Department at Notre Dame. (One exception to the departmental chill was a colleague named Dave Powell, who, years later, was removed in handcuffs by the sheriff or police from his class for refusing an administrative directive to upgrade an athlete's F or turn over his class records to the Vice President of Academic Affair's Office.)

My first meeting with my chairman and my new colleagues took place during registration at the school gym. This was a new academic experience for me as an academic. At Notre Dame, registering students was left to the registrar's office and Department staff. At Western, the entire faculty participated in this boring but essential all-day and night task, advising students about Department courses and majors and so on. The involve-

ment with students struck me as a good idea. The downside of registering occurred during long stretches when there were no students to advise; one either sat around chatting desultorily with colleagues, trying to read, politely admiring the occasional stunning coed, or twiddling one's thumbs thinking of all the invaluable course planning one could be preparing in one's office instead of registering students.

Registration in late August 1975 also provided my first sight of WNMU students. More than a few looked lower or lower-middle class, and there were many Hispanic and some Native American students, both college-age and older. I was shocked over the years to hear about how some of my Hispanic students, male as well as female, had been physically punished by their grade-school teachers in southern New Mexico for speaking Spanish in class; this reminded me of Notre Dame students offering accounts of being similarly treated by nuns during grade-school days for committing other infractions.

WNMU students were by and large a marked contrast with the general run of Notre Dame students who, despite being part of the late sixties-early seventies era of long hair and a semi-hippie clothes style, generally came from middle and upper-middle class homes. Notre Dame kids often looked either handsomely healthy or wholesome, and appeared reasonably confident about going on to graduate schools and professional or well-paying jobs. The feeling I had about WNMU students was (with some exceptions) that a fair number of them would at best go on to lower middle-class jobs as clerks, grade-school teachers, and so on. Some might indeed do brilliantly, but I felt they were a tiny minority. (I recall one or two going on to Harvard.) Western students weren't necessarily less intelligent than Notre Dame or UCLA students; one gathered they lacked the financial, educational, and psychological family and peer-group support essential to getting into more prestigious colleges and aspiring to higher professional goals.

My notion about the limited occupational boundaries for the average Western student was strengthened by what at the time (1975) I had heard was the average reading level of WNMU students—8th grade. After Notre Dame, where the average reading level, especially after women were admitted as Notre Dame students, was much higher, I found this information shocking. Apparently, the average Western student entered the school with little knowledge not only of literature but also lacking basic reading skills to master complex print matter. In all fairness, though, one should recall that reading skills of other students at even premier universities like UC Berkeley have been sufficiently inadequate for decades now to necessitate instituting an academic industry of rudimentary composition and reading skills courses.

The quality of New Mexico grade schools had more than a little to do with that low WNMU reading level. In a 2007 national report released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico schools received grades of F in such categories as reading proficiency, academic achievements of low income and minority students, and post-secondary and workforce readiness. The journal *Education Week* ranked New Mexico last in its "chance for success" category. This ghastly status might as well have been as true for 1975 as for 2007.

This is not to suggest that students at WNMU or most other New Mexico colleges weren't serious about their college careers. However, many of them had conceivably adjusted themselves to more modest collegiate and work goals than students at Notre Dame or Berkeley. In addition, as in better schools, there was that indeterminate class of students who were in college because, short of McDonald's, other "service-work" areas or the army, there was nowhere else for them to be. Then one encountered Paul Fussell's sobering perception in his book *Class* that "'educational opportunity' was opened up by the process of verbal inflation, by promoting, that is, numerous normal schools, teachers colleges, provincial 'theological seminaries,' trade schools, business schools, and secretarial institutes to the name and status of 'universities,' thus conferring on them an identity they were by no means equipped to bear, or even understand" (155), a broad categorization that he describes as a bold class deception and which certainly applied to WNMU. All that notwithstanding, one still ran into excellent students at Western, a few who would sometimes offer acute insights in reading a given novel that I'd completely missed.

The virtual or alleged illiteracy of the average WNMU Freshman student in 1975 also meant that Western English professors were probably viewed by their students more as 13th grade high-school teachers rather than as professors, the latter a status dignity that was possibly meant to make up—at least, in the humanities "disciplines"—for a pay level at some good colleges that would be an insult to the secretary of a quality law firm. So if one had published on, or was regarded as an expert in, some subject or author (in my case, D. H. Lawrence and Anthony Powell), it would be meaningless to students at this school or even held against one by other faculty. At Notre Dame, however, having published merely a few articles, I recall a few of my English majors actually *excited* about the pieces and looking forward to reading them, or so they claimed.

There was another problem for me at Western, one that remained at least until my retirement in 1994: many of my new colleagues lacked doctorates. Western was after all a normal or teachers college, and doctorates had traditionally not been required. Consequently, more than a few of my

new academic comrades not only lacked a Ph.D. but had no serious intention of acquiring that offensively pretentious degree. Indeed, some of these "Masters" weren't even ABDs, and manipulated that lack to try to get special or research funding to take post-M.A./M.S. courses during the summer. Needless to say, people with doctorates were open to suspicion if not resentment, especially if they published. Thus, any raising of standards suggested by a Ph.D. academic at WNMU was bitterly resented by the non-docs, and clamors of degree snobs permeated the unhallowed halls of Western NM University. In later years, the administration put more pressure on demanding doctorates of new faculty which was only proper in view of Western's self-ascension from teachers college to university status.

The setting of the WNMU campus itself was quite attractive. Located in a strip of land rising steeply to mountains to the west of the town, it provided from its library windows a stunning view of dark-green rolling mountains and valleys to the north and northeast. Many of the school's buildings, however, were commonplace or worse—dull, oblong structures that looked like military quarters for Reagan-backed Central American paramilitaries or elaborate meth "labs." The physical-education complex during my first year or so was quite shabby. Western's gym was disgraceful even for a New Mexico high school, let alone a college. One encountered ugly, wall-stained, badly-lit *faculty* locker quarters ideal for getting mugged by some grade-vindictive student, and a small basketball arena with scarcely room for more than a hundred fans. A new, much larger complex was built a few years later that far better served the needs of the student body, faculty, staff, and town community, including a large, stately swimming pool and a decent faculty locker room. Since I left in 1994, the school has added a sizably expanded, handsome library almost ghostly in its lack of students during my last daytime visit there, an enlarged, attractive student union replacing its much smaller and dismal predecessor, and a new humanities building with reasonably sized, comfortable offices far better than the Dickensian rabbit warrens my humanities colleagues and I had inhabited for decades.

One of the major and comic ironies of my time at Western occurred in 1980. Western needed a new president, the preceding one having been indicted on fifteen counts of felony. The new Prez was a Notre Damer, not a student there but a mid-level administrator named Bob Glennon who was at Notre Dame at the same time I was. He was now Western's new President. As if that wasn't enough of the past—or our family's past—melding with the present, Notre Dame's president, Father Ted, was coming with a retinue of senior administrators to inaugurate our new president

and former Notre Damer. The ironies were heady stuff: Notre Dame coming to far-away, very centrally isolated WNMU to inaugurate a former Notre Damer, an event attended by a former Notre Dame assistant professor who didn't get tenure at Notre Dame.

The inauguration took place in the football field, appropriate setting, to be sure, for the Notre Dame crowd, and after the formalities, when people were milling around, Father Ted saw me and said, "There's Don Gutierrez, a Notre Dame guy!" We chatted a bit, then Marlene and I had our picture taken with Hesburgh in the middle, his arms around both of us. The irony deepened thus, and yet, in a way, not, because had it not been for Ted Hesburgh *and* John Snedeker, Marlene, Hector, Trajan, and I might have ended up in Iran just four years before Ayatollah Khomeini's savage religious dictatorship came down like a sword on many thousands of Iranians.

After the ceremony Marlene and I were graciously invited to a Notre Dame party held at Western's presidential house. An explanation somehow got floated in the atmosphere about why I was let go at Notre Dame. Provost Burtchaell or someone had decided there were too many senior professors; the ratio of seniors to juniors was getting unbalanced, and, true or not, that was a nice explanation because it made it seem less like I was let go out of personal academic inadequacies. At any rate, the glamour of the event was palpable. Great Notre Dame hadn't journeyed out to distant, isolated, tiny, southwestern Silver City to make me feel better, nor did I, but the convergence of these two such utterly different schools was comically disorienting to me, rather like suddenly inhabiting the topsy-turvy world of Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall.*

Seven years later, Hesburgh made it possible for me to secure a semester (he urged a year) fellowship at Notre Dame in the school's Arts and Letters Division, much to the frustrated wrath of some of my former department colleagues, another juxtaposition of WNMU and N.D. not lacking in piquant irony. This fellowship allowed me to finish my sixth book of literary criticism, this one devoted to the poetry of my mentor Kenneth Rexroth, the book itself placed in the school's special Hesburgh library collection. One of my former N.D. office mates once observed, rather tactlessly, that some members of the Department were unhappy about my receiving grant money through Hesburgh that should have gone to the Department. I suggested to him that they should consult Hesburgh about the matter. Personally fond as I was—and remain—of Father Ted, I recall that he threatened to expel students demonstrating against Dow Chemical recruiting on campus during the Vietnam War, stating that if they didn't disband within fifteen minutes, they would be expelled from school. An autocratic act to be sure, William Buckley, Jr., provocatively

brought it up during a television interview with Hesburgh years later. On the other hand, President Bush II would not likely have been invited by Hesburgh to give the school's graduation ceremony address as he was by the Notre Dame administration in 2001, an event I along with perhaps two hundred or so Notre Dame people protested across the street from the Sports Complex.

The witticism that Silver City was centrally isolated is not just a joke. Silver City is around sixty miles north of two small towns, Deming and Lordsburg (the latter a few miles northeast of a ghost town called Shakespeare), 110 miles northwest of the first sizable town (Las Cruces), 144 miles northwest of El Paso, and 200 miles northeast of Tucson. But one's sense of isolation as an academic at Western wasn't only geographical; it was also psychological. Here, as Fussell had observed generally, was basically a teachers college self-elevating itself to undeserved prestige by calling itself a university one of whose VPAAs (a gym teacher) once stated that Western is not a publishing university. That description would strike many academics as an oxymoron but it apparently didn't appear so to both the administration and some faculty at Western.

A few faculty and administrators did support and value research writing, and the school harbored Dale Zimmerman, one of America's most famous ornithologists. What counted for more—and certainly this virtual requirement goes far beyond Western—was not rocking the administration and Department boats. Anyone who did was punished, either not being granted tenure or promotion, or, in my case, promoted to full professor but with the promotion raise cut fifty percent (or $2000.00), according to the VPAA, by the president. Administrators usually don't take criticism from faculty well—never mind open debate about important policies and issues directly affecting the faculty about which the latter is not even consulted—and sometimes retaliate vigorously against it. On the other hand, faculty members might do well to wonder how liberal or tolerant of faculty criticism they would be if put in the position of administrators, something hard to know until one holds the reins of administrative power.

A major problem for WNMU humanities professors was that the school was by and large run by presidents usually oriented towards the business, computer-math, science, and education departments. This meant that the English Department was in effect relegated to being an educational "service" adjunct. This euphemism meant that the primary focus of the English Department was to teach composition. Offering literature courses was, to be sure, allowed. However, the course load and curricular stress of the school were such that the students were not much oriented towards upper-division literature courses.

Further, English faculty members had little inducement to offer mainly literature courses; otherwise, they could end up stuck with four course preparations per semester—three literature courses and one composition course. A compromise of sorts involved doing two literature courses and two comps, but reality sometimes obtruded in the form of upper division literature courses not making (seldom a problem at Notre Dame). A college professor at Western—and surely elsewhere—might have spent much of the summer developing a new course on the 20th century American novel or on the life and work of W. B. Yeats only to discover, come registration day, that three people had registered for the course.

The consequences of this tendency was to play it safe, do sophomore survey courses sure to make. Thus, creativity or audacity in course planning was stifled, and more than a few faculty, including myself, after one of my Lawrence classes didn't make (at Notre Dame the course had overenrolled with 27 students), would settle for *one* lit class and three comps. This was quite a contrast to Notre Dame where one usually taught three literature classes, two of them the same course—the faculty there gnashing its collective teeth when informed one dark day in the early 1970s that senior as well as junior faculty would henceforth have to teach at least one composition course a *year*. At Western, both junior and senior faculty taught at least two or three composition courses a term, not to mention two more for the two summer sessions, if financial need urged, and it usually did, the English Department being one of the lowest salaried departments in the school.

A few words are in order about WNMU presidents because there were seven of them during my nineteen years at the school. The majority either weren't up to running Western, got mired in campus politics, or had the good sense to get out in the nick of time. To be fair, Western was not an easy school to run. It had at least three ethnic sectors to satisfy: Hispanics, Native Americans, and "Anglos" or whites, not to mention the vested interests of local business and mining moguls. For example, if too much money went into a given ethnic program or into an area that could be seen as a slight to another sector or department, complaints or considerable pressure could result either from within or, especially, from beyond the campus. Then getting state financial support from Santa Fe was a high art that probably most educational administrators would find very difficult to master. Occasionally, a high-quality administrator would somehow appear at Western, such as James Waddell (Oxon.), who left the school after trying to establish a serious humanities academic culture as dean of the department and climaxed his career as president of a private college in California.

Still, the seven presidents included some odd fellows indeed. One was said to have his secretary bring rubbing alcohol to sanitize his hands after having shaken hands with anyone. He finally overreached himself one day by telling the entire faculty at a general meeting that he might not allow further faculty use of gym facilities because of some alleged offense he felt they had committed, probably criticizing administration policy. Within a week, he received a faculty vote of no confidence, one of the few times in my memory when the WNMU faculty stood up to a high-handed administrator. Nevertheless, even some critics felt this fellow was one of the most brilliant, if authoritarian, presidents with a genuine goal of turning the school into a real university. Another president, said to be occasionally given to swearing at school personnel in the privacy of his office, walked from his office to his presidential home (around 200 yards) with gaze fixed on the ground, as if contemplating some dark misdeed in his past or worrying about what tomorrow might bring. What tomorrow often did bring, it was claimed by the knowing, was an intimidating phone call from the head regent who was reputed to badger him almost every day on the phone. He finally quit the job mid-term. The successor shocked everyone by offering as his presidential maiden speech an analysis of Sophocles' *Antigone*; while those of the six-person literature department who had read or heard of Sophocles were pleased by this unexpected sign of erudition in a WNMU president, many others on campus probably thought "Where'd they get *this* one?" This scholarly Prez soon revealed, again, according to repute, an excessive interest in women that led to his reign ending after a year or so. Both the Sophoclean president and a Prez temp following him might also have alienated the regents by having markedly liberal political tendencies, the regents then consisting of pro-military, crew-cut high-school history teachers, dentist assistants, small-business locals, and similar types clearly well-suited to serious meditation on general university policy. Crew Cut on one occasion lectured the general faculty on how it should be more positive about America. This sermon startled me, as, except for a few, I was not aware of the WNMU faculty functioning whatsoever as public intellectuals taking the-powers-that-be in Washington or Wall Street to task for a given misdeed or crime.

The president from Notre Dame was the one who halved my full-professor salary raise for my protesting at a general faculty meeting his appointing four faculty members to well-paying deanships with no faculty input whatsoever. This one concocted an initiatory morale-boosting motto, something inspirational like "Forward as One" or "Together Ahead," apparently to differentiate himself from "Clean Hands" who moved Forward as One in the opposite direction from most of the faculty

and staff. The Notre Damer developed such an arrogant clique of administrators, including a whole corps of deans and vice presidents for a school with a student body averaging around 1500 during many of my years there, as before long to alienate much of the faculty. This president also wanted to develop technical programs befitting a technical high school or community college designed to fit in with local mining needs. The current president, one of the longest lasting and a military-corporation fellow, has, according to one campus report, pressured much of the faculty into submission and apathy. Nevertheless, some impressive buildings have been erected on an otherwise drab campus under his watch, so the current monarch deserves credit for that. Aside from preventing or dissuading either the faculty/staff/student body or the townspeople from raging outside the presidential office with pitchforks and firebrands, the main function of any WNMU president was to bring home the bacon from Santa Fe. This was not always a goal easy to achieve as some Santa Fe officials seemed to behave as if Silver City and WNMU were located a short distance north of the South Pole.

A good example of top state political officials being out of touch with some of the realities of academe occurred when a Republican governor visited Silver City in the 1980s and gave a talk in Western's auditorium. The talk was actually a threat. He was tired of hearing about these New Mexican colleges in which some faculty taught only one course a term—or perhaps even a year!—and thought it was time to reform that alleged academic sybaritic practice. One course indeed!—they probably spent most of their expanded free time playing tennis or chasing female students or colleagues' wives. What apparently the good governor had not been clued in on by his staff is that at Western all faculty usually taught four courses a term. Out of total ignorance the governor would in effect have given our obsequious current president the green light to force WNMU faculty to carry *five* courses per semester, lowering our "University" to the pedagogic level of a community college. I recall protesting with sufficient vigor after the governor finished his speech to make our president turn around in his seat to see who this rant was coming from. This president was said to be the one notorious for indulging in avalanches of gross verbal abuse against helpless staff and even occasionally against faculty in the privacy of his office. However, I never received a summons to the office afterwards, fortunately for one or maybe for both of us.

The years at Western weren't all bad, not by a long chalk. There occasionally were students at Western who would have done well academically at Berkeley or Yale. Very important in courses like English Composition 101, moreover, was the presence of adults, especially women in their thir-

ties to fifties, who were returning to college for degrees or to galvanize their minds after years of raising children. They were invaluable because they functioned as magnets of serious attentiveness and participation for the younger students. These adult women helped to make classwork at Western tolerable and sometimes even enjoyable for an instructor; they certainly did for me.

However, academic life at WNMU, except for some phases of severe enmity between a few faculty and some heavy-handed, authoritarian presidents, was often almost too quiet. Western would host the occasional literary star like delightful Rudolpho Anaya or some exotic musical or dance troupe, but such events seemed few and far between compared to other academic venues. But if there was little intellectual or cultural stimulation on campus, various kinds of non-academic libertarians and artists continued to infiltrate both Silver City and its county (Grant, from Ulysses S.), giving the area cultural vitality and variegation not likely to be found in drab, wornout Eastern New Mexico military-base towns like Clovis which featured billboarded Ten Commandments near the western entrance to town. There were quality public poetry readings at coffee houses, many artists residing in the area, quality art exhibits both on and off campus, a growing number of handsome art galleries featuring serious work, and a vigorous environmentalist group and center which were occasionally threatened either economically or worse by local and rural right-wing interests. As a confirmatory sign of arrival or of the kiss of death, Silver City was designated in the 1990s as one of the ten most attractive retirement small towns in America. Some boom-towners even urged its informally calling itself Santa Fe II until wiser counsel prevailed.

One spectacular cultural event of sorts was the annual Gila Christmas party. This was an elaborate, magical affair that took place in a small, colorful town called Gila, some 35 miles or so north of Silver City located in a large, fertile valley with picturesque surrounding hills. One drove from Silver (as we Silver Cityans called it) through winter cold, the sheer, all-surrounding darkness occasionally relieved by lights from an isolated ranch, swooping up and down long hills on a good two-lane highway with mountains looming vaguely and slightly ominously in the near distance. Getting to the party site, then being met by young men in tuxedos who escorted guests onto the premises, one entered a long interconnected series of halls, all decked up with varieties of Christmas ornaments and gear. The table bearing food (much of it brought by the visitors) must have been at least fifteen yards long, sagging with every conceivable kind of victuals, as well as a host quality wine bar, while turkey, ham, and roast beef were being roasted in large, old-fashioned ovens.

People came to this festive, very out-of-the-way event not only from all over the state but even from Arizona and Colorado, such was its popularity. Who got to come? Apparently, invitations were sent out not only to friends of the family (the white-haired, stately father a former opera singer, the mother a gracious, bejeweled figure, the two tuxedoed adult sons jolly and cordial) but also to anyone understood to be an artist or "creative." My wife qualified, a few of her one-person art exhibits at the college and art works elsewhere known of, and I as "the husband of the artist" could therefore also come along, perhaps also because I wrote some literary criticism or political-polemics letters to *The Silver City Daily Press* or got a wide rep for writing more than one-sentence critiques on student frosh compositions. But that was not all. Everyone attending was expected to dress up, preferably in turn-of-the-19th-century outfits, florid but sometimes quite daring dresses for the women, tuxedos for the hombres. This apparel fit in with the general décor of four or five extended rooms which, besides Western bric-a-brac, old portrait photos, paintings, and expensive, ancient drapes and carpets, contained a lot of antiques going back surely to the days of Geronimo and Mangas Coloradas (Red Sleeves), great Apache chiefs who had roamed on horseback all this area and as far south as the almost 150-miles distant Chiricahua Mountains and Mexico. At these parties one not only met friends and enemies from Silver but also became acquainted with sometimes fascinating people in a variety of the arts, business, and other enterprises, some legitimate, others more esoteric. There was a group of young women who sang all the carols exquisitely (some men enjoying the music, some probably the women), and, as the evening wore on, a retreat by the younger bloods to a newer, separate facility where, amid twirling, multicolored globe lights, amplified rock music, and an occasional whiff of marijuana, couples danced the night away, sometimes with a glass of champagne in one hand. Leaving the party around 1 A.M. or so felt a bit like leaving one of Jay Gatsby's extravaganzas, all the stardust and romance floating over one's head and car as one headed back—reasonably or one hoped sober—through the magical darkness of mountains and star-studded black sky towards comparatively dreary Silver City.

IV.

So, what can I make of my nineteen years at Western in itself and in relation to my experience at Notre Dame? First of all, students, no matter what their class or ethnic background or dis/advantages or sense of limited or illimitable future, are students. Some part of myself responded positively to any student who was genuinely interested in learning; it didn't deeply matter if they weren't bright, though one of course would usually

have preferred that. Serious students were important because they made me feel that my work in a humanities department, virtually "declassed" by the administration as mainly a "service" department, was not meaningless. I don't want to romanticize this point: the Noble Teacher moved to his pedagogical best by Earnest Student hungering for educational guidance for coping in a ruthless, class-structured work world. More than a few Western students put me off with their ethical, intellectual, or esthetic insensitivity or apathy; some students at WNMU just wanted their C or D so they could move on—to where?, one wondered. But at best there sometimes was a student-teacher bond that, I felt and feel, was as firm and mutually enriching as that of any faculty and student at a premier university. Fussell in *Class* insists that there are only a handful of colleges that can bestow on students any significant potency in the *real* world of economic, political, or social status, and in my opinion and implicitly his, WNMU is not one of these. But in this respect Western isn't any worse than hundreds of other American colleges. Indeed, Fussell and such writers as Ferdinand Lundberg and C. Wright Mills have argued convincingly that what really matters is what *prep* school one attended (Choate, Groton, St. Paul, etc.). That standard would not have been met not only by virtually all WNMU students and many at Notre Dame, UCLA, and Berkeley, but certainly by me as well.

A rigid class stratification of American higher education is undoubtedly the case, yet one never knows for sure at what college, first or fifth rate, and with what professor a student might be inspired in ways not measurable in future job or social status or salary level. It is in that potentially creative space of student-teacher interactive possibility and individual effort that teaching at a school like Western or even a two-year community college could be gratifying, and my hope would be that it was so for at least some of those students I knew. Moreover, I might have been able to offer my students more of myself (assuming they wanted that; some surely didn't) if I were not also personally, perhaps selfishly, committed to writing.

Two students at Western especially stand out in my mind, both Hispanic women, very intelligent, attentive, and somewhat quiet in class. I had laced a few ideas in an American studies course with anarchist communalist theory from Peter Kropotkin, and, at the end of class, one of these young women came up to me and said, "Dr. Gutierrez, I now realize that I'm a philosophical anarchist!" The second girl chose me for taking a special studies course in which she could pursue a serious study of lesbian thought and her own same-sex semi-autobiographical fiction, despite there being two faculty women in the Department. I felt honored and did the course with her.

Certainly teaching at Notre Dame would be more prestigious than teaching at a teachers college in a remote section of New Mexico. But there was an interface between the religious and secular sides of Notre Dame life that I felt uncomfortable with; I almost felt a bit hypocritical being part of a Catholic educational community but not being a Catholic or even a Christian. As for WNMU, I became relatively desensitized to its inelegant and pedestrian character, but also occasionally depressed by its general intellectual aridity and emptiness. One or two colleagues at Western had told me that I should be teaching at a better college. Perhaps, perhaps not. But I could also have been teaching at Pahlavi University in Shiraz and by 1980 have had to put my family and myself into hiding from violent anti-Shah, anti-American Iranian officials and their street police thugs. My personal maxim at Western was "Things could be worse," and that, intended as guarded optimism, was indeed the case or so I strongly felt. I count myself and my family among the minority of the fortunate in the world.

GREGORY GAGNON

Survival, Identity, Sovereignty, and Indian Agency:

Contributions to Indian Studies Scholarship

Felix S. Cohen and David Wilkins, eds. *On the Drafting of Tribal Constitutions*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. Pp. xxxvi + 200, $34.95 hb.

Laurence Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III, eds. *Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860-1920*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. Pp. xx + 334, $34.95 hb.

Albert Hurtado, ed. *Reflections on American Indian History: Honoring the Past, Building a Future*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. Pp. xix + 149, $29.95 hb.

Thomas N. Ingersol. *To Intermix with Our White Brothers: Indian Mixed Bloods in the United States from the Earliest Times to the Indian Removals*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. Pp. xxi + 450, $39.95 hb.

J. Diane Pearson. *The Nez Perces in the Indian Territory: Nimiipuu Survival*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. Pp. xxiii + 383, $34.95 hb.

Laura Peers. *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2007. Pp.xxiii + 206, $27.95 pb; $75.00 hb.

Akim Reinhardt. *Ruling Pine Ridge: Oglala Lakota Politics from the IRA to Wounded Knee*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007. Pp. xxvii + 274, $34.95 hb.

Fay A. Yarbrough. *Race and the Cherokee Nation: Sovereignty in the Nineteenth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. Pp. x + 184, $55 hb.

Indian Studies scholarship has built a nuanced picture of the Indian experience during the past few decades. The enlarged, more detailed portrayal created a new focus that reveals Indians as actors and Indian cultures and societies as adapting to new conditions. By contrast, early anthropological scholarship focused on describing an ethnographic present where Indian cultures were pictured as immutable until the arrival of Europeans/Americans to disrupt cultures that had existed since time immemorial. In part this research was informed by the idea that the main reason to preserve knowledge was to better understand the evolution of societies from savagery to civilization. Ethnography's description of idealized, static societies ignored external influences, tribal adaptability, and individuals whose actions changed their communities.

Initial historical accounts focused on Indians as either obstacles to inevitable American progress or as noble but doomed foils who tested and honed American "rugged individualism." The emphasis was on war and conflict where the valiant, colorful Indians fought savagely for their ways of life. After the Indian Wars were over, American historians mainly ignored the fact that Indians continued to exist. Indians as sentient leaders and Indians as savvy, three dimensional actors in their own histories did not receive much attention.

Of course, there were always scholars who provided more depth in their work than this simplistic picture would have it. After World War II in particular, the foundation work of a few pioneers like Angie Debo was expanded. For instance, the emergence of Indian Studies as a discipline in the 1970s rather than as a focus within existing disciplines freed scholars to develop ethnohistory. As the field changed, it became fashionable to lament the limitations of previous scholars and to emphasize Indian societies/tribes as viable and as led by intelligent individuals. Indians were actors just as much as the Europeans and Americans were.

Unfortunately, part of the academic riposte resulted in scholars overreacting to the sins of their predecessors. Too often a new misperception replaced the old ones. In this trope, Indians were always right and Europeans/Americans were always wrong. This neo-Romanticism was a variation on the Romanticism of the Noble Savage that had been one aspect of American and European perception since at least the Enlightenment. Although not a scholarly effort, the American cavalry and the Lakota *tiyospaye* in *Dances with Wolves* illustrate this new Romanticism. Academic treatments were muddled by advocacy scholarship and the general milieu of multiculturalism that dominated American scholarship from the 1960s onward. This pattern is akin to the same patterns that developed in other ethnic focused studies. Neo-Romanticism remains in much of the scholarship, but it is becoming less pervasive.

Academics have a difficult time drawing a complex picture because scholarship privileges the binary. If Indians are right, then Americans are wrong. If Indians suffer, then Americans are responsible. If Indian religions are viable then Christianity cannot be. If whites presented a racist picture of the Indian experience then only Indians should present the new picture. The refinement of the field of Indian Studies includes wrestling with a binary picture of the past as a measure of its maturity. Each of the eight books reviewed here builds on the established trend of Indian agency and complexity with varying success. Each is the result of excellent research including syntheses of previous scholarship.

In *Reflections on American Indian History: Honoring the Past, Building the Future*, Albert Hurtado collected examples of Indian historiography. He avoids some of the problems that have distracted Indian Studies by simply including both non-Indian and Indian scholars. The prolific Colin Calloway's contribution indicates that today's issues are rooted in the past: colonialism, land and treaty rights, sovereignty, wealth and poverty, and identity. Exploring these roots is the task of the historian. Lawrence Hauptman provides examples from Oneida history of their uses of interpretations of history. According to Hurtado, Hauptman's descriptions of the way history resonates demonstrates that "Oneida history is not always strictly correct or verifiable in the ways that academics think of their work. But it is full of meaning and truth . . . because it validates their conception of personal and tribal identity as well as historic relations with the U.S." (x). This subtheme of establishing a national or tribal trope is mirrored in many Indian Studies publications. Indian nations, just like the United States or Vietnam, need to have a national narrative, and its gist is more important than the exact verisimilitude expected of histories. This is a conceit that makes sense as Indians work toward an identity in a world where tribal sovereignty is being asserted by Indian nations' leaders and by non-Indian decision makers in the federal government.

R. David Edmunds provides a stimulating essay addressing the key issue of identity. On the face of it, determining who is an Indian should be no problem, but Edmunds points out that even Indians have conflated 19th-century ideas of race with political and cultural identity. Given that the United States can cease to recognize Indians (it has done so in the past), the issue is particularly crucial. The infamous "blood quantum" requirement to be Indian will result in Indians disappearing if it continues unchallenged as the dominant measure of being Indian. Edmunds does indicate that many other changes are occurring in Indian Country but the issue of identity may be the most important.

Peter Iverson provides a similar narrative but with a focus on the Navajo Nation. He sees Indian history as a continuing story rooted in the past but with Navajo integrated into the 21st century. Brenda Child's study of the expanding place of the Jingle Dress in pan-Indian settings and continued use of the dress as a healing mechanism is a case study in the connectiveness of Indian cultures. Each of the essays in this stimulating collection provides a synthesis of current Indian Studies scholarship and includes each author's foundational assumptions.

To Intermix with Our White Brothers explains why identity became a conundrum for American Indians that is grounded in an exploration of the racism that characterized European cultures and that was magnified by Americans. Although Ingersol occasionally drifts off into overstating his assertion of fear of miscegenation being a guiding principle for "typical white Americans," he grinds out a convincing argument that the definition of race developed in Jeffersonian America accounts for the negative pictures of mixed bloods that abound in late 19th-century American popular culture. His assertion that fear of mixed bloods was tied into efforts to keep women in their place while affirming the white male self-image is a bit strained. He identifies the key role that mixed-blood individuals had in defending Cherokee sovereignty and even survival; this is a different take on mixed-blood leadership than is found in much of the scholarship.

To Intermix with Our White Brothers is a contribution to the field because Ingersol demonstrates the adaptability of mixed bloods and underscores their leadership in trying to maintain Indian national sovereignty and even survival in the face of an often ruthless America. His thesis that whites' fear of contamination combined with the demonstrated ability of mixed bloods to "shape the Jacksonian Indian Removals" (xiv) is not so tenable. Ingersoll's provocative thesis is augmented by his mining of sources and creating combinations not often reviewed within Indian Studies monographs. For instance, he examines primary sources to derive the European and American biases that made mixed bloods the pariahs of empire. He demonstrates that Europeans at home and colonials alike just could not deal with the reality that mixed bloods stood as contradictions to their cherished prejudices.

Fay Yarbrough could agree with Ingersol about the leadership of Cherokee mixed bloods, but she sees the leadership as despicable. She relates race to sovereignty during the course of Cherokee history and identifies the mixed bloods and their white relatives as playing the race card for survival at the expense of blacks. One of the major reasons for the Trail of Tears was white fear that mixed bloods, blacks, and full-

bloods would conspire to mongrelize and overcome the white race. Cherokees had tried to assuage this fear by clearly privileging Cherokee-white marriages while legislating against black inclusion as Cherokees. Cherokees embraced the exclusion of blacks of the American society, partially as a survival tool. They were willing to mix with whites because whites were dominant. Of course, the pragmatic Cherokee were willing to make exceptions.

This pattern continued among Cherokee leaders even after arrival in Indian Country. Cherokees, led by mixed bloods, enacted Black Codes of their own. Yarbrough's construction of the intricacies of identity reveals a complex pattern for the Cherokee that resonates in Cherokee society today. The issue of Cherokee freedmen is better understood because of Yarbrough's work.

Laura Peers examines history as a fluid construct with her impressive study of the interactions of constituencies at historic reconstructions sites. *Playing Ourselves* focuses on re-enactment docents who pretend to be historical characters at sites around the Great Lakes. All of these American and Canadian sites have added Native American characters to their enactor staffs and have changed the dynamic of the construction of national narratives in both countries.

Her field research was conducted at Lower Fort Garry, Fort William, and Sainte Marie among the Hurons in Canada. American sites were Colonial Machilimackinac and the Northwest Company Fur Post. Professor Peers consults at several of the sites concerning the authenticity of Indian-related materials. She conducted extensive interviews and observations over a period of years. One of the strengths of this work is its acceptance of the parameters that parks have (including financial limitations, the nature of historic recreations, the audiences, availability of Native participants, and even the laws governing employment discriminations). Along the way she reviews scholarly studies and issues of tourist sites, particularly those with historical recreations,

She concludes that park managers try to provide a balanced picture, but inherent problems call the whole process into question. Native interpreters are not playing Indian, they are Indian and that brings the necessity of "breaking character to the fore." Natives feel that they must challenge the national creation myth nearly all non-Indian visitors bring to the interchanges. Whether or not tourists respond to the challenges to their national narratives is another question.

Professor Peers goes beyond her narrative scholarship to offer suggestions for providing better understanding of the Indian place in North American history. Among others, she suggests that the scope of Indian involvement needs to be emphasized. Currently the sites acknowledge

Indians, but each leaves the impression that Indians were really just peripheral customers while the Europeans lived a European life with European artifacts. The public needs to know that Indians were present all of the time and often were the fur traders or were at least married to them. Native Americans provided the food and many of the artifacts for living, and they greatly outnumbered the Europeans. The trading posts defined a European space, but that space was within an Indian context. Peers recommends that these realities need to be part of the visual impact created at the forts. Training for staff should position the Native interpreters within their special roles and correct misrepresentations that previous patterns created. Peers acknowledges that this need is a challenge particularly for funding but "what we say about the past is not only shaped by, but can shape the present." *Playing Ourselves* is highly recommended for anyone interested in the issues of reconstructed identity and the post-colonial world.

Most Americans are familiar with Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé. My students generally know of his famous speech, "I will fight no more forever" or something to that effect. They are generally convinced that Chief Joseph and the Nimiipuu (Nez Percé) were tragically wronged by Americans. Professor Pearson examines the full scope of the perfidious treatment of the Nez Percé by the United States, but one wonders whether her representation of Nimiipuu society is over-idealized. However, it is really hard to avoid picturing the Americans as always wrong because there is so much evidence of callous, racist, dishonest treatment of the Nez Percé by Americans. It is easy to idealize a group of people who were so victimized and yet maintained cultural identity while struggling to return to their homeland. Pearson focuses on the years in exile in Indian Territory as the watershed event in Nimiipuu survival. Her use of primary sources to tease out Nez Percé individuals' place in the tragic saga is exemplary—a model for all ethnohistorians.

Professor Laurence Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III, the founder of the Oneida Historical Society, examine Oneida adaptations during the height of America's assimilationist efforts. The Oneida exemplified adaptability similar to those Ingersoll found among the Cherokee by working within the system the United States created and focusing on what the United States was willing to sustain. *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860-1920* is a valuable case study. They changed many of their cultural traits but remained committed to avoiding the assimilation demanded by Indian policy. Allotment was one of the major efforts to destroy Indian societies as most historians would agree. There were, however, options within the system, and the Oneida certainly turned to them.

They embraced Christianity, sent their children to boarding schools, and struggled to deal with the world they had, the world of assimilation and allotment. Individual parents along with Oneida leaders made rational decisions within what was available. Despite having their reservation reduced to around ninety acres, they kept their identity as Oneida and used boarding school-educated leaders to challenge assimilation efforts. Hauptman and McLester draw on extensive Works Progress Administration records to provide personalized information about Oneida struggle for survival as a people. This work is an excellent illustration of revealing the voice of Indian people through effective delving into historical records and utilizing interviews.

Despite the reality that American Indian leaders maintained constant attention to the political survival of their nations and that they crafted a Pan-Indian approach to the federal government to recreate Indian sovereignty, it was necessary for the non-Indian establishment to accede to Indian efforts. As Justice John Marshall pointed out, the United States had "irresistible power" and the 300,000 or so American Indians had to have allies from the dominant society. Felix Cohen, one of the many allies during the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, is legitimately called the father of American Indian law. He crafted the *summa* of Indian law which established the canon. Additionally, Cohen was a vital part of a watershed change in Indian policy, the crafting of tribal constitutions during the 1930s. Best represented by the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), the new policy allowed tribes to vote to create tribal governments described by tribal constitutions. Tribal governments could replace the colonial governments administered by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Professor David Wilkins presents a well-introduced printing of Felix Cohen's lengthy memorandum that sought to create a milieu for the writing of tribal constitutions. Although it is impossible to discern the impact of *On the Drafting of Tribal Constitutions*, it clearly indicates that this influential lawyer reflected the opinion that tribal constitutions should not slavishly copy some cookie-cutter model. He opined that tribal leaders should draw on their own traditional political theories derived from pre-reservation government to create truly tribal constitutions. Thanks to David Wilkins' efforts, the views of this important supporter of tribal sovereignty are available for scholars to better assess the whole era of Indian Reorganization.

Ruling Pine Ridge: Oglala Lakota Politics from the IRA to Wounded Knee provides a version of what the Indian Reorganization Act wrought. Akim Reinhart's history of the period from 1934 to 1973 on Pine Ridge

Reservation reflects nearly all of the trends in Indian Studies, both positive and negative. Like so many other new scholars, he is critical of the IRA because he contends that the adopted constitution was so alien to Oglala Lakota (Teton Sioux) culture that it led to the 1973 Occupation of Wounded Knee. He assumes that the "traditionals" were the opponents of the IRA government and the real driving force behind opposition to the IRA government of Chairman Richard Wilson. He asserts that the traditionals wanted to restore a known pre-reservation tribal government that had never changed. He concludes that the Oglala did not support the IRA government because they went to the BIA to handle land and cattle sales, not to the tribal government. Of course, he does not seem to know that land sales could only be handled by the BIA. He omits the popularity of Richard Wilson who was in the run-offs for tribal chairman as late as the 1980s. The BIA retained most of the executive control of all reservations well into the 1970s. He criticizes the BIA superintendent, Stanley Lyman, for supporting the tribal government that the law and policy required him to support. Too often, Reinhardt ignores evidence not consistent with his view that the IRA government supported by a patronizing BIA was the only picture to be painted.

Although riddled with assumptions gleaned from the neo-Romantic view of Indians, Reinhardt's study has many strong points that are consistent with current trends. He emphasizes the local context of opposition to Wilson's tribal government, the place of outsiders like the American Indian Movement, and the ineptitude of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. His research is particularly effective at demonstrating the patronizing, micromanaging, racist actions of BIA officials who acted "in the best interest" of "their" Indians. He documents well the effects of BIA control of land to reward non-Indians and control Indians. *Ruling Pine Ridge* should be read because it adds to the knowledge of perhaps the most studied reservation, Pine Ridge, and therefore its omissions can be compensated for by other scholars like Rolland Denig, Robert Warrior, Pat Smith, and Thomas Biolsi.

Each of the works adds to the growing, generally less polemic, body of scholarly work that characterizes Indian Studies. Each establishes that Indians in the past and the present affect their own lives and have never been just passive victims or mere foils for the expanding United States. Each demonstrates the tenacity of Indian identity within a tribal context. Each focuses attention on the Indian actors and their adaptability in meeting the challenges of outside and inside forces seeking to manipulate, at best, or destroy, at worst. Each also demonstrates the richness of sources that can be mined by scholars.

What's in Our Name?

In the fall of 1972, my parents drove me to the University of North Dakota for my freshman year. Everything I needed was packed in a brand-new royal-blue aluminum trunk: a crazy-quilt afghan that my mother had crocheted for my bed, thirty dollars' worth of new clothes, my Berlitz French Self-Teacher, the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius (a gift from my father) a framed photograph of my grandfather Mooshum, and a beaded leather tobacco pouch that he had owned ever since I could remember, and which he had casually handed to me as I left, the way old men give presents.

Other freshmen were already moving into their dormitory rooms when we arrived, with their parents helping haul. I saw boxes of paperbacks, stereo equipment, Dylan albums and varnished acoustic guitars, home-knitted afghans, none as brilliant as mine, Janis posters, Bowie posters, Day-Glo bedsheets, hacky sacks, stuffed bears. But as we carried my trunk up two flights of stairs terror invaded me. Although I was studying French because I dreamed of going to Paris, I actually dreaded leaving home, and in the end my parents did not want me to leave, either. But this is how children are sacrificed into their futures: I had to go, and here I was. We walked back down the stairs. I was too numb to cry, but I watched my mother and father as they stood beside the car and waved. That moment is a still image; I can call it up as if it were a photograph. My father, so thin and athletic, looked almost frail with shock, while my mother, whose beauty was still remarkable, and who was known on the reservation for her silence and reserve, had left off her characteristic gravity. Her face and my father's were naked with love. It wasn't something that we talked about—love. But they allowed me this one clear look at it. It blazed from them. And then they left. . . .

Louise Erdrich, from "Reptile Garden,"
The New Yorker, January 28, 2008

Reviews

Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. Pp. 238, $20.50 pb.

Some time ago a colleague of mine at a prestigious research university showed me a draft of a mission statement drawn up by senior faculty members. It said that "curiosity driven" research was outmoded, and a far more exciting challenge lay before us: to put our skills to work in the service of government and industry. As a faculty member, I recoiled. Since when had the public interest been encompassed by government and industry alone? And what about those past disasters (the waste and radiation hazards associated with the nuclear program, for example) produced when big business, big government, and big science colluded too closely?

But in retrospect I appreciate the honesty of that mission statement. It signals that a revolution is afoot in higher education. It bluntly says that those who pay the piper (corporations and governments) will surely call the tune. The relevance of universities is on the line. And a recent flood of books, commentaries, and reports all depict the university as a deeply troubled institution.

On the surface, that claim sounds dubious. Prestigious institutions are winding up billion-dollar fundraising campaigns, and star professors move from one university franchise to another at ever-increasing salaries. Tuitions have been rising above the rate of inflation for years, while the demand for higher education continues strong.

There are problems, of course. A substantial amount of the teaching is now done by grossly exploited graduate assistants or temporary instructors. Public financing has not kept up, and scientists cannot feed so easily at the federal trough now that the Cold War is over. The cost of higher education has been increasing rapidly, particularly in research institutions where equipment and labs absorb millions in the competitive chase to produce cutting-edge research. And relying on student tuitions has its price: universities have to market themselves competitively and deal with students as consumers who noisily claim their rights.

Universities now operate in a much more Darwinian world where the fit survive and others flounder. Tenure is under threat, bothersome rankings and performance indicators are becoming common, and new university structures are arising to provide professional qualifications at very low cost. But nothing is going on here that has not already gone on in government and business. The shake-out should prove healthy, the argument goes, and bring us a sleeker delivery of higher-education services to

match market needs. A dose of private-sector logic will surely help. And to the extent that everyone lives in this kind of world, why should the university be any different?

Internal resentments and resistance abound, of course. Complaints about excessive administrative powers and burdens, "corporatization" and "proletarianization," are heard everywhere. And difficulties attach to applying corporate logic when the "product" is something as undefined as "an educated student" and when there's a modicum of significance to the distinctions between getting an education and getting a qualification, between thinking and mere information processing, between producing knowledge and consuming it. Higher education for what and for whom? And why even bother? It is on this last point that much of Bill Readings's challenging book turns, setting *The University in Ruins* interestingly apart from comparable writings in recent years.

Readings (who taught comparative literature at the Université de Montréal) argues compellingly that the university has outlived its purpose—a purpose defined two centuries ago when the nation-state and the modern notion of culture came together to make the university the guardian of national culture. In Europe, it helped to solidify national cultures, gave "reason to the common life of a people," and fused "past tradition and future ambition into a unified field of culture." The university embodied an ideal. In the United States the mission was parallel. But here it was to deliver on a promise—to create tradition, found mythologies, and form a "republican" subject who could combine rationality and sentiment and exercise judgment within a system of consensual democratic governance. The university was where elite citizens went to be socialized and educated.

But globalization of culture as well as of economies, the rise of transnational powers, and the consequent "hollowing out" of the nation-state have undermined this traditional role. So what, Readings asks "is the point of the University, if we realize that we are no longer to strive to realize a national identity, be it an ethnic essence or a republican will?" What happens when the culture the university was meant to preserve goes global and transnational along with everything else?

This is an intriguing argument. And even if (as I believe) it is only half right, it helps to explain much. From this perspective, for example, Readings is wonderfully insightful on the "culture wars" that have wracked universities and bewildered the public for two decades. Attacks on "the canon" of dead white males signaled the end of the university as a guardian of universal truths and values. Conservatives were right to worry that multiculturalism meant an end to the university as we knew it, but

hopelessly nostalgic in their prescriptions. Multiculturalists, by "lending primacy to the cultural," also missed "the fact that culture *no longer matters* to the powers that be in advanced capitalism—whether those powers are transnational corporations or depoliticized, unipolar nation-states." Much of the current debate consequently "misses the point, because it fails to think of the University in a transnational framework, preferring to busy itself with either nostalgia or denunciation—most often with an admixture of the two."

So what is actually going on? How are we to understand the perpetuation of the university as an institution? Readings carefully constructs his answer: The university is now "an autonomous bureaucratic corporation" responsive to the idea that what really matters in today's world is "economic management" rather than "cultural conflict." It no longer cares about values, specific ideologies, or even such mundane matters as learning how to think. It is simply a market for the production, exchange, and consumption of useful information—useful, that is, to corporations, governments, and their prospective employees.

With devasting skill Readings takes apart the rhetoric of "excellence" with which universities cover the emptiness at their core. Rankings (like those in *U.S. News & World Report*) measure it, and internal budgets focus on it. And the joy of excellence is that we all agree about it. Its invocation "overcomes the problem of the question of value across disciplines, since excellence is the common denominator of good research in all fields" while all manner of multicultural diversities can be accepted as equally excellent.

The trouble is that excellence is meaningless when it comes to key decisions (for example, to close a classics department and open up a mult-cultural-studies program). "So to say that excellence is a criterion is to say absolutely nothing other than that the committee will not reveal the criteria used to judge applications." Those criteria, it turns out, lie elsewhere. The pursuit of excellence allows the university "to understand itself solely in terms of the structure of corporate administration." A key slippage then occurs, as the quite proper demand that the university be *accountable* gets translated into the reductionist idea that everything is simply a matter of *accounting*.

This is a striking insight. But Readings could have pushed it further. Money is now the measure of all things, and a crude cost-benefit logic pervades administrative decisions. University presidents pontificate about excellence while the bean counters in the back rooms call the shots. The traditional university culture, with its odd sense of community, has been penetrated, disrupted, and reconfigured by raw money power.

I recall an incident some years ago when my own department was rumored to be "in trouble" with the dean. We prepared voluminous docu-

mentation to prove how excellent we were. The dean said that he had never questioned our excellence but was interested in only one thing, and it was "colored green." We were not, apparently, earning enough of it to justify our existence.

The effects of such logic are devastating. The hidden hand of the market distributes resources and rewards so as to ensure a proliferating freedom of market choices in higher education while denying the capacity to explore alternative values. Money discipline undercuts the freedoms of research and speech promised by tenure and threatens to be worse than McCarthyism in its effects on independent scholarship and critical thought. And it is far more insidious: there is no overt source of oppression to be identified and resisted. Even university presidents are caught within the logic, forced to raise more and more money or economize on costs by whatever means to meet the escalating financial needs of teaching and research.

This is what aligns the university with the economistic logic of contemporary capitalism, converting knowledge into information and students into consumers and transforming the ability to think into a capacity for information processing. It constructs a kind of market in which we are free to choose about issues that, like culture, no longer matter.

I do depart from Readings's diagnosis in some respects. His conception of globalization is too simplistic. Although the nation-state's role is changing, it is nowhere near as hollowed-out as he claims. New territorial commitments, to locality and region, are emerging within which the university may be an invaluable economic and cultural leader (think of Quebec and Catalonia). Readings sees the bitter tension between national (or even local, ethnic, or regionalist) commitments and the forces of transnational and cultural globalizations too one-sidedly. Furthermore, the modern research university is driven by science, engineering, medicine, and technology. Readings's claim that the problems arising in these sectors are broadly parallel to those in the humanities is hard to swallow.

If he got that wrong, it casts doubt on the metaphor for the university as a ruin. Readings likes the metaphor not only because it clearly signals the end of the traditional university but also because ruins contain some niches of unpredictability in which the human "addiction" to thinking may perhaps flourish. The university can then be viewed as a potential model space in which a new kind of "dissensual community" might form—a ruined edifice within whose cracks many different flowers can bloom.

But if the university is bowing more and more to corporate values—if it is also a centerpiece for the knowledge-based industries so essential to economic competitiveness—then it appears more like a modern-day behe-

moth than a gentle ruin. The university is a battleground where accountability has indeed been co-opted into accounting—where empty chatter about excellence evades fundamental questions of values while disguising narrow and brutal conceptions of cost and benefit. It is a battleground where the professionalization of disciplines remains closely guarded, even though that makes no sense in relation to many of the pressing issues we now face, such as global rights and systems of governance and worldwide environmental degradation.

Something plainly has to give, and the powers that be—corporations, governments, wealthy donors, and even parents—broadly know that the university must be reformed. Their overt interventions in curricula and research grow more transparent by the day. The fear of ruinous "tuition wars" in which the more well-endowed universities use their resources to lower tuitions is everywhere apparent (the competition is essentially hidden these days under the category "financial-aid packages"). But beyond this we also see a vast struggle unfolding over appropriate knowledge structures for the twenty-first century. How can we think, Readings asks, in "an institution whose development tends to make Thought more and more difficult, less and less necessary?" What the transnationals and the international bureaucrats and even the foundations need and want to know is not necessarily all the public needs or wants to know.

Who decides is a key question. Readings offers a call to arms to those of us who live and work in universities as well as to those on the outside—a call to better understand our position in a changing world, to come out of our professional shells, stop pining for a lost world, and actively seek to construct something different. Change, he insists, "comes neither from within nor from without, but from the difficult space . . . where one is."

Readings invites a conversation on these matters. Sadly, his voice has been silenced. He died in an air disaster shortly before this book was published. So I give him the last word, a fitting epitaph drawn from a remarkable contribution.

> Energies directed exclusively toward University reform risk blinding us to the dimensions of the task that faces us—in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences—the task of rethinking the categories that have governed intellectual life for over two hundred years.

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Sebastian Felix Braun, *Buffalo Inc.: American Indians and Economic Development*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. Pp. xii + 272, $39.95 hb.

By 1990 a number of tribes in the United States and Canada entered into the business of establishing buffalo herds, and among these was the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe located in north central South Dakota. One of the poorest reservations in the United States, Cheyenne River reintroduced buffalo to the reservation community with the vision of restoring economic, ecological, political, cultural, social, and physical health to the people. By 2000 Pte Hca Ka, Inc., the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's buffalo venture, was the premiere tribal bison operation; it had acquired 22,000 acres of land, it had a state of the art mobile slaughterhouse and processing plant, it had implemented and inspired curriculum in the schools, it was running an arts and crafts store featuring items made from buffalo byproducts, and the corporation was planning to develop what was termed "Sioux National Park," a place where local people and ecotourists could learn about the sacred place of the buffalo in Lakota life and culture. Pte Hca Ka was, as author Sebastian Felix Braun states, "a story of innovative visions transformed into reality. . . " (6). For the people of Cheyenne River, Pte Hca Ka seemed a certain pathway to sustainable development.

By 2007 Pte Hca Ka was closed; the herd, once the largest of any tribe at 3,500 head, was reduced to 220, and the corporation was $6 million in debt. Economically Pte Hca Ka was an abysmal failure. However, a major point in Braun's case study of this tribal bison cooperative is that indigenous economic development projects have their own standards of success and failure. Pte Hca Ka was never envisioned as having purely economic purpose; equally important were the cultural, social, and ecological goals which were designed to fit the community. And so the social and cultural legacy of Pte Hca Ka, Inc., was a success in that it underscored the possibility of local development that fit a particular community's need to maintain cultural and social integrity. Sebastian Felix Braun's ethnographic study of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's buffalo operation is a multilayered analysis that leads the reader to understand both the pitfalls as well as the necessity of establishing a holistic approach to economic development projects in Indian Country. Braun leads the reader to understand that Pte Hca Ka, Inc., was a successful venture on many levels.

The need for sustainable economic development is a very real problem for reservations located in rural areas of the Northern Plains. Making this need doubly challenging for reservation communities, economic development must promote tribal self-determination while at the same

time any project must sustain and promote cultural integrity. Historically, Lakota culture was centered on the buffalo in both spiritual and economic ways. Indeed, the Lakota considered themselves as relatives of the buffalo and said prayers of forgiveness and thanksgiving every time a buffalo was killed. It was said that the demise of the buffalo on the Plains also marked the end of the traditional Lakota way of life. So by the 1980s, when a niche market for buffalo meat developed, the prospect of establishing buffalo operations resonated with American Indian people, especially those on the Plains for whom the buffalo had been central to the life of the people. For the members of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe buffalo operations presented the opportunity to link tribal sovereignty, economic self-sufficiency, and cultural revitalization.

In 1991 Pte Hca Ka became a tribally chartered corporation with safeguards in place to keep a distance from tribal government. It had forward-looking leadership that focused on economic and cultural self-sufficiency. But from the start tensions arose over these goals. For some in the tribe, including cattle ranchers, economic success was primary; for others, revitalization of cultural knowledge and understanding became paramount. Nonetheless, Pte Hca Ka continued to grow and work closely with the community. The growth and success of the buffalo operation caused it to come under the scrutiny of tribal government by the summer of 2000. In part, as Pte Hca Ka began to more clearly diversify its economic role, the tribal government took note and began to insert itself in its day-to-day operations. The tribe used the mobile slaughterhouse for cattle, prohibited the corporation from applying for grants, and interfered in management of the buffalo operation. Coupled with these actions, the buffalo market bottomed out in 2000. With the entry of the tribal government into management of the corporation emphasis shifted squarely to a business-only approach, and thus began the slow decline of the corporation and its vision for sustainable development for the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

Braun, an anthropologist, presents a fascinating contemporary case study of a Northern Plains reservation's effort to use holistic approaches to revitalize both its economy and culture. Although this case study is of a particular community and what happens when a community takes control of its economic, cultural, and ecological future, this book presents wider implications for small rural communities throughout the Northern Plains which seek similar holistic approaches to economic development.

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Timothy R. Pauketat. *Chiefdoms and Other Archaeological Delusions*. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007. Pp. xii + 258, $29.95 pb.

Archaeology, Timothy Pauketat asserts, "has an inferiority complex" (2). It is for this reason that archaeologists have often tried to analyze the aspects of mostly material culture they find by applying ethnological theory, or at least they tried to fit their analyses into ethnological concepts. As the title of his book suggests, Pauketat, an archaeologist himself, has some doubts on whether that is such a good idea. In fact, he thinks that it leads to delusions.

Pauketat begins his argumentation with cultural materialist Marvin Harris who, in 1968, warned archaeologists to avoid "the 'sophisticated delusions' of sociocultural anthropology" (1). While Harris at the time thought specifically of archaeologists who were trying to find evidence of kinship systems, Pauketat expands this notion to ethnological concepts in general. In the opening pages, Pauketat lays the foundations of his argument; he explains that the existence of kinship systems, or the assumption that kinship is systemic, "involves a huge leap of faith based on the observations of a few anthropologists. Why make that leap? Why believe that the observations of a few anthropologists at a few places can be extrapolated to the rest of the world?" (1). The ethnographic delusion, it turns out, is that cultural processes reside "in the mind alone" (2), instead of acknowledging that "the reality of the past [and, I might add, the present?] was *what people did* and *how people experienced* social life" (2; italics in original). The latter point is well taken; however, contrary to what Marvin Harris and other cultural materialists believed, I don't think any sociocultural anthropologist would deny it. On the other hand, the fact that kinship as a system is not experienced in material ways does not make kinship systems delusions. Pauketat himself argues this when he says that "people—*acting as if these things mattered*" (40; italics in original) constitute political institutions. To act "as if [an institution] were real" makes states and kinship systems more than delusions; it makes them realities, as Pauketat points out (40).

Pauketat's real issue seems to be "with archaeological models that retain social evolutionary underpinnings" (4). I absolutely agree with Pauketat. Again, however, I have problems seeing what this has to do with sociocultural anthropology—a field that has thrown social evolutionary theory on the trash heap of history some time ago. Pauketat defines sociocultural anthropology through the neoevolutionary works of the 1950s and 1960s; in so doing he digs up the field's past and applies it to the present (18-26). Morton H. Fried and Elman R. Service, however, and their models of stages of political systems have long been critiqued by

anthropologists and archaeologists who have driven much of the discussion about complexity for the last forty years. I think it has long been accepted and is not questioned, anymore, that "inequality and polity didn't develop in lockstep" (26), at least in sociocultural anthropology. Perhaps the problem, then, is not that archaeologists are using ethnological models, but that they are using antiquated ethnological models (the same applies vice versa).

I find myself agreeing with much of Pauketat's practical argument: that we need to constantly review our assumptions, that we cannot assume what we can and cannot find before engaging in the process of finding data, and that our analyses of data need to be consistent with the data not with the theory *de jour*. Pauketat delivers much information on Mississippian societies, and his discussion in the later chapters of archaeological data in the Southeast and the Southwest are interesting and relevant. In the context of Mississippian archaeology, especially, discussions about the complexity of these societies have filled books.

However, Pauketat's theoretical discussions seem to be driven by a personal dislike of specific peers. He invents personas: Dr. Science, the Southern Pragmatist, and Darth Evader, as well as UGS, the uncertain graduate student, who play out scenes and discuss arguments throughout the book. These arguments use real ideas and theories; clearly, Pauketat knows who he has in mind, yet, for some reason, he does not tell his audience who the people are (perhaps because Dr. Science's "scholarly pedigree is impressive, his friends influential" [12]?). I found myself wondering if the people portrayed recognize themselves; why not mention their names? In the end, the Pragmatist leads UGS to see the light in the fight against Dr. Science, neoevolutionary approaches, the "dark forces of corporate America" (208), and, it is assumed, ethnological delusions. Similarly, the reader seems to be assumed to have been guided to the same revelation: "'Not really quite sure what you'll find?' [the Pragmatist] asks. '*That*,' he grins, 'is why we dig'" (211; italics in original). It may be that writing this book was necessary. Perhaps some archaeologists really have become so overtaken by ideological theories that instead of using good scientific methodology, they have become partisans who shoot at any ideas that do not fit their models. There are, unfortunately, certain departments that have split over such issues because faculty would not talk to each other anymore. However, is not Pauketat engaging in the same ideological warfare when he asserts that "the neoevolutionists . . . (and all ethnologists) lacked historical perspective" (54)?

In the end, Pauketat is simply arguing for good science. Much of the argumentation has lifted away, like mist from an Arkansas oxbow lake. While archaeologists should avoid ethnological delusions, he has argued

that archaeological analysis that does not include agency is misled. While neoevolutionary argumentation is too rigid and does not look at local exceptions, postmodernism led to a "cacophony of localized debates over complexity" (37-38). What is left is going into the field and starting to dig for data. I hope the uncertain graduate student realizes, though, that she will have to use categorical comparisons to make sense of the data and that she will have to compare, cautiously, as any good scientist would, some of her data to ethnological theory and case studies. The simple fact is that archaeologists cannot observe people, and they therefore need models. I also hope that her advisor will not think that therefore she is delusional.

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Kaimei Zheng. *Wars in American Soldiers' Eyes*. Beijing: Xinhua Press (8 Jingyuan Road, Shijingshan District, Beijing, China <http://press.xinhuanet.com> and <http://www.xinhuapub.com>), 2008. Pp. ii + 360, ¥ 39.80 RMB (Chinese yuan).

Based on the translation of interviews of American veterans and reflections of the author, *Wars in American Soldiers' Eyes* is meant "to tell the stories of American veterans to Chinese readers—once former enemies on the other side of the battle line" (180). The collection consists of eleven interviews divided into three sections: interviews about American veterans who served in the Second World War, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. These veterans served in different positions and armed branches during the wars. For example, the four veterans who fought in World War II include a submarine mechanic in the Navy, a machine gunner in a B-24 Air Force bomber, an assistant to an Air Force general, and an Army scout dispatched in Europe. The four veterans who served in the Korean War were a tank platoon leader, an Army MP, a POW who had been a tank crew member before he was captured, and a truck platoon leader in an infantry division. And the three American veterans who served in the Vietnam War consisted of an engineer who cleared the landing spaces for helicopters in the jungle, a Marine, and an experienced helicopter pilot. Some of these veterans were decorated war heroes, awarded with various war medals. The collection also includes a preface by Minqing Yang, a preface by the author herself, a postscript, and a bibliography containing both English and Chinese reference materials divided among the three war periods. Subtitles composed of direct quotations of words and phrases from the interviews are used. Valuable black and white photos of these veterans during and after the wars, taken as early as 1939, can be found throughout the book.

Each of the interviews has been edited, polished, and presented with Zheng's own thoughts and reflections as well as facts and references from other sources frequently interwoven among the lines. As a result, the collection is absorbing to read with facts and personal experiences of the interviewees, yet it also seriously probes into the disastrous and extraordinary impact of the wars upon the societies and the individuals involved. Additionally, the author also elaborates on how she initially got in touch with these veterans, the settings of the interviews, and some of the interview questions.

Although the main theme is about the wars, the description of combat experience is not always the dominant part of each of the chapters. For example, readers can find detailed descriptions about how a bomber gunner fiercely fought Japanese aircraft in the sky above the Pacific Ocean

during WW II; how a tank platoon leader zigzagged his tanks in battlefields while attacking during the coldest winter in the Korean War; and how an experienced chopper pilot flirted with death each time he flew a mission in the jungles of Vietnam. Readers can also find a lot of pages devoted to describing non-combat experiences and the daily life of these veterans prior to the war, during the war, and after the war. For instance, there are frequent flashbacks to veterans' childhood stories and their daily lives before serving in the war; love stories and romances sparked between American veterans and service personnel like nurses and civilians; daily activities, fortuitous events, amusing or sentimental anecdotes American soldiers experienced between battles during the wars; and emotional and psychological barriers they encountered when they started coping with civilian life after the wars.

In addition to the descriptions of battlefield experiences and routine activities of American soldiers' daily lives, the author also includes a number of cases when the veterans frankly discuss the bravery and tenacity demonstrated by their enemies on the battlefields; the ineffable cruelty of the war experienced by civilians and American soldiers, especially by an American POW during the Korean War; their fear and reluctance to perform some military duties and to fight; the true friendship and lasting bond they developed with civilians and even with enemy soldiers during the war; their deeply felt guilt and regret for their unethical and odious conduct and the crimes they committed; as well as the everlasting negative impact of the war upon these veterans including lingering symptoms of post-war distress disorders. Some of the veterans, especially those who served in Vietnam, also comment on their thought-provoking self-contemplation about the war when their ideology and faith influenced by government propaganda clashed with the facts they found in war and the bitter feelings of being victimized by both the war and the society.

Moreover, readers can frequently find Zheng's own thoughts, understandings, and reflections between the lines, such as her hearty response to the catastrophic effects of the wars on the soldiers, citizens, and countries involved, her own judgments and heartfelt questions about the meanings of the wars, and her admiration and pride when depicting Chinese soldiers and commanders. It is also common to find her sympathies for the tremendous ordeals suffered by civilians and soldiers alike, especially POWs; her childhood memories or stories associated with the wars; her torn feelings when visiting and interviewing "old enemy" soldiers and their relatives; and her awareness that some information obtained from the interviewees may be inaccurate and curtailed for different reasons including her specific role as an interviewer. Some of the veterans during the interviews also touched on a few sensitive topics themselves, such as

whether they shot and killed people and the implication of being captured. While some of the information pertinent to these topics is enlightening or contrary to what Chinese readers would expect, other information is vague, if not elusive.

One of the distinctive features is the author's frequent use of Chinese proverbs, metaphors, and colloquial Chinese expressions including even popular expressions that flourished during the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, there are also a large number of quotations from well-known Chinese poems, novels, movies, folklore, and songs. Zheng uses these linguistic devices from the Chinese language to describe American soldiers' characters, to summarize combat experience, and to explore American soldiers' consciences and feelings hidden deepest in their hearts. No doubt, such apt use of the native language of the readers can help them relate immediately to the topics described in the book and get them emotionally involved while reading.

Another noticeable feature is the author's constant use of information from various sources to complement information which was not available from the interviews or to verify how a particular battle was fought. In a number of cases, the author uses information from official government documents and excerpts from memoirs by Chinese veterans and other American veterans to account for a specific battle. The supplementary yet crucial information from these sources helps readers understand the deployment of military forces for a battle and learn the subsequent detailed casualities on both sides. One more distinctive feature is the use of humor to express the author's feelings and understanding of some characters, events, and technology. In most cases humorous phrases and words fit well the characters and situations described; however, a few may sound offensive to some Chinese readers.

Long influenced by Chinese media, Chinese readers would usually associate American soldiers with unpleasant, if not negative, characteristics such as arrogance, machoism, and brashness. The descriptions of the veterans' war experiences, their thoughts and feelings, as well as the documentation of their daily lives before, during, and after the wars will definitely change the image of American soldiers held by many Chinese readers. As the author has shown American soldiers to Chinese readers from a different angle, an angle constructed by the American soldiers' own words once sealed in their hearts, Chinese readers are able to find out that American soldiers were also ordinary people of common natures, just like one's neighbors and acquaintances. This is especially evidenced when several veterans expressed earnestly their peace-loving desires and aversion to war. Similarly, American readers would very likely be enlightened and pleased by an English translation of this important book.

In spite of some proofreading lapses, this book is definitely a valuable and worthy addition to the war literature for Chinese readers from American veterans' perspectives. It surely serves well as a window for Chinese readers to learn not only the war experience of American soldiers, but also, as equally important, their lives and feelings as ordinary people.

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Ralph Flores, *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature: Sacred Rhetoric and the Uses of Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008. Pp. viii + 224, $65.00 hb.

In recent decades a great number of books about Buddhism have been written in English. The majority aim at a general audience and attempt—with varying degrees of success—to repackage the Buddha's message(s) in ways that appeal to Western readers browsing in the Self-Help, New Age, and Psychology sections of big-box bookstores. A smaller, more serious group of books includes those written by, and for, practitioners of Buddhist disciplines; a third category, overlapping the second, comprises books by scholars that target an academically focused audience of specialists and students, some of whom are practicing Buddhists. Few, if any, books have surveyed the vast canon of Buddhist texts from the vantage of literary studies. *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature* is exploring new ground.

Flores gives three aims, or "focal points," for his book. The first is to serve as a corrective for the bad, partial, or even flat-out wrong readings of Buddhist scriptures that are deplorably common in all of the above categories of books. Flores points out several ways in which Western interpreters of Buddhism, both famous and obscure, have distorted key Buddhist teachings, and suggests that conscientious, responsible reading could have prevented many of the misunderstandings of Buddhism that are now unfortunately widespread. The book's second aim is to read selected Buddhist texts as "literature," not as self-help, philosophy, or religion. Flores warns readers that this approach will lead to interpretations that are "slightly askew," and in this he is surely right. The third, more subtle aim is to use theory to "uncover sites of lyricism, drama or compelling storylines" and show ways in which "Buddhist ideology and rhetoric are at work in shaping responses in listeners and readers" (3). All three of these aims are interesting and any one of them would merit an entire book. The question, of course, is obvious: can Flores unite all three "focal points" and give them full, coherent treatment in one slender volume?

We might first look at the mechanics. *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature* is a slender book indeed. Without notes, it runs to 185 pages. Possibly attempting to compensate for the book's relatively few pages, the publisher printed the text in an extremely small font, thereby packing more content into a small space. Most readers over forty will find the text difficult to read, I suspect. The tiny font might help explain the large number of typographical errors that have crept into the later chapters of the book. Of course, since SUNY Press publications are often riddled with typos, perhaps no explanation is needed. In any case, only the most diligent and sharp-eyed readers will see them.

In many ways, *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature* is a curious book, very limited at the same time that it is broad. Only a few Buddhist scriptures are examined in any detail, but they range from some of the earliest texts in the ancient Pali Canon through early Mahayana and Zen classics to the relatively late (14th century) *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (*Bardo Thödöl*). The ideal reader would be broadly familiar with Buddhist texts and well versed in critical theory. While I found the Buddhist parts easy going, many readers might not, given the cursory explanations Flores provides and his generous assumptions about readers' background knowledge. On the other hand, my understanding of critical theory was inadequate. I recognized all the notables Flores cited, but I was not sufficiently awed by their reputations to take their unsupported assertions seriously. For example, Flores quotes René Girard:

> Rivalry multiplies mirror images of violence. . . . Symbolized reality becomes, paradoxically, the loss of all symbolism. . . . Myths make constant reference to the sacrificial crisis, but they do so only to disguise the issue. Myths are the retrospective transfigurations of these crises . . . in light of the cultural order that has arisen from them. (35)

With no explication of Girard's intended meaning, Flores then heads into a dense discussion of the role of mimetic violence and sacrifice in religion, as if all readers are coming along with him on his wild excursion. I, for one, did not follow him, needing more context and evidence to determine if Girard's insights are profound or simply clever word play, devoid of meaning, scholarly sounding mimetic gibberish. And speaking of gibberish, what is one to make of Paul De Man's proclamation that "Death is a displaced name for a linguistic predicament" (163)? Perhaps meaning can be created from this sentence by scholars of literary criticism, but as a religious studies professor, I find it unintelligible.

Unlike some scholarly writers, Flores allows his personality to be reflected in his prose; readers soon realize that he has a deep personal interest in the existential implications of the texts and issues he discusses. He treats his readers as companions on a quest for *meaning*, not as Buddhists necessarily but as intellectuals and literati. Flores comes across as a congenial fellow with a wide-ranging, eclectic knowledge base—a fascinating guy to invite out for beer and conversation when visiting his home university in Bangkok. Unfortunately, the downside of his omnivorous intellectuality is that Flores is not the easiest writer to follow. His mind leaps from topic to topic, but few sustained arguments are developed. Literary scholars are quoted and dropped, rarely receiving two consecutive sentences of exposition and almost never a full paragraph. The net result is a pastiche, sometimes evocative, occasionally brilliant, but all

too rarely developed into tangible positions that can be summarized or even paraphrased.

So what is good about the book? Quite a lot, actually. Flores' literary reading of Buddhist texts can be very revealing at times, as he subtly, and persuasively, undercuts traditional interpretations of the Buddha's received words and teachings. The Buddha's life story is analyzed as an epic, that genre of great adventure stories from the dawn of literature. While Flores suggests that the Buddha's life might in some ways be closer to a romance, simply placing it within the developing literary currents of its day enables Flores to develop fascinating insights into the formation of early Buddhist ideology. Flores shows a flair for presenting extraordinary selections from early Buddhist texts, making great use of the very passages that modern anthologizers tend to omit. The Buddhism Flores discovers is far stranger and more wonderful than the sanitized, rational Buddhism of textbooks.

In the end, Flores probably does less to develop his three "focal points" than some might wish, but his "slightly askew" readings provide occasional brilliant insights. Unfortunately, *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature* is too expensive and too difficult to appeal to a wide readership. It seems likely that only scholars working in both religious studies and critical theory will wish to purchase this book for themselves, though it is definitely worth checking out at a library. Just don't be surprised to discover that you need strong reading glasses.

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Nicholson Baker, *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008. Pp. 566, $26.00 hb.

Human Smoke opens with a quotation from Alfred Nobel, manufacturer of dynamite and other explosives, speaking before the fourth World Peace Conference, in August of 1892. "Perhaps my factories," Nobel said, "will put an end to war even sooner than your congresses. On the day when two army corps may mutually annihilate each other in a second, probably all civilized nations will recoil with horror and disband their troops." How hopeful and how gloriously naïve. Nobel could not, of course, have foreseen the day when not just armies, but also nations, could be destroyed in seconds. Technology moves on. A presidential candidate of 2008 has proclaimed that if Iran attacked Israel, "we would be able to totally obliterate them." The candidate was talking about a population of some *seventy million* people.

After the introductory comment from Nobel, *Human Smoke* moves into a historical account consisting of many hundreds of entries that begin in the spring of 1914 and end on December 31, 1941. Each entry is precisely dated in the format of, for example, "It was April 6, 1917." After 1941 the worst is yet to come, of course, but what has already happened by the end of that year is a damning record of inhumanity. With frequent short editorial comments, Baker summarizes or quotes directly from primary and secondary sources: journals, letters, press conferences, newspaper accounts (especially the *New York Times*), and so on. Each is fully documented: the listing of sources fills 52 pages and the bibliography of references another sixteen. The entries are brief; usually, two or three will fill a page. The reader moves easily from one to the next; there are no clear transitions, and yet the sequences are compelling since an understood narrative line follows the course of events as they move inexorably to their known conclusion, the horrors of World War II. The cumulative effect is stunning. Over each entry the future hangs ominously like the "smoke" of the title which comes from a statement by General Franz Halder of Germany who, when imprisoned in Auschwitz near the end of the war, noted the smoke blowing into his cell. "Human smoke" was the name he gave it.

An early quotation from Winston Churchill sets the grim tone that will characterize events to follow. In 1914 Churchill, then first lord of the admiralty, instituted a naval blockade of Germany. "The British blockade," he wrote in *The World Crisis, 1911-1918*, "treated the whole of Germany as if it were a beleaguered fortress, and avowedly sought to starve the whole population—men, women and children, old and young, wounded and sound—into submission." In 1940 there would be another

British naval blockade of Germany, again supported by Churchill for the same purpose. Massive starvation would once more become a weapon of war, inflicting incalculable suffering on the innocent, and not just in Germany. Other countries affected included Belgium, France, Holland, Norway, and Poland. Although the deaths and torments inflicted were indiscriminate, Baker offers no evidence that Churchill might have felt guilt or remorse.

There are two major villains in *Human Smoke*: Adolph Hitler, of course, and, perhaps surprisingly, Churchill. Hitler's murderous commands, his unspeakable atrocities, his desires for domination, are recorded, but his proposals for peace and accommodation with England are also recorded in the book, as though they had some validity. Churchill thought not: he was consistently and resolutely opposed to any peace negotiations with Hitler. Was he right? Baker seems to believe otherwise. He presents without comment the various peace overtures from Hitler as though they deserved serious response. Any reader may feel doubtful, given Hitler's ultimate and unconcealed intentions for domination.

Many readers will find surprising the notion of Churchill as villain. Was he not fighting "the good war"? Baker thinks not. Churchill is portrayed in *Human Smoke* as willfully eager for battle, even delighting in it. One entry quotes Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, who noted in his journal of 1941, "In every conversation [Churchill] ultimately reaches a point where he positively enjoys the war." Churchill is on record as willing, or more than willing, to put his own people at risk in the hopes that devastation of England would bring the United States into the war. Charles De Gaulle, for example, records in his memoirs Churchill's statement in 1940 that "the bombing of Oxford, Coventry, Canterbury, will cause such a wave of indignation in the United States that they'll come into the war!" The prospect of massive attacks on England seems not to have bothered Churchill; if it did, Baker chooses not to mention it. Again, human loss and suffering were regarded as necessary as long as they promised to advance a desired purpose.

Accounts of the massive bombings on both sides recur frequently. Who began them is not entirely clear; what matters is that they continued undiminished, even though they were notoriously inaccurate. Often it was difficult for the pilots to find the cities they were supposed to attack, much less the precise targets. The attacks were relentless. As early as October of 1940 the Royal Air Force released an account of its bombings: Hamburg, 36 times; Bremen, 31 times; Berlin, 15 times, and more. Comparable figures for bombings by Germany are not given, but the devastation in Britain was massive. Violence led to violence, one city after another in a continuing cycle: London/Berlin, Coventry/Hamburg,

Oxford/Munich, on and on, in an apparently ceaseless cycle of murderous retaliation. The intent was to terrify whole populations into submission, and in this respect both sides could claim necessity as justification—"necessity, / The Tyrant's plea," Milton called it in *Paradise Lost* (IV: 393-94). Milton was commenting on Satan's monologue defending his intended "vengeance" on the innocent Adam and Eve. Baker evidently recognizes a figurative Satanic impulse behind the policy of continued terrorism, of violence against the innocent, for which he finds both sides guilty. As W. H. Auden wrote in "September 1, 1939" (the date of the German invasion of Poland),

> I and the public know
> What all schoolchildren learn,
> Those to whom evil is done
> Do evil in return.

On the same date as Auden's poem, President Franklin Roosevelt sent a letter to the leaders of Germany, Poland, Italy, France, and England. He wrote, in part,

> The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population . . . which has resulted in the maiming and in the death of thousands of defenseless men, women, and children, has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.

Roosevelt called for the cessation of such bombardment. England and France agreed to the proposal and promised "to conduct hostilities with a firm desire to spare the civilian population," and Hitler also agreed, on condition that the enemy followed the same rules. A lull in the bombings followed, allowing the combatants time to build up armaments and defenses. The attacks resumed.

Overwhelmed by the horrors he describes, Baker subtitles his book "*The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization.*" The beginnings of the war, yes, but the end of civilization? World War II was inhumane and destructive on an unprecedented scale, no doubt about that; but widespread savagery is unfortunately a constant theme in the annals of humanity. Baker focuses on the indiscriminate bombings of civilians as a clear sign of moral degeneration, but the slaughter of innocents is timeless. Consider, for example, Joshua's destruction of Jericho, perhaps some 3000 years ago, in which the conquering Israelites "utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword" (Joshua 6:21).

Weapons have of course improved since the devastation of Jericho, becoming ever more efficient, ever more lethal, but human nature seems much the same. Civilization is thus constantly battered and bruised, and yet it struggles on, however precariously poised, offering some measure of hope and redemption.

While Baker appears to present an objective and dispassionate account from cited sources, the nature of his selections and his editorial comments disclose an unmistakable viewpoint which is stated directly in the closing page of the book where the author writes,

> I dedicate this book to the memory of Clarence Pickett [a prominent Quaker] and other American and British pacifists. They've never really gotten their due. They tried to save Jewish refugees, feed Europe, reconcile the United States and Japan, and stop the war from happening. They failed, but they were right.

The humanitarian efforts were impressive and admirable, but *were* they right? The sad fact remains that pacifism must always fail, at least until human nature becomes perfected, simply because its final costs are unacceptable. Gandhi, who was apparently willing to accept them, at least in his public pronouncements, did not conceal his vision of the ultimate consequences. If the Germans and Italians invaded England, he wrote in a 1940 letter to the British people, and "If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them."

To be a pacifist is to be willing to commit yourself, your loved ones, and everyone else to suffering unspeakable atrocities and massive slaughter: a position of the highest principle to its adherents, no doubt, but less noble to its unwilling victims and hardly palatable except for the few saints and martyrs among us. Eventually, and probably sooner rather than later, the realities of human nature and human history will assert themselves. As Machiavelli, the supreme realist, noted in *Il Principe*, *The Prince*, "uno uomo, che voglia fare in tutte le parte professione de buono, conviene ruini infra tanti che non sono buoni": "Anyone who wishes to do good in all ways must inevitably fall victim to those who are not so good." And there the argument rests.

Alfred Hayes. *The Sour Note*. New London, Connecticut: Azul Editions, 2008. Pp. 98, $14.00, pb. (40 Franklin St., Apt. #9, 06320)

The title poem concludes *The Sour Note*, and its final lines plainly tell the reader what has long been apparent:

I play like this because I must, and make my instrument serve
as best so cheap an instrument can
to scrape the listener on his most sensitive nerve—
the sickness of being man.

The author knows himself and his work, no doubt about that. *The Sour Note* is as joyless a book as one might wish, if one wished for such, without redemption, without hope, without possibility of renewal. The poems focus on themes of loss, disappointment, alienation, deception, betrayal, disillusion, despair—well, the drift is apparent. In "The Boy Lost," for example, the lost boy is now the lost adult, "not knowing where to turn / Nor which obscure road / Is the road by which I came and by which I must return."

Equally telling is one of the more striking poems in the book, "The Shrunken Head," which effectively develops an extended metaphor to its dismal conclusions. The speaker visits a taxidermist's shop where he sees a head: "a polynesian [sic] curio, I think, / delicately dried, miniature, a genuine skull, colored like wood." From that image he moves to his own diminishment:

I thought, Oh shrunken too by other arts, by love, affection, work,
I've kept what seems my shape,
and well-intentioned, even kind, a taxidermy's boiled me small,
yes, boiled down passion, hope and hate,
and mounted me, curio that I am, beside a hootless owl and
moveless ape,
delicately dried, the color of wood,
but all reduced. . . .

The poems in *The Sour Note* were first published in *Welcome to the Castle*, 1950. By that year Hayes, who was born in London in 1911, had graduated from the City College of New York and served in the U.S. Army Special Services during World War II. After the war he remained in Italy to work as a screenwriter for Italian films before returning to the United States. He also wrote for American television and published seven novels. Hayes is probably best known today for his novel *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* (1949) and his poem "Joe Hill" ("I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night"), set to music by Earl Robinson in 1936 and recorded by Joan Baez, among others. Hayes died in 1985.

The novelist and scriptwriter are evident in *The Sour Note*. The book is divided into two sections, "The Being a Soldier" and "A Facsimile of Home," which together suggest an ancient narrative theme, departure and return. (The word "facsimile" indicates the disillusion that return was to bring—not to a joyous homecoming, but to a different kind of war: "You are home again among the familiar cannibals / Put on the terrible mask,

and dress"). The departure was no better: "With chinstrap buckled to our chin / We choke a nagging sense of something wrong. . . ." The entry into Naples is an entry into hell: "City of the dead canzoni city of the bitter wine / Abandon hope O you who enter here. . . ."

The poems of *The Sour Note* are governed by a style derived from narrative, rather than lyric, forms. While Hayes can write accomplished lines, he is not a master of poetic craft; his work is generally solid and unpretentious, but seldom astonishing. While there are occasional rhymes, some highly effective, Hayes's main strength is in long loose lines of irregular length, a form suitable to the storyteller he is, a storyteller returning to a past that continues to haunt. Particularly in the first section, the poems are often long, as long as twelve pages, as the author recounts the experience of a soldier in Italy during the war. At its best the narrative style can be compelling, as in these lines spoken by one of the twenty carabinieri of Mussolini, recalling the dictator's execution:

> So: In the back. It was necessary in the back? And then hung,
> mutilated and abused, in the piazza,
> the dogs barking,
> and in the rain turning a little, with the wind slowly swung,
> wearing the last, and most terrible,
> of all his uniforms.

On occasion, however, the lines fall flat and become mere statement. The influence of Hemingway is apparent, sometimes with unfortunate results:

> Saturday night I went into town. They had changed the waitress
> at the Southern Grill so I went to a
> Dance.
> And I had a couple of beers. And I went to a church bazaar and
> I had a couple of beers.

And so it goes. After four beers this reviewer has had enough. Usually, however, Hayes is on firm ground as long as he maintains control.

These narrative poems are sometimes spoken in the first person, sometimes in the person of a literary or historic persona, imagined or otherwise (e.g., an Englishman in the Piazza di Spagna in 1821, Hamlet), sometimes telling of others (e.g., Heine, Flaubert). Many are of singular interest in their creation of character and circumstance. Still, the most memorable poems are the first-person recollections, including "The Boy Lost," "The Shrunken Head," "After All These Years," and "The Sour Note." To be sure, some readers may feel that the poet is overly obsessed with his pains, bleeding a bit much as he falls upon the thorns of life; nevertheless, the poems are for the most part strong portrayals of self-discovery. In a manner suggesting Wordsworth, they juxtapose past and present;

they are merciless in their characterizations of the self and in their revulsion over the cruel gifts of time, which the poet apparently finds unforgivable.

Grandin Conover. *10 YEARS*. New London, Connecticut: Azul Editions, 2008. Pp. 89, $14.00 pb. (40 Franklin St., Apt. #9, 06320)

The title—"*10 YEARS*" on the front cover and title page, "TEN YEARS" on the spine—significantly indicates what is to come. The book is firmly fixed in time: the years are those from 1959 to 1969, a decade that for many began in hope and ended in despair. It also ended in Grandin Conover's suicide in June of 1969.

The critic may resist, but there is no way not to read the end into the beginning. As with Hemingway, Plath, Sexton, and others, one looks for signs along the way. What are the steps that reached such a conclusion? Do these poems mark a trail to oblivion? Again, one wonders how to read the life of the times into the life of the poems. Conover does not make overt political references; his landscape models the interior of the mind. That said, it must be acknowledged that the decade of this book was a time of extraordinary disruption, turmoil, and violence, including assassinations, the war in Vietnam, riots in the streets, challenges to authority, the development of a "counter-culture," and so forth. There was no escaping the tenor of the times.

One more consideration: Despite conflicts about his sexuality (one poem begins, "When I'm old I'm going to beat queers up . . ."), Conover knew what it was to be gay in a time when homosexuality hovered below general awareness like a subject beyond discussion, generally considered, as it still is in some quarters, shameful, sinful, and even criminal. While he achieved early successes in his writing and his career, he nevertheless remained an outsider, alienated from "normal" society and subject to mental illness. He was hospitalized several times for therapy, including electro-shock treatments, and he was frequently in the care of psychiatrists.

With that background in mind, consider the poems. They are generally written in a free verse full of urgency, full of anger and hostility. They withhold nothing. The language is often brutal and startling: words confront the reader in ways that may have less impact than they did some forty years ago, and yet the power is barely diminished. Artistry is beside the point: these are words that *must* be spoken. Conover's intensity is both discomforting and compelling. Violent alienation colors every page:

> When I'm president
> I'll electrocute everyone who is not a

Poet.
And then I'll go into exile seeking
new friends
Who will die for beauty.

This is poetry on the edge, hovering on the border of collapse. At every point it seems near exhaustion, especially as the poems move toward 1969. The poetry tries to maintain control, but the effort is desperate; its failure is everywhere implied. The intensity would appear impossible to sustain; it seems to lead toward its own dissolution.

Consider one of the major poems of the book, "Revolution" (1969). It begins with echoes of Ginsberg's "Howl," published in 1956:

Most of the previous generation
reached 31,
Went to psychiatrists, kept
track of their insights like
Housewives who dust and dust
and wonder where it all
Came from.

The unsupported generalization seems a poor opening until one realizes that Conover is writing about himself, then about 31 years old. The poem then moves into wishful—and murderous—recollection:

They were among the first we killed
after the revolution.
And it felt good to kill them.
I'd do it all again. . . .

The poem is abandoning poetry as it is overwhelmed by compulsive statement. Such is both the strength and the weakness of Conover's poetry. Lacking restraint, he lacks decorum, order, propriety; but he has no pretensions to be other than what he is. The intensity is overwhelming, pressing upon a reader with savage force. The poems are often raw and brutal, politically, personally, and sexually fierce and full of rage. They may be offensive, they may be beyond control, but they will not be denied.

10 YEARS is a reprint. The book was first published, with the title *TEN YEARS*, by the University of Massachusetts Press in 1972. Admittedly, it has not achieved great renown. As Robert Bagg points out in his shrewdly perceptive biographical and critical introduction, Conover's poems were not widely read or reviewed, perhaps "because they were punishing as well as thrilling to read." They make uncomfortable demands on any reader. So what justifies the reprint? One reason stands out: *10 YEARS* provides a poet's perspective on tumultuous times. The perspective is inward, and yet the sense of a deep background cannot

be ignored. One feels the decade in all its angers, hopes, frustrations, disappointments, and tensions. Grandin Conover was *there*; and in language of compelling power he captures the essence of a time that lingers in depths of imagination.

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Lynn C. Miller, *The Fool's Journey: A Romance*. Houston: Winedale Publishing, 2002. Pp. 290, $18 pb.

You might be tempted to dismiss *The Fool's Journey* as a lightweight quick read. Or as a book about the tarot (the cover illustration includes a tarot card). Or as a novel only about academia. But you would be foolish to dismiss it for any reason. *The Fool's Journey* is a great read, and, although its topic is the machinations of an academic setting, you don't have to be in academia to enjoy it. The main character, Fiona Hardison, is a forty-something teacher and scholar at the fictional Austin University in Texas. At the beginning of the book, she has some chapters of a not very inspiring book about Edith Wharton which she can't seem to finish, she's in a nine-year affair with Sigmund Froelich, the married chair of her department, and she's denied promotion, whereupon she resigns. Froelich responds, "Nonsense. I reject your resignation. No one resigns over these matters. It's just politics." Fiona, however, ends the affair and sets off on a journey that leads to more satisfying work. The fun is in how she gets there.

Part of that fun is in recognizing the many layers that make up the story. The most basic is the "romance," Fiona discovering her strengths and what she wants to do. Then there is the story within a story. After her resignation, Fiona writes "Ivory Power," a parody about departmental politics. Its publication by a friend of hers at *The Gazette of Higher Education* drives the plot and her unfinished book in another direction. Another layer is the age-old pattern of the journey, the fool's journey in Miller's parlance but also the hero's journey as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. As Fiona explains to her students:

> The stories we tell in everyday life, like fairy tales, usually involve going from something old—a place, an awareness—and moving toward something new. Many novels and films follow this journey theme as well. It usually works like this: a person, usually fairly innocent, falls into a situation, goes somewhere (either psychologically or literally), faces trials, proves herself or himself, and is transformed. He or she is wiser and more worldly by the end of the journey. We see it in 'Rapunzel' as clearly as Huck Finn. It's the same old story—the hero's journey—with infinite variations. (224)

Another part of the fun of *The Fool's Journey* is the eccentric characters, among them Bettina, Fiona's friend and colleague and archetypal Earth Mother; Kyle Cramer, a student with a fondness for suing faculty and administrators who sues Bettina for sexual harassment; and Blake Burnois, Fiona's friend from graduate school days. Even the minor characters have interesting eccentricities as seen in this anecdote:

They took the stairs from his fourth floor office. "The elevator's been more than usually perverse this week," he said. "I think it's going to go out again. We don't want to be on it when it does." His low voice rose an half-octave as he said with pleasure: "Dennis was trapped for forty minutes last time."

"What did he do?"

"Well, you might know he's claustrophobic. So he said the only way he remained sane was to recite over and over again Marc Anthony's funeral oration for Caesar."

"Good grief. Why that?"

"It's the only thing he could remember in a panic." (67)

A further example of Miller's—and the reader's—fun is the chapter epigraphs; they include selections from the writings of various characters (such as a diary, class lectures), excerpts from children's books, and overheard conversations among other sometimes made-up sources. Here's the epigraph for chapter 16:

> *The King is dead! Long live the King! Are those the twin poles of deception you've lived by? Face it, you're just a cog in a wheel; once you don't serve your function anymore, nobody gives a damn about you. So forget the hero bullshit. You're not the stuff of legend, so what? Buck up. You can still have a productive career. Save yourself—let some other sucker take the heat at the top.*—Richard Lester, pep-talk to Sigmund Froelich in the men's room. (210)

While no knowledge of the tarot deck is required for understanding or enjoying *The Fool's Journey*, the deck and its cards do underpin the structure and movement of the novel. When Fiona is denied promotion, an older woman in her department recommends Daphne Arbor, a very discreet and insightful tarot reader. Each chapter is named for a card from the tarot deck, which also represents the steps of the journey that Fiona and all heroes must make. "The Fool," the first card in a tarot deck and the title of the first chapter, is the zero card representing innocence and beginnings. Chapter and card number nine is "The Hermit" which represents a search for deeper truths, a turning inward. Sure enough, that chapter finds Fiona retreating to the coast and gaining perspective from being alone.

Although this review has emphasized the fun of *The Fool's Journey*, there is also serious social commentary that lies within or perhaps below the surface story. To be denied promotion, as Fiona is, can be a serious setback even for a tenured faculty member. Even if it does not mean losing your job, it does mean that a group of your colleagues has looked at your achievements and found them wanting. And to recognize, as Miller does, the power disparity between students and faculty and the kind of tradeoffs people often make in long-term and insular groups like faculty

committees is to point to the shadow side of the so-called Ivory Tower, not exactly a comforting picture.

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Tom Rea, *Devil's Gate: Owning the Land, Owning the Story*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. Pp. xii + 307. Maps. Illustrations. $26.95 hb.

Had the title *The Middle Ground* not been claimed by Richard White for his seminal work on United States-Native American relations, it easily could stand as the title of Tom Rea's *Devil's Gate: Owning the Land, Owning the Story*. Rea is the author of several previous volumes, including *Bone Wars: The Excavation and Celebrity of Andrew Carnegie's Dinosaur*, winner of the Western Writers of America Spur Award for contemporary nonfiction.

From the onset of this work, two themes consistently appear, making Rea's argument seem nigh impregnable. The first is the concept of the middle ground. As he notes in his introductory comments, "Everything seemed ambiguous" about Wyoming's Sweetwater River (6). He finds a middle ground in Lt. John C. Frémont's ambitions and incompetencies, in historian Francis Parkman's perception of Native Americans and the reality he observed while living amongst the Oglala, in the western emigrant road separating the old life of travelers and the lives to which they aspired, and in the concept of ownership of the land and the meaning it imparts to the stories the land is allowed, or perhaps *made*, to tell.

Besides this middling ambiguity that sits upon the land, the second unmistakable theme to *Devil's Gate* is easily reflected in the old line that to the victor goes the spoils, including the tales of the land upon which the battles were fought. In nearly Turnerian waves, people march across the landscape of the Sweetwater River, each claiming the valley, if only for a brief moment in time, and each imparting his or her own meaning upon the land for that brief moment.

From the time before the arrival of European Americans or even Native Americans, Rea traces the history of the valley from prehistoric times, pausing to discuss glaciers, mammoth animals, the slow development of rivers across the plain, and the erosion denoting their meanderings. That his first chapter should cover such a vast period of time, while other chapters cover only a decade or so, should prove no surprise. As Rea notes: "time, which feels no more constant in its flow than a western river in drought, still alters everything. It changes rocks, climate, birds, and people. It changes memory, and sooner or later it changes historical meaning" (12).

Time flows much more rapidly during the remaining chapters of Rea's work. Native Americans—Shoshone, Arapaho, Oglala, Brule, Cheyenne—traversed the land in pursuit of buffalo herds, while small numbers of Americans explored the landscape and fewer yet traveled

across it, destined for Oregon. With the passage of time, the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie set aside specific territories for the plains tribes. Once again the meaning of the land changed. While tribes had considered the land a communal resource, whites viewed it as a commodity, something that could be "swapped or traded away" (52).

In rapid order came Lt. John C. Frémont to map the land, further commodifying a landscape that soon had hundreds of Americans crossing it on an annual basis headed to Oregon, a land deemed much more valuable than that which they passed through. Following Frémont and the first Oregon-bound travelers came the early merchants, men bent on making their fortunes on the needs of those passing through the valley. With mixed-race families a frequent result, travelers passing through the region added a new chapter to the developing volume on the Sweetwater River.

While further chapters detail the arrival of new and disparate groups to the valley—photographers, surveyors, cattlemen, soldiers, dam-building engineers intent on irrigating the land, and family-oriented ranchers—the key story to this volume belongs to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormons.

In 1856, while pushing handcarts across the Great Plains enroute to Salt Lake City, two companies of migrating Mormons became stranded in the winter snows of the Sweetwater River valley. Rescue teams were sent by Brigham Young to replenish the starving, half-frozen converts, but to little success. Indeed, some 200-250 of the handcart pioneers died among the coves and embankments of the Sweetwater River. Although the precise location of the deaths is not known, in 1992, Mormon Church President Gordon Hinckley traveled to the Sweetwater to dedicate three monuments to those who lost their lives in 1856. Indeed, as a member of the church noted to Rea, the three sites dedicated that day are sacred to the Mormon faith. "It's a lot more than just a place where the people died" (235).

And in an effort to tell their story, the Saints have acquired the sites from the family ranchers who held the land for over a century, emplacing their own story upon the land. A middle ground is, however, still contested with the Mormons standing upon their sacred stories and the Bureau of Land Management, conservationists, the American Civil Liberties Union, and ranchers, among others, at least challenging key points. But as Rea notes from the onset, owning the land is owning the story.

Rea's writing is crisp and engaging, and the text is well illustrated not only with photographs, but also with sublime characters such as Cattle Kate, a probable rustler of livestock; Boneparte Napoleon Earnest, a rancher flooded out by the creation of the Pathfinder Reservoir; Billy

Owen, an overachieving surveyor; and the Suns, a family of ranchers uncertain of their future.

Despite its fine qualities, a potential issue of concern is the undertone of anti-Mormonism that pervades the text. Rea laments that the story of the Sweetwater has "become largely a one-story place" (9) with the former Sun ranch serving as a parking lot to the Mormon's larger story. He complains about Mormons who told the stories of their suffering ancestors so many times that they became "streamlin[ed] and simplif[ied] to such an extent that church members "would feel compelled to return to the Sweetwater and claim the spots where they *believed* the stories began" (80-emphasis added). Proselytizing Mormons also come under his stern gaze (254).

Despite this bothersome issue, Tom Rea's *Devil's Gate* is a must read volume for those interested in the history of the West, the study of memory and of oral tradition. It is also storytelling at its finest, coupled with intelligent argumentation in developing a sense of the land's meaning.

Kimberly K. Porter
University of North Dakota

Editor's Notes

We are happy to publish this isue on Higher Education in North America. To cobble it together we did not assign or even suggest related topics, but as we had hoped we did invite and attract a wide range of pertinent essays and one volunteer poem about a professor. We hope the issue in part or in whole may stimulate progressive actions and reactions.

William Borden, Fiction Editor Emeritus of *North Dakota Quarterly,* has published a new novel, *Dancing with Bears* (Livingston, Alabama: University of West Alabama's Livingston Press, Station 22, Livingston, AL 35470). Pp. 340, $16.95 pb.

"Dancing with Bears is a wonderful mix of ingredients—love story, nature myth, media satire, postmodernist riff on authorship, and sexy screwball comedy. The result is a delicious stew seasoned with playful, lyrical prose, raucous humor, and real wisdom."—Larry Watson, author of *Montana 1948* and *Sundown, Yellow Moon*

"Few writers understand human longing better than William Borden, and here he has gathered a cast unafraid of desire and its fallout. Lyle Gustafson is an absolute original, the bears are as honestly rendered as any in American literature, and everyone else, once in the kitchen or forest or bedroom, refuses to leave quietly. This astonishing novel will make you want to climb aboard a snowmobile and head for the Minnesota woods to join the passionate folks who orbit Lyle's cabin and his life."—John Salter, author of *Alberta Clipper* and *A Trout in the Sea of Cortez*

Sea Changes: Books That Mattered

Just as they provide pleasure and prompt criticism, books have a role in the developmental history of their readers. The impact of a book depends not only on *how* it is read but *when*. Many books fortify or deepen the

beliefs of readers; others prompt adaptive responses—that is, the newly read text is fitted to its reader's fund of knowledge and experience. Encounters with some texts, however, amount to a sea change in the lives of their readers. They produce fundamental reorientations of belief, understanding, and purpose. *North Dakota Quarterly* publishes occasional accounts of "books that mattered," books that produced a sea change in their readers. These personal essays have been about well-known books like Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and lesser known ones such as George Morgan's *The Human Predicament*. As one contributor has proposed, books that matter "liberate the reader from a parochial view of experience . . . and usher their readers into a fuller understanding of self, society, and culture." *NDQ* continues to invite contributions of personal essays on a book or books that mattered.

Explore . . . Endure . . . Evolve . . .

Contributors

Paul T. Bryant has taught at five U.S. universities and held administrative positions at four. His most recent book, *Confessions of an Habitual Administrator: An Academic Survival Manual*, recounts the lessons learned from that experience. He is currently at work on "Old Men," a collection of short stories and sketches on a subject which he also knows from first-hand experience. He has retired from academe and now lives in Arden, North Carolina, a suburb of Asheville.

Gregory Gagnon is Associate Professor of Indian Studies at the University of North Dakota. In addition to frequent reviews in *North Dakota Quarterly*, he has published numerous reviews and review articles in *Choice* magazine, *North Dakota History*, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, and the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*. He co-authored *Native Peoples of the Northern Plains* (2008), and has published articles on tribal colleges, tribal government, and treaties.

Gaynell Gavin is the author of *Intersections* (Main Street Rag, 2005) and was a finalist for the 2003 AWP Award Series in Creative Nonfiction. Her prose and poetry have appeared or are forthcoming in many publications, including *Prairie Schooner*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Legal Studies Forum*, *Quercus Review*, *Best New Poets 2006* (Samovar Press, 2006), *Risk, Courage, and Women* (University of North Texas Press, 2007), and *The Best of the Bellevue Literary Review* (Bellevue Literary Press, 2008). She is a member of the English faculty at Claflin University.

Michael Graham is a graduate of the University of Texas and received his MFA in creative writing from Eastern Washington University. His work has appeared in *Monday Night*, *Cake*, *Knock,* and *Other Voices*.

Donald Gutierrez, Professor Emeritus of English from Western New Mexico University, has published six books of literary criticism and scholarship and well over one hundred literary essays, papers, book

reviews, and memoirs. Since retirement in 1994, much of his work has focused on issues of social justice and human-rights abuses.

Sheryl O'Donnell is Professor and Chair of the Department of English at the University of North Dakota. Her research and teaching interests include 18th-century British culture, feminist theory, and the discourse of agriculture. She lives on a farm in northwestern Minnesota where she tends a flock of natural-colored sheep.

Steinar Opstad has worked as a journalist, editor, and publisher. He has undergraduate degrees in teacher education, social science, and marketing and a Ph.D. in communication technology. He has written several professional books on communication and management. In 1992, he founded the American College of Norway in Moss, Norway.

Carolyn Raphael retired from the English department at Queensborough Community College, CUNY, after more than thirty years of teaching. Her poems have appeared in journals including *Cumberland Poetry Review*, *The Formalist, Pivot*, *Iambs and Trochees*, and *The Raintown Review*. Her chapbook, *Diagrams of Bittersweet*, was published by Somers Rocks Press. Her poetry collection, "The Most Beautiful Room in the World," has been accepted for publication by David Robert Books.

Laurel Reuter is the founding Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art, located on the campus of the University of North Dakota, and with its departments of Art, Music, and Theatre Arts, a prime locus of the fine arts. Its galleries feature arts from the region, the nation, and the world.

Dan Rice is Dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the University of North Dakota and Professor of Educational Leadership. His book, *The Clifford Years: The University of North Dakota, 1971-1992*, chronicles the legacy of the University's legendary President Thomas J. Clifford.

Joan Rudel spends her time writing, teaching, and spoiling her four grandchildren. Her own childhood filled with years inside opera houses with her conductor father has influenced her poetry and essays which are published or forthcoming in, among others, *The Texas Review*, *Porcupine*, *South Carolina Review*, *Poem*, *Eureka*, *Wisconsin Review*, *Riversedge*, *Berkeley Poetry Review*, *Illuminations*, and *MacGuffin*.

Lee Slonimsky's work is most recently in *Atlanta Review*, *Blueline*, *The Classical World*, Carol Goodman's novel *The Night Villa*, *Per Contra*, *Poetry Daily*, *The Raintown Review*, and *32 Poems*. Orchises Press published his sonnet sequence *Pythagoras in Love* in 2007, and its sequel *Logician of the Wind* will appear in 2011. He manages a hedge fund and also conducts a poetry workshop, "Walking with the Sonnet," at the Writer's Voice of the West Side YMCA in Manhattan.

Thomas Van Nortwick is Nathan A. Greenberg Professor of Classics at Oberlin College where he has taught since 1974. He holds a B.A. in History and a Ph.D. in Classics from Stanford University, and an M.A. in Classics from Yale University. He has published scholarly articles on Greek and Latin literature, autobiographical essays, and five books, *Somewhere I Have Never Travelled: The Second Self and the Hero's Journey in Ancient Epic* (Oxford University Press, 1992), *Compromising Traditions: The Personal Voice in Classical Scholarship* (Routledge, 1997, with Judith Hallett), *Oedipus: The Meaning of a Masculine Life* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), *Imagining Men: Ideals of Masculinity in Ancient Greek Culture* (Praeger, 2008), and *The Unknown Odysseus: Alternate Worlds in Homer's Odyssey* (University of Michigan Press, 2009). He was awarded the American Philological Association's "Excellence in Teaching Award" in 1993 and "The 2005 Award for Excellence in Teaching" by the Northern Ohio Council on Higher Education. He is a contributing editor of *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Fred Whitehead edited the Thomas McGrath special issue of *North Dakota Quarterly* (Fall 1982), and more recently he has contributed entries to *The New Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (Prometheus) and the *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition* (Greenwood). He is a contributing editor of *North Dakota Quarterly*.

Edward O. Wilson was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1929. He received his B.S. and M.S. in biology from the University of Alabama and, in 1955, his Ph.D. in biology from Harvard where he taught for four decades, receiving both of its college-wide teaching awards. He is University Research Professor Emeritus at Harvard and Honorary Curator in Entomology of the Museum of Comparative Zoology. He is the recipient of more than one hundred international medals and awards, including the National Medal of Science; the International Prize for Biology from Japan; the Catalonia Prize of Spain; the Presidential Medal of Italy; the Crafoord Prize from the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences given in fields of science not covered by the Nobel Prize; and, for his conservation

efforts, the Gold Medal of the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Audubon Medal of the National Audubon Society. He is the author of 25 books, two of which won Pulitzer Prizes, *Human Nature* (1978) and *The Ants* (1990, with Bert Hölldobler). Six of Wilson's books compose two trilogies. The first, *The Insect Societies*, *Sociobiology*, and *On Human Nature* (1971-78) founded sociobiology and evolutionary psychology. The second, *The Diversity of Life*, *The Future of Life*, and *The Creation* (1992-2006) organized the base of modern biodiversity conservation. Wilson has served on the Boards of Directors of The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the American Museum of Natural History, and gives many lectures throughout the world. His most recent books include *Consilience* (1998), which argues for the uniting of the natural sciences with the humanities. In 2003 he conceived the idea of the *Encyclopedia of Life,* which has since come to fruition. Wilson lives in Lexington, Massachusetts, with his wife, Irene.