Dædalus

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Summer 2005

comment	David Greenberg	The new politics of Supreme Court appointments 5
on professions & professionals	Howard Gardner & Lee S. Shulman	The professions in America today 13
	William M. Sullivan	The civic promise of professional education 19
	William Damon, Anne Colby, Kendall Bronk & Thomas Ehrlich	Passion & professionalism in balance 27
	Harvey Goldman	Good work, from Homer to today 36
	Howard Gardner	Compromised work 42
	Lee S. Shulman	Signature pedagogies 52
	Jeanne Nakamura & Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi	The case of undergraduate teaching 60
	Geoffrey Galt Harpham	The case of literary studies 68
poetry	W. S. Merwin	To the present tense 76
fiction	Robert Coover	Grandmother's nose 77
dialogue	Leszek Kolakowski & Danny Postel	on exile, philosophy & the horror of modernity 82
notes	Gustavo Pérez Firmat	on bilingualism & its discontents 89
	Richard Stern	on how the stories changed from 1955 to 2001 93
	Donald P. Green	on evidence-based political science 96

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Rembrandt. ft. 1632

Inside front cover: Detail from Rembrandt's "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp," oil on canvas, 170 x 217 cm. (1632). See William M. Sullivan on *Markets vs. professions: value added?* pages 19 – 26. Photograph © Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

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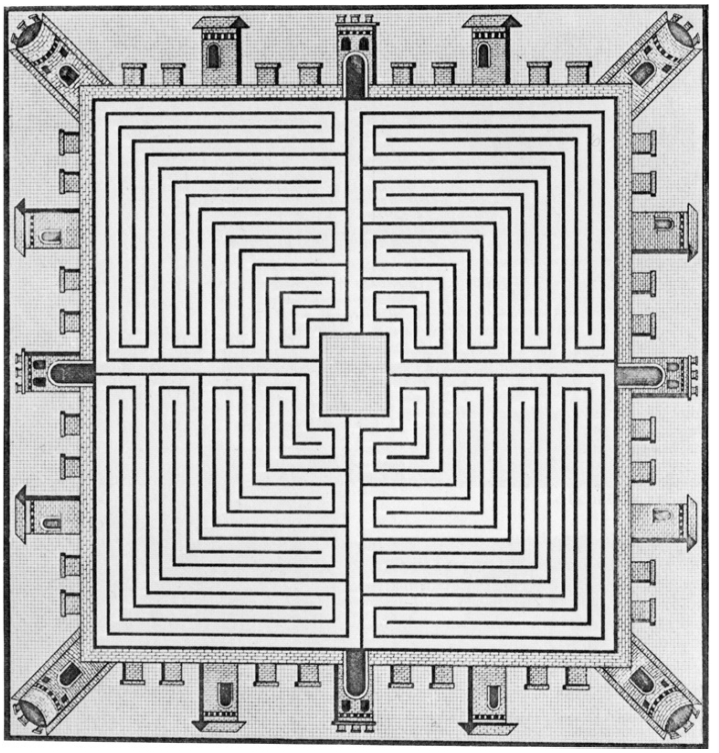

Nineteenth-century depiction of a Roman mosaic labyrinth, now lost, found in Villa di Diomede, Pompeii

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Comment by David Greenberg

The new politics of Supreme Court appointments

In all probability, George Bush will soon fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court, and for all his rhetoric about bipartisanship, he is clearly spoiling for a fight. Not only has Bush pledged to appoint justices in the mold of the Court's most conservative jurists, but at the start of his second term he also renominated several controversial lower court judges whom Democrats had successfully opposed.

Senate Democrats also show no signs of backing down. Their opposition to Bush's appellate court nominees has hardly been as obstructionist as Republicans have claimed, but they did noisily contest several of his most ideologically extreme first-term choices, once resorting to a filibuster.[1] Their rare unity on the issue, coupled with Bush's resolve, all but guarantees a partisan brawl over a future Supreme Court nomination.

Should such a showdown occur, it seems likely that antagonists will staunchly – and implausibly – deny that the nominee's ideology is at issue. Despite the patently ideological nature of so many recent judicial appointment fights, the participants now routinely profess to be assessing the nominees solely on their professional merits. This phony premise goes largely unchallenged in the news media – seemingly in an effort to uphold an unwritten rule that nomination fights shouldn't be waged on ideological grounds, lest the judiciary, the branch of government that's supposed to stand above the fray of partisan politics, be politicized.

A fictive discourse of appointments has thus emerged: a nominee's advocates make his case in the ideologically neutral language of merit, as if the candidate's views had no bearing on his selection, while critics find extrapolitical reasons in which to root their objections – a reputed character flaw, the performance of some unsavory act way back when, or some alleged lack of credentials. These rhetorical sleights on both sides have solidified the fiction that ideological differences aren't the issue.

Yet for all the attention paid to recent nominations, little effort has been made to explain, historically, how this peculiar condition came to pass. In fact, at least five trends converged in the late twentieth century to forge the current dynamic: the expansion of presidential power and the resulting desire to restrain it; the growing frequency of divided gov-

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1 During Bill Clinton's presidency, the parties' roles were reversed. Republicans regularly held up or fought liberal appellate court nominations. Clinton avoided Supreme Court nomination fights mainly because he vetted his candidates beforehand in the news media and privately with Republican leaders such as Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch. See Orrin Hatch, *Square Peg: Confessions of a Citizen Senator* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 180.

ernment; the increased cultural cachet of professional experts; the rise of identity politics in a more pluralistic political sphere; and the culture of scandal that pervaded Washington after Watergate. Together, these trends created the situation in which politicians fight vigorously over high court appointments even as they deny ideology any rhetorical place in the debate.

The distinctiveness of the current moment stands in sharp relief next to earlier periods in American politics, when different norms obtained. Traditionally, the Senate was assumed to have a strong say in Court appointments. The Constitution gives the president the power to nominate justices only with the "advice and consent" of the Senate, placing no clear-cut bounds on that advice and consent. In its first century, the Senate was deeply involved in the appointment of judges and justices. Then as now, senators often objected to nominees for political reasons – between 1794 and 1894, twenty-two of eighty-one nominees failed to make it onto the high court – though unlike today, they didn't hesitate to say so.[2]

That regular combat surrounding Court appointments has been forgotten because a markedly different pattern of political behavior crystallized in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century. Despite controversy over a few appointments during this time (notably Woodrow Wilson's selection of Louis D. Brandeis in 1916 and Franklin D. Roosevelt's choice of Hugo Black in 1937), between 1894 and 1968 only one high court candidate failed to gain Senate approval: Herbert Hoover's nominee John J. Parker of North Carolina, whose candidacy foundered on his antilabor rulings as an appellate judge and on racist remarks he had made while running for governor of his home state a decade earlier. This seventy-four-year period coincided with an era of unparalleled growth in presidential power that augmented the mystique of the executive branch and muted congressional resistance to judicial appointments. In recent decades, by contrast, the Senate has again become assertive in its treatment of Supreme Court nominations.

To understand this resurrection of serious, vibrant senatorial debate – and to appreciate the ironies of the present moment – it is useful to recall the events of 1968, when the Senate's long era of deference to presidential wishes came to a dramatic end. In 1968, the South's discontent with the liberalism of Lyndon Johnson and the Warren Court boiled over when Johnson sought to elevate his old friend Abe Fortas from associate justice to chief. Fortas's nomination – and not, as later commentators have suggested, that of Robert Bork in 1987 – ushered in the new era of contention.

It's frequently remembered that Fortas was forced off the bench in 1969 for his shady financial dealings. That memory, though accurate, obscures a battle a year earlier over his nomination to be chief justice. When on June 13, 1968, Earl Warren announced his intention to resign from the bench, Johnson chose Fortas almost immediately as Warren's succes-

2 The tally is based on Henry J. Abraham, *Justices, Presidents, and Senators: A History of the U.S. Supreme Court Appointments from Washington to Clinton* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), which is indispensable to any discussion of the history of Supreme Court appointments. A persuasive and influential argument that ideology played a role in confirmation battles is Laurence H. Tribe, *God Save this Honorable Court: How the Choice of Supreme Court Justices Shapes Our History* (New York: Random House, 1985). Tribe, however, does not write historically, instead furnishing examples from disparate eras to support his points.

sor. A distinguished lawyer and a liberal associate justice since 1965, Fortas also served as a close adviser to LBJ on all manner of politics and policies.[3]

But Johnson, having declared he wouldn't seek reelection, was a lame duck. Senate Republicans expected that their party's candidate, Richard Nixon, would win that November's presidential election, and Minority Leader Everett Dirksen ultimately joined forces with Georgia's Richard Russell, the leader of the Southern Democrats, to block Fortas's elevation. (Several Southerners waited until Nixon secured the Republican nomination before stating their hostility to Fortas.) But whereas a few years earlier, in 1959, Southerners had explicitly opposed the appointment of Potter Stewart because of Stewart's support for black civil rights, the reasons many senators gave for opposing Fortas weren't baldly ideological. Rather, they tried, if sometimes perfunctorily, to hide their political motives behind talk of ethics and merit.

Fortas, it emerged, had accepted fifteen thousand dollars to lead a university seminar, and his critics inflated this petty offense into a disqualifying crime. They also made much of the counsel Fortas gave to Johnson, although the practice of justices advising presidents was a long-standing, if waning, tradition.[4] The real bone of contention, everyone knew, was the liberal orientation of the Warren Court on subjects from racial integration to school prayer to the rights of the accused. Indeed, so controversial had the Court become that in 1964 its makeup loomed as a major issue in a presidential campaign for the first time since just after Franklin Roosevelt's failed 1937 Court-packing plan. In 1964, both Barry Goldwater and George Wallace railed against the Court's activism, and in 1968, Nixon followed suit.[5] Nominated at this ill-starred moment, Fortas became the lightning rod for pent-up rage toward the Warren Court's expansive rulings. Strom Thurmond denounced him for defending rapists, criticizing the decision *Mallory v. United States* (1957), which let a confessed rapist go free because police kept him in custody too long before his arraignment – and which also happened to have been decided before Fortas joined the bench. Thurmond also set up a film projector to show to interested lawmakers and reporters the pornographic movies that Fortas had supposedly deemed to be legal under the First Amendment.

Fortas won the Judiciary Committee's recommendation, but a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats carried the fight to the Senate floor. On September 25, these senators began a filibuster, during which they beat back a cloture motion. Acknowledging a rare defeat, Johnson, the erstwhile master of the Senate, withdrew the nomination. As a consequence, he also had to withdraw a second nomination, that of Homer Thornberry, a Texas judge (and another friend) whom he had picked to replace Fortas as associate justice. Not since John Parker's discomfiture in 1930 had a president failed to appoint his man; Johnson, in the space of a few days, failed twice.

3 On the Fortas nomination, see Laura Kalman, *Abe Fortas: A Biography* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990); and John Massaro, *Supremely Political: The Role of Ideology and Presidential Management in Unsuccessful Supreme Court Nominations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 32 – 77.

4 Fortas's plight may have helped make such relationships less acceptable.

5 William G. Ross, "The Role of Judicial Issues in Presidential Campaigns," *Santa Clara Law Review* 42 (2002): 391 – 482.

The Fortas debacle was a watershed. Not only did it mark the first defeat for a president in thirty-eight years, but it also certified a new willingness on the Senate's part to challenge presidential prerogative. This assertiveness was echoed in other challenges to political (particularly presidential) authority during this period – from the antiwar protests that brazenly derided government leaders to the new viciousness in satire, from the string of assassinations to the unprecedented back-to-back resignations of a vice president and president. Various segments of society felt an urgent need to restrain the imperial presidency, and nominations to the Court offered an occasion for senators to do so.

In the following years, senators began to boldly oppose presidential appointments. Yet the arguments used to defeat two of Nixon's high court nominees – Clement Haynsworth in 1969 and G. Harrold Carswell in 1970 – also confirmed the reluctance of critics to ground their opposition in plainly political terms. The search for more salable rationales for striking down nominees, introduced with the opposition to Fortas, took root with the fights against Haynsworth and Carswell. A comparison of votes on the nominations of Fortas and Haynsworth (who as an appellate judge had twice failed to recuse himself in cases involving companies in which he owned stock) proved what seems intuitively obvious: most senators' invocations of ethical concerns were, if not wholly insincere, highly expedient. Fortas's opponents, ostensibly offended in the summer of 1968 by his honoraria, supported Haynsworth the next year despite his ethics violations – their purported high moral standards conveniently vanishing. Conversely, Fortas supporters, who overlooked his infractions in 1968, waxed indignant about Haynsworth's misdeeds and voted against the Nixon nominee. Of the seventy-eight senators who voted in both cases, only eight followed a consistent pattern of support or opposition. Ethics, in short, was typically offered as the reason for a no vote, but ideology predicted how the votes went.[6] Here, then, was the real beginning of the fictional discourse that would thereafter surround nomination fights.

This reluctance to invoke ideology was not, of course, entirely new. Politicians have always avoided needlessly antagonizing one ideological faction or another, and taking the high road of endorsing a well-qualified nominee despite some differences can even give a senator an aura of statesmanship. But that truism begs the question of why an aura of nobility first came to grace politicians who appear to be above partisanship.

One answer lies in the century-long rise in respect for expertise. Progressive Era reformers helped establish professional authority as a basis for making judgments about governance, in matters of jurisprudence as elsewhere. By 1945, the American Bar Association (ABA) had founded the Standing Committee on Federal Judiciary to help choose nominees to the lower court,[7] and the committee's role was seen as a natural extension of the Progressive vision of government by experts. Dwight Eisenhower augmented the ABA's importance, telling Attorney General Herbert Brownell that he would not appoint anyone who didn't earn the body's approval. Starting in 1956, the attorney general's letter to

6 Massaro, *Supremely Political*, 1 – 24.

7 Abraham, *Justices, Presidents, and Senators*, 23; Sheldon Goldman, *Picking Federal Judges: Lower Court Selection from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 86.

the president recommending a nominee began to include that candidate's ABA rating.[8]

But the sword of expertise cut both ways. In time, senators found that impugning a candidate's fitness for the bench could substitute for criticism of his ideology. Carswell, for example, was widely derided as mediocre. To this line of attack, his defenders struggled to reply. ("So what if he is mediocre?" Nebraska Senator Roman Hruska said of Carswell, to much laughter. "There are a lot of mediocre judges and people and lawyers. They are entitled to a little representation, aren't they?") After the Senate rejected Carswell, Nixon, who initially had spurned the ABA, believing it to be run by liberals, asked it to consider and approve his nominees before he even nominated them. The depleted president realized that the august body's imprimatur could help him ease future nominations through a truculent Senate.

No one would argue that excellence shouldn't count in selecting justices. Neither, however, should the obvious need for skilled jurists obscure the problems of the fetishization of 'expertise' that took hold after the Carswell affair. For the consensus over the paramountcy of expertise inadvertently helped drive considerations of ideology further underground. A nominee's strong résumé – a long stint as an appellate judge, an appointment at a prestigious law school – could be wielded to intimidate senators from opposing him, even though that opposition might be warranted on other grounds.[9] Talk about qualifications became a largely phony discourse deployed for strategic reasons, not a genuine effort to assess the relative merits of potential justices.

If expertise or merit emerged as one false discourse used to discredit opposition to a nominee, references to his or her identity represented a second. During the years of the new contentiousness in Court appointments, multiculturalism swept across American society. With the proliferation of ethnic, racial, and gender consciousness in the late 1960s and afterward, politicians considered the potential electoral gains in making appointments from key constituencies. Confident that the tide of public opinion had turned against white supremacy, Johnson sought acclaim for naming Thurgood Marshall as the first African American justice. Nixon's deliberations, as his Oval Office tapes reveal, were consumed by questions about how the gender, religion, and ethnicity of prospective nominees would play politically.[10]

Ronald Reagan similarly understood the advantages to be gained from playing identity politics. In his 1980 campaign for president, Reagan polled better among men than women, partly because he opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. In an effort to close the gender gap, Reagan first said he would probably name a woman to the Supreme Court, then all but promised to.[11] Then,

8 Goldman, *Picking Federal Judges*, 115.

9 Many liberals, for example, harbored concerns about Judge Antonin Scalia's views when President Ronald Reagan nominated him to the Supreme Court in 1986 but found it hard to oppose him given his strong résumé. See, for example, Anthony Lewis, "The Court: Rehnquist," *The New York Times*, June 23, 1986, A15.

10 See, for example, John W. Dean, *The Rehnquist Choice: The Untold Story of the Nixon Appointment that Redefined the Supreme Court* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

11 Douglas E. Kneeland, "Reagan Pledges Women on Court; Carter Challenges Foe on Economy," *The New York Times*, October 15, 1980, A1.

in the spring of Reagan's first term, Justice Potter Stewart retired, precisely at a moment when polls were showing that the administration's belligerent El Salvador policy was eroding Reagan's female support. By nominating the conservative Sandra Day O'Connor to replace Stewart, Reagan fused the apparatus of public opinion polling to the selection of high court nominees. "It was done to help us with the woman problem," said Reagan's Chief of Staff James A. Baker, "and to keep a campaign pledge."[12] Similar calculations, of course, lay behind George H. W. Bush's decision to nominate Clarence Thomas to replace Thurgood Marshall in 1991; although most black civil rights leaders opposed the choice, Democrats were still hard put to oppose an African American nominee.[13] This logic also underpins the current administration's inclination to appoint a conservative Hispanic, such as Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, when a vacancy next arises on the Court.[14]

The readiness of Nixon, Reagan, and Bush Senior to pick justices from traditionally excluded groups spoke to the extent to which 'diversity,' in the age of multiculturalism, had come to be seen as a social good with broad public support; even politicians who opposed affirmative action and related policies for redressing racial and gender imbalances engaged unofficially in such practices. But the conservative use of race, gender, and ethnicity in the appointments process also contained a cynical element. Like expertise, identity constituted a sort of immunity talisman with which presidents outfitted nominees whom they feared might otherwise falter. Indeed, by the time of the current Bush administration, one occasionally heard conservatives leveling at liberals the charge of racial or religious discrimination when they opposed right-wing nominees.[15] It seems unlikely that anyone – even those making the charges – took them seriously. But within the boundaries of the new fictive discourse, in which ideology was pushed underground, the ease with which such absurd charges were proffered revealed the confident assessment, even by those historically most opposed to the sharing of power by Protestants, whites, and men, that, to borrow a phrase from the sociologist Nathan Glazer, we are all multiculturalists now.

The lone apparent exception to the emerging rule of euphemistic cynicism in senatorial jousting over Supreme Court nominations was the frankly ideological debate over Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork in 1987 to replace the retiring Lewis F. Powell. But even this

12 Sidney Blumenthal, "Marketing the President," *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1981, 43ff.

13 Initially, those who opposed Thomas, including seven of the eight Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, rested their opposition on what they characterized as a lack of experience – little more than a year as an appellate judge. Eventually, they would seize on allegations that he sexually harassed women who worked for him.

14 See, for example, Elisabeth Bumiller and Neil A. Lewis, "Choice of Gonzales May Blaze a Trail For the High Court," *The New York Times*, November 12, 2004, A1.

15 The charge was used in 2002 in the case of William Pryor, a Catholic nominated for the appellate court, and more recently in the general charge that Democrats oppose "people of faith." See "Washington in Brief," *The Washington Post*, April 11, 2002, A9; Robin Toner, "Washington Talk: Accusation of Bias Angers Democrats," *The New York Times*, July 27, 2003, 18. For a more recent use of the tactic, see David D. Kirkpatrick, "In Telecast, Frist Defends His Efforts to Stop Filibusters," *The New York Times*, April 25, 2005, A5.

apparent exception to the unspoken ban on invoking ideology ultimately served to reinforce it. Bork's liberal critics, after all, chose not to label him 'too conservative'; they depicted him, rather, as a wild-eyed, bushy-bearded zealot holding radical views alien to most Americans. As the Senate Judiciary Committee put it in its report, "Judge Bork's philosophy is outside the mainstream of such great judicial conservatives as Justices Harlan, Frankfurter and Black, as well as such recent conservatives as Justices Stewart, Powell, O'Connor and Chief Justice Burger."[16]

Although the open discussion of Bork's views on abortion, affirmative action, and other issues made the debate, in some undeniable sense, about ideology, the focus on the eccentric aspects of Bork's personality and his mind allowed his opponents to maintain they were not applying narrow litmus tests in rejecting him. "I supported Justices O'Connor and Scalia as well as Chief Justice Rehnquist," said Senator David Pryor of Arkansas. "But the question of Robert Bork is not an issue of a person being conservative or liberal, Republican or Democrat. It is a larger question of temperament and understanding." Bork's critics convinced the public that they were concerned about his character and even something like his sanity – aspects of a nominee that, unlike ideology, everyone agreed merited serious attention in the choice of a justice.

The ideologically charged Bork case, ironically, solidified the taboo on opposing a nomination on ideological grounds. When Douglas Ginsburg, the Reagan administration's next choice to fill Powell's seat, turned out to have smoked marijuana as a law professor, participants in the confirmation fracas retreated from the precipice of invoking ideology that they had approached with Bork, heading back to the safer terrain of 'scandal' and 'character.' But the failure of the successive nominations (the administration withdrew Ginsburg's name once the news of his drug use surfaced) gave rise to a round of public soul-searching and blue-ribbon panels, with various solutions put forward to try to lower the temperature.

The most commonly heard prescription held that the appointments process had to be 'depoliticized.' A post-Bork task force convened by the Twentieth Century Fund, comprising nine leading lawyers, professors, and retired politicians, urged that candidates no longer testify at their own Senate confirmation hearings (a process that began in 1925, well before the current dynamic took hold). If nominees did testify, the task force added, they should not be asked about how they would rule on cases before the Court.[17] Such prescriptions went nowhere. The public, understandably, held to its demand that its representatives vet lifetime appointees to a body increasingly distrusted for its unaccountability, even in the face of dismay at hearings that often seemed staged or circuslike. For presidents or senators to have returned to the dynamic that held sway in the early twentieth century would have been to turn back the tide of history.

More recently, another proposal has come from the other direction. Law professor Randall Kennedy of Harvard, Senator Charles Schumer of New York, and others have called for participants in the confirmation process to admit that ide-

16 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Nomination of Robert H. Bork to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., October 13, 1987, p. 13.

17 Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on Judicial Selection, *Judicial Roulette* (New York: Priority Press Publications, 1988).

ology inevitably plays a role and to bring it out of the shadows. "Many people sneer at the notion of litmus tests for purposes of judicial selection or confirmation – even as they unknowingly conduct such tests themselves," Kennedy wrote early in the current Bush administration. But litmus tests, Kennedy added, were actually commonly accepted ways of sizing up a nominee's views. The real problem, as he saw it, was that the taboo on discussing ideology led to a search for scandal. "A transparent process in which ideological objections to judicial candidates are candidly voiced," he concluded, "is a much-needed antidote to the murky 'politics of personal destruction.'"[18]

Of the two prescriptions, Kennedy's seems more likely to offer a way out of the thicket, for at least it strives toward transparency. But where those favoring depoliticization fail to reckon with half of the current dynamic – the ineradicability of politics – those favoring greater candor neglect the other half: the tenacity of the fictive discourse that has emerged over thirty-five years. Indeed, though it seems counterintuitive, it may well be the very frequency of the nomination fights that has made senators eager to reassure themselves that they're not putting parochial preference above national comity. Every so often, a high-stakes congressional vote, such as on whether to go to war, leads politicians to talk about 'a vote of conscience' – implying that conscience plays little role in ordinary votes. Just so, the chance to oppose or confirm a nominee in language that affirms a dedication to the common good affords politicians a measure of absolution for all those other occasions on which they fail to do precisely that.

– April 26, 2005

18 Randall Kennedy, "The Case for Borking," *The American Prospect*, July 2 – 16, 2001, 26. Schumer, a member of the Judiciary Committee, made a similar argument: "The taboo [on invoking ideology] has led senators who oppose a nominee for ideological reasons to justify their opposition by finding non-ideological factors, like small financial improprieties from long ago. This 'gotcha' politics has warped the confirmation process and harmed the Senate's reputation." From Charles E. Schumer, "Judging by Ideology," *The New York Times*, June 26, 2001, A19.

Howard Gardner & Lee S. Shulman

The professions in America today: crucial but fragile

Whether one sees the professions as a high point of human achievement, or, in George Bernard Shaw's piquant phrase, as a "conspiracy against the laity," there is little question that they have played a dominant role in industrial and postindustrial society since the early twentieth century. It is difficult to envision our era without the physicians, lawyers, and accountants to whom we turn for help at crucial times; or the architects and engineers who shape the environments in which we live; or the journalists and educators to whom we look for information, knowledge, and, on occasion, wisdom.

Some forty years ago, in a *Dædalus* issue devoted entirely to the professions, guest editor Kenneth Lynn declared, "Everywhere in American life, the professions are triumphant." He went on to comment, "Given this dramatic situation, it is truly extraordinary how little we know about the professions."

We appear to know much more about the professions now than we did forty years ago; certainly there is no paucity of scholarly and popular literature on specific professions, if less on the professions in the aggregate. But the professions themselves have not remained frozen over that time. Indeed, they have recently been subjected to a whole new set of pressures, from the growing reach of new technologies to the growing importance of making money.

In recent years, the professions have not always had good press. Worried by evidence of incompetence and dishonesty, the general public seems to have lost its uncritical admiration for the pro-

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fessional. Some in higher education see creeping professionalism as the enemy of liberal learning. Perhaps most dramatically, potent market forces, untempered by forces of equivalent power, have made it increasingly difficult to delineate just how professionals today differ from those nonprofessionals who also have power and resources in the society.

Triumphant on the one hand, under critical scrutiny on the other, the professions stand in need of fresh attention today. In the essays that follow, our authors review the professions in contemporary America – and the very idea of having a vocation or calling. We raise the question of whether the professions will survive in their recognizable form, evolve into quite different entities, or dissolve entirely; and whether the methods that have been developed for educating professionals are adequate to the current intellectual, practical, and ethical demands of these roles.

Generically, professions consist of individuals who are given a certain amount of prestige and autonomy in return for performing for society a set of services in a disinterested way. At midcentury, American sociologists like Bernard Barber, Everett Hughes, Robert Merton, and Talcott Parsons limned the defining characteristics of the professions. Barber, for example, identified four attributes: a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge; a primary orientation to community interest rather than personal interest; a high degree of self-control of behavior through a code of ethics; and a system of monetary and honorary rewards that symbolize achievements of the work itself. In more recent times, important studies of specific professions have been carried out by Andrew Abbot, Howard Becker, Elliot Freidson, Anthony Kronman, and Paul Starr – just to name a few who have approached the professions from a sociological perspective. These authorities have stressed the role of explicit training regimens, formal licensure, and procedures whereby untrained, incompetent, or unethical individuals can be excluded from practice.

In our view, six commonplaces are characteristic of all professions, properly construed: a commitment to serve in the interests of clients in particular and the welfare of society in general; a body of theory or special knowledge with its own principles of growth and reorganization; a specialized set of professional skills, practices, and performances unique to the profession; the developed capacity to render judgments with integrity under conditions of both technical and ethical uncertainty; an organized approach to learning from experience both individually and collectively and, thus, of growing new knowledge from the contexts of practice; and the development of a professional community responsible for the oversight and monitoring of quality in both practice and professional education.

The primary feature of any profession – the commitment to serve responsibly, selflessly, and wisely – sets the terms of the compact between the profession and the society. The centrality of this commitment defines the inherently ethical relationship between the professional and the general society. It also sets up the essential tension between the two poles of professional responsibility: the duty to serve the interests of one's immediate client and the obligation one has to the society at large. The lawyer's dual responsibilities of serving as both an officer of the court and as a zealous advocate for her clients exemplify this tension. Failure to deal responsibly with

this tension frequently creates the conditions that we have termed 'compromised practice.'

Second, every profession lays claim to a theoretical knowledge base – a body of research, conceptions, and traditions that is the normative touchstone for its efforts. Whether that knowledge base is a body of biomedical research and theory, a collection of sacred texts, or a body of laws, regulations, and legal decisions, professions rest much of their authority on knowledge that, to some degree, develops both independently of the practice of the profession and in conjunction with it. For this reason, most of the professions, properly understood, have a place in the academy, the world of higher education. Both during professional education and through the course of one's career, the practicing professional is expected to remain current with the growth and changes in that knowledge base.

Third, the defining characteristic of any profession is its mastery of a domain of practice. Professions are essentially practical performances. It is no accident that we regularly refer to professional 'practitioners' and professional 'practice.' The technical skills of analysis and argument, treatment and ritual, deliberation and diagnosis, action and interaction, are the hallmarks of any profession. We typically identify professions by the very practices in which their members engage. These practices have often developed quite independently of the putative knowledge base and ethical norms of the profession. There is thus a predictable conflict in practice between the norms of the academy and the norms of the professional practice community. How that conflict plays out in defining the standards for competent practice and malpractice, as well as the conditions for approved professional education, is a drama that unfolds regularly in every professional domain.

Fourth, the hallmark of all professions, even beyond the prototypical practices of each, is the ubiquitous condition of uncertainty, novelty, and unpredictability that characterizes professional work. While much of professional practice is routine, the essential challenges of professional work center on the need to make complex judgments and decisions leading to skilled actions under conditions of uncertainty. This means that professional practice is frequently pursued at or beyond the margins of previously learned performances. That circumstance creates two related challenges for professional practice and education: professionals must be trained to operate at the uncertain limits of their previous experience, and must also be prepared to learn from the consequences of their actions to develop new understandings and better routines. They must also develop ways of exchanging those understandings with other professionals so the entire professional community benefits from their insight.

The need for professional judgment and action under conditions of uncertainty gives rise to the fifth commonplace of professions: the continuing need to learn from one's experience – to grow smarter, wiser, and more skilled through the very experience of engaging in professional practice thoughtfully and reflectively. But no single practicing professional can accomplish that end and adequately aggregate and judge the lessons of practice while working in isolation. The conditions of professional practice and professional learning demand the establishment and smooth functioning of professional communities.

The sixth feature is therefore connected to learning to practice as a member of

a professional community, charged with responsibility for establishing and renewing standards for both practice and professional education, for critically reviewing claims for new ideas and techniques and disseminating the worthy ones widely within the community of practice, and for generally overseeing the quality of performances at all stages of the career.

At the present time, few would dispute the claim that physicians, lawyers, architects, accountants, engineers, and clergy are professionals. Most would consider nurses, social workers, and teachers as members of critically important, albeit less prestigious, professions. (The lower prestige of the latter group of practitioners is generally attributed to the status of those whom they serve, and to the fact that their ranks have long been populated primarily by women – a situation that may be changing.) Other practitioners such as politicians, journalists, and foundation program officers have some claim to professional status. We would not consider artists, entertainers, athletes, or businesspersons to be professionals in the usual sense; but it is worth noting that any individual or group may choose to behave as a professional. And we can suggest as well that some groups of workers, like engineers, have improved their standings as professionals, while others, such as accountants in recent years, have undermined the status of their profession.

Whatever the fine points of definition, the professions date from ancient times – the Hippocratic oath, for instance, has been with us for millennia. Aspects of training, expertise, membership, and exclusion were characteristic of the medieval guilds. When universities were created centuries ago in Europe, they were intended primarily as institutions for the preparation of professionals: physicians, theologians and clergy, lawyers, and teachers of the disciplines. It was already clear in the late Middle Ages that preparing young people (and they were unimaginably young!) to 'profess' was a serious challenge, and that a new institution – the university – needed invention to accomplish that end.

Across the centuries, controversies have swirled around the ways the professions organized themselves for practice. Varieties of guilds and professional societies, as well as diverse educational institutions, set standards of quality and licensure. Their purpose has been to ensure quality through controlling access, thus protecting the public from the dangers of incompetent practitioners, and to safeguard the professions against the slings and arrows of outraged clients, political leaders, and organized (as well as disorganized) competitors.

At the start of the twentieth century, various authorities wrote foundational works on the professions. From the sociological perspective, Max Weber emphasized a moral, as well as a technical and pragmatic dimension, across the learned professions. Surveying the medical profession in the United States, educator Abraham Flexner emphasized the critical connections between the medical profession and the recent explosive growth of science; this trend called for the embedding of professional education within the universities. In the United States, the Progressive movement of the era both enhanced the prestige of the professions and conferred upon them an elite status. Professionals were expected to put aside personal motivations and to behave in a selfless and socially responsible way.

At midcentury, as documented in the earlier *Dædalus*, the professions had attained the heights of status, and the best

in each profession were admired as role models. However, admissions policies and licensing predilections largely barred the professions to women and those who lacked a privileged background. The trends of egalitarianism in the 1960s opened up the professions to a much wider pool of talent; at the same time, however, the ideal of the disinterested professional became more elusive, and criticism of the 'elite' professions mounted.

It is worth noting that now, at the very time when professions are being challenged in America and other Western societies, attempts are being made to consolidate them in other parts of the world. In contemporary China, for example, strenuous efforts are underway to establish the law as a realm independent of the state, and to train lawyers to see themselves as officers of an independent judiciary. Controversy swirls in Hong Kong and on the Chinese mainland about the degree to which journalists should defend the state, engage in self-censorship, report in a neutral manner, or serve as a counterweight to official propaganda. It would be ironic if professions were to gain credibility in East Asia even as they are becoming delegitimized in societies where they once thrived.

The professions in America today: crucial but fragile

Roughly a decade ago, reflecting trends in psychology and education, two groups – the Preparation for the Professions Program and the GoodWork Project – embarked on large-scale studies of professional life in America today. The goals of these empirical investigations were to survey a number of American professions and to draw broader conclusions about the status and prospects of professional training and life. Both studies include a comparative dimension and have turned out to be synergistically complementary to one another. Most of the thematic essays in this issue of *Dædalus* grow out of these two research groups' decision to collaborate on a set of papers that draw lessons from the groups' joint efforts.

Led by scholars at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Preparation for the Professions Program has sought to understand the nature of professional training today in a variety of fields, including medicine, law, engineering, teaching, nursing, and the ministry. Scholars at Carnegie are also studying the Ph.D. as a professional degree that prepares individuals for careers in the academic professions of mathematics, history, neuroscience, chemistry, English, and education. Thinking of the Ph.D. as a program of professional preparation sheds entirely new light on the concept of a 'doctor of philosophy.' The work of the Carnegie team looks primarily at the period leading up to professional practice, most of which occurs in formal educational settings. The commonplaces laid out above have emerged during the first phases of the Carnegie study.

Under the direction of scholars at Claremont Graduate University, Harvard University, and Stanford University, the GoodWork Project examines more mature practice – the experiences of both new and veteran professionals as they attempt to cope with changing conditions and powerful market forces. The GoodWork Project has investigated journalism, genetics, theater, law, philanthropy, and higher education, among other fields. As currently conceptualized, good work consists of three facets: excellence in practice of the profession; an enduring concern with the social and ethical implications of one's work; and a feeling on the part of the practitioner that he or she is en-

gaged in work that matters and that feels good.

Much of the impetus of the GoodWork Project came from our realization that unchecked market forces constitute a strong challenge to the professions. When no line remains inviolate save the bottom line, the distinction between professionals and 'mere workers' disappears. It is our observation that the current emphasis on market models and principles, in the absence of significant counterforces of a religious, ideological, or communal sort, constitutes an enormous challenge to all professions. This observation is confirmed by our studies of young workers. While all acknowledge and applaud the features of good work, a significant number of young professionals feel unable to pursue good work at this time. And so they console themselves with the belief that once they have attained monetary success they will be able to pursue it – a prototypical triumph of ends over means.

Taken together, the essays in this collection attest to the continuing importance of the professions in America and elsewhere; to their perennial fragility, particularly in the face of powerful and relatively uncontested forces; and to the need both for excellent and ethical training during formation and for strong educational and institutional support throughout one's professional life. It took centuries for professions to achieve their central role in a complex society; it would take far less time to undermine their legitimacy. As a society, we need to decide whether we value our professions enough to provide sufficient continuing popular and institutional support.

William M. Sullivan

Markets vs. professions: value added?

The prestige of the traditional professions is under siege. Not just their performance but also their claim to distinct expertise, the very core of professional legitimacy, has come under withering fire. Skepticism is particularly leveled at professional claims that the public interest is being served. Lawyers now routinely expect denigration for their professional affiliation, even from other attorneys. Physicians are not only challenged by the proponents of 'alternative medicine,' but face patients armed with all kinds of medical knowledge obtained through the Internet. The prevalence of 'emergency' teaching credentials in school classrooms calls into question the value of professional teacher training. The list goes on.

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Despite the specificity of these claims to the particular circumstances of one or another professional field, these challenges circulate within a larger current of thought that is deeply skeptical of the value of the professional organization of work. The prevalence of the notion that the market is self-regulating and morally self-sufficient has cast doubt on the public value of an individual's lengthy and expensive induction into a professional guild – into its monopoly over esoteric knowledge within an occupational domain, particularly over the recruiting, training, and licensing of personnel.

Yet it is precisely within this context that professional organization, and especially the academic basis of the professional career, matters more than ever. The bruising experience of the 1990s boom-and-bust in the financial markets glaringly revealed just how important professional acumen and integrity are to the viability of the marketplace. Professionalism, it turns out, provides a public value essential to modern societies. The real issue is how to promote and ensure the viability of genuine professionalism amid highly challenging conditions.

The academic institutions in which professionals begin their apprenticeships are key. Professional schools are the single institutional context that pro-

fessionals control, the sole site where the professions' standards of good work set the agenda for learning. Professional schools are not only where advanced practitioners communicate their expert knowledge and judgment to beginners – they are also the place where the professions put their defining values and exemplars on display, and where future practitioners begin to assume, and critically examine, their future identities. That is the underappreciated challenge of professional preparation: it links the interests of educators with the needs of practitioners. How well it is met is in large part determined by how clearly it is understood.

As a kind of thought experiment, imagine eliminating professional organization in the provision of expert services. Suppose that social and individual needs might be met both more efficiently and effectively if 'knowledge workers' could compete for jobs, on the basis of whatever skills and credentials consumers and employers decided were useful, now monopolized by licensed professionals.

This would mean the end of the monopoly of profession-specific schools in which teachers serve as gatekeepers of the field as well as contributors to its knowledge base. If this seems odd in the context of legal counsel or medicine or teaching, consider that it is typical in fields such as journalism and business, which sometimes claim an aura of professionalism; and that in nineteenth-century laissez-faire America this was the state of affairs in health care, engineering, school teaching, religious preaching, and much else.

But perhaps we do not need a thought experiment. The advent of the so-called managed care revolution in health care seems to have set in motion a process that attacks many of the core elements that have marked medicine as a profession. Medicine is now regarded as just one element in the health-care industry. Physicians and other health-care professionals are increasingly described as employees to be subjected to managerial scrutiny and discipline, for the sake of product consistency and economic efficiency. The final beneficiaries of such changes, we are told, will be patients, now redefined as 'consumers.'

For radical critics of the professions, physicians are really just highly specialized service providers who have walled themselves off through an elaborate occupational culture, bolstered by state licensing and education requirements, to monopolize medical knowledge. After all, critics can argue, 'top docs' trade on their positions to dazzle a gullible and often desperate public and collect outrageous fees. What are professional protestations about independent standards, after all, but camouflage for special interests.

The authoritative model lurking in the background here is obviously the ideology of deregulation currently in vogue. In this view, the only moral obligation of any enterprise is to maximize its economic well-being. Once considered extreme and ideological, this viewpoint today claims a more respectable place in public opinion. This powerful trend works to strip away any moral understanding of the relationships between profession and society, or between professional and client, except that of commercial exchange. It denigrates the importance of a specifically professional perspective, deeply tied to educational and regulatory institutions, in providing expert services. The assertion is that advancing rationality, technological and economic, is rendering the traditional claims of professionalism to regulate ex-

pert judgment irrelevant if not anachronistic.

But is the assertion true?

Recent history provides a painful yet potent indirect proof of our collective dependence on professional integrity for the functioning of business, that least sentimental domain of modern society. The "irrational exuberance" of the Roaring Nineties tested the inherent rationality of unregulated markets both in telecommunications and information technology – the heartlands of the 'New Economy' – and on Wall Street.

The long boom of the last decade saw the largest economic expansion in American history, apart from that during World War II. Nearly everyone benefited, not least American business, which became the envy of the world. By 2001, however, the bursting of the overinflated stock market reduced aggregate wealth substantially; in economists' jargon, this was the market 'correcting' itself. The human consequences, however, were heavy, as not only the holdings of investors but also the retirement incomes of millions of workers were in real jeopardy. As part of the fallout, Enron, heralded as a model of the New Economy in the recently deregulated energy industry, collapsed utterly. By 2002, the recently deregulated telecommunications industry had produced the wreckage of WorldCom, the largest bankruptcy in history. Then, as a sad coda, along with Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, and a line of other huge enterprises, went their auditor, Arthur Andersen.

Joseph Stiglitz received the Nobel Prize in 2001 for pioneering economic analyses that show the inadequacy of market self-regulation due to imperfect information. From his experience as head of the Council of Economic Advisors during the early Clinton years, Stiglitz argues that the real culprit in the 1990s boom was an ideological and untested faith that deregulation – not reformed regulation – was the general elixir of economic growth. New financial techniques were being developed in rapid succession, and "investors and regulators alike were having an increasingly difficult time assessing companies' balance sheets."

Under such conditions, accurate information was bound to be difficult to procure, threatening the efficiency of the capital markets. At just this time, Stiglitz points out, when caution would have been the intelligent policy to ensure long-term economic stability, "the special interests, their power augmented by an unwavering faith in markets, remained dominant in policymaking and continued to chant the mantra of deregulation."[1] This was the larger business climate in which the Big Five accounting firms, including Arthur Andersen, found themselves.

Accounting is a highly technical field rooted in mathematical sophistication. To perform audits of publicly traded companies, accountants must be certified, which requires passing stiff examinations. Beyond that, auditing requires considerable finesse within a fast-changing and complex economic environment. Accountants doing public audit work must handle vast amounts of sensitive financial information in a short time. They must also make critical judgments about how to treat data and how to deploy sophisticated mathematical tools. They unavoidably incur risks. The special nature of this expertise is what enabled public accounting firms such as Arthur Andersen to become multibil-

1 Joseph Stiglitz, "The Roaring Nineties," *The Atlantic Monthly*, October 2002, 9 – 10.

lion-dollar enterprises of international scope.

Arthur Andersen's namesake, an accounting professor and dean at Northwestern University's fledgling business school, founded his firm as a start-up in 1912. Andersen encouraged the best of his students to join the firm, which specialized in auditing publicly held companies in the booming financial center of Chicago. From the start, Andersen sought to instill high standards of probity as the hallmark of both the nascent accounting profession and his firm, insisting that those standards would give both enterprises public stature and significance. Throughout its history, the firm prided itself on choosing not only the brightest accounting talent, but also those most evidently committed to a high-minded view of the profession. So seriously was this aim taken that even as a global organization with tens of thousands of professional employees, only partners, not human resource personnel, did the final interviewing and selecting of new hires.

Like the lawyer who is supposed to balance serving a client with the role of being an officer of the court, the public accountant was to serve the particular interests of the client by auditing corporate accounts, while protecting the public interest with sound financial information. By the booming 1990s at firms like Andersen, however, auditing had become the subordinate player to the more lucrative business consulting services. Auditing came to be seen by many consulting partners as simply providing 'annuity clients' that could be sold any number of highly profitable consulting services. Thanks to consulting, Andersen partners could expect not merely a comfortable living in a respected profession at a firm with a good name, but also personal wealth. By the time the consulting business had spun off on its own as Accenture, Andersen was already mired in the accounting fraud of Enron, soon to be joined by that of its other now-notorious clients – WorldCom, Global Crossing, Qwest, and so on. By the time the federal indictment for obstruction of justice (the famous Andersen shredding of documents) came down in 2002, the compromised culture of the firm had left little of its old reputation intact.

As Howard Gardner points out in his essay "Compromised Work," this outcome became inevitable only gradually. The firm's leaders lost sight of the need to revise the difficult and complex balance between maintaining good relations with clients while also keeping their interests at arm's length. Rules can only provide general guidelines in such matters; determining how close is too close a relationship with a client is finally a matter of judgment. Such judgment is at the core of professional expertise, and cannot be developed quickly or without considerable experience. Viable professions nurture the capacity for expert judgment in both professional education and in the apprenticeship provided in work environments.

Throughout the painful aftermath of the accounting scandals, the persistent cry on both Wall Street and Main Street has been: "Where were the auditors?" As economists since Adam Smith have pointed out, economies depend on shared values and moral norms: good faith remains the necessary condition for all contracts, the very foundation of commerce. So when auditors began to act as enablers of corporate fraud, they abandoned their loyalty to the public value of accurate financial knowledge. Once the fraud came to light, the result was a loss of investor faith, precipitating the ruin of a horde of grossly overextended corporate behemoths. This was

a failure of self-regulation. To secure public faith in the markets, the federal government finally acted, imposing much tighter regulations in the form of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. Among other measures, the Act insisted upon splitting most consulting activity from auditing firms. It has also largely eliminated self-regulation from the accounting profession.

Indeed, in the wake of the Andersen disaster, the public mood has shifted away from trust, toward a greater reliance on official regulation. Yet the viability of investor capitalism depends on professional integrity in activities that are essential to the functioning of the system as a whole; because of the very complexity of accounting, in the end there is an unavoidable need for professional good faith. Without this, the arena within which the pursuit of self-interest can produce socially positive results implodes.

The case of accounting in the 1990s points to the public value of professionalism.[2] It also underscores the need for dedication on the part of practitioners to the purposes and principles the profession has been publicly chartered to maintain. The challenge is how to foster that dedication while supporting individual creativity in the performance and delivery of expert services. How, that is, can the practitioners' sense of personal agency be enhanced while also encouraging strong allegiance to the ideals of competent performance that lie at the core of every professional domain?

The answer lies in the institutions where professionals work and, especially, the educational institutions where these practitioners acquire their knowledge and skills. These institutions foster a sense of individual agency by providing a context of social membership within which persons can learn to rise to challenges, accept responsibility, and discover the standards by which each can recognize the point and value of his own efforts. The threat to individual agency comes not from institutions as such – they are necessary to empowered personhood – but from the corruption of institutions. This occurs when the pursuit of means – say, a profitable bottom line in an accounting firm – displaces the ends of the institution to become an end in itself. This is the lesson of the collapse of Arthur Andersen.

Markets vs. professions: value added?

What would be the best way to equip practitioners with the needed intellectual sophistication, practical skills, and strong sense of public responsibility? These three dimensions – the learning of theory, the mastery of practice, the formation of professional identity – are imperatives for the competent practitioner. Perhaps asking how best to impart these can provide a useful second thought experiment.

The kind of preparation we are seeking would have to reckon with the tensions and complexities that beset the effort to educate professionals. From the perspective of the student, professional school offers entry to a world that is likely to be initially alien, perhaps even threatening or hostile. As students experience it, the knowledge and skills that faculty (and later, board or license examiners) expect *is* the profession, for practical purposes. Therefore, it matters a great deal just what is put forward as significant through the medium of requirements, subject matter, and modes of assessment. Together with the forms of pedagogy, these expectations form the wider curriculum.

2 This theme is developed in William M. Sullivan, *Work and Integrity: The Crisis and Promise of Professionalism in America*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004).

Seen from the students' perspective, professional school functions as a kind of apprenticeship to the profession. By teaching and example, the faculty initiate and guide beginning students into the mysteries of their guild. Too often, however, the students glean that the principal requirement of their education is to display some knowledge or deploy some problem-solving skill on demand, without much thought about how that knowledge or skill is supposed to inform professional performance. This is the potential drawback of schooling: the privileging of performance on demand over training for mastery of a domain.

Particularly in the early phases of professional training, performance as a student is the critical bar against which novices are measured, and it is academic professionals who do the measuring. Yet, while professional practice draws upon theoretical knowledge and often contributes to its development, actual practice is wider and deeper than the predominantly cognitive emphasis of academic culture. Historically, professions have relied on apprenticeship to inculcate the broader dimensions of competence and perspective. Accounting, for example, continues to demand practical experience as a requirement for full certification. However, when the professions moved most of their training into the academy a century ago, they introduced into professional preparation a tension between the values of academic training and those of traditional apprenticeship.

A century ago, when the European university model of training professionals through formal academic programs was enjoying great prestige, professions such as law and medicine made university attendance mandatory. Academics whose loyalties resided with their disciplines came to insist that 'pure' theory had to precede any mingling with the contaminating aspects of actual practice, including the substantive – but not 'scientific' – commitments of the professional fields to values and goals. The 1910 Flexner Report on medical education, the most famous and influential model of this viewpoint, decreed two years of "basic sciences" taught in the academic mode as the necessary rite of passage into later clinical training. Other fields have followed that model almost universally.

At the same time, the rise of positivism to ideological ascendancy in the American academy helped legitimate these trends. Positivism held that only scientifically verified claims could count as knowledge. It thereby sharply separated factual, empirically based knowledge from claims about aesthetic, religious, or moral value. Only the former was to be the proper concern of academic disciplines.

The result of the tension between the cognitive focus of the academy and the ethical concerns of the practitioner community has in virtually every field been a division of loyalties. These intellectual separations have, in turn, become embedded in institutional divisions – in what is taught, by whom, and in what kind of setting. This has had the sometimes unintended effect of separating cognitive development from the kind of moral formation that was long the focus of professional apprenticeship organized by practitioners. Moving professional training into the university has sharpened the focus on cognitive skills, with resulting improvements in all fields. Yet it has also created a major tension between the accelerating advance of cognitive knowledge and the need to integrate these advances with the other essential

dimensions in order to form a professional identity that is truly responsible to the interests of the broader public.

From the student's perspective, there are currently three successive apprenticeships required for entry into a profession.

The first, as we have seen, is focused on the cognitive demands of the academy. It weights academic credentials over practical competence, academic success over practical experience, and expert knowledge over professional identity. In order to achieve integrated competence for practice – the goal of our second thought experiment – the preparation we are seeking would have to shift the balance within these pairs.

Such a rebalancing would likely entail several of the classic features of traditional guild training – the basis for the second apprenticeship. In today's context, induction into the craft of the guild should incorporate the modern academic forms of knowledge and assessment. It should also tie this first, academic apprenticeship more closely to the practitioner's concerns. The setting of the first apprenticeship is the school, while the workplace necessarily facilitates the clinical and practical training. Throughout these two interrelated phases, the guilds' unique set of attitudes and perspectives should be held out both as demands and aspirations. Here there is a need for strong cooperation between the academic and practitioner wings of each domain.

The final aim of professional preparation, now as in the past, is the shaping of the future practitioner as a member of a specific community of practice, integrating learned competence with educated conscience. This provides the substance of the third apprenticeship: the formation of the requisite perspective on work and the self that marks a genuine professional. To better achieve the goals of the third apprenticeship, we must rethink the academic curriculum, the introduction to practice skills, and the formation of social responsibility.

Markets vs. professions: value added?

Beyond this point, the guild analogy is inadequate. Today's professions face not only changing domains of knowledge, but also shifting fields of practice within a dynamic and often confusing society. Therefore, the horizons of the professions need to be broad: Practitioners must be able to think critically about their own situation and that of their field in relation to its defining purposes. The institutions of professional education must challenge students to be both experts and citizens. Adequate professional preparation must reconceive the traditional concern with professional ethics in order to train students to judge from the standpoint of social justice and the public welfare. In addition, professional judgment has to be open to the broad perspectives associated with education in the liberal arts. Uniquely, American professional schools have long demanded evidence of competence in liberal arts disciplines either as prerequisites or as collateral studies. From its roots in the Greek and Roman classics, the best liberal learning has urged students to understand the world in order to take a responsible part in it.

The final aim of professional preparation, then, includes both individual and social dimensions. The great promise of the professions has always been that they can ensure the quality of expert services for the common good. At the same time, the professions have also offered individuals the possibility of a form of self-actualization as workers, as citizens, and as persons – and the hope of a career in which one's livelihood is good for others as well as oneself.

William M. Sullivan on professions & professionals

Professional education needs to aim at renewing its commitment to that project. Educators of professionals have a special relationship to their students and their society. Their highest calling – and most exciting pedagogical challenge – is to ensure that the connections are made between the developing minds and hearts of future practitioners. It is making those connections that, above all, fulfills the civic promise of professionalism.

William Damon, Anne Colby, Kendall Bronk & Thomas Ehrlich

Passion & mastery in balance: toward good work in the professions

Whether or not people belong to a true 'profession' as sociologists define the term, they usually consider professionalism to be a quality worth striving for. To call someone a pro implies that the person knows what to do and does it well. Professionals don't act naively, make stupid mistakes, or get easily flustered. Professionals have staying power and can be counted on: they 'go on with the show' no matter how they're feeling. It is this attitude that journalist Alistair Cooke had in mind when he said, "A professional is a person who can do his best at a time when he doesn't particularly feel like it."

Professionalism in any field – medicine, law, sports, butchery, baking, or candlestick making – implies dependable work reflecting a solid mastery of occupational knowledge, standards, and methods. Mastery of this sort matters greatly to clients. Who would go into surgery with a doctor who had not acquired professional skill? Or hire a lawyer with an 'unprofessional' reputation? Or, for that matter, buy from a butcher who didn't know a pork chop from a short rib?

Yet the prestige of professionalism, especially during recent times, has been tarnished by the indifferent, self-serving, and sometimes unethical work of some professionals. No doubt the high-pressure demands of today's professional fields have a lot to do with this. In a world of HMOs, mandated billed-hour

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quotas, and other bottom-line assessment standards, matters of great importance to the lives of clients – a shady spot on a brain scan, an audit notice from the IRS, a child who can't learn in school – may become little more than chores in a professional's daily routine. With a frame of mind that used to be summed up (in a pre-inflation era) as 'another day, another dollar,' professionals may find it hard to maintain a sense of pride in their expertise, let alone a mission-driven enthusiasm for their daily work.

The obverse of professional status is amateurism, connoting passion and enthusiastic engagement.[1] The freely given passion of the amateur is evident in avocations such as sports, where participants labor long and hard to acquire expertise for the game itself, and where blatant commercial incentives are seen as contaminating the original spirit of the game. The move from amateur to professional status suggests a loss of innocence and authenticity, heightening the contrast between the two. One field in which the contrast is particularly sharp is the occupation long known as the world's oldest profession – and there are many more conventional endeavors that also prize the passionate naiveté of the amateur while distrusting the chilly indifference of the professional. Some endeavors have such a strong aversion to professionalism that they have not been able to agree upon the shared standards, credentialing requirements, or best practices to recommend to novices wishing to enter the field.[2]

1 By 'passion,' we mean heartfelt engagement, possibly but not necessarily of a joyful kind. Indeed, our use of the term encompasses both pleasant and unpleasant sorts of enthusiasms.

2 Philanthropy and the clergy are two such fields that we have examined in our studies.

Can the purposeful passion of the amateur be combined with the expertise and reliability of the professional? An integration of passion and professionalism is notoriously difficult to sustain in the course of a working life. For one thing, professional success often sows the seeds of passion's destruction through many little compromises that help keep the job manageable: a doctor learns how to limit time with patients to deal with an increasing workload; a lawyer learns how to play the court system like a game rather than as a mission of justice and rights; a teacher discovers that getting by with lower expectations is just fine with most students.

In the other direction, passion can sow the seeds of professional destruction: an overzealous prosecutor plants evidence on a suspect; a scientist, fervently wishing to convince people to stop smoking, exaggerates data on the risks of second-hand smoke. Too much caring can cloud professional judgment. There are good reasons why surgeons refuse to operate on loved ones.

All professionals must learn a formidable array of skills, habits, and understandings to master their fields. But beyond this, to accomplish good work consistently, they must acquire a special orientation, a commitment to use their mastery to fulfill a mission that goes beyond the self. It is the pursuit of a mission that inspires passion. This does not mean that pursuing a mission is always pleasurable: we do not agree with the pop psychology view that equates meaningful work with fun. Indeed, the etymological root of 'passion' is *passe* – or 'to suffer.' We are aware that pursuing a noble mission is often painful. Yet it is satisfying in a way that routinized, fill-the-hours work is not. Good work is always mindful of its mission; and passion, whether painful or pleasurable,

both energizes the mission and provides an enduring emotional reward that goes beyond pleasure or pain.

But passion must be kept in check when it threatens to do inadvertent harm; it must, in fact, be regulated by the knowledge that mastery brings. Balancing passion and mastery requires that each be fully developed and that the two operate simultaneously. British psychiatrist Anthony Storr referred to this integration when he commented, "The professional must learn to be moved and touched emotionally, yet at the same time stand back objectively. I've seen a lot of damage done by tea and sympathy."

Keeping a sense of mission alive while not letting it get out of hand is possible only for those who really believe in the mission and have enough self-perspective to remain wary of dangers such as arrogance, megalomania, misguided beliefs, and a host of other distorted or mistaken judgments that anyone can have from time to time. Fulfilling a profession's mission at a high level of excellence requires not only analytic distance and freedom from personal bias, but also passionate engagement, personal commitment, and human concern. And these qualities must not merely coexist; they must be kept in some kind of integrated balance.

Achieving this kind of balance is a challenge under the best of circumstances; in times of stress, it becomes a test of character. If nothing else, the beginning of our new millennium has been a time of great stress. In addition to the cataclysmic events surrounding September 11 and the interminable war on terrorism they spawned, there has been a hardening of expectations and a coarsening of social relationships due to economic pressures of a sort that professionals of previous generations rarely experienced. In such a climate, the public mission of work can be obscured by excessive attention to the short-term signals of the market. In research interviews with professionals, we have observed widespread anguish about this consequence, even among those who generally applaud the role of market forces. When speaking about publishing, for example, Irving Kristol said that when he was starting out, the producers of newspapers and books "were satisfied with a modest return . . . so long as they got enough to pay their salary and cover all their expenses, with a little extra for development. So it was 9 or 10 percent on your investment, not so bad." Now media companies routinely expect profit margins exceeding 20 percent, and they press eagerly to get to 30 percent if they can. "And that," said Kristol, "has been an awful development."

For the professional who enters a field with a different goal in mind – say, a journalist intent on covering civic affairs in-depth rather than producing sensationalistic stories, or a doctor intent on caring for patients rather than maximizing an HMO's profits – this increased emphasis on market priorities can throw the sense of mission into doubt. The nagging question becomes, "Does the purpose of my work still bear any resemblance to what I wanted to accomplish when I first chose my career?" If the answer is no, sustaining the original passion for the work may quickly become a lost cause. The problem can be even more severe for younger workers, whose public mission may be grounded in ideals they have only read about or seen on television.

Market forces always will be part of the landscape of work, and more often than not they exert a beneficial influence, providing accountability and infor-

mation about the real value of the services that are being offered. But market operations vary enormously across time and place, and, like any social or economic force, can do harm when they gain excessive influence. Professionals in many fields today – particularly in medicine, law, and education – perceive that the demands of the market have escalated. There is no question that those who have lived and worked through this change feel pressures for which they are not prepared.

Professionals have always had to balance multiple goals, but in times of severe market pressure, the stakes are especially high. If people believe their economic survival is threatened, they may conclude that success in their profession means ignoring the public mission and focusing on business transactions alone. If they believe it has become impossible to accomplish the public mission within the profession's contemporary framework, they may give up on the enterprise entirely. Choices of either kind harm the public interest, the profession, and the worker.

How can a person master the demands of the field, even as it becomes increasingly market oriented, while retaining a love for the work and a passion for the mission to which the work is dedicated? We take this as a central problem for professionals in our time.

The pressures of many of today's workplaces create conditions under which it is difficult for individuals to pursue non-economic professional values. And since these conditions show no sign of improving – indeed, they may well continue to get worse – we need to strengthen individuals' ability to do good work under less than hospitable conditions. Education is the only realistic way of accomplishing this.

To be both masterful and mission-driven, students need to learn how to be disinterested without being detached. Finding the right equilibrium between analytic distance and human connection is a tension that appears in some form in all professions. Professional schools also must find ways to balance the intellectual rigors of the domain with its fundamental purposes, which serve for many students as the inspiration for entering the profession. This is another essential tension that is not easily resolved: professional education can err on either side of the balance between intellectual rigor and connection with the underlying social purpose of the profession. It takes years of learning for students to develop and integrate these capabilities successfully, and the most effective tools for this learning are not obvious or well elaborated in professional education at this time – nor is most undergraduate education attuned to this key task.

In what follows, we examine this task with reference to two disparate fields: law and journalism. Law is a formal profession in that it requires certification through degrees and licenses; journalism is an informal one in that it has no credentialing requirements. Three-fourths of working journalists have never attended journalism school, but instead learned on the job by apprenticing to experienced reporters and editors. These two cases illustrate the need for educational shifts within both professional schools and in-service settings.

Many commentators from within the legal profession have pointed in recent years to widespread declines in public esteem and to dramatic increases in attorneys' dissatisfaction with their work. According to many observers, the 'crisis of professionalism' can be seen in a decline of civility and an increase in adver-

sarialism; a decline in the role of the counselor and in lawyers' competence, including ethical competence; a loss of calling or sense of purpose among lawyers; and a new sense of the law as a business, subject to greater competitive economic pressures and answerable only to the bottom line.

Survey data show that most lawyers would choose another career if they had the decision to make again, and three-quarters would not want their children to become lawyers. In addition, attorneys suffer from depression, alcoholism, and drug addiction at significantly higher rates than the general public. Of course there are many reasons for lawyers' dissatisfaction with their work, but lack of a sense of meaning is one central cause. Only one-fifth of attorneys report that their careers have borne out their hope of contributing to the social good.[3]

Although law schools are surely not the primary cause of this malaise, at this point they seem to contribute more to the problem than to its solution. We have said that professional education can err on either side of the balance between an intellectually rigorous initiation into the discipline and a connection with the fundamental purposes of the domain – in this case, the pursuit of justice. There is no doubt about which side of this balance takes precedence in law schools. Law schools excel in producing intellectual mastery – teaching the special brand of analytic thinking, close reading, and careful use of language that is known as 'thinking like a lawyer.' During the famously intense first year of the American law school, students from widely different personal and academic backgrounds, with different knowledge, assumptions, and habits of mind, are taught to master this powerful mode of legal analysis. By the end of the year, the ability to think like a lawyer is deeply engrained, forming a common base for more advanced learning and a central element in the practice of law.

Accomplishing this transformation entails a concentrated focus on the details of particular legal cases disconnected from consideration of the larger purposes of the law. First-year students are repeatedly told to set justice aside, not to let their moral concerns or compassion for the people in the cases they discuss cloud their analyses. This practice does seem to be effective in helping free students from misconceptions about how the law works. But moral concerns are seldom reintroduced in the second and third years of law school, even though by then students have mastered the analytic skills for whose sake these concerns were stripped away. Over and over, students express dismay and confusion about the implications of this dispassionate perspective: "It seems like legal thinking can justify anything." "When I took criminal law, I started to think of it in technical terms and stopped looking at the human side." "Law schools create people who are smart without a purpose."

For many students, the single-minded pursuit of intellectual mastery effectively shuts out mission-driven passion. In law schools' top students, a different kind of passion emerges – the sheer delight of intellectual virtuosity as an end in itself. Since these virtuosos tend to become the next generation of law school faculty, the system reproduces itself; it has remained largely unchanged for more than a hundred years.

It is true that, in order to comply with accreditation guidelines, law schools require all students to take a course in

3 Deborah L. Rhode, *In the Interests of Justice: Reforming the Legal Profession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

legal ethics. Most often this course is structured around legal cases that concern alleged violations of the American Bar Association's ethical code. Students apply their analytic skills to these cases, approaching them the same way they deal with challenging legal cases in torts or contracts. This approach, known as the law of lawyering, is valuable in teaching an area of law that should be of immediate concern to every practicing attorney.

Unfortunately, however, legal ethics courses taught this way inadvertently send some ethically counterproductive messages. When these courses focus exclusively on the law of lawyering, they can convey a sense that attorneys' behavior is bounded only by sanctions such as the threat of malpractice charges, and can give the impression that most practicing lawyers refrain from unethical behavior only when it is in their immediate self-interest to do so. These courses, in essence, teach students what they can and can't get away with. No wonder Stanford Law School professor Deborah Rhode calls these courses "legal ethics without the ethics."[4]

Beyond the law of lawyering, many law school faculty doubt both the feasibility and the legitimacy of educating for ethical development and passion grounded in the mission of law. Based on research in developmental psychology, we know they are wrong about the feasibility of educating for ethical maturity, and we believe they are wrong about its legitimacy. Some faculty at virtually every law school – though admittedly a minority – agree and have begun to develop creative ways to teach with ethics and passion in mind.

Some faculty have adopted the 'pervasive method' of teaching ethics, in which ethical issues specific to particular fields of law are incorporated into substantive courses. Some law schools provide special experiences in the first year that introduce students to the broader context and significance of the law. To address the limitations of legal ethics courses as they are traditionally taught, many law schools offer courses in ethics that go beyond the law of lawyering to a deeper consideration of the complexities of lawyers' roles, the context of meaning for legal work, and the kinds of social capacities lawyers need to be fully competent, including the ability to listen carefully, to work collaboratively, and to question stereotypes and assumptions. In addition to these curricular programs, all law schools offer extracurricular experiences that support a deeper understanding of the contributions law can make to the social good.

A program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill illustrates the kinds of experiences some law schools are developing to help students find an inspiring vision of what it means to be a lawyer. In the UNC Law School Oral History Project, students interview practicing lawyers and judges who represent the highest ideals of the profession – "lawyers and judges who [are] living lives dedicated to a higher purpose, who love what they [are] doing, and who [find] intellectual richness and creativity in lawyers' work." These are lawyers and judges who are "proud of being members of the profession, who [feel] that being a lawyer involves a deep moral commitment, that it is a position not only of prestige but of honor."[5] Through ongoing relationships with the interviewees, students who participate in the Oral History Project have the opportunity to internalize heroic images of profes-

4 Ibid., 200.

5 Walter Bennett, *The Lawyer's Myth: Reviving Ideals in the Legal Profession* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 6.

sionalism, and to draw on these when confronting difficult moral problems.

In his acclaimed book *The Lost Lawyer,* Anthony Kronman argues that the American legal profession "stands in danger of losing its soul."[6] If law schools are to help counter this trend, they will need to adopt programs like the Oral History Project on a larger scale. But unfortunately, this kind of creative education for ethical-social learning is the exception rather than the rule on most campuses. And given the central place of the legal profession in American society, this relative lack of attention to ethical-social learning does a disservice not only to a great but troubled profession, but also to the nation and the world.

What can be done to turn the many available elements into a formative experience that reaches all who enter the practice of law? In our view, what is needed above all is the conviction that shaping professional responsibility and identity is the duty of legal education, along with the will to make this agenda a high priority. If this foundation were in place, creating a more intentional, integrated, and powerful preparation for good work would be within the grasp of law schools within the next five to ten years.

However great a commitment law schools make to this agenda, they cannot entirely insulate students against the harsh realities of inhumane structures and contexts in legal practice. But despite their own sometimes inhumane structures and contexts, law schools do not seem terribly far from being the kinds of institutions that could create committed, visionary individuals that can change those realities.

6 Anthony T. Kronman, *The Lost Lawyer: Failing Ideals of the Legal Profession* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

Passion guided by ethics and balanced by impartiality is as important, and probably as elusive, for journalists as it is for lawyers. Journalists frequently use the same words as lawyers to describe their loss of the ideals that drew them to the field in the first place. And journalists who do maintain their passion face the same risks as lawyers who become overzealous.

In our journalism research some years ago, we interviewed a rising young star who wrote about life in African American communities with a sensitivity and understanding that captivated readers. The reporter's fearless, passionate column won numerous awards and attracted a new urban readership to the paper. There was just one problem with his writing – some of it was fiction. The reporter believed that creative writing could enhance factual reporting in conveying the essence of the narrative. In this conviction, he ignored one of the most basic tenets of his field: truthful, accurate reporting is an absolute standard. We might guess that the reporter had an amateur's passion but not a professional's grasp of the standards and methods necessary for doing good work in the domain. We also might guess that the problem lay more with the training (or, more precisely, the lack of training) that the reporter received as he rose through the ranks than with his own skills and passionate concerns, which were formidable.

In contrast, some seasoned veterans with an expert grasp of journalism's best practices get so frustrated with poor working conditions, low pay, or escalating demands for 'leads that bleed' that they become cynical, apathetic, and burnt-out. Most academic programs for journalists do not provide instruction on how to sustain idealism or make it more sophisticated, robust, and usable

amidst the moral ambiguities and practical complexities of real life. In any case, as we noted at the outset, the majority of practicing journalists never go near journalism schools, except perhaps to give occasional lectures or to teach once they have retired.

In-practice education may offer the best hope of rekindling the flame that brought working journalists to the profession, while also reinforcing the basic tenets of the domain. In-practice education is important for all professions, and especially for those that do not require specialized degrees. One program that attempts to foster both passion and mastery has been developed in collaboration with the Washington-based Committee of Concerned Journalists (CCJ).[7] The program is an interactive workshop centered on three half-day 'modules' chosen from among twelve options by the newsroom's editor. The workshop – whose goals are to reawaken the commitment to the mission of journalism and to help journalists overcome the barriers that prevent a sense of mission from infusing their work – has worked with print, broadcast, and Internet newsrooms. To address the barriers in ways that are consistent with the deepest values of the mission, the workshop also pays close attention to the ethical principles underpinning high-quality journalism. The participants share strategies for bringing together the vigor and passion of the amateur with the methodological knowledge, technical know-how, and sober commitment of the expert.

Given the centrality of journalism's public mission to this educational effort, it is important to begin with an articulation of that mission. To this end, the CCJ conducted twenty-one nationwide public forums over the course of a year. After this extended examination of the character of journalism at the end of the twentieth century, a consensus emerged that "The central purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the accurate and reliable information they need to function in a free society."[8] Journalists widely acknowledge this mission, but it is often obscured by the press of deadlines, limited resources, and competing objectives.

To help reconnect journalists with this mission, workshop participants are asked to reflect on their initial decision to pursue the profession: Why did they choose this work? What interested them about it? What did they hope to accomplish? Responses are invariably enthusiastic and idealistic, reflecting respect for the mission articulated through the CCJ public forums. Participants then talk about how successful they feel they have been in accomplishing their original goals. Responses here tend to be more muted, focusing on barriers to working in ways that unambiguously serve the mission.

The remainder of the workshop addresses issues that are key to responsible journalism, such as achieving a deep understanding of exactly what unbiased reporting is and how it can be accomplished. Discussions of what journalists call independence, for example, focus on the relationships journalists establish with the people they cover. Fulfilling the mission of journalism requires just the right balance between impartiality and involvement. In the political domain, the curriculum presents cases such as Jim Lehrer of PBS, who claims he hasn't

7 William Damon and Kendall Bronk participated in this collaboration. The CCJ is a "consortium of reporters, editors, producers, owners, and academics worried about the future of the [journalism] profession."

8 The CCJ offers this summary of the responses it gathered.

voted in an election since 1964, and Leonard Downie, executive editor of *The Washington Post*, who goes even further, not allowing himself to decide which candidate he favors. Both believe these practices keep them from becoming too emotionally engaged in the issues they cover, protecting them from bias. In contrast, the workshop considers journalists who cover rallies or demonstrations they attend. These contrasting practices provide the stimulus for lively discussions about political journalists' proper relationships with the objects of their reporting.

Another activity that helps participants think through the delicate issue of balancing personal connection and professional detachment asks staffers to share their personal biographies and discuss the ways their backgrounds might have influenced past coverage. Personal experience relevant to the content of a story can be helpful. As one participant remarked, "I think my background as a first-generation American born to immigrants from the West Indies has benefited me when interviewing newcomers to this country. As a reporter for one paper, I wrote several stories about refugees from Kosovo and a Kurdish family that fled Iraq. My own experiences have given me a certain respect for and sensitivity toward other cultures and prevented me from lapsing into stereotypes." However, personal connections with the issues can also threaten responsible coverage, as indicated by another workshop participant: "After a miscarriage and several years of fertility treatments, I was sensitized to stories involving children. As a page 1 editor, I could not bring myself to print a story in the paper about a heinous crime involving the abuse and murder of an infant." Group activities such as this encourage participants to apply lessons to their daily work.

We have talked about two professions, but it is clear that they are not alone in facing challenges to the integration of passion and professionalism. Concerned organizations and individuals from within many professions have described the current moment as a turning point. As William Sullivan points out, professions are at risk of becoming technical services for hire, unmoored from the ethical features that help to make them professions.

New forms of regulation are being devised as one strategy for preventing the harm this can do – but ultimately professions are made up of individuals. If the professions are going to become more hospitable to good work, this will come about through the efforts of inspired and creative individuals. Education both before and after entry into the field can increase the likelihood that such individuals will emerge.

Harvey Goldman

Good work, from Homer to the present

Work has long been understood as an ethical practice within a more comprehensive moral economy. Yet students of the modern professions have often ignored the ethical aspects of work. One can therefore only applaud contemporary reform efforts like the GoodWork Project that attempt to understand the specific moral economy of the professions. Effective projects for the reform of work have generally needed to acknowledge not only professionals' ideologies and practices, but also the social institutions and forces that inform them. Only in this way have reformers been able to determine the genuine nature of the problems that undermine good work.

In modern times especially, the challenge of work goes deeper than the moral formation of single individuals. As Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber well understood, we moderns live in a social climate that increasingly and systematically takes control over the conditions of meaningful and responsible work from those who work – even within the professions. One implication of their theories is clear: unless the social climate is transformed, merely exhorting students in professional schools to 'do good' is not likely to produce truly good work.

Advice on how to do good work has been part of Western culture since at least Hesiod's *Works and Days*. The Greek notion of 'excellence' – *areté* from Ares, the Greek god of war – dates back to Homer and an era when aristocrats, the *aristoi*, or 'best,' assumed that they alone were excellent in the profession that mattered most, that of arms. On the basis of its martial virtue, the Homeric aristocracy justified its superiority to itself and to the common people whose labor sustained its power and wealth.

Aristocratic power and self-conceptions did not go unchallenged, however, as economic growth and technological developments enabled the lower classes to assume an ever-more important role in the waging of war and the defense of society. During struggles over the arbitrariness of aristocratic rule in

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the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., another ethical conception emerged among the Greeks, associated with *diké*, or justice. The new ideal introduced a conception of responsibility that went far beyond the tribal loyalty at issue in Homeric *areté*. *Diké* became a social rallying cry, changing the relations between the traditional ruling classes and those they administered.

Yet, despite the tradition that put justice ahead of all other ethical excellences, Greek conceptions of the ethically good persisted. As an ethical achievement, such goodness remained possible only outside the sphere of ordinary work, that is, possible only for those who did not have to work for a living, but were, rather, nurtured in the sphere of privileged leisure. No idea of excellence or of a higher good attached to other kinds of work could emerge.[1]

In the fifth century, Plato famously took up in a number of his dialogues the question of ethics and the proper role of craftsmen and workers. Plato stressed repeatedly the value of professional expertise for gymnastic instructors, navigators, physicians, and other workers, and it was this model that guided the training of rulers for the city he imagined in the *Republic*. At the same time, in keeping with the spirit of Socrates, who was called by the oracle at Delphi to query his fellow citizens in a search to find a wiser man than himself, Plato cast his philosopher-kings as the first professional elite to justify their rule over others on the basis of their wisdom and moral excellence. Drawn out of the cave of common opinion and toward the light of true knowledge, Plato's philosopher-king is compelled to return to that cave in order to provide his fellow citizens with the expert guidance and wisdom they need. Thus, the philosopher-king's calling links the acquisition of expert knowledge with a moral responsibility to apply this knowledge justly and without regard to personal gain.

1 Claude Mossé, *The Ancient World at Work*, trans. Janet Lloyd (London: Chatto & Windus, 1969).

Good work, from Homer to the present

But the disparagement of most forms of work was not confined to the Greco-Roman world: the Hebrew Bible makes work part of Adam and Eve's punishment for their disobedience of God's restrictions in the Garden. Further, the Hebrews never thought of work as a calling through which excellence or any other high concern could be pursued.

The work that mattered most to the ancient Hebrews was religious observance. Yet interestingly, even though the Hebrews had an established priesthood, a sacred book, complex ritual practices, and, later, a rabbinate, they did not associate most forms of religious work with any sacred call, despite the enormous cultural significance of religious professionals among them. Only the biblical prophets identified such a call – and God's call to them was a narrowly religious mandate to the very specific social and political task of bringing the Hebrew people back to the path marked out by their covenant with Him.

Thus, whether as a product of aristocratic supremacy or philosophical vision, or as a consequence of a particular form of monotheism, ideas of work in the ancient world were subject to social and religious forces that tended to deny any deeper meaning or ethical value to most forms of worldly work.

The early Christian fathers, from Paul to Augustine, inaugurated a change in attitude toward labor in the West, counseling believers to perform their worldly work obediently within the orders that God had established; but the religious

work of Church leaders was conceived as the highest form of work – the only *vocatio*, or calling.

The concept of a calling in anything like its modern sense dates back to the early-sixteenth-century intellectuals of the Renaissance and Reformation, to Ficino, Petrarch, and Erasmus.[2] Erasmus defended the choice of one's own way of life (*genus vitae*) based on one's true nature and abilities, reflecting the humanist belief that society and history were made by human labor. Yet it was a reaction to both the practices of the Church and the ideals of the Renaissance that produced the first recognizably modern approach to thinking about what constitutes truly good work.

The key figure was Martin Luther. He recast each form of worldly work as a task uniquely commanded by God. Luther's conception turned every form of worldly work into a *vocatio*.[3] In Luther's view, God called the individual to pursue a specific line of work, and the believer's obligation was to fulfill that calling, whatever its demands, and to do so in a spirit of obedience to all earthly authorities, as well as to God. What mattered about doing one's work was the faith in God it demonstrated. Indeed, there were two kinds of calling: an 'inner' religious call to salvation and an 'outer' worldly call to pursue a specific vocation. Max Weber thought the linking of these two callings was Luther's greatest innovation – "the valuation of fulfillment of duty within the worldly callings as the highest content that the ethical activity of the self could generally receive."[4]

In many ways, of course, Luther's conception remained traditional – Luther's God was interested in obedience, not in achievement. Nor was there any question of personal autonomy or of personal satisfaction, but rather a feeling of gratification in God's employ.

Later, Calvinism's idea of predestination and the elimination of the traditional Catholic means for dispelling the feeling of sin led believers to seek a sense of certainty about the call to salvation, even though they could do nothing either to win grace or to lose it once it was given. Since success in a calling was thought to be bestowed only on someone who was an agent of godly purposes, the successful individual was entitled to think of himself as being in a state of grace.

Still, by the seventeenth century, discussions of calling in the Protestant West described it more and more in terms of the profit and advantage of individuals, and less and less in terms of God's plan. Increasingly the issue of one's personal calling in the world received more attention than one's general call to salvation. Rapid economic change and growing class conflict in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries further undermined conceptions of work as a sacred calling that entailed a sense of responsibility to the good of society as a whole. It was primarily in learned professions like law and medicine that the concept of work as a special

2 See Richard Douglas, "Talent and Vocation in Humanist and Protestant Thought," in Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold Seigel, eds., *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), 261 – 298.

3 Klara Vontobel, *Das Arbeitsethos des deutschen Protestantismus, von der nachreformatorischen Zeit bus zur Aufklärung* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1946), 4.

4 Max Weber, "Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1920), 69. See also Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, vol. 2, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931), 561 – 569.

kind of ethical calling survived. In most other lines of work, material concerns increasingly displaced the spiritual orientation implicit in treating work as a calling.

An awareness of the potential costs of untrammeled economic growth led Hegel to argue that the ethical narrowness of even the highest forms of work in modern market societies could never be resolved by the market itself; that narrowness could only be overcome by integrating workers within a commonwealth under the rule of law, in order to transcend class divisions and foster an ethics of solidarity.

Marx, of course, rejected the idea that the rule of law could do any such thing. In his earlier writings, he saw labor as the key to the fulfillment of humankind's needs, and argued that putting an end to production based on the exploitation of wage labor would make possible a new meaning for work. In a truly just society, production would be organized by workers themselves and based on need. In this manner, social ideals would give new meaning and gratification to work.

Beyond that, Marx hoped that the eventual expansion of production would eliminate the most burdensome forms of work that had dominated most of humankind throughout its history. This would make possible for all humankind the highest kinds of activities – from sport, to self-fashioning, to art – that had traditionally been undertaken as ends in themselves, and in which only the privileged had historically been able to engage. Contrary perhaps to his earlier idealization of labor, Marx now believed that ultimate human development and gratification were to be found in forms of self-development rather than through any calling as normally understood.

Interestingly, something similar emerged from more conservative intellectuals like Nietzsche. His hopes for society also concerned the activities and forms of self-assertion that only aristocrats had traditionally been able to undertake. But unable to imagine that such self-assertion was possible for anybody besides the elite, Nietzsche opposed socialism and even equality, proposing constraint, if not slavery, for the working masses. Nietzsche's views were partly a reaction against the challenge that the advent of mass education – introduced to accommodate the new demands of the modern economy and state – posed to classical ideals of self-development. For Nietzsche, there could be no resolution of the conflict between traditional education and professional or technical education. Ultimately, the primary difference between Marx's and Nietzsche's conceptions of self-development beyond work concerned whether that undertaking could be pursued by all or only by a small elite.

Good work, from Homer to the present

At the end of the nineteenth century, the French Republican intellectual Émile Durkheim proposed an ethical reform of work that would strengthen the solidarity and sense of social responsibility that market societies tended to undermine. To Durkheim, Marx had been mistaken in his long-term prognosis: work was not condemned to be a meaningless mastery of technical tasks, but held out the hope of fusing individual meaning and social well-being, excellence and ethics. Individuals were ennobled by their callings, as long as they could grasp the structure and imperatives of their roles and of their contribution to the social whole. Durkheim hoped to see technical interdependence strengthened even more through the division of labor, and to see an educational campaign that

would teach individuals about their functions in the larger social whole. In this vision of the future, everyone would become a professional with both excellence and ethics as guiding values.

At the same time, Durkheim argued that specialized vocations required giving up the older hope of self-realization cultivated by liberal education. He argued that "In higher societies, our duty is not to spread our activity over a large surface, but to . . . contract our horizon, choose a definite task and immerse ourselves in it completely, instead of trying to make ourselves a sort of creative masterpiece, quite complete, which contains its worth in itself and not in the services that it renders." But Durkheim also argued that inequalities in society that were the result of the arbitrary factors of birth or wealth, rather than of natural differences and abilities, had to be eliminated if society's rules were to be just, and "for that, it is necessary for the external conditions of competition to be equal."[5]

While Durkheim believed to the end of his life that the competitive system of French education was the best way of carrying out social reform, his call for equality of external conditions flew in the face of the power and interests of traditional elites as well as of the new industrialists. As a result, Durkheim's project for the ethical reform of professions remained unfulfilled. He was forced to recognize that his proposed ethical program would require a level of alignment between professional practitioners and clients that went far beyond the teaching of occupational morality to a professional elite. If the moral reform of work was to succeed, it would have to overcome any inequalities of wealth and power that were the product of an unjust social system.

It is not surprising that the other modern social theorist who proposed a thoroughgoing ethical reform of the professions was Max Weber, inspired as he was by the social significance of the Protestant conception of work as a calling.

Weber believed that without a higher call to an object of service – to an object that could acquire a power analogous to that which Christians associated with God – modern societies would be left without forms of meaningful work that could overcome the potentially corrosive implications of the modern scientific understanding of the world. One reason was that a reformed concept of work as a vocation might enable modern individuals to transcend petty self-interest: "With every task of a calling, he to whom it is assigned has to restrict himself and to exclude what does not belong strictly to the *object*, and most of all, his own love and hate."[6]

For Weber, however, the calling was not only important for defining a selfless relationship to one's work. In the earlier world of classical education, the elite had been able to recognize each other, even in the absence of criteria of birth, through their ethical formation and the ideals they embodied. But in the world of mass professional and technical education, this was no longer the case. Here the only formal credentialing system was rooted in the academic degrees earned in higher education, which by themselves revealed nothing about ethical qualifications, authenticity, or capacity. In this scenario, the visible effects of a calling might serve as a sign by which

5 Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York: Free Press, 1964), 401 – 402, 407.

6 Max Weber, "Der Sinn der 'Wertfreiheit' der soziologischen und ökonomischen Wissenschaften," in Weber, *Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, Germany: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1982), 494.

one could distinguish genuinely 'called' individuals from those who were entirely self-serving.

Good work in this sense was not for Weber merely a matter of birth, technical degrees, position attained, or any other outward sign of status. Only work that grew out of an inward sense of vocation – an express conviction that one answered to a higher calling – could be regarded as truly good. For Weber, the calling became a badge as well as a source of direction and strength.[7]

But was Weber's conception of work as a calling really viable? Elsewhere, Weber rejected the idea that ethical schemes devised by intellectuals had any chance of becoming adopted widely in the absence of numerous preexisting social and other conditions. Would a modern renaissance of the older sense of a 'duty in a calling' be feasible outside an elite university lecture hall?[8] Weber died before he could judge for himself the feeble practical results of his famous 1919 lectures "Science as a Vocation" and "Politics as a Vocation."

In its orientation toward the training of professionals, the contemporary American university recapitulates many of the contradictions that Durkheim and Weber faced at the turn of the century. The question is whether the contradiction at the heart of the social system between economically rewarding and morally responsible work is any more capable of a resolution today than it was then. As long as the goal of the dominant economic actors, as David Landes once put it, is to "privatize profits and socialize costs," then those actors will replicate the contradiction inherent in the current training and credentialing process, wrapped in an ideology of 'liberal education' and self-determination.

Any serious effort to reform the professions must be augmented by extensive social and educational reform. As Robert Bellah and the other authors of *Habits of the Heart* observed twenty years ago, it is hard to imagine how the problem of ensuring good work within the professions can be resolved unless we can increase the number of social stakeholders and enlarge the stakes for professionals as well.

A skeptic might even wonder if the preoccupation with the morality of individual professionals grows, in part, out of a concurrent sense that politics is a hopeless arena for serious social reform, especially the reform of the moral economy of the professions. In the America of George W. Bush, it is increasingly a question of how to cultivate one's own garden. Like the Stoics of the ancient world who tried to live ethically under an empire they were powerless to reform, the contemporary advocates of good work risk resigning themselves to, rather than changing, the economic and social conditions that systematically put ethics into conflict with self-interest. Regrettably, only broad political and cultural efforts can create an environment of trust and enforcement that can protect society, which may be the biggest ethical task we face today.[9]

7 Ernst Gellner, "Trust, Cohesion, and the Social Order," in Diego Gambetta, ed., *Trust: Making and Breaking of Cooperative Relations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988). See also Adam B. Seligman, *The Problem of Trust* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

8 See Harvey Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

9 See Steven Brint and Charles S. Levy, "Professions and Civic Engagement: Trends in Rhetoric and Practice," in Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, eds., *Civic Engagement in American Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1999), 163 – 210.

Howard Gardner

Compromised work

One would like to find an abundance of good workers across the professions: teachers who have mastered their subject matter, present it well, and behave in a civil manner toward students and peers; physicians who are knowledgeable about the latest techniques and medications and who cater to the ill no matter where they are encountered and whether they have resources; lawyers who can argue a case persuasively and who make their services available to those in need, irrespective of their ability to pay. Occasionally the impressive achievements of such individuals are publicly honored; and those concerned about the long-term welfare of the society hope that aspiring teachers, physicians, and lawyers will have ample exposure to such exemplars of good work.

Not surprisingly, the absence of good work commands the attention of scholars, journalists, dramatists, politicians, and ordinary folk. We are, perhaps naturally, perhaps understandably, fascinated to learn about the teacher who fails an exam or seduces a student; the physician who fakes her credentials or operates on the wrong patient; the lawyer who skirts the law or only defends the wealthy. As a friend quipped, Time Warner might sell more copies if it renamed its venerable business publication *Misfortune*.

In the GoodWork Project in which my colleagues and I are involved, we are focusing on those individuals and institutions that aspire toward, and in the happiest case, exemplify, good work. There is much to be learned from careful study of a journalist like Edward R. Murrow, a physician like Albert Schweitzer, a publisher like Katharine Graham, a public servant like John Gardner (no relation). Yet it is important to recognize that many individuals fail to achieve good work, that some do not even strive to be good workers, and that in the absence of compelling role models, future workers stand little chance of becoming good workers themselves. Hence, it is justifiable at times to suspend our focus on good work to see what can be learned from frankly deviant cases.

In what follows, I focus on what we have come to speak of as 'compromised

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work.'[1] We conceptualize this variant as work that is not, strictly speaking, illegal, but whose quality compromises the ethical core of a profession. We do not concern ourselves with individuals who merit the descriptor 'bad workers' – the journalist who steals, the physician who commits assault and battery, the lawyer who murders. Presumably these individuals would engage in such illegal acts irrespective of their professional status, and it is the job of law enforcement officials, and not of professional gatekeepers, to call these miscreants to account. Rather, our concern is with the journalist who makes up stories, the politician whose word has no warrant, the physician who fails to heed the latest medical innovations and thus provides substandard treatment. Each of these individuals may at one time have embraced core values – journalistic integrity, political veracity, medical acumen – but at some point turned his back on the profession. If we can better understand how once good workers begin to compromise their work, we may be able to enhance the ranks of good workers.

It is easiest to spot compromised work in professions that have existed for some time and whose principal values are widely shared. In such domains there should be consensual processes of training, recognized mentors, and established procedures in place for censuring or ostracizing those whose work violates norms of the domain, with disbarment or loss of license as the ultimate sanction. Of the three professions I will treat in this essay, law is closest to the prototype, journalism is furthest (many journalists lack formal training), and accounting is somewhere in between.

1 I thank Jeffrey Epstein for his support of these investigations.

Since our project began (and no doubt long before), the pages of the newspapers have been filled with examples of compromised work; indeed, in preparing this essay I have sometimes been tempted to clip half the stories in the daily newspaper. Here I focus on three cases from recent years that caught both my attention and that of the broader public. The first case involves Jayson Blair, an ambitious reporter for *The New York Times* who was fired after it was discovered he had plagiarized and fabricated stories. The second case centers on Hill and Barlow, a venerable Boston law firm that closed abruptly when its profitable real estate department announced it was leaving the firm. The third case centers on the flagship accounting firm Arthur Andersen that went bankrupt after the Enron scandal of 2001.

In my initial study of compromised work,[2] I chose these cases because they apparently represented three levels of analysis: Jayson Blair as an instance of compromised work by a single, flawed *individual*; Hill and Barlow as an instance of compromised work within a single *institution*; and the Arthur Andersen–Enron debacle as an instance of compromised work throughout a *profession*. My study revealed, however, surprising continuities across these three apparently distinct levels of analysis. In each case, I found I was studying individuals as well as institutions, and, indeed, an entire industry. Also to my surprise, I discovered that institutions held in high regard might be especially vulnerable to the insidious virus of compromised work; I had expected that such institutions harbored righting mechanisms that for some reason had failed to detect the of-

2 I thank Ryan Modri, Paula Marshall, and Deborah Freier for their invaluable research efforts.

fending party. Finally, I expected that at least some instances of compromised work would be isolated and of relatively short duration. A far more complex and, to my mind, more troubling picture emerged – a picture that, moreover, reflects ominous trends in American society.

In 1999, Jayson Blair, a young African American with a flair for writing, became a regular reporter for *The New York Times*. Even before his stint at the *Times*, Blair had been regarded by peers and supervisors with a combination of admiration and suspicion. There was no question that Blair wrote well, had a nose for important stories, was a gifted schmoozer, and had impressed the governing powers at the college and community newspapers where he had worked. At the same time, observers wondered whether he in fact had exercised the due diligence that is expected of a reporter; and indeed, supervisors had detected a highly unusual number of errors in his stories. While he had occasionally been admonished for carelessness, there had been few consequences. In fact, at the *Times*, Executive Editor Howell Raines and Managing Editor Gerald Boyd gave increasingly important assignments to Blair.

When Blair was discovered to have plagiarized a story from the *San Antonio Express-News*, he was immediately forced to resign. Then on May 11, 2003, in an unprecedented bout of self-examination, *The New York Times* devoted over four full pages to documentation of numerous cases of invention, plagiarism, and fraudulent expense and travel reports. Nor did the brouhaha over the Blair affair die down. Six weeks later, editors Raines and Boyd were forced to resign their posts, and the new editorial regime at the *Times* explicitly dissociated itself from the policies and practices of its predecessors.

At first blush, Jayson Blair seemed to be an isolated case – a reporter who refused to play by the rules and who may well have been emotionally disturbed. And in fact, there is ample evidence that Blair was a troubled young man who should have been carefully scrutinized for years. He was so unpopular at his college newspaper that he was relieved of his editorial position. When he was an intern at *The Boston Globe* in 1996 – 1997 and a freelancer there in 1998 – 1999, the sloppiness of his coverage was discussed. Shortly after he began to work full-time at the *Times*, Metropolitan Editor Jonathan Landman sent around a note that said, "We have got to stop Jayson from writing for the *Times*. Right now." Blair soon accumulated a record number of corrections and complaints about his coverage. His behavior aroused dislike and suspicion among many of his contemporaries. But despite ample warning signs, Raines and Boyd took him under their wings; he was praised and offered ever-more important assignments. And, to the shame of the *Times*, the decisive discovery of plagiarism was made not by its own staff but by a reporter for a regional paper.

To be sure, Blair had been a bad egg whose misbehaviors were more flagrant than those of his contemporaries. But at least since publisher Arthur Sulzberger had appointed Raines as managing editor in 2001, a strong set of explicit and implicit signals had been sent to the *Times* staff. Reporters were told they had to increase the "competitive metabolism" of the news coverage. Those who wrote flashy, trendy stories were rewarded with promotions, special privileges, and ample front-page coverage. In contrast, reporters who took a more thoughtful, less sensational approach,

who emphasized the journalistic precept of carefulness, found themselves increasingly marginalized. Nor was this new culture a secret: in a much-discussed portrait of Raines that appeared in *The New Yorker* in June of 2002, the changing milieu at the *Times* was detailed and critiqued.

Had Jayson Blair been a truly isolated case, it is highly likely that the Sulzberger-Raines-Boyd managerial team would have survived intact and perhaps continued its questionably hectic pace and excessively dramatic bent. Once the Blair case broke, however, other heroes and casualties soon emerged. The most flagrant consequence was the abrupt resignation of star reporter Rick Bragg, who was accused of using unacknowledged stringers and of embellishing his lengthy and highly evocative stories. While Raines and Boyd fought to keep their positions, it was probably inevitable that sooner or later they would be squeezed out. The replacement appointment of Bill Keller, an individual widely considered a contrast in temperament and journalistic values, served as a sign that the *Times* was rejecting the go-go atmosphere of the previous few years.

Under Raines and Boyd, the *Times* had been engaged in an example of what I will call 'superficial alignment.' The editors were looking for young reporters who exemplified the pace and coverage they sought; the fact that Blair was African American was a bonus and, by the editors' own admission, caused them to cut him slack. For his part, Blair was keen at discerning what his editors desired; and, as befits an accomplished con man, he knew how to give the impression of good work and to cover his tracks. What both sides avoided in this *pas de deux* was a genuine alignment that honored the tried-and-true mission of journalism. Had Blair been subjected to a mentoring regime of tough love, he might have turned into a genuinely good reporter. And had he somehow slipped through an otherwise well-regulated training and supervision system, it is unlikely that the discovery of his misdeeds would have caused such turmoil in his company and, indeed, in the wider journalistic profession.

During the second week of December of 2002, residents of Boston were astonished to learn that the prestigious law firm Hill and Barlow had closed down the previous weekend. The firm had been in existence for over a century, was esteemed in the community, and comprised in its legal ranks many prominent citizens, including at various times three governors of the Commonwealth. With their deep involvement in the community – exemplified by their defense in the famous Sacco-Vanzetti case of the 1920s – Hill and Barlow partners epitomized what legal scholar Anthony Kronman has called "lawyer statesmen." For outsiders, there was little reason to suspect any significant problems at Hill and Barlow – and none whatsoever to prepare them for its sudden dissolution.

A word about partnerships is in order here. Examination of about twelve hundred interviews in the eight domains considered in the GoodWork Project reveals that only lawyers speak regularly about partnerships. In part a financial arrangement, in part a social network, the partnership serves as the locus for daily activity, the attraction and sharing of clients, and the mechanism for services and payment. The transition from associate to partner is the legal equivalent of the attainment of tenure in the academy; and in many ways, partners behave like members of a faculty. Young lawyers serve as associates until, assuming a good record and available slots, they are

welcomed into the partnership, which is likely to be their home for the remainder of their professional lives. It goes without saying that the health and stability of the partnership is crucial for its constituent members, staff, and clients.

Each partnership has an institutional culture, passed on both explicitly and implicitly from the older partners to the new members of the association. By all reports, the institutional culture of the Hill and Barlow of old stressed intellectual and legal excellence; community service, including the holding of elected or appointed office; and a willingness to earn somewhat less money than competitors, in return for a lifestyle that was more balanced and that went beyond the sheer number and rate of billable hours.[3]

Outsiders' initial reaction to the sudden closure of Hill and Barlow was shock. After all, this was a partnership that had been highly esteemed for decades. To observers and the media, it appeared that overly avaricious lawyers from the real estate division had issued a *fait accompli* to their bewildered colleagues, thereby in one act destroying a distinguished New England law firm. The shock was compounded by the fact that the remaining partners did not even try to reconstitute the firm, but instead interpreted this mass exodus as a sign that the firm could no longer survive.

Closer examination reveals that the problems went back many years, perhaps several decades. Through the middle of the twentieth century, Hill and Barlow did indeed have a deserved reputation as a firm of outstanding lawyer statesmen who not only were leaders in litigation and trusts, but who also stood out for their service to the community. Yet, on my analysis, this sterling reputation turns out to have been a mixed blessing. By the 1970s and 1980s, the situation in law had changed dramatically throughout the land. Whether lamented or not, the era of the lawyer statesman was over. Law firms were becoming much larger and more internationalized; corporate law divisions and the high-metabolism specialty of mergers and acquisitions were growing more rapidly than other spheres; many large corporations built up their own in-house legal teams; and individual lawyers were becoming far more mobile, as opportunities to make very large salaries materialized for those who were willing to jump ship.

None of these trends in itself necessitated a de-professionalization of the law. And indeed, many moderately sized law firms in New England and elsewhere took steps to modulate these trends: they increased in size or developed distinctive niches; they actively sought large corporate clients; and they reconfigured salary schedules to reward those lawyers who brought in the most business. Perhaps most importantly, the more reflective firms realized that law was becoming more of a business: they recruited or trained professional managers; they were sensitive to the clout of specific partners and divisions; they paid close attention to changing patterns of income and expenses; they established governance vehicles whereby the most important members consulted regularly about trends and how best to meet them; they favored frequent, open, frank communications about all matters that materially affected the firm; and they were prepared, when necessary and with regret, to retire or marginalize partners who could not in any demonstrable way contribute to the well-being of the firm.

According to our interviews with former members of Hill and Barlow, the

3 Technically, Hill and Barlow became a corporation in 1992.

firm did not seriously undertake any of these measures. Members continued to take pride in the history of the firm, and many continued to serve the community in various ways. But they did not work any longer as a firm of dedicated partners (epithets such as 'a hotel for lawyers' and 'university-style governance' were used by informants). Costs spiraled, but steps were not taken to increase income commensurately (or to lower costs, for example, by reducing the number of associates or moving to less luxurious quarters). Most damaging, the law firm never was able to create a governance structure that was widely respected by its members and that could meet these various challenges. On my analysis, it was the combination of the inordinately successful real estate group, on the one hand, and the ensemble of dysfunctional governance structures, on the other, that made the firm's closure inevitable.

I do not conclude that the Hill and Barlow partners necessarily compromised their practice of law *per se*. I do believe that both the real estate division, and the remaining partners who failed to deal decisively with the shifting terrain, undermined law as a profession. In acting in their own self-interest, they contributed to the destruction of the accumulated wisdom, public service emphasis, and pluralistic view of legal practice that had once characterized Hill and Barlow. To the extent that law simply becomes a collection of free-agent practitioners, for sale to the highest bidder, or a set of employees of multinational corporations, it will indeed be a diminished profession.

Accounting became a technical rather than back-of-the-envelope practice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the widespread use of double-entry bookkeeping and other financial and business innovations. With the rise of corporations a century ago, and the advent of increasingly complex taxation and investment policies, the role of the independent certified auditor gained steadily in importance. Particularly at times of crisis, such as the stock market collapses during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, the public was reminded of the importance of the accounting professions. Perhaps to his advantage, the auditor was seen as a rather colorless individual who followed technical rules in the manner of the archetypical Dickensian clerk or Weberian bureaucrat.

Within the profession and amongst those with close ties to the profession, there was keen awareness of crucial shifts that began in the 1970s. The wall that had once separated auditors from the firms they were monitoring had begun to crumble. Increasingly, personnel circulated between accounting firms and well-heeled client firms. Accounting firms set up consulting branches that worked with client firms; over time the amount of consulting business often equaled or even surpassed that dedicated to the monitoring of the books. In the go-go financial milieu of the 1980s and 1990s, as documented in our GoodWork Project and many other sources, markets became increasingly dominant in many spheres of life. Indeed, at the end of the 1990s, I made a quip that turned out to be uncannily prophetic: "If markets come to control everything, in the end there will be only one profession – accounting. And that is because only the auditors will be able to tell us whether the books are on the level or have been cooked."

But like most of the public, I was unprepared for the huge accounting scandals that captured the headlines at the

start of the twenty-first century. Led by the renowned firm Arthur Andersen, all the major firms were shown to have abandoned their professional disinterestedness (or 'independence,' as it is referred to in the profession) in flagrant ways. It was no longer unusual for accountants to hold stock in, work for, or consult for the firms they were allegedly monitoring; and for their part, firms went out of their way to provide lucrative work and extra perks for the supposedly independent auditors.

The smoking gun was the relationship between energy giant Enron and the flagship professional services firm of Arthur Andersen. These firms met powerful sanctions: bankruptcy with possible jail terms for those high-level managers whose involvement crossed the line from compromised to frankly bad work. At the time of this writing, other major accounting firms like Ernst and Young and PricewaterhouseCoopers have also had to pay significant penalties; punitive new regulations and legislation have been put into place; and many other business firms – established ones like General Electric and Xerox, newer ones like Tyco, WorldCom, and Global Crossing – have undergone probes or have even dissolved. Meanwhile, the tacit or demonstrable complicity of members of boards of directors has been amply documented, and the domain of accounting as a whole lies very much under suspicion, its standing as a profession open to strong challenge.

The core value of the profession of public accounting is captured in the descriptor 'public.' Accountants receive training, licenses, and status commensurate thereto on the assumption that they will represent the public's interest in their review of the financial practices of individuals or corporations. Should the books appear questionable in any way, it is the duty of the public accountant to raise questions to the responsible individual or corporation, and, if necessary, to refuse to certify that the accounts conform to generally accepted accounting principles.

Whether one thinks of journalism, law, or accounting, it is tempting to posit a golden age – a time when professionals *were* professionals, and the vast majority exemplified the highest values of the domain. But the mixed reputation of lawyers and journalists over the decades reveals the superficiality of such an analysis. And when one examines the history of accounting in the United States in the twentieth century, one also discovers an oscillation between periods when auditors were under suspicion for questionable practices, and periods when corrective measures were installed and the prestige of the profession was restored. Indeed, such a swing of the pendulum can be seen in the history of Arthur Andersen.

At the start of the twentieth century, like other accounting firms, Andersen carried out non-audit services. By the 1960s, it was possible to become an Andersen consultant without having worked as an auditor for the two prior years; and in 1973, a separate consulting arm of the firm had been set up. In the late 1970s, CEO Harvey Kapnick tried unsuccessfully to split the firm into two separate entities and was pressured to resign thereafter. During the 1980s, the consulting arm of the firm became increasingly powerful, and the lines between consulting and auditing blurred. By the late 1980s, the tension between the accounting and consulting arms was so acute that the two parts of the firm were in constant argument and occasionally in court. By 1999, Arthur Andersen had become the slowest growing of the Big Five accounting firms, and in

2000, the consulting arm, Accenture, finally became a wholly independent entity.

As is now well known, Andersen had become the auditor for Enron. Widely touted as a model for a new kind of company for a new millennium, Enron trafficked in the selling of energy (especially gas) and energy futures. In 2000, it was, on paper, the seventh largest firm in the United States, with a book value of 100 billion dollars. In 2001, the Enron bubble burst when it became clear that much of the corporation's alleged size, activity, and profitability was in fact fraudulent, the result of imaginative advertising and improper accounting. And when Arthur Andersen began to shred its Enron documents, the fate of the firm was sealed in the eyes of the media, the general public, and, eventually, the legal system.

Studies of the Andersen-Enron connection reveal that it had been deeply compromised for years. Enron was one of Andersen's largest clients; it paid a total of over fifty million dollars a year to Andersen's auditing, consulting, and tax divisions. Employees shuttled back and forth between the two companies with such ease and frequency that it was sometimes difficult to tell for which they were working; at least eighty former Andersen auditors were working for Enron. The supposed line between the company being audited and the auditors evaluating the books of that company had become so blurred that, in effect, it no longer existed. And yet it has proved difficult to demonstrate sheer illegality. This is both because the nature of Enron's business was so new and so convoluted, and because so much of the role of the auditor/accountant remains an issue of professional judgment rather than of sheer legality or illegality.

In my view, the chief embodiment of compromised work in the accounting profession is the condition of wearing two hats – hats that inevitably pit key interests against one another. On the one hand, as representatives of the public, auditors and their umbrella organizations are supposed to remain at arm's length from the companies they monitor. On the other hand, the excitement and the monetary gains available for consulting prove irresistibly seductive for many auditors and their umbrella organizations. One cannot at the same time offer advice and feedback to companies while standing disinterestedly apart from their practices; in effect, one has become judge and litigant at the same time.

In each of the cases discussed, the background history covered a much longer period than I had anticipated. Jayson Blair's case reflected larger-scale trends at the *Times*, dating back to the 1980s and exacerbated by the appointment of a new managerial regime in 2001; Hill and Barlow failed to recognize, let alone adapt to, forces that middle-sized law firms had been confronting for decades; and Arthur Andersen encountered long-standing tensions in the accounting profession regarding appropriate relations with clients. Nor are the cases restricted to the particular examples on which I happened to focus: Within journalism, similar scandals had occurred in recent years at *The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *The New Republic*. Several dozen major law firms in Boston and elsewhere had either closed down or were absorbed into larger and more profitable firms. In recent years, each of the Big Five accounting firms saw significant scandals; comparable 'multiple hats' problems arose in Europe and Asia; and compensatory legislation like the Sarbanes-Oxley Act caused turbulence in a great many American corporations.

Whatever their usefulness for conceptualization and exposition, the three levels of analysis that I had selected turned out to be more closely related than I had expected.

If the study of good work is in its early adolescence, then the examination of compromised work is in its infancy. Firm conclusions would be decidedly premature. And yet, given the importance of the problem, and its indissoluble links to issues of good work, a few summary comments are in order.

Because persons and institutions can go bad for any number of reasons, isolated cases of compromised work cannot be prevented. What is susceptible to treatment is the soil in which compromised work is likely to arise and thrive. Our three cases and others that could have been treated suggest that superficial signs of alignment can in fact be the enemies of good work. Respected institutions like *The New York Times*, Hill and Barlow, and Arthur Andersen create in their members – and in the general public – the belief that these institutions are inherently good and above suspicion. Those assigned the job of surveillance internally or externally may become lax, and, accordingly, those who are tempted to practice compromised work may find an unexpectedly promising breeding ground. (In writing about the Jayson Blair case in *The New Yorker* of June 30, 2003, Elizabeth Kolbert said that this "paper of record" cannot afford to "check up" on its employees; it has to assume they are trustworthy.)

Indeed, these circumstances obtained in each of our three examples: Jayson Blair was on the make; Raines and Boyd wanted to remake the culture of the *Times* even at the cost of violating its most important values. And while various alarm bells tolled, none sounded loudly enough or insistently enough to be heard. Despite the enviable reputation of Hill and Barlow, many lawyers left the partnership starting in the 1980s; the particular requests of the real estate group were not taken seriously enough; and attempts to address the issue of financial survival and partnership communication were undertaken too late and with too little sense of urgency. Arthur Andersen had actually resisted temptations to enter the consulting world. But when it finally succumbed, it entered with a vengeance – and despite warnings about conflicts of interest. Spokespersons for the firm continued to enunciate the fundamentals of accounting, but too many partners and workers were trying to wear two incompatible hats. When the ambivalent Andersen encountered the swashbuckling Enron, a disaster was in the making.

In each case, superficial features and blandishments obscured the central values of the domain. During the Blair-Raines period at the *Times*, scrupulous and fair reporting was sacrificed to the immediately accessible and sexy. At Hill and Barlow, the norms of an effective partnership were undermined, as lawyers and entire departments went their own selfish way. And sometime in the last few decades, those responsible for the atmosphere of an accounting company forgot that it was supposed to be a public trust. Those on the inside should have seen these problems and made loud noises, but efforts to right the culture were too weak and ineffective. And so in each case it took a dramatic event – Blair's plagiarism, the real estate department's exodus, the Enron meltdown – to reveal what should have been clearer to those on the outside and clearest to those entrusted with preserving and embodying the values of the domain.

What happens when such a critical point is reached? It is possible, of

course, that the domain will continue to deteriorate, and may come to be replaced altogether. Newspaper editor Harold Evans has quipped, "The problem many organizations face is not to stay in business but to stay in journalism." The lawyer statesman no longer exists; it remains unclear whether he is being replaced by a viable option, or whether lawyers have just become high-priced free agents or cogs in a corporate legal machine. And if there are too many Enrons and Global Crossings, the Big Five will dwindle to Little Zero – and it is not clear whether the books will be monitored in the future by independent accountants, government officials, or private investigators.

It is also possible that these professions will continue to survive but attract a different type of person with different kinds of values. With few exceptions, for example, broadcast television journalism exists as entertainment rather than as news. Totalitarian countries have bookkeepers, but, as the old joke goes, they produce "whatever numbers you would like us to produce." And it is certainly possible to have lawyer whores who sell their services to the highest bidder. In such cases, those who want to know what is really happening in the world, whether the books are really accurate, or whether they can get a fair trial, will no longer look to the members of the ascribed profession.

One goal of the GoodWork Project is to help bring about a happier scenario. Professions will always feel pressures of one type or another, and, at the time of powerful market forces, these pressures can be decisive. The forces cannot be ignored; they must be dealt with – but they must not be succumbed to. Those individuals, institutions, and professions that actively cope with these forces while adhering to the central and irreplaceable values of the domain are most likely to survive and to thrive.

How to do this? In our project, we speak of the four Ms that help to propagate good work (these were initially designed to address individuals, but they can be applied as well to institutions and even whole professions). The Ms seek answers to the following questions: What is the *mission* of our domain? What are the positive and negative *models* that we must keep in mind? When we look into the *mirror* as individual professionals, are we proud or embarrassed by what we see? And: When we hold up the *mirror* to our profession – or, indeed, our society – as a whole, are we proud or embarrassed by what we see? And, if the latter, what are we prepared to do about it?

I suggest that if the individuals and institutions described here had perennially posed these questions and tried to answer them in a serious, transparent way, they would not have become targets for our study.

Lee S. Shulman

Signature pedagogies in the professions

The psychoanalyst Erik Erikson once observed that if you wish to understand a culture, study its nurseries. There is a similar principle for the understanding of professions: if you wish to understand why professions develop as they do, study *their* nurseries, in this case, their forms of professional preparation. When you do, you will generally detect the characteristic forms of teaching and learning that I have come to call *signature pedagogies*. These are types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions. In these signature pedagogies, the novices are instructed in critical aspects of the three fundamental dimensions of professional work – to *think*, to *perform*, and to *act with integrity*. But these three dimensions do not receive equal attention across the professions. Thus, in medicine many years are spent learning to perform like a physician; medical schools typically put less emphasis on learning how to act with professional integrity and caring. In contrast, most legal education involves learning to think like a lawyer; law schools show little concern for learning to perform like one.

We all intuitively know what signature pedagogies are. These are the forms of instruction that leap to mind when we first think about the preparation of members of particular professions – for example, in the law, the quasi-Socratic interactions so vividly portrayed in *The Paper Chase*. The first year of law school is dominated by the case dialogue method of teaching, in which an authoritative and often authoritarian instructor engages individual students in a large class of many dozens in dialogue about an appellate court case of some complexity. In medicine, we immediately think of the phenomenon of bedside teaching, in which a senior physician or a resident leads a group of novices through the daily clinical rounds, engaging them in discussions about the diagnosis and management of patients' diseases.

I would argue that such pedagogical signatures can teach us a lot about the personalities, dispositions, and cultures

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of their fields. And though signature pedagogies operate at all levels of education, I find that professions are more likely than the other academic disciplines to develop distinctively interesting ones. That is because professional schools face a singular challenge: their pedagogies must measure up to the standards not just of the academy, but also of the particular professions. Professional education is not education for understanding alone; it is preparation for accomplished and responsible practice in the service of others. It is preparation for 'good work.' Professionals must learn abundant amounts of theory and vast bodies of knowledge. They must come to understand in order to act, and they must act in order to serve.

In the Carnegie Foundation's studies of preparation for the professions, we have gone into considerable depth to understand the critical role of signature pedagogies in shaping the character of future practice and in symbolizing the values and hopes of the professions. We have become increasingly cognizant of the many tensions that surround professional preparation, from the competing demands of academy and profession to the essential contradictions inherent in the multiple roles and expectations for professional practitioners themselves. The importance of the particular forms of teaching that characterize each profession has become ever more salient in the course of our inquiry. Above all, we have found it fruitful to observe closely the pedagogy of the professions in action.

Behold a first-year class on contracts at a typical law school. Immediately one notices that the rectangular room is not designed like most lecture halls: the 120 seats are arranged in a semicircle so that most students can see many of the other students. The instructor, clearly visible behind the lectern, is at the center of the long side of the rectangle. Rather than lecturing, he tends to ask questions of one student at a time, chasing the initial question with a string of follow-ups. At certain points, he will turn his attention to another student, and stick with her for a while. Again and again he asks a student to read aloud the precise wording of a contract or legal ruling; when confusion arises, he repeatedly asks the student to look carefully at the language. The instructor may use the board or the overhead projector to record specific phrases, to list legal principles, or to note the names of court cases or precedents. Throughout the hour, the law professor faces the students, interacting with them individually through exchanges of questions and answers, and only occasionally writing anything on the board. The students can see each other as they participate, and can respond easily if the professor solicits additional responses. But it's relatively rare for students to address one another directly.

Now consider a lecture course in fluid dynamics as taught at a typical engineering school. The seats all face the front of the room; discussion among students is apparently not a high priority here. Although the teacher faces his class when he introduces the day's topic at the beginning of the session, soon he has turned to the blackboard, his back to the students. The focal point of the pedagogy is clearly mathematical representations of physical processes. He is furiously writing equations on the board, looking back over his shoulder in the direction of the students as he asks, of no one in particular, "Are you with me?" A couple of affirmative grunts are sufficient to encourage him to continue. Meanwhile, the students are either writing as furiously as their instructor, or

they are sitting quietly planning to review the material later in study groups. There is very little exchange between teacher and students, or between students. There is almost no reference to the challenges of practice in this teaching – little sense of the tension between knowing and doing. This is a form of teaching that engineering shares with many of the other mathematically intensive disciplines and professions; it is not the 'signature' of engineering.

Quite a different classroom style is evident when one visits a design studio that meets in the same building of the same engineering school. Here students assemble around work areas with physical models or virtual designs on computer screens; there is no obvious 'front' of the room. Students are experimenting and collaborating, building things and commenting on each other's work without the mediation of an instructor. The focal point of instruction is clearly the designed artifact. The instructor, whom an observer identifies only with some difficulty, circulates among the work areas and comments, critiques, challenges, or just observes. Instruction and critique are ubiquitous in this setting, and the formal instructor is not the only source for that pedagogy.

Consider, finally, the varieties of bedside teaching and clinical rounds used in medical schools. Here the classroom is the hospital, where a clinical triad – the patient, the senior attending physician, and the student physicians – facilitates the teaching and learning. Since much of medical pedagogy is peer driven, only one year of training or experience may differentiate the student from her instructor. The ritual of case presentation, pointed questions, exploration of alternative interpretations, working diagnosis, and treatment plan is routine. The patient may be physically present or represented by a case record or, these days, by a video. There is no question that the instruction centers on the patient, and not on medicine in some more abstract sense. The dance changes as we move from the patient's first visit to the follow-up, but the basic moves remain the same.

In the Carnegie Foundation's studies, we have spent a lot of time observing, analyzing, and documenting how teaching and learning occur in many kinds of settings. We not only watch and record, but also meet with faculty members and students individually and in focus groups. We review teaching materials and the examinations used to evaluate the progress of students. To the extent that we identify signature pedagogies, we find modes of teaching and learning that are not unique to individual teachers, programs, or institutions. Indeed, if there is a signature pedagogy for law, engineering, or medicine, we should be able to find it replicated in nearly all the institutions that educate in those domains.

Signature pedagogies are important precisely because they are pervasive. They implicitly define what counts as knowledge in a field and how things become known. They define how knowledge is analyzed, criticized, accepted, or discarded. They define the functions of expertise in a field, the locus of authority, and the privileges of rank and standing. As we have seen, these pedagogies even determine the architectural design of educational institutions, which in turn serves to perpetuate these approaches.

A signature pedagogy has three dimensions. First, it has a *surface structure*, which consists of concrete, operational acts of teaching and learning, of showing and demonstrating, of questioning

and answering, of interacting and withholding, of approaching and withdrawing. Any signature pedagogy also has a *deep structure*, a set of assumptions about how best to impart a certain body of knowledge and know-how. And it has an *implicit structure*, a moral dimension that comprises a set of beliefs about professional attitudes, values, and dispositions. Finally, each signature pedagogy can also be characterized by what it is *not* – by the way it is shaped by what it does not impart or exemplify. A signature pedagogy invariably involves a choice, a selection among alternative approaches to training aspiring professionals. That choice necessarily highlights and supports certain outcomes while, usually unintentionally, failing to address other important characteristics of professional performance.

We can see the relevance of all these features if we examine, for example, the signature pedagogy of legal case methods. This signature pedagogy's *surface structure* entails a set of dialogues that are entirely under the control of an authoritative teacher; nearly all exchanges go through the teacher, who controls the pace and usually drives the questions back to the same student a number of times. The discussion centers on the law, as embodied in a set of texts ranging from judicial opinions that serve as precedents, to contracts, testimonies, settlements, and regulations; in the legal principles that organize and are exemplified by the texts; and in the expectation that students know the law and are capable of engaging in intensive verbal duels with the teacher as they wrestle to discern the facts of the case and the principles of its interpretation.

The *deep structure* of the pedagogy rests on the assertion that what is really being taught is the theory of the law and how to think like a lawyer. The subject matter is not black-letter law, as, for example, in British law schools, but the processes of analytic reasoning characteristic of legal thinking. Legal theory is about the confrontation of views and interpretations – hence the inherently competitive and confrontational character of case dialogue as pedagogy.

The *implicit structure* of case dialogue pedagogy has several features. We observed several interactions in which students questioned whether a particular legal judgment was fair to the parties, in addition to being legally correct. The instructor generally responded that they were there to learn the law, not to learn what was fair – which was another matter entirely. This distinction between legal reasoning and moral judgment emerged from the pedagogy as a tacit principle. Similarly, the often brutal nature of the exchanges between instructor and student imparted in rather stark terms a sense of what legal encounters entail. These lessons might also be called the hidden curriculum of case dialogue pedagogy.

Finally, we can examine what is missing in this signature pedagogy. The missing signature here is clinical legal education – the pedagogies of practice and performance. While these pedagogies can be found in all law schools, they are typically on the margins of the enterprise, are rarely required, and are often ungraded.

I would also call our attention to three typical temporal patterns of signature pedagogies in the professions: the pervasive initial pedagogy that frames and prefigures professional preparation, as in the law; the pervasive capstone apprenticeships, as in the clinical bedside teaching of medicine or in the comparatively brief period of student teaching in teacher education; and the sequenced and balanced portfolio, as in the medley

of analysis courses, laboratories, and design studios in engineering, or in the interaction of hermeneutic, liturgical, homiletic, and pastoral pedagogies in the education of clergy.

Up to this point, I have emphasized the distinctive characteristics of signature pedagogies – the characteristics by which we can tell them apart. In spite of the differences among their surface structures, signature pedagogies also share a set of common features. These features may help explain the relative durability and robustness of these approaches to teaching and learning. Indeed, I believe these features evolved precisely because they facilitate student learning of professionally valued understandings, skills, and dispositions. Enumerating them will help to explain the persistence and generality of signature pedagogies in the professions.

First, as observed earlier, signature pedagogies are both pervasive and routine, cutting across topics and courses, programs and institutions. Case dialogue methods in law, for example, are routinely encountered by law students in nearly all their doctrinal courses – torts, Constitutional law, contracts, civil procedure, and criminal. Teachers and students can be inventive or creative within the boundary conditions of these teaching frameworks, but the frameworks themselves are quite well defined.

Of course, everyone understands the danger of routine, but routine also has great virtues. Learning to do complex things in a routine manner permits both students and teachers to spend far less time figuring out the rules of engagement, thereby enabling them to focus on increasingly complex subject matter. Also, the pedagogical routines differ in purpose: legal education routines develop habits of the mind, whereas clergy education routines also develop habits of the heart, and clinical education routines develop habits of the hand.

Pedagogies that bridge theory and practice are never simple. They entail highly complex performances of observation and analysis, reading and interpretation, question and answer, conjecture and refutation, proposal and response, problem and hypothesis, query and evidence, individual invention and collective deliberation. To the extent that the substance of these complex performances changes with each session, chapter, or patient, the cognitive and behavioral demands on both students and faculty would be overwhelming if it were not possible to routinize significant components of the pedagogy. To put it simply, signature pedagogies simplify the dauntingly complex challenges of professional education because once they are learned and internalized, we don't have to think about them; we can think with them. From class to class, topic to topic, teacher to teacher, assignment to assignment, the routine of pedagogical practice cushions the burdens of higher learning. Habit makes novelty tolerable and surprise sufferable. The well-mastered habit shifts new learning into our zones of proximal development, transforming the impossible into the merely difficult.

But habits are both marvelous scaffolds for complex behavior as well as dangerous sources of rigidity and perseveration. Thus we shall also see that the very utility of habit that is a source of signature pedagogies' power also contributes to their most serious vulnerability: Signature pedagogies, by forcing all kinds of learning to fit a limited range of teaching, necessarily distort learning in some manner. They persist even when they begin to lose their utility, precisely because they are habits with few coun-

tervailing forces. Since faculty members in higher education rarely receive direct preparation to teach, they most often model their own teaching after that which they themselves received. This 'apprenticeship of observation' is powerful even among precollegiate teachers who do undertake pedagogical training. Moreover, since the physical layout of classrooms so typically tracks the premises of a field's signature pedagogies, the very architecture of teaching encourages pedagogical inertia. Only the most radical of new conditions – such as sharp changes in the organization or economics of professional practice or in the technologies of teaching – are sufficient forces to redirect that inertia.

Another feature of signature pedagogies is that they nearly always entail public student performance. Without students actively performing their roles – as interlocutors in legal dialogues, as student physicians reporting on cases in clinical rounds, as designers of artifacts, or as active critics in the engineering studio – the instruction simply can't proceed. This emphasis on students' active performance reduces the most significant impediments to learning in higher education: passivity, invisibility, anonymity, and lack of accountability. The pedagogies command student vigilance, which in turn causes learners to feel highly visible in the classroom, even vulnerable. Again, the case dialogue method will provide our example: at any moment the law professor may call on students (the infamous 'cold call') to answer questions about the case prepared for a given class, or for arguments or counterarguments in discussion of a case. Because so much depends on student contributions – in dialogue, in diagnostic work-up, in the design of artifacts, in practice teaching, or in therapeutic encounters – there is also an inherent uncertainty associated with these situations: the direction the discussion takes is jointly produced by the instructor's plan and the students' responses, elaborations, and inventions.

Indeed, in these signature pedagogies, students are not only active but interactive. Students are accountable not only to teachers, but also to peers in their responses, arguments, commentaries, and presentations of new data. They are expected to participate actively in the discussions, rounds, or constructions; they are also expected to make relevant contributions that respond directly to previous exchanges. Signature pedagogies are pedagogies of uncertainty. They render classroom settings unpredictable and surprising, raising the stakes for both students and instructors. Interestingly, learning to deal with uncertainty in the classroom models one of the most crucial aspects of professionalism, namely, the ability to make judgments under uncertainty.

Finally, uncertainty, visibility, and accountability inevitably raise the emotional stakes of the pedagogical encounters. Uncertainty produces both excitement and anxiety. These pedagogies create atmospheres of risk taking and foreboding, as well as occasions for exhilaration and excitement. Indeed, I would argue that an absence of emotional investment, even risk and fear, leads to an absence of intellectual and formational yield; Alison Davis used to refer to "adaptive anxiety" as a necessary feature of learning. However, teachers must manage levels of anxiety so that teaching produces learning rather than paralyzing the participants with terror. When the emotional content of learning is well sustained, we have the real possibility of pedagogies of formation – experiences of teaching and learning that can influence the values, dispositions, and characters

of those who learn. And when these experiences are interactive rather than individual, when they embody the pervasive culture of learning within a field, they offer even more opportunity for character formation.

Howard Gardner has proposed the concept of 'compromised work' to describe forms of professional practice in which the fundamental ethical principles of a profession are violated. I would propose a parallel concept of 'compromised pedagogy' to describe a somewhat different phenomenon. Instead of recognizing only the tensions between the technical and the ethical dimensions of professional learning as those that are regularly compromised, I would argue that a sound professional pedagogy must seek balance, giving adequate attention to all the dimensions of practice – the intellectual, the technical, and the moral. Pedagogy is compromised whenever any one of these dimensions is unduly subordinated to the others – even when an adequate intellectual preparation is subordinated to an ethical perspective (which rarely happens outside the preparation of teachers and clergy).

Professional action is often characterized by a tension between acting in the service of one's client and acting in a manner that protects the public interest more broadly. Thus lawyers are torn between acting as zealous advocates or as officers of the court. They can also experience the tension between acting in their own self-interest or in the interests of either their client or the greater society. Engineers can design to reduce costs and maximize profits, or to increase safety and environmental protection. Physicians can order tests and interventions that maximize the potential benefits to their patients, or can act to control costs and the likelihood of overprescription. Teachers can maximize their perceived efficacy by teaching to the benefit of those students most likely to earn high test scores, or can teach in ways that equalize educational opportunity and emphasize educational ends whether or not they are externally examined.

Every profession can be characterized by these inherent tensions, which are never fully resolved, but which must be managed and balanced with every action. As John Dewey observed about many of the problems of science, "we don't solve them; we get over them." Responsible professional pedagogy must address these tensions and provide students with the capabilities to deal with them.

Since individual professions adapt to their own signatures, which, however effective, are prone to inertia, we can learn a great deal by examining the signature pedagogies of a variety of professions and asking how they might improve teaching and learning in professions for which they are not now signatures. What might laboratory instruction in the sciences learn from examining the studio instruction of architecture and mechanical engineering? How might the challenges of integrating the texts of legal theory and the enactment of legal practice profit from taking seriously the clinical education of physicians, or the learning of homiletic by clergy? The comparative study of signature pedagogies across professions can offer alternative approaches for improving professional education that might otherwise not be considered. Indeed, I believe that education in the liberal arts and sciences can profit from careful consideration of the pedagogies of the professions.

I have written about signature pedagogies as if they are nearly impossible to

change. There are, however, several conditions that can trigger substantial changes in the signature pedagogies of professions. The objective conditions of practice may change so much that those pedagogies that depend on practice will necessarily have to change. A dramatic example is developing in medicine and nursing: Bedside teaching became these fields' signature pedagogy at a time when a much larger percentage of patients were hospitalized, and for much longer periods of time. Under those conditions, patients – the teaching material for clinical instruction – remained in place long enough to provide extended teaching opportunities. Today, by contrast, we find far more medicine and surgery practiced either as outpatient procedures or with much shorter hospital stays. For example, surgical removal of the gallbladder once entailed at least a week's hospitalization; that procedure is now done laparoscopically, and patients do not even remain overnight. Recovery now takes a few days instead of several weeks. Under these kinds of changing conditions, the signature pedagogies of medicine will have to change.

New technologies of teaching via the Internet; Web-based information seeking; computer-mediated dialogues; collaborations and critiques in the design studio; powerful representations of complex and often unavailable examples of professional reasoning, judgment, and action – all create an opportunity for reexamining the fundamental signatures we have so long taken for granted. In surgery, the signature pedagogy for learning new procedures has been 'watch one, do one, teach one' – an approach that is undeniably fraught with the likelihood of error and significant danger to the patient. Now new forms of simulation, the use of surgical mannequins and robotlike models, cognitive task analysis, and cognitive apprenticeship create opportunities to make substantial changes in that pedagogy, and therefore to dramatically modify its signatures.

Finally, severe critiques of the quality of professional practice and service, which occur with great frequency these days, can accelerate the pace with which the most familiar pedagogical habits might be reevaluated and redesigned. The ethical scandals that have beset many professions – well illustrated by our colleagues in the GoodWork Project – may create the social conditions needed to reconsider even the most traditional signature pedagogies.

One thing is clear: signature pedagogies make a difference. They form habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of the hand. As Erikson observed in the context of nurseries, signature pedagogies prefigure the cultures of professional work and provide the early socialization into the practices and values of a field. Whether in a lecture hall or a lab, in a design studio or a clinical setting, the way we teach will shape how professionals behave – and in a society so dependent on the quality of its professionals, that is no small matter.

Jeanne Nakamura & Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Engagement in a profession: the case of undergraduate teaching

"When I was at Yale, I overheard a conversation between two famous senior professors. The two were talking about the fact that they did not like teaching undergraduates and preferred to teach graduate students, and to do research. They were exchanging pointers on how to get out of undergraduate teaching. One of them was saying that he taught them badly: he reused his lecture notes and didn't try to put anything into it. And so the dean didn't make him teach that course very often.

I found myself getting very angry at hearing this, but I couldn't quite understand why it mattered to me what these guys did in their teaching. And then I realized that I had [formed a conviction] that pedagogy was fundamentally important, especially at the undergraduate level. At that moment, something in me said, 'I don't want to be like them.' It was then that I decided I would think about teaching at a small college."

This event, described as a graduate-school epiphany by an engineer who went on to become an outstanding teacher at an outstanding college, illustrates the lack of support for taking undergraduate teaching seriously and aspiring to excellence in it. Yet isn't it worrisome that few college teachers would find the vignette surprising?

Unfortunately it is not only university teaching where the central purpose of the profession appears to be compromised. Physicians find themselves increasingly in the role of administrators rather than healers, and lawyers complain about not being able to serve clients with the personal attention they expected to be able to give when starting their careers. In most professions, practitioners rarely spend more than a quar-

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ter of the time on the job doing what they see as their main task. For instance, physicians treat and talk to patients about 23 percent of their working time; the rest is spent talking to coworkers, reading, writing, filing, and doing a host of other activities that are less and less related to their training and purpose. What makes this state of affairs difficult to understand is that the professions are supposed to be the most free and most satisfying ways to make a living. If doctors, teachers, lawyers, and engineers all have trouble doing the work they are meant to do, what about the great majority of people who work in even more constrained settings?

There are basically two threats to the professions. One is subjective, involving a loss of motivation and commitment. As long as workers experienced their jobs as callings, they were motivated to listen to the voice that pressed them to do their best. But who is calling them now? That voice has become a barely audible whisper, obscured by stentorian calls to do what's best for one's comfort, bank account, or social influence. Members of a profession can be compelled or intimidated into doing work that meets standards of quality and codes of ethics. But they cannot be forced into feeling *engaged*. It is when they enjoy and care deeply about the work they do, and wholeheartedly value the people and the ends it is meant to serve, that they are most likely to aspire to excellence and principled conduct.

The second threat to professional conduct involves more objective factors. For example, it has been argued that the diffusion of the automobile, which resulted in suburban sprawl, has made it uneconomical for physicians to make home visits. This has moved the interaction between doctor and patient from domestic to more impersonal settings, contributing to the compartmentalization and bureaucratization of medicine. For each profession, dozens of similar factors have transformed how the work is done. Some of the time the resulting change in practice is sensible, even inevitable. Other times it is not – and professionals and the public they serve are the worse for it.

Consider the case of just one class of modern professionals: those who teach undergraduates. Undergraduate teaching is a profession that influences all others. Medical schools shape future doctors; law schools shape tomorrow's attorneys. Those responsible for undergraduate education touch the lives of students who go on to enter *all* the professions. As a result, undergraduate teachers potentially have a much wider impact on the future well-being of the professions and, through them, society as a whole. The point is not that undergraduate education lays the groundwork for absorbing a body of professional knowledge, or that it initiates students into a field's distinctive code of ethics. Rather, at its best, undergraduate education plays a special role in encouraging each student's engagement with a discipline and, in this respect, in preparing all students to do work that is 'good.' For while finding enjoyment and meaning in one's undertakings may be the most durable basis for good work, how to find them is not taught in graduate and professional schools.

We recently interviewed about a hundred leading teachers and administrators at ten highly regarded schools, including liberal arts and community colleges, research universities, and a major for-profit institution.[1] The picture of the

1 These interviews were conducted as part of the Study of Good Work in Higher Education supported by the William and Flora Hewlett

profession that emerges from these interviews is an ideal that hardly represents what the job of teaching is like at most of the nation's colleges. But unless we occasionally examine what ideal professional conditions entail, it is unlikely that we will be able to improve the condition of the professions more generally.

Unrepresentative though they may be, these engaged teachers and administrators illustrate how it is possible to derive satisfaction from a profession today. One professor told us, "If I won the lottery, I would still be coming back here to do my job. There is nothing else I can imagine I would rather be doing." Such deep absorption is most likely to occur when the work holds clear challenges that fully utilize capacities without overwhelming them, when the rules of engagement are unambiguous, when actions receive timely feedback, and when it is possible to shape the process as it unfolds. A teacher who can still vividly recall her own teachers' infectious enthusiasm explained, "They put things in manageable pieces for you so you could understand it. And then as you gained some skill with it, you started to become passionate about it, to get excited about it, and it became fun." When the work's challenges are not only well defined and demanding but also aligned with what the individual values, the profession becomes a source of meaning as well as enjoyment.

Like any profession, undergraduate teaching offers several ways to become engaged in the job. For undergraduate teachers, four areas of possible engagement are key: educating students; preserving and advancing a specific domain of knowledge; serving the needs of the institution; and responding to the needs of the broader society. Teachers become engaged in their work to the extent that they find enjoyable challenges in one or more of these areas, and to the extent that they find that those challenges are in line with their values. In what follows, we will explore the experience of teachers at outstanding colleges in each of these areas.

There is no question that *educating students* is the core challenge of the teaching profession. An engaged teacher enjoys and finds meaning in this central task, mediating between the students whose learning is the goal and the set of questions that animate the domain of knowledge.

Effective teachers choose pedagogies that allow them to enjoy the process and get their students involved. A teacher at a research university explained, "It's fun. In all my courses I try to do these sort of hands-on, more inquiry-based things. It keeps [the students] engaged."

A profession becomes a vocation when those doing it believe that its challenges matter, and when the work connects them to what they value most. As a teacher at a community college told us, "Education is supposed to be inspiring. It's supposed to be exciting. It's supposed to change your life. If education can't enrich, why bother?" The challenges of teaching are infused with meaning when the teacher cares about the students and about helping them meet their educational goals. "I don't know of anything that really gets my engine going more than watching the light come on for a student," one professor told us. Another said, "To see a student suddenly begin to question his own assumptions – not desperately, but excitedly – and with tools to understand. To see that same student come back the next year and seem to have grown five years

Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and the Atlantic Philanthropies.

older in terms of who that student is as a human being – that does it for me. It's exciting, it's unendingly exciting." Many teachers – particularly those working with disadvantaged students – are profoundly moved to see their students receive their diplomas, and speak with pride about students who return years after graduation to share their accomplishments and express their gratitude.

While such rewarding experiences should be sufficient to keep professionals focused on their primary task, many obstacles may interfere. When a teacher is expected to face five hundred young people in an introductory class, for example, it is almost impossible to see an individual student question his own assumptions, or to see the light of understanding dawn in his eyes. Also, while some teachers love engaging underprepared students who are eager to learn, others feel frustrated about not being able to overcome the chasm separating too many students from the expectations of higher education. As in other professions, numerous obstacles make it difficult for teachers to be continuously engaged, even with the core aspects of their task.

The challenge of *preserving and advancing knowledge* provides a second form of engagement for college teachers. In this case, they are rewarded by knowing that through them something of value survives as a living part of the culture. "I just always loved learning. I loved school," a professor told us. "It was the place in my life where I always felt most at home. [The university] just seemed to me a wonderful place to be and a wonderful way to live, constantly reading and asking complicated, deep, unanswerable questions." Especially at research institutions, faculty may find excitement in researching and writing in their disciplines, or in the life of the mind more generally.

True, the two most basic roles of college professors – teaching and research – often conflict. One professor at a liberal arts college recalled that during graduate school at a leading public university, "I had to sort of hide under a rug, in a way, my desire to teach. I got a terrific graduate education there, but the down side was it was clear they didn't care one bit about teaching." A study conducted in the 1990s showed that in all types of four-year institutions, the proportion of time dedicated to research rose and the time dedicated to teaching declined. Yet over two-thirds of the faculty outside research universities claim they are more interested in teaching than research. It is obviously not the case that devotion to one's discipline has to conflict with doing good work as a teacher. Indeed, a teacher indifferent to his area of study is unlikely to engage students.

Serving the needs of the institution is an important element in any profession: doctors may become devoted to their hospitals, lawyers to their firms, journalists to their newspapers, professors to their colleges or universities. A distinguished scientist assumed the presidency of her research university to a large extent because of "a deep love of this institution." She explained that "it would not have occurred to me to think about this job at any other institution. You have to fundamentally care about a university that you lead because it's too much work if there isn't a real passion." She traced her own passion to "the respect with which [the institution] treats ideas, treats excellence, treats people . . . I deeply admired the way in which [my predecessor] ran the university based on a core set of values and principles that we were going to try and live up to. I think it made me al-

ways proud to be a member of the community." When professionals find a place in an organization that shares their values, a sense of vocation is more likely to flourish. A clearly defined institutional mission provides a compelling compass for action and a basis for judging if one is doing good work. The presence of such a mission is a sign that an ethos genuinely exists within the institution – an ethic that expresses the defining spirit and values of the community.

Although such commitment is common at outstanding colleges, the wider field is virtually silent about the rewards of engaging challenges of an institutional nature. In the Carnegie Foundation's widely cited 1989 survey, faculty members were asked, "Do your interests lie primarily in research or in teaching?" – the survey did not measure administrative or institutional interests at all. The same survey revealed that "faculty identify strongly with their academic discipline, less so with their department, and still less with their institution." Shaping a collective enterprise and participating in a community is perhaps the least recognized source of joy in academic life. Even to use a term such as 'joy' seems a stretch for a set of challenges that most teachers view at best as duties and at worst as outright burdens.

Enhancing the well-being of an institution one loves can of course become an end in itself; and efforts to burnish its reputation, build its coffers, or otherwise enhance it can come to be an enjoyable way of using one's skills as a leader, fundraiser, or strategist. Service to the institution acquires meaning because of the values the institution represents. Good work gets done when serving the institution advances the profession's core purpose of educating students.

The fourth area of engagement for teachers involves *serving the needs of the broader society*. Many teachers hold values that shape their educational goals. When, for example, a faculty member describes the challenges and rewards of fostering diversity and openness to the perspectives of others, he or she is seeing beyond the classroom or institution to the society as a whole. An environmental studies professor we interviewed counts preserving the natural environment among her overarching goals. As she put it, "I realized that if I was worried about the trends in the environment . . . [and] if I was going to make a difference, it would be that I need to be back in the classroom and talk to people about what was happening with the environment." Many teachers engaged by social and cultural issues such as war and peace, globalization, and poverty share this belief that the classroom constitutes one front in a larger battle.

This kind of engagement can be consistent with one's professional commitments but lie outside one's daily job – as when doctors volunteer in such organizations as Doctors Without Borders, or when lawyers do pro bono work. For some professionals, such outside engagement may become the most meaningful part of working life. Of course, an activist approach to the profession can also be a detriment, as when a teacher uses his bully pulpit to indoctrinate students in partisan causes.

Most undergraduate teachers participate in the four key areas of possible engagement – educating students; preserving and advancing knowledge; serving the needs of the institution; and responding to the needs of the broader society – without necessarily deriving the same amount of enjoyment and meaning from each of them. Indeed, the very

effort required to negotiate multiple sets of challenges can diminish one's ability to engage any of them fully. Nevertheless, some rare individuals find all four sets of challenges to be a source of significant meaning and enjoyment.

One such individual is John T. Scott, who has taught at his alma mater, Xavier University in Louisiana, for thirty-five years. A historically black, Catholic college renowned for its success in training future doctors and scientists, the school has struggled with limited resources to serve underprepared students. As an art teacher, Scott has also had to struggle to interest Xavier students in his field of expertise. Yet he describes undiminished absorption in the challenges of pursuing his craft as sculptor and printmaker ("I am still discovering things and expanding the language of my craft"); helping students learn ("I developed this love for sharing information . . . teaching is as much a creative challenge as being in my studio"); sustaining the culture of his institutional home ("'Pass it on' – that is the philosophy here. And I think I'm one of the ones who continues that tradition"); and serving the broader community ("As a visual artist, part of my job is to be a spokesman for the community that I'm part of"). During his years of teaching, he built a foundry from scratch, constructed the critically acclaimed African American pavilion for the 1984 World's Fair, and garnered such honors as the 1992 MacArthur "genius" award.

How has he remained engaged despite the obstacles? His approach on all fronts creates the conditions for intense involvement, or 'flow.' His goals have a fine clarity. His nonnegotiable standard is excellence ("'Good enough' is never good enough. If it's not the best you're capable of, you're being dishonest"). He regards hurdles as challenges ("An obstacle should not be something that slows you down, but [that] teaches you how to jump high"). Scott's work is also *meaningful*: each set of challenges matters to him; each endeavor connects him to something beyond himself. Making art, teaching students, meeting institutional challenges – each is at the same time a way of taking on challenges facing the human community in general and the African American community in particular. Through his teaching he aims to prepare students for life ("They [should] leave here with a sense of purpose – what they want to do with their lives – [and a recognition that] life is not separate from the community of humanity that you're a part of"). By serving Xavier University, he supports an institution he loves ("This place has been more like a family than like a school") with a mission in which he believes ("The success of Xavier has been that the student has been the focus for so many years").

Scott's case illustrates one way of being fully engaged by all four sets of challenges without feeling pulled in four different directions. For some, taking all four sets of challenges seriously could amount to a draining exercise in juggling, multitasking, and negotiating trade-offs and compromises. The resulting risk: all of the challenges may be met less well and provide less fulfillment than when a single one is engaged alone. For those like Scott, by contrast, it can mean that the effort invested in any of the four challenges also serves to meet the requirements of the other three.

A sense of vocation is critical to teachers' own well-being and to the continued vitality of higher education. When college teachers are uninspired, they may dishearten future professionals of all kinds. Conversely, when undergraduate teachers experience their work as a vocation, they may have a positive impact on

the next generation of workers in *all* the professions. To inspire passion, one must feel it oneself. An outstanding teacher in our study remembers college "classes that I absolutely loved that had nothing to do with what I was studying. But I loved the class because the teacher was so excited about it . . . . If you don't live it, it's hard to teach it." Engaged teachers are likely to find ways to draw students into the excitement of learning.

More broadly, they provide a model of engaged adulthood for their students. They show that it is possible to experience work as a calling rather than merely as a job. One of the teachers in our study suggested that ultimately students have only one question of their teachers: are you happy enough that I can stand to be like you? Through their conduct, engaged teachers answer the question affirmatively. Young people often see status and wealth as keys to adult happiness. Engaged teachers present a vision that grounds happiness in the pursuit of broader goals. For thirty-five years, John Scott's students have watched him engage his profession as a way of life, approach it with intensity, rise to its challenges, and, through it, serve the communities to which he belongs. Undeterred by lack of resources and repeatedly achieving extraordinary results despite steep odds, Scott and his colleagues – like his own teachers at Xavier – present students with a model of work that contrasts sharply with the prevailing one of "getting a job and making a whole lot of money."

Students respond to teachers' genuine interest in the subject they are teaching, and to teachers' interest in the students themselves. Most students quickly catch on if a teacher is bored by what he is saying, or if he has little respect for the class. As one teacher notes, "They will put up with all sorts of stuff if they believe that you have their best interests at heart – [and] they are very good at detecting whether you do."

At the same time, teachers need to introduce students to the broader institutional framework that may nurture a lifetime passion for learning. To succeed, learning must be embedded in a network of stable and significant relationships. Teachers bring students into the learning community through various routes, establishing communities in their own classrooms and taking the most engaged students to professional meetings. More broadly, they may help create a sense of intellectual community in the institution as a whole by establishing common curricula, setting aside time for the exchange of ideas outside of class, designing spaces that encourage interaction, and supporting the negotiation of differences through dialogue. At many universities, of course, the great majority of students display with pride the bumper stickers and other paraphernalia of the school's football team, but are effectively strangers to the world of knowledge the school is supposed to represent. One of the main tasks confronting higher education is to engage young people not just with ideas, but also with a fellowship of knowledge seekers.

Teachers heighten student engagement when they can show their students that what they are learning might make a difference outside the domain of knowledge and the field of scholarship. Good schools set ambitious goals for their students: to become community leaders, champions of the oppressed, protectors of the environment. When teachers care deeply about such goals and can provide credible solutions, the aim of serving social ends through knowledge becomes compelling to students. For example, one professor told

us her work is "not a job at all; it's a call to contribute to the world." She framed the challenge for her students in the same terms: "We want [the students] to go out there and participate and be leaders in the community, to excite them, to engage them! We want to engage them so that they become engaged with the community . . . . professional life is to be viewed as a life of service . . . . I think all of us try to share that, and instill it in our students."

Undergraduate teaching in the United States today may be extreme if not unique among the professions in the divergent visions of service it encompasses. However, it is not unique in the varied forms of engagement it affords, nor in privileging one set of challenges – the form of service to others that defines the profession – over the other challenges that members of the profession may find engaging. Good work can be threatened if secondary tasks actively compete or conflict with the profession's raison d'être – for teachers, the education of students. However, good work may be more likely if engaging the challenges of domain, institution, or broader society serves or complements that central purpose.

In addition to being typical of professions in this general sense, undergraduate teaching has a special, underappreciated relationship to all the professions: if work is enhanced or compromised there, it will cause ripples throughout the professions for which an undergraduate education is a prerequisite, and affect all the knowledge workers on whom the future of society depends. If good work is threatened in the colleges, we suggest, it is at risk everywhere.

Geoffrey Galt Harpham

Politics, professionalism & the pleasure of reading

A few short years ago, the state of literary studies was a subject of public controversy. According to some commentators, the study of literature at the university level had been seized by a malign spirit. Rather than conserving and transmitting the cultural heritage, literary scholars had become at once inaccessible and moralistic, incomprehensible and politically correct, disdainful of the common reader and of literature itself. Worst of all, they enjoyed privileged access to two precious things – young minds and the literary tradition of the nation – both of which they were corrupting.

For many literary scholars, especially those under forty, these were exciting times. Having lost the attention of much of the educated public during the 1970s and 1980s – the period of internecine battles over deconstruction, feminism, and Marxism – scholars were now, in the 1990s, engaged with nonacademic opponents in the 'culture wars.' Suddenly, professors of literature were widely considered to be important, even dangerous figures engaged in significant debates. Scholars on the front lines of these debates did not see themselves as antipopulist, moralizing obscurantists; far from it. Many felt that as a consequence of battles they had fought and won, the study of literature had been made conceptually more stringent and politically more engaged than it had been in the heyday of New Criticism, when literature was held to exist in an aesthetic realm untouched by philosophy, science, or ideology.

A measure of 'difficulty' in critical writing was, in fact, often regarded as the mark of a new seriousness, a new self-confidence, a new level of ambition, and well worth the cost in terms of popular appeal. Such figures as Lionel Trilling, Irving Howe, and Alfred Kazin had been impressive in their ways, but they did not have theoretical awareness of the kind that younger literary scholars took for granted during the 1990s. They remained, in the view of many during this time, impressionistic, unsystematic, belletristic, and therefore, in many cases,

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unwittingly conservative and even uncritical.

While the rhetoric of literary study had become inaccessible to the layman, many scholars felt that the practice of literary criticism itself furthered the cause of justice and truth; they felt that theory enabled them to 'conceptualize,' 'thematize,' or 'problematize' the political in their work, so that criticism could be seen as making a political 'intervention.' Through their efforts, many scholars felt, literary scholarship had positioned itself on the side of cultural democratization and social justice; most impressively of all, it had broadened its horizons dramatically, to the point where it was established as a master discourse in which inquiries formerly reserved for the disciplines of linguistics, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, or history could be engaged. Fashioning themselves as the standard-bearers for intellectuals in general, a great many leading literary scholars had come to feel that their enemies were intellectually or politically reactionary, and that their friends included everybody who counted.

Today, things have changed – and it is the literary scholars who are on the defensive. The battles of today are not being fought in the lecture halls or classrooms, and the combatants tend to be armed with heavier ordnance than arguments. It's (still) the economy, stupid – and AIDS, and SARS, and WMDs, and terrorism, and Enron, and the environment, and technology, and globalism, and nuclear proliferation – and professors of literature find themselves once again marginalized in a culture that neither heeds their critiques nor rewards their contributions. Many literary scholars, having touted their discipline as the reflective form of political struggle, find themselves in a state of political and professional bewilderment that is not without an uneasy self-awareness of their own anomalous position: now tenured, they are weirdly secure in an unstable world, their claim to affinity with the marginalized, silenced, and dispossessed undercut by their own success.

But the marginalization produced by tenure is not the only or even the primary instance in the recent fortunes of literary study of a success followed by unintended consequences. Three others from recent years stand out: literary theory, professionalism, and politicization. Each one of these marks a moment of intellectual excitement and institutional effectiveness, followed by a reaction from which the discipline of literary study is still trying to recover.

It was easy, in the excitement that first circulated around the names of Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, de Man, Lacan, Kristeva, Barthes, Althusser, and others, to overlook or misconstrue the antihumanistic spirit that, in varying degrees, animated all of them and made theory itself seem a 'movement.' So fascinating did American literary scholars in particular find the new modes of thought, with their exotic vocabulary and alien concepts, that they often failed to recognize, or enthusiastically endorsed, the determination to undermine concepts of human creativity, human freedom, and the human capacity for self-awareness that informed them. For a time, literary scholars in great numbers abandoned the specifically human orientation and scale that had always characterized their work and began to talk about things that were much smaller than human beings, such as graphemes, signifiers, or tropes, or much larger, such as Western metaphysics, epistemes, or ideological processes – and to talk about them as if they were independent, even 'constitutive,' of

human agency or human communicative processes. Drawn by the cosmopolitanism, novelty, and intellectual authority represented by theory, literary scholars worked to refashion their discipline, leaving the figure of the self-aware and self-determining human being out of it – 'effaced,' 'bracketed,' or 'under erasure.'

A robust conception of human freedom, subjectivity, and creative agency may be expendable in many disciplines where human beings or their works figure as the objects of study, including biology, some branches of linguistics, some versions of philosophy, and even some social sciences. The study of literature, however, like the humanities generally, virtually requires us to posit individual acts of reflection, intention, and expression, as well as a social and historical context for such acts. The figures named above, who were often invoked as the master-thinkers of the theoretical movement in the United States, were not trained in literary studies, so this fact had little pertinence for them. But their arguments were imported to this country largely by literary scholars, who might have been expected to be suspicious of Trojan horses. And a Trojan horse it was, for by comparison with the masterly new force of advanced theory, the disciplines of literary criticism and literary history seemed woefully undisciplined, and seemed to shrink under its gaze. And the study of literature evolved: where scholars once discussed Dickens's depiction of women, they now talked about the representation of gender with Dickens as example, and eventually began to discourse on gender theory as such, minus the distracting examples.

While the worldly consequences of the profusion of theoretical discourse may have been slight, one of the many by-products of that profusion was a sharp spike in professorial self-esteem. This effect was closely linked to a new emphasis on professionalism in literary study and in the academy more generally. Professionalism had always been an unstressed element in academic life, especially in the humanities, where many scholars had scarcely even regarded themselves as employees, much less as members of a guild. But beginning about twenty years ago, and spurred by an influential series of articles on professionalism in literary study by Stanley Fish, scholars began to take more seriously such things as conferences and professional organizations, and to think more systematically about workplace issues. The annual meetings of the Modern Language Association became not ceremonies of decorous conviviality, but scenes of turbulence and upheaval, animated by political insurgencies, theoretical quarrels, and a sharpened awareness of the brutal economics of the market. In this highly stressed and volatile context, it was both exciting and reassuring for professors to think that an academic life might be not just a practice of routine and unmarked constancy undertaken over a succession of decades, but a career, with the kinds of structure and self-affirmation enjoyed by professionals in other fields. Under the influence of this new conception of the scholar's working life, 'the profession' (as it called itself with increasing conviction) of literary studies discovered a new solidarity and a new sense of its own prospects.

Others, however, did not always join in the excitement felt by the newly professionalized scholars. Undergraduates, to take one significant example, are often disturbingly unaware of the professional eminence of their teachers. They form their own opinions, and are unim-

pressed by talk of 'the profession' when they are trying to come to grips with Melville, Dickinson, Woolf, or Swift, often for the first and last time in their lives. A professionalized professoriat may be in touch with their own careers, but they are not thereby placed in a vital relationship with their most essential constituency; nor can they easily, or at least consistently, claim the special kind of cultural authority or prestige traditionally associated with deep intimacy with the literary heritage.

Professionalism is often portrayed as a self-enclosed and self-protective state of mind devoted to hierarchy and group structure rather than to openness, innovation, risk, passion, idiosyncrasy, free inquiry, iconoclasm, or historical imagination – all of which are, or can be, characteristic of the very best literary scholarship. However valuable or even invaluable it may be in fostering group self-appreciation and support structures, the spirit of professionalism fails to solicit, when it does not actively suppress, undergraduate enthusiasm; moreover, it deforms the training of graduate students, who, having arrived at graduate school with a love of literature, are encouraged not to engage in a long-term project of immersing themselves in the traditions of literature and literary study, but immediately to think of themselves in an entrepreneurial sense as publishing and conference-going scholars whose business is to make assertive but essentially agreeable little interventions in the ongoing and self-sustaining conversations conducted by a narrowly defined subgroup.

Perhaps the most curious feature of literary study over the past generation has been the odd coupling of a vigorous professionalism and a subversive anti-authoritarianism. One of the primary justifications for developing robust professional structures has traditionally been to organize resistance to political pressures that would deform conscientious practice. This justification was especially pertinent in the case of literary study, which traditionally conceived of itself as a scholarly practice ideally abstracted from the urgencies of the moment. The need for professional solidarity was reinforced by the hostility to the academy, and to literature professors in particular, that manifested itself from time to time, most notably during the reign of Lynne Cheney as head of the NEH. But the profession of literary studies did not respond to political pressures by reaffirming the apolitical nature of its work. Beginning with an attempt to enlarge or to abolish the canon of traditional literature, and moving to an endorsement of a variety of minority-rights causes, literary studies in its dominant forms committed itself both to professional self-affirmation and to an often harsh critique of established power structures.

The connection may have been made on the grounds of a growing sense that literature professors had long since lost whatever influence they had once enjoyed as guardians and exemplars of a coherent cultural tradition. Attacked for promoting both elitism and antitraditional populism, but losing ground to scientists on the one hand and to popular culture on the other, many literary scholars felt they had to band together for group defense and consolation, and to form common cause with others who found themselves outside the mainstream, including women, African Americans, and gays. Their vocation as critics could be easily adapted to a social rather than a literary context, and their theoretical sophistication gave them access to a comprehensively 'radical' posi-

tion. Speaking up for the silenced, the ignored, the disrespected, the stereotyped, and the marginalized, many literary scholars felt themselves to be doing many things at once: performing a cultural service, undermining an oppressive established order, promoting a more egalitarian society, and asserting themselves as a cultural and political force.

Of course, literary scholars have the right to speak out and the right to free assembly; indeed, as articulate and presumably informed citizens, they have something like an obligation to enter the public realm wherever they might contribute. But this responsibility derives from citizenship, not from academic credentials. It does not derive at all from literary study itself. The relation between the immediacies of the political arena and works of art – which become regarded as art by virtue of their ability to detach themselves from their contexts and speak to people across boundaries of time, space, and culture – is never more than indirect, analogical, and, above all, variable from reader to reader, moment to moment, context to context. Literary study may be political in some larger or more general sense, but it has no necessary political directionality, and can easily accommodate positions on the left, right, and center of the political/cultural spectrum. To suggest otherwise, as many on both sides of the culture wars have done, is to attribute to literary study itself a kind of purposiveness and commitment that properly belongs to individuals in particular circumstances.

The unanticipated and unintentional consequence of these three powerful currents – antihumanistic theory, professionalism, and political engagement – blowing over the scene of literary studies is a distinct lack of confidence among today's younger scholars about the purpose, audience, and value of their work. I suspect that this uncertainty is experienced most acutely at the top research institutions, which have been most eagerly responsive to new energies. This lack of confidence has aggravated the current ailment of literary study – a persistent uncertainty concerning the object of attention. Since literature consists of the representation of human thought or action, the literary artifact can be approached from the point of view of any humanistic discipline. Indeed, one could argue that literature cannot be studied 'in itself' at all, and that literary study actually requires assistance from some other discipline that provides an angle of vision and limits and sorts the evidence. Over the years, philosophy, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and history have been remarkably effective in providing such support, but the dominant discipline informing literary study today is the weak form of anthropology known as cultural studies, which is, by comparison with these others, theoretically and methodologically undefined. With 'culture,' and sometimes 'material culture,' invoked as the context for literary study, younger scholars often find themselves wondering about such fundamental and preliminary questions as what they are talking about, what counts as a 'fact,' and what constitutes an 'advance in knowledge' in their field.

The situation sounds dire, but literary scholars have one very important and constant ally as they struggle to regain their sense of purpose and cultural value: the enduring power of literature to attract serious interest from young people. With its direct but noncoercive address to readers, its invitation to engage with it on one's own terms, literature has always elicited live or stray psychic energy of the sort that college-age students have in great abundance, and pro-

vides ways of thinking about experience that experience itself does not always afford. Teachers are necessary guides through literary texts, and thus, indirectly, through the life experiences that seem to be illuminated by them. By mediating the experience of literature for students, professors can borrow some of literature's charisma, and can even take some credit for it.

More so than any other subject, literature lends itself to powerful teaching. In their desire to assert a professional identity as serious as that of research scientists, literary scholars have, however, convinced themselves that the best teaching jobs are those that involve the least, or least strenuous, teaching. This disposition is both ill suited to the times, which are skeptical of the bottom-line value of literary studies, and out of step with the mounting crisis among university presses, which is constraining opportunities for traditional forms of publication. It is, in this context, not irrelevant that when alumni recall their most memorable college experiences, they frequently single out a particular teacher – often a professor of literature – who managed to provide instruction about the text, and about far more than the text. Countless films, stories, plays, and novels have taken the university as their setting, and the vast majority of these involve professors in the English department, which is, for the culture at large, the site within the university where the desire for knowledge braids most intimately with the hunger for experience. Literary scholars should not waste their time protesting the inaccuracy of their image in the media, but should see in such portraits a recognition of the ability of literary pedagogy to reach deep into a student's growing self-understanding and understanding of the world. Learning how to make the most of this ability is a professional necessity for literature professors – even a survival skill.

One of the most stubborn of the aesthetic mysteries that professors must learn to talk about productively is the peculiar nature of aesthetic pleasure, which can attach itself not just to comedies or lyric poems, but also to representations of human misery, pain, and suffering. The spectacle of King Lear wandering the plain in his madness, of the gnawing self-consumption of Dostoevsky's underground man, of the wittily articulated hopelessness endured by Kafka's heroes, even of Anne Frank's unbearably poignant self-discovery – all give us an intense but inexplicable and even disturbing pleasure. Our own reactions seem to implicate us somehow in the suffering we are reading about, and lead us deep into the chasm that separates the aesthetic representation from the thing represented, and thus to the specificity of art. By suggesting a certain capacity for detachment, our pleasure in the contemplation of pain also troubles the image we may have of ourselves as morally sensitive people, and so provokes a critical self-scrutiny and thus a sharpened and refined self-awareness.

Even when we are reading about pleasurable experiences, our own pleasure in reading is of a different kind, and the discordance between the events represented and our interest in those events suggests a human capability to take things in a different sense than they seem to demand – an ability to understand something against the grain or construe it according to our own interests. Becoming aware of this ability leads us to the recognition that the world as given does not necessarily determine our responses to it. We learn from literature what we want to, when we want to, and this deferred and independent process

of learning constitutes an experience of dawning freedom to which undergraduates more than anyone should be exposed.

The distinctive form of aesthetic pleasure we take from the literary experience gives us the sense that we are being deepened, empowered, and enriched even as we are being entertained or charmed – pleased in the deepest sense. Such a complex experience is difficult to theorize, professionalize, or politicize, but it is a vital and essential dimension of literary study, and should be maximized wherever possible. Indeed, just as one rough measure of literary merit is the degree of aesthetic pleasure the work creates, an equally rough measure of the merit of literary scholarship might be the degree to which it brings out or awakens an otherwise latent capacity for such pleasure in the work under discussion. This 'degree' cannot be measured, and is rarely mentioned in promotion reviews, but a critical practice that does not expose itself to such a test cuts itself off from its only durable support – the desire people have to turn and return to literature even when not obliged to.

There is a diffuse kind of politics here, but literary study cannot be considered as a superior or refined civics, for what it really fosters is an ongoing and open-ended project of individual and, perhaps, social self-examination and transformation. Professors of literature are in a position to encourage this project, but must learn to accept the principle of pleasure (rather than the desires for enlightenment, virtue, or justice) as its engine, and deferral and indirection as its conditions. As citizens, literary scholars may commit themselves to any position, any ideology, any issue, any candidate they choose, but in their roles as professors of literature, they participate in a small yet critical way in a process with a much longer time frame and a far greater range of possible outcomes. What they teach is not just a set of facts about an archive of texts, important as the record of literary history is; they also inculcate an informed and disciplined responsiveness not directly connected to advantage, utility, or immediate needs. Transmitting the literary heritage in all its astonishing variety, scholars are engaged in the constant rekindling of the capacity to experience aesthetic pleasure and the sense of imaginative freedom, even wonder, that accompanies that experience. Part of that wonder might be directed toward the remarkable fact of cultural survival and transmission across the continents, the cultural boundaries, and the millennia. Such a project may not satisfy many short-term interests, but it is not without honor, and those who are engaged in it have no need to question the value of their work.

Despite the noisy ideological quarrels that seem to beset literary studies, the best kinds of literary scholarship in any school are characterized by a few constant qualities: scrupulous attention to the text and to its various contexts; an equally scrupulous attentiveness to that aspect of the text that detaches from those contexts and speaks to readers today; and the ability to make interesting connections between the text and ideas that are current today but that are addressed in the literary text only indirectly or analogically. Especially given the crisis character of so many aspects of contemporary society, there is no shortage of such ideas today, and therefore absolutely no reason why literary scholars should not continue to discover new ways of making these connections, thereby renewing the literary tradition and providing contemporary debates

with resources they would not otherwise have.

What literary scholars need today is, then, not a new set of intellectual masters, or a new fortification of professional structures, or a more effective way of articulating political opposition. What is needed is more general and fundamental – a renewed sense of confidence and mission, especially among younger scholars. The profession can be most useful in nurturing this confidence by reminding its members that while professional structures do provide a certain measure of affirmation and solidarity, and thus a degree of autonomy from extra-academic or anti-academic pressures, professional concerns do not form the horizon of their interests or even their ambitions. The kind of confidence needed now will be based on a clarified sense of the long-term processes of cultural and individual self-interrogation and self-transformation to which literary study contributes, and a keener understanding of the forces that drive them. If literary scholars can reconnect their practice with these slow and uncertain but deeply necessary processes, they will have performed an immense service for themselves, for their students, and for the larger community whose precious artifacts are, for a brief moment, in their care.

Poem by W. S. Merwin

To the present tense

By the time you are
by the time you come to be
by the time you read this
by the time you are written
by the time you forget
by the time you are water through fingers
by the time you are taken for granted
by the time it hurts
by the time it goes on hurting
by the time there are no words for you
by the time you remember
but without the names
by the time you are in the papers
and on the telephone
passing unnoticed there too

who is it
to whom you come
before whose very eyes
you are disappearing
without making yourself known

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Fiction by Robert Coover

Grandmother's nose

She had only just begun to think about the world around her. Until this summer, she and the world had been much the same thing, a sweet seamless blur of life in life. But now it had broken away from her and become, not herself, but the place her self resided in, a sometimes strange and ominous other that must for one's own sake be studied, be read like a book, like the books she'd begun to read at the same time the world receded. Or maybe it was her reading that had made the world step back. Things that had once been alive and talked to her because part of her – doll, house, cloud, well – were silent now, and apart, and things that lived still on their own – flower, butterfly, mother, grandmother – she now knew also died, another kind of distance.

This dying saddened her, though she understood it but dimly (it had little to do with her, only with the inconstant world she lived in), and it caused her to feel sorry for these ill-fated things. She used to think it was funny when her mother chopped the head off a chicken and it ran crazily around the garden; now she didn't. She no longer squashed ants and beetles underfoot or pulled the wings off flies and butterflies, and she watched old things precious to her, like her mother, with some anxiety, frightened by the possibility of their sudden absence. Since dying was a bad thing, she associated it with being bad, and so was good, at least as good as she could be: she wanted to keep her mother with her. If her mother asked her to do something, she did it. Which was why she was here.

She also associated dying with silence, for that was what it seemed to come to. So she chattered and sang the day through to chase the silence away. A futile endeavor, she knew (she somehow had this knowledge, perhaps it was something her grandmother taught her or showed her in a book), but she kept it up, doing her small part to hold back the end of things, cheerfully conversing with any creature who would stop to talk with

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her. This brought smiles to most faces (she was their little heroine), though her mother sometimes scolded her: Don't speak with strangers, she would say. Well, the whole world was somewhat strange to her, even her mother sometimes; it was talk to it or let the fearful stillness reign.

Though the world was less easy to live in than before, it was more intriguing. She looked at things more closely than she had when looking at the world was like looking in at herself, her eyes, then liquid mirrors in a liquid world, now more like windows, she poised behind them, staring out, big with purpose. To be at one with things was once enough, sameness then a comfort like a fragrant kitchen or a warm bath. Now it was difference that gave her pleasure: feathers (she had no feathers), petals, wrinkles, shells, brook water's murmuring trickle over stones, not one alike, her mother's teeth (she hadn't even seen them there in her mouth before), the way a door is made, and steps, and shoes. She thought about words like dog, log, and fog, and how unalike these things were that sounded so like cousins, and she peered intensely at everything, seeking out the mystery in the busyness of ants, the odd veiny shape of leaves, the way fire burned, the skins of things.

And now it was her grandmother's nose. It was a hideous thing to see, but for that reason alone aroused her curiosity. It was much longer and darker than she remembered, creased and hairy and swollen with her illness. She knew she ought not stare at it – poor Grandma! – but fascination gripped her. Such a nose! It was as if some creature had got inside her grandmother's face and was trying to get out. She wished to touch the nose to see if it were hot or cold (Grandma lay so still! it was frightening); she touched her own instead. Yes, dying, she thought (though her own nose reassured her), must be a horrid thing.

The rest of Grandma had been affected, too. Though she was mostly covered up under nightcap, gown, and heaped-up bedclothes as though perhaps to hide the shame of her disease, it was clear from what could be glimpsed that the dark hairy swelling had spread to other parts, and she longed – not without a little shudder of dread – to see them, to know better what dying was like. But what could not be hidden was the nose: a dark bristly outcropping poking out of the downy bedding like the toe of a dirty black boot from a cloud bank, or from snow. Plain, as her grandmother liked to say, as the nose on your face. Only a soft snort betrayed the life still in it. Grandma also liked to say that the nose was invented for old people to hang their spectacles on (Grandma's spectacles were on the table beside her bed, perched on a closed book), but the truth was, eyes were probably invented to show the nose where to go. The nose sat in the very middle of one's face for all to see, no matter how old one was, and it led the way, first to go wherever the rest went, pointing the direction. When she'd complained that she'd forgotten the way to Grandma's house, her mother had said: Oh, just follow your nose. And she had done that and here she was. Nose to nose with Grandma.

Her grandmother opened one rheumy eye under the frill of her nightcap and stared gloomily at her as though not quite recognizing her. She backed away. She really didn't know what to do. It was very quiet. Perhaps she should sing a song. I've brought you some biscuits and butter, Grandma, she said at last, her voice a timid whisper. Her grandmother closed her eye again and from under her nose let loose a deep growly burp. A nose was also for smelling

things. And Grandma did not smell very nice. On the way I also picked some herbs for tea. Shall I put some on? Tea might do you good.

No, just set those things on the table, little girl, her grandmother said without opening her lidded eye, and come get into bed with me. Her voice was hoarse and raw. Maybe it was a bad cold she was dying of.

I'd rather not, Grandma. She didn't want to hurt her grandmother's feelings, but she did not want to get close to her either, not the way she looked and smelled. She seemed to be scratching herself under the bedding. It's . . . not time for bed.

Her grandmother opened her near eye again and studied her a moment before emitting a mournful grunt and closing it again. All right then, she mumbled. Forget it. Do as you damned well please. Oh dear, she'd hurt her feelings anyway. Her grandmother burped sourly again and a big red tongue flopped out below her swollen nose and dangled like a dry rag on a line, or her own cap hanging there.

I'm sorry, Grandma. It's just that it scares me the way you look now.

However I look, she groaned, it can't be half so bad as how I feel. Her grandmother gaped her mouth hugely and ran her long dry tongue around the edges. It must have been – *fooshh!* – something I ate.

She felt an urge to remark on her grandmother's big toothy mouth, which was quite shocking to see when it opened all the way (so unlike her mother's mouth), but thought better of it. It would just make her grandmother even sadder. She'd said too much already, and once she started to ask questions, the list could get pretty long, not even counting the parts she couldn't see. Her big ears, for example, not quite hidden by the nightcap. She remembered a story her grandmother told her about a little boy who was born with donkey ears. And all the rest was donkey, too. It was a sad story that ended happily when the donkey boy got into bed with a princess. She began to regret not having crawled into bed with her poor grandmother when she begged it of her. If she asked again, she would do it. Hold her breath and do it. Isn't there some way I can help, Grandma?

The only thing you're good for, child, would just make things worse. Her grandmother lapped at her nose with her long tongue, making an ominous scratchy sound. Woof. I'm really not feeling well.

I'm sorry . . .

And so you should be. It's your fault, you know.

Oh! Was it something I brought you that made you sick?

No, she snapped crossly, but you led me to it.

Did I? I didn't mean to.

Bah. Innocence. I eat up innocence. Grandma gnashed her teeth and another rumble rolled up from deep inside and escaped her. When I'm able to eat anything at all. . . foo. . . She opened her eye and squinted it at her. What big eyes you have, young lady. What are you staring at?

Your . . . your nose, Grandma.

What's the matter with it? Her grandmother reached one hand out from under the bedding to touch it. Her hand was black and hairy like her nose and her fingernails had curled to ugly claws.

Oh, it's a very *nice* nose, but. . . it's so. . . Are you dying, Grandma? she blurted out at last.

There was a grumpy pause, filled only with a snort or two. Then her grandmother sighed morosely and grunted. Looks like it. Worse luck. Not what I had in mind at all. She turned her head

to scowl at her with both dark eyes, the frill of the nightcap down over her thick brows giving her a clownish cross-eyed look. She had to smile, she couldn't stop herself. Hey, smartypants, what's funny? You're going to die, too, you know, you're not getting out of this.

I suppose so. But not now.

Her grandmother glared at her for a moment, quite ferociously, then turned her head away and closed her eyes once more. No, she said. Not now. And she lapped scratchily at her nose again. In a story she'd read in a book, there was a woman whose nose got turned into a long blood sausage because of a bad wish, and the way her grandmother tongued her black nose made her think of it. Did her grandmother wish for something she shouldn't have?

I sort of know what dying is, Grandma. I had a bird with a broken wing and it died and turned cold and didn't do anything after that. And living, well, that's like every day. Mostly I like it. But what's the point if you just have to die and not be and forget everything?

How should I know what the damned point is, her grandmother growled. She lay there in the heaped bedding, nose high, her red tongue dangling once more below it. She didn't move. It was very quiet. Was she already dead? Or just thinking? Appetite, her grandmother said finally, breaking the silence. And the end of appetite. That's it.

That was more like the Grandma she knew. She had lots of stories about being hungry or about eating too much or the wrong things. Like the one about the little girl whose father ate her brother. He liked the dish so much he sucked every bone (now every time she ate a chicken wing, she thought of that father). The little girl gathered all the bones he threw under the table and put them together and her brother became a boy again. Grandma often told stories about naughty boys and cruel fathers, but the little boy in this story was nice and the father was quite nice, too, even if he did sometimes eat children.

Her grandmother popped her eye open suddenly and barked in her deep raspy voice: Don't look too closely! It scared her and made her jump back. She'd been leaning in, trying to see the color of the skin under the black hairs. It was a color something like that of old driftwood. Look too closely at anything, her grandmother said, letting the dark lid fall over her eye once more and tilting her nose toward the ceiling, and what you'll see is nothing. And then you'll see it everywhere, you won't be able to see anything else. She gaped her jaws and burped grandly. Big mistake, she growled.

The thing about her grandmother's nose, so different from her own, or from anyone's she knew, she thought as she put the kettle on for tea, was that it seemed to say so much more to her than her grandmother did. Her nose was big and rough, but at the same time it looked so naked and sad and kind of embarrassing. She couldn't figure out exactly *what* she thought about it. Grandma's talk was blunt and plain and meant just what it said, no more. The nose was more mysterious and seemed to be saying several things to her at once. It was like reading a story about putting a brother back together with his licked bones and discovering later it was really about squashing bad ladies, one meaning hidden under another one, like bugs under a stone.

With a pestle she ground some of the herbs she'd brought in a mortar, then climbed up on a chair to get a cup down from the cupboard. Her grandmother's nose was both funny and frightening at the same time, and hinted at worlds beyond her imagination. Worlds, maybe,

she didn't really want to live in. If you die, Grandma, she said, crawling down from the chair, I'll save all your bones.

To chew on, I hope, her grandmother snapped, sinking deeper into the bedding. Which reminds me, she added, somewhat more lugubriously. One thing your grandmother said, as I now recall, was: Don't bite off more than you can chew.

Yes. But *you're* my grandmother.

That's right. Well – *wuurpp!* – don't forget it. Now go away. Leave me alone. Before I bite your head off just to shut you up.

This dying was surely a hard thing that her grandmother was going through, one had to expect a little bad temper. Even her grandmother's nose seemed grayer than it had been before, her tongue more raglike in its lifeless dangle, her stomach rumblings more dangerously eruptive. It was like she had some wild angry beast inside her. It made her shudder. Dying was definitely not something to look forward to. The kettle was boiling so she scraped the mortar grindings into the cup and filled it full of hot water, set the cup on the table beside the bed. Here, Grandma. This will make you feel better. Her grandmother only snarled peevishly.

Later, when she got home, her mother asked her how Grandma was feeling. Not very well, she said. A wolf had eaten her and got into bed in Grandma's nightclothes and he asked me to get in bed with him. Did you do that? No, I sort of wanted to. But then some men came in and chopped the wolf's head off and cut his tummy open to get Grandma out again. I didn't stay but I think Grandma was pretty upset. Her mother smiled, showing her teeth, and told her it was time for bed.

Was that what really happened? Maybe, maybe not, she wasn't sure. But it was a way of remembering it, even if it was perhaps not the best way to remember poor Grandma (that nose!), though Grandma was dying or was already dead, so it didn't really matter.

She crawled into her bed, a place not so friendly as once it was, but first she touched her bedstead, the book beside it (Grandma had given it to her), her pillow, doll, felt the floorboards under her feet, convincing herself of the reality of all that, because some things today had caused her doubt. No sooner had her feet left the floor, however, than there was nothing left of that sensation except her memory of it, and that, she knew, would soon be gone, and the memory of her grandmother, too, and some day the memory of her, and she knew then that her grandmother's warning about the way she looked at things had come too late.

Dialogue between Leszek Kolakowski & Danny Postel

On exile, philosophy & tottering insecurely on the edge of an unknown abyss

DANNY POSTEL: You've been living outside of Poland since 1968. Two decades ago you wrote an essay titled "In Praise of Exile," though in it you don't discuss your own exile. Do you feel that your exile has shaped the way you think about and relate to the world?

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI: Yes. Yes, I think so. I love the British, of course. But I don't feel British. I'm not an Oxonian. Britain is an island. Oxford is an island in Britain. All Souls is an island in Oxford. And I am an island in All Souls. I'm a quadruple island. But I don't complain. Only I don't feel that I belong to it. In fact, when I go to Paris, I feel more at home than in London, even though I've never lived there for more than six months at one time.

DP: Why do you think that is?

LK: Well, probably because I know French literature and poetry better. I learned French early. I would say French is my best second language. And I think that you really feel another culture when you read its poetry, in the original. The languages in which I could read poetry in the original when I was young were French and German and Russian – not to speak of Polish. But not English, of which I was ignorant.

DP: Speaking of poetry, do you have any thoughts on the death of your countryman Czeslaw Milosz?

A Fellow of the American Academy since 1970, Leszek Kolakowski is Senior Research Fellow Emeritus at All Souls College, Oxford. In 2003, the Library of Congress awarded him the first John W. Kluge Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Human Sciences. His books include "The Individual and Infinity" (1958), "The Philosophy of Existence, the Defeat of Existence" (1965), "Husserl and the Search for Certitude" (1975), "'If There is no God'" (1982), "Metaphysical Horror" (1988), "The Two Eyes of Spinoza and Other Essays on Philosophers" (2004), and "My Correct Views on Everything" (2005). In October, W. W. Norton will publish his celebrated three-volume "Main Currents of Marxism" (1976 – 1978) in a single-volume edition.

Danny Postel is contributing editor of openDemocracy.net and a member of the editorial board of "The Common Review." His work has appeared in "Philosophy and Social Criticism," "The Chronicle of Higher Education," "The Washington Post Book World," "The Nation," "The American Prospect," and "Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture."

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LK: I met him on my first trip to Paris, at the end of 1956. Later on, I saw him on various occasions here and there. I have a very, very high opinion of his poetry. He was a great writer. He was overwhelmed by sadness, sadness about the world around him. Not political, but cultural. He had no feeling of belonging. Although he was Polish, he had no motherland. He was homeless in some way. Perhaps it was the memory of his young days in Vilnius, where he was brought up, which had been Polish between the wars but then became Lithuanian. And I liked his book *The Captive Mind* very, very much. He speaks about people whom I knew – but without mentioning their names. He was, during his lifetime, strongly attacked from various sides. He had worked for some years in Polish diplomacy, in Paris and in Washington. He knew what Communism was about. At a certain point, he decided to defect. He stayed in Paris. Then he was terribly attacked by Polish journalists and the Polish government – writers and apparatchiks. But he was never accepted by Polish exiles – first of all, because he had been in Polish diplomacy, so they regarded him as an agent of the Communists. But also because he was very critical of prewar Poland.

DP: You mean the right-wing culture of prewar Poland?

LK: Yes, the right-wing culture of Polish Catholicism – a special kind of Catholicism, full of bigotry, anti-Semitism, nationalism. Of course, not everything in Polish Catholicism was like that. But the general atmosphere in the Church was very distasteful to him, as was Polish political culture in general in those years.

DP: This is an outlook you shared with Milosz.

LK: Yes, except that we weren't quite from the same generation. He was a young writer before the war, whereas I was a boy, not even twelve. But yes, I had this feeling. I strongly disliked a certain current in Polish culture – the nationalism, bigotry, anti-Semitism. And yet I've always been Polish.

DP: Your less than euphoric feelings about the Western Left were strongly colored by your year in Berkeley in 1969 – 1970. Tzvetan Todorov describes a similar experience, of fleeing a Communist country – in his case, Bulgaria – only to find himself in a heavily Communist intellectual milieu in Paris. What was Berkeley like for you?

LK: I found the so-called student movement simply barbaric. There are of course ignorant young people at all times and in all places. But in Berkeley their ignorance was elevated to the level of the highest wisdom. They wanted to 'revolutionize' the university in such a way that they wouldn't have to learn anything. They had all sorts of silly proposals. For instance, they wanted professors to be appointed by students, and students to be examined by other students. I remember one leaflet issued by the black student movement asserting that the libraries contained nothing but "irrelevant white knowledge."

DP: What about the student movement's opposition to the Vietnam War?

LK: I believed there were several good reasons for America to withdraw from Vietnam. But one reason which was nonsense was the claim of many opponents of the war that once America withdrew, South Vietnam would be liberated. Everybody even minimally acquainted with Communist politics knew that

when the Viet Cong took over South Vietnam it would be a disaster – oppression, despotism, massacres – as it was, of course. It was bound to be. Everybody should have expected that.

DP: As you know, Theodor Adorno's encounter with the New Left was similar to yours. He was horrified by the behavior of the radical students in Frankfurt. Did you ever meet him?

LK: Once. It was 1958. I was allowed to go for one year to Holland and to France, and I was also in Germany for a short time. So I met Adorno. I didn't know his work then. I remember him taking a manuscript from his desk and waving it furiously – a Lukács manuscript, as it happened.

DP: Why were you expelled from the Polish Communist Party in 1966?

LK: For many years my Party membership had been a joke really. But I believed, and so did many friends – probably wrongly – that there were reasons to stay in the Party, as it gave us more opportunity to express unorthodox views. A number of my friends, most of them writers, left the Party in protest against my expulsion. But even then I could teach whatever I wanted at the university. Nobody interfered with my teaching. But in 1968, I was expelled from the university, as were a few of my friends. There was a slander campaign against us in the press and so on. Nothing pleasant. Nevertheless, I should always remember it could have been much worse.

DP: What was it like to watch one Communist regime after another come tumbling down in 1989 and after?

LK: Very gratifying, of course. I was in Poland at the end of 1988, on a British passport. This was my first visit after twenty years. But I knew what was going on inside the country, since I was a member of this committee which was formed in the 1970s, after the riots – the Committee in Defense of Workers. I gave many interviews in support of this movement.

DP: Were they published in Poland?

LK: No, no. It was forbidden to mention my name in the Polish press, unless it was to attack me. I couldn't publish. I was an 'unperson.'

DP: When you went to Poland in 1988, why did the Polish authorities let you in?

LK: Because the regime was crumbling. It was very weak. But I was still interrogated by the secret police.

DP: On what grounds?

LK: Because on the visa application for myself and my wife, I wrote that I was going for private reasons. And then I took part in a meeting in which the Citizens Committee was formed, with Lech Walesa. And I had lectured at a philosophical society in the university as well. There were many people in attendance. And so I was accused of lying by an officer who interrogated me: I had said I was in the country for private reasons, but then my interrogator said, referring to the meeting with the Citizens Committee, "You participated in a secret meeting." I said, "What secret meeting? Everybody heard about it. Nothing was secret." My meeting with Walesa was discussed in the press. In Poland during that period, the distinction between le-

gal and illegal was unclear. I asked him, "Why do you have people follow me all the time? Wherever I go, they follow me in a car." I went to the cemetery, for instance, to the graves of relatives. And then I went to visit my very old aunt, and everywhere they followed me. But why? He said, "They're protecting you." Protecting me from whom? It was ridiculous.

DP: You've made the point that liberalization and openness are not necessarily an effective way of preserving a totalitarian regime; on the contrary, they often lead to revolutionary upheaval and the complete dismantling of regimes.

LK: Think of Gorbachev's *glasnost* – it was supposed to make Communism better but instead it ruined it.

DP: Do you think that having to resort to a certain kind of Delphic or esoteric idiom of writing under Stalinist rule added a dimension to the style of writers like yourself that might never have been developed in a free society?

LK: When I was in Poland, all of us who were intellectuals were compelled to use a certain code language, a language that would be acceptable in the established framework. So we had an acute sense of the limits of what could be said, of censorship. Of course. Occasionally our works were confiscated. But we tried to be intelligible without being transparent. In this period there were only a few cases of people publishing in émigré journals. There was a journal in Paris, *Kultura* – a very good and very important journal; obviously it was prohibited in Poland. Nevertheless, a few copies always circulated. The members of the Writers' Association were even able to read it in the library, legally. And occasionally, people brought it in from abroad. But people were afraid to publish. There were people arrested for publishing in such journals. But later on, at the very end of the 1960s, some people published books in Paris under their own names.

DP: The opening line of *Metaphysical Horror* reads: "A modern philosopher who has never once suspected himself of being a charlatan must be such a shallow mind that his work is probably not worth reading." Have you ever suspected yourself of being a charlatan?

LK: Certainly. Many times.

DP: Did you see Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*?

LK: Yes. It was very well done. I was in Poland [when the film is set, during World War II], though not in the ghetto, of course. But I lived among people who helped the Jews and who lived with the Jews in hiding. I remember Warsaw during the ghetto uprising. I lived for some time in a flat which was a hiding place for Jews who were saved from the ghetto. Not long ago I learned that once the Gestapo came to search all the flats, one after another. There were two groups of Gestapo people searching. And they failed to visit this very flat where I was because one group believed that it was already searched by another group, and vice versa. So my flat was spared. Had it not been, we wouldn't be talking today; I would be a crumbling skeleton. A friend of mine, Marek Edelman, was one of the very few survivors of the ghetto uprising, and one of the leaders, actually, of the uprising. He's still in Poland. He saw the film and said that it was true.

DP: Do you think that the experience you were just describing – living as a young man amongst Jews in hiding, people fearing for their lives – do you think that influenced you and your worldview?

LK: Probably, but I cannot say exactly in what way. It was, as you can imagine, a very bad experience. I was this young boy. I knew many people, of course, of various persuasions. My strong feeling was that the most dedicated and the most courageous were on the left.

DP: Is this what attracted you to the Left as a young man?

LK: Among other things, yes. And as I said, my strong negative feelings against a certain current in Polish culture – the chauvinism, nationalism, anti-Semitism, clericalism. I disliked it very strongly.

DP: In the title essay of your collection *Modernity on Endless Trial*, you describe the orthodoxy of our age as a kind of "patching up." "We try to assert our modernity," you write, "but escape from its effects by various intellectual devices, in order to convince ourselves that meaning can be restored or recovered apart from the traditional legacy of mankind and in spite of the destruction brought about by modernity." Do you view the revival of humanism going on today – I'm thinking of Todorov's recent work, for example – as an attempt at this kind of patchwork?

LK: I think so. There are attempts to restore humanism very simply through intellectual efforts. You can always repeat some old slogans, but I don't expect them to have a big impact. At the same time, there is a revival of religious sentiments and ideas going on as well. There is a feeling that we lack something important. I had many discussions with American students who had this feeling, even if they were not brought up in a religious tradition. They were attracted to this tradition quite independently of their upbringing. They felt they lacked something in life. Not necessarily the Church. But the need for something spiritual goes beyond our consumerist society. I think it's widespread, all over the world. So I don't expect, as many people did expect in the eighteenth century and beyond, that religion will vanish. I don't believe it will vanish. And I hope it will not.

DP: You also wrote, in that same essay, that "[t]here is something alarmingly desperate in intellectuals who have no religious attachment, faith or loyalty proper and who insist on the irreplaceable educational and moral role of religion in our world and deplore its fragility, to which they themselves eminently bear witness . . . . I do not blame them . . . . either for being irreligious or for asserting the crucial value of religious experience; I simply cannot persuade myself that their work might produce changes they believe desirable, because to spread faith, faith is needed and not an intellectual assertion of the social utility of faith." I suppose we can surmise from this that you yourself are a man of faith.

LK: This I don't want to discuss.

DP: May I ask why?

LK: I could say why I do not want to answer this question only by actually answering it.

DP: You've long defended European civilization and the European "project" against its anti-imperialist and Third

Worldist critics. But today Europe is being attacked by the American nationalist Right. American conservatives rail against European sensibilities about global power; American religious conservatives attack Western European secularism; and so on. As a Europeanist, how does it make you feel to see these attacks on Europe coming from America?

LK: I feel uneasy about it. This is to say, I believe the European tendency toward unification is a good thing – to a point. I don't believe that it will forge a superstate. France especially would support this only on the condition that it would be the dominant power in such a formation, but I don't find this desirable. National feelings are there. You cannot destroy them. I'm against the new European Constitution, but not the European Union. One of the reasons – though not the only one – is Russia. The Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Ottoman Empire, British Empire – they all fell. So did the Soviet Empire. Nevertheless, Russia today is awash in strong imperialist nostalgia. It is a Great Power. It can use its resources to blackmail its neighbors. And I think that for Poland and other countries previously in the Soviet Bloc, it is important for this reason to belong to the European Union. But this is not the only reason; it is one of several. So yes, I support the European Union. But I don't support its tendency to act as one state – one European state. You can see how furious, for example, Chirac was about Poland supporting the Iraq War. Apart from the question of whether it was a good idea or not, he was furious that Poland dared to do that. He preferred to make the target of his fury a weaker country like Poland, and not the United States.

DP: Did you think it was a mistake then for the Polish government to line up with the United States?

LK: No, I don't think so. Just days before the war started I was asked by a newspaper what I thought about the war. I said I was very happy that I'm not an American president and I don't need to decide anything. Because I've got ambivalent feelings about it.

DP: Would you share your thoughts on the state of philosophy today?

LK: I don't follow what's going on in today's philosophy. I have been reading very little. Unfortunately, my eyes are very bad. If something very important appeared, perhaps I would know, but I don't believe there are any great philosophers alive.

DP: None?

LK: Well, there are intelligent people, of course, very clever, full of intellectual vigor. But not a great philosopher.

DP: Are there any philosophers writing today whom you read with interest?

LK: I read Rorty with interest, though I don't share his views.

DP: In *Metaphysical Horror* you conjured an image that I found arresting: "It is perhaps better for us to totter insecurely on the edge of an unknown abyss than simply to close our eyes and deny its existence." Not merely to totter insecurely on the edge of an abyss, but an *unknown* abyss at that.

LK: *Metaphysical Horror* was an attempt to show that metaphysical ambitions,

metaphysical yearnings, metaphysical needs are still with us, and whenever we try to formulate them, they either fall apart or we run into contradictions. There is no good solution. That's our predicament.

DP: Do you see any way out of that predicament?

LK: No. We're living in a world which is, after all, ruled by Manichaean, hostile gods.

Gustavo Pérez Firmat

on bilingualism & its discontents

In a letter written toward the end of his life, the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev remarked that a writer who did not write only in his mother tongue was a thief and a pig. Although Turgenev did not explain the epithets, it's not difficult to figure out what he meant. Since a language is a form of cultural property, a writer who uses words that do not belong to him is a thief; since his theft of the words of others entails the neglect of his own, he is a pig. As it happens, Turgenev wrote his letter in German, his third language. And even though his letters are often every bit as literary as his novels, apparently for him the use of other languages in correspondence did not count as an infraction against his mother tongue. Indeed, it is revealing that Turgenev, in spite of his mastery of several European languages and his many years of residence outside Russia, never seized the opportunity, or succumbed to the temptation, of writing fiction in a language other than Russian. Once, when a reviewer incorrectly stated that one of his novellas had been written originally in French, an offended Turgenev pointed out – in flawless French – that he would never stoop to something so base.

Turgenev's attitude toward the Russian language offers an instance of the phenomenon that Uriel Weinreich termed language loyalty – that powerful, deep-seated attachment that many of us feel toward our mother tongue. Although feelings of language loyalty go back to the ancient Greeks, who stigmatized users of other languages as 'barbarians,' it is only more recently that individual languages have acquired the pull and prestige that they now enjoy. Unlike Turgenev, a sixteenth-century neo-Latin poet felt few qualms about not using his mother tongue for literary composition. Even writers who worked primarily in the vernacular also wrote, without apparent damage to their self-esteem, in other languages: Milton composed Italian sonnets; Garcilaso de la Vega wrote Latin odes. It was not until the rise of modern nation-states that native languages became national languages, and thus a privileged cultural possession. For most of us, as for Turgenev, the language that we speak is a fundamental component of our nationality, and hence of our sense of who we are. That is why when we want to question someone's claims

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Note by Gustavo Pérez Firmat

about his nationality, we often take aim at his language habits: "Oye, chico, pero tú no suenas cubano." Or, "Funny, you don't sound like an American." As Andrée Tabouret-Keller puts it, language acts are acts of identity. Who we are is what we speak.

As for myself, I have always felt a mixture of regret and remorse that I have not done more of my writing, and my living, in Spanish. Sometimes I have even thought that every single one of my English sentences, including this one, hides the absence of the Spanish sentence that I wasn't willing or able to write. And that if I handle English more or less well, it is because I want to write such clear, clean prose that no one will miss the Spanish that it replaces (and that it can never replace). Why I haven't tried to write more in Spanish is something that I've wondered about, something that I'm wondering about right now, but that I don't entirely understand. I know all about the practical reasons for my use of English, but I also suspect that there are other, more murky motives of which I'm only half aware: anger, fear of failure, maybe even a little self-hatred. If you say "tomato" and I say *tu madre,* the code-switching expletive may be a symptom of the speaker's unhappiness with his mother tongue, with his other tongue, and most of all, perhaps, with himself. And if you say "Latino" and I say *la tuya,* this expletive may reflect his unwillingness to accept his switch in loyalties.

It's been said that our mother tongue is the only one in which we have a right to make mistakes. But for many of us whose mother tongue is Spanish but who spend our lives on the hyphen, exactly the opposite is true: Spanish is the only tongue in which we *cannot* make mistakes. And not necessarily because we have mastered English better than Spanish – I haven't mastered either one; both have mastered me – but because our deficiencies in English do not undermine our sense of self. For most of my adult life, the language I have felt uneasy about has been Spanish, my mother tongue, rather than English, my second language. When I'm speaking English, my Cuban accent doesn't faze me, and I don't feel guilty about my occasional lapses. But if I'm speaking Spanish and I hear myself fumbling for words, I cringe. Every time I commit an inadvertent anglicism, every time I say *consistente* instead of *consecuente,* or *aplicación* instead of *solicitud,* I want to run and hide.

Since a crucial component of our self-image is the idea we have of ourselves as language users, one of the most disabling forms of self-doubt arises from the conviction that we cannot speak our native language well enough. In my Spanish classes, I have witnessed this fear many times in students of Hispanic background. I have seen how they squirm and look away when I call on them, when they think I think they should speak like natives. I have often squirmed and looked away myself, feeling that no matter how good my Spanish may be, it is just not good enough, not what it should be for somebody born and raised in Cuba.

The complexity of these feelings suggests that the notion of language loyalty, useful as it is in some contexts, doesn't do justice to an individual's attachment to his or her languages. It is not enough to explain, as Uriel Weinreich does, that language loyalty is nationalism applied to language. For one thing, tongue ties don't always correspond to national borders. For another, tongue ties antedate national allegiances. Psychologists have found that already in the first weeks of life infants can distinguish the sounds of their mother tongue, even when they are

not uttered by their mothers. That is to say, even before we can recognize those pockets of sound that we call words, we are bound to one language by ties too primal, too irreflective, to be subsumed under the notion of loyalty.

Languages not only inspire loyalty; they also provoke fear, resentment, rage, jealousy, love, euphoria – the entire gamut of human emotion. From the undergraduate whose difficulties with the subjunctive make him complain that he "hates Spanish," to the exile who clasps her mother tongue in a tight embrace, tongue ties are every bit as knotty as our other affections. And not only because of the role of language in shaping our conscious identity, but also because languages serve to act out and work through conflicts whose origins lie elsewhere, in groups and individuals who not only speak a given language, but – what is much more important – for whom that language speaks. The Spanish poet Pedro Salinas, in a letter to Katherine Whitmore, the American muse of *La voz a ti debida,* perhaps the greatest volume of love poetry ever written in the Spanish language, writes, in English: "If I like English, if I read English, it is only by its similarity with you. I read English as I would look at a picture of you." Falling in love with an American is falling in love with the English language. Having it out with *un español* is having it out with *el español*.

Entrenched as it is in all the European languages, the idea of a 'mother' tongue simplifies a much more complicated situation. Mother tongues are forked or folded into father and sister tongues, spouse and lover tongues, friend and enemy tongues. Among bilinguals and multilinguals, language kinship is not restricted to the maternal. The philosopher George Santayana, who was born and raised in Spain, identified Spanish – his 'mother' tongue – with his father, and English – the language in which he wrote all his work – with his half sister Susana, who was his first English teacher. Unlike Santayana, the Cuban writer Calvert Casey, who was born in Baltimore of a Cuban mother and an American father, wrote in both Spanish and English, but assigned them to incompatible emotional registers. In Casey's stories his mother's Spanish serves as the language of disguise, of dissimulation – indeed, his most famous story is called "Notas de un simulador." But English, Casey's father's tongue, was an instrument for self-revelation, the only medium in which he could express his desire for the male body, which he ultimately identified with his father's body.

My point is that many nonlinguistic factors, some nearly impossible to detect, determine a bilingual's engagement with languages. In the course of their lives, bilinguals shape – and are shaped by – their own language family, which does not quite fit the model of the Freudian family romance. In the Freudian scenario, the child is caught between the male and female parent; in the linguistic family romance, the bilingual subject oscillates – sometimes gleefully, sometimes gloomily – between languages that are not always distinguished so neatly. Although the other tongue may indeed be the father's, there will be times when both tongues will be regarded as motherly. In these instances, the competition involves aspirants to the maternal slot, as if the child, rather than having to negotiate between parents of opposite sexes, had to choose between a parent and a stepparent, or decide which of his mothers is the legitimate one.

Because we tend to think about bilingualism in terms of the dichotomy 'mother-other,' we sometimes overlook that the 'other,' like the mother, has a

Note by Gustavo Pérez Firmat

gender: there are he-tongues as well as she-tongues. The person I am closest to is an American woman; the person who had the biggest impact on my life, and to whom I was never close, was a Cuban man. The language of my inner discourse, the taunts and endearments I whisper only to myself, is shaped by these and other emotional entanglements. While I talk to myself both in Spanish and English, when I hear Spanish voices in my head, they are usually male; when I hear English voices, they are usually female. Like these voices, my languages are gendered – not intrinsically but circumstantially. For me English is a loving and accessible she-tongue; Spanish, a distant but beloved he-tongue. The true bilingual is not someone who possesses 'native competence' in two languages, but someone who is equally attracted to, or torn between, competing tongues.

Contrary to some reports, there is no bilingualism without pain. Although bilinguals are often playful, bilingualism is not a game. More often than not, the interlingual puns of bilingual writers are ill-tempered, nasty, aggressive: have pun, will travel. Etymologically, puns are *pullas*, jabs; when we go for the jocular, we go for the jugular – even if it is our own. The bilingual muse is a melancholy muse; it divides and does not conquer.

I should make clear that I am not talking about casual or classroom bilingualism, about the tourist, the scholar, or the student, but about those of us who live shaping events in our lives – growing up, falling in love, surviving illness, enduring loss – in more than one language. In these circumstances, the celebration of bilingualism is not the dominant mode. For every moment of bilingual bliss, there is a corresponding moment of bilingual blues. For every merry bilingual who feasts on wordplay – all roads lead to roam – there is a somber bilingual who bites his tongues, someone for whom, as Santayana once remarked, language belongs to the dark side of life.

It may be heretical for a Spanish professor to say this, but I think we are sometimes too quick in singing the praises of bilingualism. Steven Kellman, the author of a book entitled *The Translingual Imagination,* writes: "If identity is shaped by language, then monolingualism is a deficiency disorder." Yes and no. Yes, identity is shaped by language; but no, languages are not like vitamins. The blurb on the jacket of Kellman's book sounds a similar note: "Monolingualism is a form of oppression. Join the future, read this book." I don't deny the damage done by coercive monolingualism, which sometimes results in the extirpation of a mother tongue, but bilingualism can engender its own forms of oppression. Calques and barbarisms are only the surface tremors of rifts that reach deeper than syntax or vocabulary. Among bilinguals, nostalgia for monolingualism is at least as common as its repudiation. A Czech proverb teaches: "Learn a new language, get a new soul." Is it always a blessing to be multisouled?

Richard Stern

on how the stories changed

There are many handles on history. You can study changing styles of transportation, communication, jokes, songs, clothes, cuisine, curses, and what have you. For half a century, my professional handle was the stories written by students at the University of Chicago.

Twice a year, I'd assemble a class of about a dozen writers out of the forty or so who submitted stories as a form of application. The class was a workshop – that is, each session a student would read to the class the story he'd written. This would always be followed by comments from each of the other students and then a general discussion.

The changing subject matter of the stories over the years is the focus here, but a word should also be said about changes in literary style. Hemingway was alive in 1955, but for most students his style wasn't (*The Old Man and the Sea* was more frequently parodied than imitated). The Hemingway understatement implied stoic control of strong feeling. A good Hemingway story made clear that such feeling was underwritten by hands-on experience intelligently, bravely, and stoically digested. In the 1940s and 1950s, the obliquity and solidity of this style turned into the impassive notations of Camus' *Stranger*, perhaps the single most influential fiction of its time. In American fiction, this impassivity turned into minimalism, an unaccented accretion of decisive remarks, gestures, events, and situations that, though violent, were almost always quiet. Post-*Stranger*, French fiction was a systematically emotionless notation of objects, settings, human beings, and events sometimes organized by a covert mythic or even less apparent pattern. Only a few American students followed this French mode, although in class we talked about its theoretical justification, the essays of Roland Barthes and Alain Robbe-Grillet. Over the years, the protagonists of the student stories changed from Hemingway stoics to passive misfits and then, though less frequently, to barely described characters whose emotional reactions and interior development were beside the clinical point.

Many student stories from 1955 to, say, 1990 were about coming out of sexual or other closets of social abnormality. The misery and joys of discovering, practicing, and revealing to more or less unsympathetic relatives or friends one's homosexuality, criminality, or emotional

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Note by Richard Stern

emptiness often made for very moving – and perhaps therapeutic – classes.

When parental divorce became common in the 1970s and 1980s, one sort of story dealt with the protagonists' puzzled resentment that their parents – sometimes grandparents – were leading second or third lives before they were launched on their first. It was as if there were but a fixed portion of life-stuff, and the children were being robbed of theirs by those whose duty was to lead them to it. The children in these stories were sometimes burdened by the additional weight of their forced complicity in the theft: they would be consulted about the suitability of parental partners, and then asked to serve as best man or maid of honor at parental nuptials.

A subgroup of these stories dealt with the young protagonists' intellectual and erotic discoveries, usually at college, and their failed attempts to interest, let alone absorb, their parents in them. Such failures either diminished or ratified the importance of the discoveries. In any case, whether the parents were sophisticated or naive, well educated or not, the discoveries marked a new level of independence.

American literature is rich in immigrant stories. The ones new in the 1970s and 1980s were about first-, second-, and, more rarely, third-generation Asian Americans. Earlier, the Indian-Pakistan political crises had initiated a literature whose most visible figure was Salman Rushdie. I had several Anglo-Indian students whose sometimes hilarious, sometimes touching stories described the old immigrant conflict between those still immersed in their countries of origin and their ever-more Americanized children and grandchildren. From what to eat and wear, to whom and how to marry and raise children, the subject matter of these stories was mostly domestic compared, say, to the finest of Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories, Forster's *A Passage to India*, or Paul Scott's *Staying Behind*. Few students had the imagination and almost none had the experience to deal with the politics of adultery or the clash of nostalgia and expulsion on a public stage. Instead they dealt, often splendidly, with exchanges over dining tables, conflicts about television programs, and dating.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the stories by Asian American students tended to describe clashes between first and second generations. Sometimes these clashes emerged in class discussions, with first-generation students criticizing second-generation students for willful erasure of the ancestral past. More powerful were the dramas of helter-skelter flight from Vietnam followed by complex resettlement in the United States. There were also some U.S. Army veteran stories about the fields, jungles, rivers, battles, intrigues, miseries, and horrors of the war and the more or less difficult return home – the sort of story Hemingway and other veterans introduced into post–World War I literature. The Vietnamese story I remember best dates from the 1980s. It had to be rewritten over and over because of the writer's inexperience with English (I came close to rejecting her for the class). It had to do with a Vietnamese family who'd come in a great rush from Saigon, settled, and prospered in a small Ohio town. When they assembled for dinner, one chair was always left empty: it was the mother's agonized reminder of the baby they'd had to leave behind in Saigon with her mother. The absence of this child was the heaviest presence in the growing years of the narrator's life. One day, news came that the grandmother had died and that the now twelve-year-old child was coming to

Ohio to join the family. The end of the story concerned the mother's inability to handle this tremendous news. When the writer, a small, lovely Vietnamese girl, read it aloud, the class, after a silent moment, applauded – a rare occurrence.

More and more, the influence of television was seen in the stories: television programs were a lingua franca shorthand for appearance, style, occupation, whatever. So instead of "Who does he think he is, Hamlet?" one read, "Hey, Kojak, your lollipop's dripping." In my last years as a professor of literature, the ubiquity and fluid power of the Internet and the ease and shorthand rhythms of email were altering narrative rhythms. These changes made for a speed of allusion that I think related to the increasing casualness of the relationships described in the stories. (Cell phones, digital cameras, BlackBerry devices, and iPods had not yet transformed lives, so I can't report on their narrative effects.)

What was also conspicuous was their global reach. I'd spent my student years trying to figure out ways to get to the Europe that Fitzgerald and Hemingway had described. Many of my students had been born and raised abroad and almost all had traveled. What they hadn't seen with their own eyes they'd seen in movies – movies that weren't filmed on Hollywood lots but on location around the world.

In retrospect, what interests me is the changing depiction of constriction and resentment, ambition and liberation, by privileged, intelligent, and ambitious young people in their late teens and early twenties.

Even more than most arts, literature depends on continuity as much as on change. Language itself is basically conservative, and the emotional repertory of human beings has not much altered. Many of the conflicts, quests, hierarchies, dreams, and appetites depicted in the three-thousand-year-old *Iliad* can be recognized, if not experienced, today. Literature teachers describe the differences that different places and times account for in works, and try to demonstrate their special narrative and poetic powers. Literary history – even an account of changes in student stories – may supply the historians of economic, social, and political change with something between filigree and marrow.

Donald P. Green

on evidence-based political science

The advent of the evidence-based movement in fields as varied as medicine, criminology, and education represents not simply a new thirst for evidence, but for evidence of a particular kind. Far from issuing banal appeals for data, advocates of evidence-based practice emphasize the need for experimental research conducted in real-world settings.

The term 'experimental' in this context refers to studies in which units of observation are assigned at random to treatment and control conditions. This type of investigation stands in sharp contrast to observational research in which some natural process determines which individuals or groups receive a treatment. In a medical experiment on hormone replacement therapy, for example, women are randomly assigned to receive either the treatment or a placebo; the corresponding observational study simply compares women who, for whatever reason, receive hormone replacement therapy to those who do not, often with statistical controls designed to make the two groups equivalent.

The strength of experimental research derives from the use of randomization procedures, which ensure an unbiased comparison between treatment and control groups. 'Unbiased' is a term of art that statisticians use to refer to estimation procedures that have no systematic tendency to over- or underestimate the true effect. Any given randomized study might over- or underestimate the effects of, say, hormone replacement therapy, but on average these errors will cancel out. Observational research, by contrast, forces the investigator to impose strong and often untestable assumptions about the comparability of groups that do and do not receive a treatment. If healthier women happen to take hormone replacements, there will be a systematic tendency to overestimate the treatment's effects.

Although political science is predominantly an observational discipline, it has gradually drifted in the direction of experimental research. The 1950s saw some initial forays into randomized experiments on voter turnout. The 1960s

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and 1970s drew political scientists into the study of group bargaining and public goods dilemmas, usually with college students standing in for legislators. The 1980s witnessed a dramatic increase in the use of randomized survey design, whereby respondents answered questions that varied in wording and content. The late 1990s ushered in the current renaissance of field experimentation when a small but rapidly growing group of scholars rekindled the experimental study of voter mobilization, conducting dozens of field experiments designed to examine the effects of door-to-door canvassing, direct mail, phone calls, leaflets, electronic mail, and televised public service announcements.

These studies, which Alan Gerber and I summarize in *Get Out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout*, refocus the method and substance of research in the field of electoral behavior. With regard to method, these studies randomly assigned hundreds, thousands, and, in some cases, tens of thousands of registered voters to treatment and control groups. Those assigned to the treatment group received some kind of intervention designed to encourage them to vote. After each election, public records were examined to gauge voter turnout rates in the treatment and control groups.

Note the contrast with conventional survey analysis, which in this instance assesses the effects of phone calls by asking respondents whether they voted and whether they received some sort of contact from a campaign. Obviously, surveys of this kind confront serious misreporting problems. But even if reporting were flawless, the problem of drawing causal inferences from nonexperimental data would remain: do those contacted by campaigns vote at higher rates because they were contacted, or are campaigns simply prone to target likely voters? If the latter were true, we might see a correlation between voting and receiving phone calls even if contact from a campaign had no effect on voter turnout. Of course, the survey analyst could assume away this problem by stipulating that those who are contacted by campaigns are just like those who are not contacted. Indeed, these kinds of assumptions are so routinely invoked that researchers are often oblivious to them. The point of experimental research is to call attention to these assumptions. The challenge is to devise experimental designs that free researchers from invoking them.

Three healthy developments flow from the exercise of confronting causal questions with experimental data. Ordinarily, bold pronouncements about research methodology and statistical analysis are insulated from criticism by the fact that the causal parameters of interest are unknown. Indeed, one cannot understand the intellectual currents in political science without appreciating the role of chronic causal uncertainty.

First, in the absence of an accurate causal inference or the prospect of getting one, methodological disputes are often a matter of style, with the advantage typically going to the most technically sophisticated statistical procedure. But experiments change the terms of these methodological debates. In recent decades, researchers in economics and medicine have begun to evaluate the performance of observational research methods by asking how closely their results concur with experimental benchmarks. The results have been quite sobering. Observational methods often perform poorly, even when the data are analyzed using cutting-edge statistical techniques.

Second, the fact that observational methods are sometimes shown to pro-

Note by Donald P. Green

duce wildly inaccurate conclusions engenders a healthy skepticism about canonical research findings that have not been confronted with experimental data. Consider, for example, the relationship between education and voter turnout in the United States. Thousands of surveys spanning several decades have documented the powerful correlation between educational attainment and electoral participation: no two variables in social science have a more robust statistical relationship. On the other hand, the implications of this individual-level result seem to be at odds with historical trends. The fact that many Western industrialized democracies have experienced dramatic long-term gains in education but no gains in voter turnout raises questions about whether education exerts a causal effect on voter turnout or is instead a marker for other factors that are the true causes (for example, exposure to political discussion during childhood). The solution to this puzzle, which has vexed political scientists for decades, is to study the long-term consequences of exogenous interventions that have increased educational attainment – for instance, do randomly assigned college scholarships or reductions in class size produce higher rates of voter turnout? This approach represents a radical departure from current practice in political science.

Third, as the foregoing example illustrates, the experimental perspective encourages political scientists to attend to experimental developments in other disciplines. When education researchers devise an experiment that produces a significant increase in high school graduation rates, the stage is set for what Alan Gerber and I have termed a 'downstream experiment.' Once education is manipulated in a random way, the task for political scientists is to trace the downstream effects on voter turnout, support for civil liberties, and other outcomes thought to be driven by education. Analogous arguments could be advanced for economic experiments: when individuals experience a rise in income, do they change their political orientations? Or for sociological experiments: when people are randomly recruited to participate in environmental or cultural organizations, do their levels of social trust and civic engagement increase?

Political scientists whose subject matter falls outside the field of political behavior tend to regard experimentation as impractical or unethical, or both. Few researchers are comfortable with the idea of randomly altering constitutional arrangements, alliances, or political cultures. This is usually where the discussion of experimental methods ends. But experimental thinking can be useful even if researchers can do no more than approximate the features of an experiment. Unfortunately, researchers seldom avail themselves of these opportunities. Those who conduct comparative research, whether qualitative or quantitative, rarely design their investigations around near-random events, such as technological or climatic developments that in the short run change trade flows, military capabilities, or mass access to new information.

Admittedly, many questions in political science do not lend themselves to experimentation. Practical and ethical constraints provide a justification for observational methods. However, those who are forced by circumstances to rely on nonexperimental evidence should not lose sight of its inherent limitations. To bring these limitations into sharper focus, Alan Gerber, Edward Kaplan, and I have spelled them out in something we dubbed the Illusion of Learning Theorem. Put simply, the argument runs as

follows: Suppose you are confronted with two kinds of evidence – experimental and observational. Thanks to random assignment, you can extract information about causality from the experimental data (at least for the narrow setting in which the experiment takes place); the larger the experimental study, the less uncertainty that surrounds this causal inference. The observational data present two sorts of uncertainty. Sampling error, one type of uncertainty, diminishes with the size of the study. A second source of uncertainty concerns bias – the tendency of research method to over- or underestimate a causal relationship. Even when the sample size is infinite, uncertainty about the bias associated with the observational research design remains. The weight you assign to observational evidence hinges on the second source of uncertainty. When you know nothing about the bias of the observational research procedure, you simply ignore the observational results entirely.

The logic of this argument presents an important challenge to those who claim that observational research has advanced our knowledge of cause and effect in political science. Those who make this claim are implicitly insisting they know the inherent biases in the nonexperimental methods that are routinely used. (They are encouraged in this view by reporting conventions, which present statistical results as though these biases were known with perfect certainty.) For most applications, one might reasonably ask how researchers came to know the biases of their nonexperimental approach. I am aware of no research program in political science that endeavors to assess whether scholars can successfully predict the biases of different types of research designs. The history of medicine is replete with examples of therapies that were lauded on the basis of observational research only to be repudiated by randomized trials – for example, hormone replacement therapy. The subtle biases of observational research often become evident only in hindsight.

A more persuasive defense of observational research notes that the questions it addresses are often bigger than those that lend themselves to experimental inquiry. If we imagine that the expected value of a research program is the product of the importance of the research question times the increase in knowledge that results from the investigation, we may conclude that some observational studies are probably good investments. The question, then, is whether the research portfolio of political science is appropriately diversified. Although experimental methods have made inroads in recent years, the overwhelming majority of research in the discipline remains nonexperimental. Political science is arguably too enamored of long shots.

One final concern about allocating more research effort to experimental investigation is that its narrow empirical focus comes at the expense of broader theoretical inquiry. Knowing whether this or that voter mobilization technique raises turnout, so the argument goes, does not tell us much about the broader conditions under which people engage in collective action. My colleague Alan Gerber has argued forcefully against this proposition, pointing out that the value of rigorous science is that it provides a firm foundation on which theories can be erected. The gradual accumulation of secure causal propositions aids theory building. Theories of collective action alone may or may not predict that door-to-door canvassing stimulates voter turnout while a torrent of direct mail

Note by Donald P. Green

and robotic phone calls does not. But once these facts are established, theorists know not to bother advancing arguments that imply that door-to-door canvassing is a waste of time because it fails to resolve the public goods dilemma, or that the content of mail and phone messages allows voters to overcome the costs of acquiring political information. Experiments provide the stubborn facts that inspire theoretical innovation, which in turn suggests new lines of empirical inquiry. To Kurt Lewin's aphorism that "there is nothing as practical as a good theory," evidence-based political science would add that there is nothing as theoretically informative as a reliable causal inference.

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Inside back cover: Lithograph by Honoré Daumier (1808–1879) from the series *Les gens de justice*: "The defense compliments the talent of the prosecution, while the prosecutor admires the eloquence of the defense. The judge applauds both lawyers. Everyone is well pleased, except the accused." See Lee S. Shulman on *Signature pedagogies in the professions,* pages 52–59: "Lawyers are torn between acting as zealous advocates or as officers of the court . . . between acting in their own self-interest or in the interests of either their client or the greater society." Image courtesy of Trustman Honoré Daumier Lithograph Collection, Special Collections, Brandeis University Libraries.

828

coming up in Dædalus:

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on identity	Akeel Bilgrami, Wendy Doniger, Amartya Sen, Stephen Greenblatt, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Sydney Shoemaker, Joseph Koerner, Susan Greenfield, David A. Hollinger, Claudio Lomnitz, Carol Rovane, Todd E. Feinberg, and Courtney Jung
on nonviolence & violence	William H. McNeill, Adam Michnik, Jonathan Schell, James Carroll, Breyten Breytenbach, Mark Juergensmeyer, Steven LeBlanc, James Blight, Cindy Ness, Neil L. Whitehead, and others
on sex	Joan Roughgarden, Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, Terry Castle, Steven Marcus, Claudia Goldin, Brian Charlesworth, Elizabeth Benedict, and others

plus poetry by Charles Wright, Peg Boyers, Jorie Graham, Kevin Carrizo di Camillo &c.; fiction by Ree Davis &c.; and notes by Robert F. Nagel, Jeri Laber, Michael Cook, Alvin Goldman, Norbert Schwarz, Rodolfo Dirzo, Joel Handler, Joan W. Bresnan, William B. Quandt, William Galston, Richard Morris, Robert J. Sharer, Lisa Randall, Bryan Clarke &c.

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