IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

World News in Brief • by Aleksandra Ciric • 3
Passings: Denis Donaldson, Yuan Baojing, William Coffin • 17
Goings on About Campus • 20

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Standards for Principals, but what Principles for Standards? • by Sam Boyd • 4
Understanding Poverty in America Today • by Julie Fry • 5
Metamorphosing the Metropolis • by Julia Simon • 6

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Capturing the Other in Iraq • by Mario Diaz-Perez • 7
Headaches for the Hague Tribunal • by Suyeon Khim • 9
Behind the Headlines, a More Dangerous World for Journalists • by Ali Winston • 10
World Baseball Classic: Post-Mortem • by Michael Cam-Phung • 12

POLITICS

Non-Proliferation on the Brink • by Andrew Stecker • 13
Super-Languages: Now Serving 6 Billion • by Niko Kontovas • 14

CULTURE

Art Theft and the Cultural Identity of the West • by Emily Warner • 15
Snap Culture: American Apparel • by Chris Ross • 16
Travels: 2000-2005 • photographs by Liliane Kang • 18

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AFRICA

SIERRA LEONE – In his first appearance before a special international tribunal, former Liberian president Charles Taylor pleaded not guilty to ten counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his alleged role in Sierra Leone’s 1991-2002 civil war. Taylor is accused of aiding rebels who fought for control of Sierra Leone’s lucrative diamond fields and used torture, rape, and amputation to terrorize civilians. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Liberia’s current president, fears that Taylor’s presence could destabilize the region and has requested his trial be transferred to The Hague.

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL – A Palestinian suicide bomber killed nine people and injured fifty in an April 17 attack on a Tel Aviv falafel restaurant. Although the bombing was carried out by Islamic Jihad, a radical faction not affiliated with the government, Hamas and some Palestinian Authority officials called it a legitimate act of self-defense, while Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas publicly condemned the attack. Israel blames the Hamas-led government for encouraging such acts of terrorism, and retaliated by revoking the Jerusalem residency rights of three Hamas legislators and a Cabinet minister.

IRAN – The United Nations Security Council urged Iran to halt its uranium-enrichment program and asked the International Atomic Energy Agency to report back on Iran’s compliance in thirty days. This nonbinding declaration was the result of three weeks of tense negotiations in which the final version was significantly weakened in order to achieve unanimous support. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said that the council “is working on the basis that Iran will not meet the proposals,” but talks concerning possible international sanctions against Iran have been inconclusive.

EUROPE

FRANCE – After two months of massive protests and strikes, the French government dropped a controversial part of a youth labor law that allowed employers to fire workers under age 26 without stated reason. The law was intended to reduce youth unemployment by making hiring more flexible, but students and unions feared it would erode crucial labor protections. Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin announced that the failed measure would be replaced by one directed specifically at disadvantaged youth.

SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO – Former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic died of heart failure on March 11 in his prison cell at The Hague. Family members and supporters claim that Milosevic was poisoned while in United Nations custody, but a Dutch investigation confirmed that he died a natural death. The Serbian government refused to grant the former leader a state funeral and did not attend the ceremonies, held in Milosevic’s hometown of Pozarevac.

AMERICAS

JAMAICA – Veteran politician Portia Simpson Miller was sworn in as Jamaica’s first female prime minister on March 30. She vowed to fight corruption, extortion, and criminal behavior, but has faced controversy over her emphasis of Christianity as one way to solve these problems. Miller denied any imposition of her religion, but said, “We have to show how the Christian faith relates to all the practical problems which this country faces.”

UNITED STATES – Amid record-low approval ratings, President Bush has accepted the resignations of chief of staff Andrew Card and press secretary Scott McClellan. McClellan’s resignation came shortly after new chief of staff Joshua Bolten announced an imminent shake-up of administrative personnel, and more resignation are possible. However, President Bush has continually supported Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld against perhaps the strongest calls for resignation, notably from retired generals criticizing his management of the Iraq war.

CHINA – The British Transplantation Society said there is an “accumulating body of evidence” to suggest that the organs of executed Chinese prisoners are being harvested and sold, without consent, for transplants. Human Rights Watch published a major report on the practice twelve years ago, stating that up to 10,000 organs a year were taken from executed prisoners, and government officials supposedly received first priority. Chinese officials deny the allegations, and plan to ban the sale of human organs and require written consent for organ donation later this year.

NEPAL – Authorities have imposed an 18-hour “shoot-to-kill” curfew on the capital city of Kathmandu in response to a major pro-democracy rally planned by the opposition. The Nepali Congress Party called a general strike after King Gyanendra dissolved Parliament and took direct control of the government in February 2005. The national shutdown is entering its third week and has claimed the lives of ten protestors, but opposition leader Shobhakar Parajuli said, “We will not remain silent. We will defy the curfew order and stage demonstrations as scheduled.”
Standards for Principals, but what Principles for Standards?

by Sam Boyd

Education Policy has many quirks and irrationalities, but few are more puzzling than the current status of the Principal. The standards movement has made school administrators the center of education reform in a novel way, yet the popular debate over school reform almost completely ignores their roles. The standards reforms of the past decades, which have culminated in No Child Left Behind (NCLB), have put enormous responsibilities on the shoulders of school principals. However, these principals have been given almost no means of effecting the change they have been burdened with implementing. Furthermore, it has been noted that the principal’s job is in many ways less rewarding and more demanding than that of the average teacher.

Principals first received attention as a special class worthy of study in the 1920s. As management became an academic study and public schools became larger, school administration came to be seen as distinct from teaching. While there had long been head teachers who were called principals, it was only in the early twentieth century that separate principal training programs emerged and the academic study of school administration began. The first doctorate in education administration was given by Columbia University in 1905, but such degrees did not become common until the 1920s. Growth in the study of education administration continued through the 1940s, parallel to the growth and increasing complexities of schools.

Principal training was first criticized in the 1940s, but major reform efforts did not take off until the end of the decade. The primary criticism of existing programs was that they did not have a rigorous enough academic approach. In response, academic administration evolved from a discipline based on business and management theory to a more academic pursuit. While it continued to be strongly influenced by management theory, that theory had become more focused on organizational decision-making and bureaucracy.

In the 1980s, criticism of American education began to focus on how schools were run. The so-called “excellence movement” focused on reforming education administration on a school-by-school basis through improved training. While the standards movement (which NCLB grew out of) is sometimes seen as part of the excellence movement, it is a somewhat separate concept and occasionally understood as an alternative to policies strictly focused on individual schools. After all, standards are statewide, or at the very least district-wide, so the standards movement does, in part, reject the idea that reform can be achieved only at the school level. On the other hand, standards are still based on evaluating the performance of individual schools (rather than districts or classes) and thus can be seen as a continuation of earlier reform efforts.

Critics of the standards movement argue that it holds principals accountable for school performance despite the fact that they have little control over it. This, they argue, makes the already undesirable position of the principal even less attractive. They present as evidence polls of principal-certified personnel and an aging principal population.

The first component of this argument is that principals are held personally accountable for school performance. NCLB certainly requires this. Even if principals are not fired or subjected to reduced pay, having a school you run labeled as failing is a deeply unpleasant experience. Standards advocates would undoubtedly retort that they don’t mind hurting some feelings if it means really reforming schools, yet, as we will see, this hardly answers the rest of the critics’ arguments. Certainly, there are exceptional individuals capable of transforming the culture of a school, yet if their approach is to be credible, standards advocates must show that the majority of principals have the tools and the ability to improve their schools to the degree which NCLB expects.

Indeed, principals often have very little control over what is unquestionably the largest determinant of school success — the quality of teachers. Typically, schools are required to accept teachers who are “excessed” from another school in the district if they do not have a place to work. Only after all transferring teachers are placed can schools hire new teachers. In some cases, over half of all vacancies are filled without input from principals. Furthermore, this process narrows the period between new teacher hiring and the start of the school year, giving principals less time to evaluate candidates and less time to introduce them to the school. To make matters worse, union contracts make it practically impossible to fire existing teachers. This often leads to underperforming teachers being bounced from one school to the next, which only makes them worse. Finally, principals have no control over who is hired first if layoffs are necessitated.

While studying principal influence over curriculum is more difficult, it seems clear that principals have, at best, only a tangential impact. Principals are also often said to influence change through managing resources effectively, but this has a tenuous impact on performance.

Even without being held accountable for performance over which they have no control, principals have a job that is not terribly attractive. Most of them start in teaching, but cease to do so once they become principals. Worse, they are expected to work 60–80 hours a week, supervise evening activities, and spend much of their time on paperwork. While there are some financial rewards, these seem inadequate for the difficulty of the job. Public school principals are paid an average of $66,487 a year compared to an average for teachers of $42,912. However, the real pay gap is probably smaller than this because principals have an average age of about 50, which is significantly higher than the average for teachers as a whole. Therefore, their pay would be somewhat higher than average even if they were not principals, since teacher pay is typically dependent on seniority. Moreover, attempts to attract more qualified teachers from the private sector are shrinking the gap in pay.

Given all this, who becomes a principal? The answer is not encouraging. A study which received data from 450 of the approximately 500 preparation programs in the U.S. found that some accepted students with GPAs as low as 2.5 and many relied almost exclusively on GPA and GRE scores to filter applicants. Only 67 percent even conducted interviews, and these often had little weight in admissions decisions. GRE scores for students intending to go into education administration are third from the bottom in a list of 41 potential fields of graduate study. Amongst seven other fields within education, administrators scored above only physical education majors on the verbal and mathematics sections of the exam and above only special and physical education majors on the quantitative section.

The data suggests that the difficulties principals face are reducing the quality of those entering the profession rather than limiting the number of principals. Furthermore, it seems likely that the problem will only get worse as the effects of NCLB on principal recruitment are fully felt. It could be that standards-based reforms are so successful that their benefits outweigh the costs to principal recruitment, but this seems unlikely. In any event, there is a clear and compelling case for either increasing principal power and/or making them less directly responsible for things they do not control.

The excellence and standards movements have shed critical light on the practice of school administration. However, they have not fully achieved what they set out to do and, in the case of the standards movement, it is possible that the situation has become worse. It is clear that school reform requires a comprehensive reevaluation of the role of the principal. Recruitment must be improved, which in turn requires better training opportunities and a healthier work environment. The expectations and responsibilities of the principal must be brought in line with reality and their working conditions must be improved. This, along with more careful requirements, may succeed in ensuring more qualified candidates can become successful principals.
Some basic facts about poverty in the US: Last year, the pre-tax-income cutoff for a couple with two children to be considered living in poverty was $19,806. According to data from the US Census Bureau, this means that there were 37 million Americans living in poverty in 2005—nearly one out of every eight people in the United States. In more human terms, 9.6 million people, (including 3 million children) go hungry each year, meaning they are consistently forced to skip meals or go without food for an entire day.

Poverty is not just confined to inner-city ghettos: only 40 percent of America’s poor live in central cities. The percentage of Americans in poverty living in suburbs is almost as high, at 36 percent. Nor is poverty a “luxury for the lazy.” Nearly 40 percent of America’s poor over the age of 16 worked either part-time or full-time in 2001, yet could not earn enough to secure even the basic necessities of life.

That’s the bad news. The good news is that ending poverty is relatively easy. The secret? Minor adjustments to the formula that determines who qualifies as living “in poverty.” Crunch a few numbers, raise a few cutoff points, and voilà! The number of impoverished Americans has been cut by over a third. It’s almost too good to be true. But don’t tell that to folks at the American Enterprise Institute, or the Heritage Foundation.

As I learned from these organizations, despite the dreary numbers, it turns out that poverty statistics are merely one more way to manipulate the government into giving money to the undeserving. “The poverty rate misleads the public and our representatives, and it thereby degrades the quality of our social policies,” writes Nicholas Eberstadt, of the American Enterprise Institute, “It should be discarded for the broken tool that it is.” The Heritage Institute reminds us that “most of America’s ‘poor’ live in material conditions that would be judged as comfortable or well-off just a few generations ago. There are two main reasons that American children are poor: Their parents don’t work much, and fathers are absent from the home.”

Is it really this simple? Could the war on poverty truly be won with minor adjustments to the calculations which determine poverty thresholds? If we tinkered enough could we really expose hundreds of thousands of lazy, relatively well-off Americans hiding under the skirts of the government?

Many conservatives criticize the use of the formula used to determine poverty, which was developed back in the 1950’s and has undergone no major adjustments since that time. Organizations such as the Heritage Foundation point to thresholds which determine who lives in poverty disguises the realities of life as a poor American, making millions of families invisible within the system. Even something as simple as the changing roles of women in society has made the current poverty formula obsolete. In the late fifties, most mothers didn’t have jobs outside the home, and they cooked meals for their families themselves. Now that most mothers work full-time, the costs of food, commuting and child-care consume far more of a family budget than in the 1950’s, especially in single-parent households.

According to the Penn State authors of An Atlas of Poverty in America, official poverty guidelines still assume that families spend about one-third of their income on food, but in actuality, food spending has dropped to one-sixth. However, a much larger share of household expenses are being taken up by housing, utilities and transportation. When health care and child-care expenses are included as necessities, the minimum level of income need by a family of four is much higher than the current formula projects.

Furthermore, the poverty thresholds are fixed across America, regardless of where a family lives. Last year, the pre-tax-income cutoff for a couple with two children was $19,806. Yet Jared Bernstein and Lawrence Mishel, of the Economic Policy Institute, in Washington, D.C., note that the average rent in working-class neighborhoods of Boston is close to a thousand dollars a month. For a family of four living slightly above the poverty line, this leaves just six hundred and fifty dollars a month for food, clothing, heat, and everything else. In many cities the poverty thresholds should be twice their current level.

Another argument put forth by conservatives is that the “poor” are actually relatively well-off, when they are compared to those living in poverty in third-world countries, or even when compared to a middle-class family in the 1950’s. Families in poverty own...
Metamorphosing the Metropolis

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa conjures a “City of Purpose”

by Julia Simon

On April 4, the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors voted to reduce the concentration of homeless services offered on its downtown skid row. The $100-million plan will replace these downtown facilities by establishing five new centers across the county providing temporary shelter and social services. The announcement of the plan comes at a rare time of economic prosperity. With county coffers bloated by a hot real estate market and the property tax revenue it generates, the Board feels free to use some of its money to help the homeless.” But the plan also makes good on a promise to improve skid row made by one of the nation’s most idealistic emerging politicians, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Villaraigosa was elected mayor on May 17, 2005. Raised in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of East Los Angeles, Villaraigosa began his career in politics at 15, volunteering for the Farm Workers’ Movement. He graduated from UCLA with a B.A. in History and has since worked his way up in the political system. A past president of the Los Angeles Chapter of the ACLU, a California State Assembly member and then Assembly Speaker, Villaraigosa has been involved in a variety of policy initiatives and legislative efforts, including an assault weapons ban, an urban neighborhood park initiatives, and the “Healthy Families” program, a plan that provides healthcare for over half-a-million California children. After losing the election for mayor of Los Angeles in 2001, Villaraigosa won a seat on City Council. He is the first Latino-American mayor of Los Angeles since 1872.

In his inaugural address on July 1, 2005, Villaraigosa outlined his utopian plan to turn LA into our eyes skyward. Let’s imagine the pinnacles that we our town. The idea of Los Angeles as a utopia is not new, argues urbanist/theorist William Alexander McClung in his cultural geographic survey of Los Angeles, Landscapes of Desire: Anglo Mythologies of Los Angeles. A utopia, McClung writes, is a paradise created, designed, and then actualized by man. “A utopian designer,” argues McClung, “customarily treats the landscape as raw material to be shaped for human purposes and is never shy about asserting the dominance of the built over the unbuilt.” In the modernist metropolis, the utopian designer wants to “make it new,” monopolizing the landscape of the “unbuilt” and replacing it with the invented “built.” And yet, McClung writes, “Invention is the hallmark of utopias, but the word in its root Latin sense means ‘discovery,’ with the implication that what is invented was already there.” In Villaraigosa’s inaugural address on July 1, 2005, the mayor conjures a utopian vision of Los Angeles drawing on both the invented and the discovered. This vision, simultaneously spatial and social, is self-consciously a product of a particularly Angeleno (a citizen of Los Angeles) imagination. The mayor asks Angelenos to unite in a shared metaphor, calling for the audience to “Dream with [him].”

In his dream, Villaraigosa recounts the story of his mother, Natalia Delgado. Natalia overcame a history of domestic abuse and the difficulties of being a single parent to survive, prosper and raise four children in the fierce landscape of the Los Angeles social hierarchy. “My mother’s story is a classic L.A. story. Not the stuff of scripts or movie fantasy. A true story, like those of countless Angelenos, past and present. A story of working hard, of loving your kids, of having a clear picture of a better future in your mind’s eye and driving for it with a ferocious sense of purpose.”

But Natalia’s is also a story of invention. Natalia had a design, “a clear vision of a better future in her mind’s eye.” Privileging the built over the unbuilt, achieved gains over present shortfalls, she drove to actualize this vision “with a ferocious sense of purpose.”

Los Angeles, Villaraigosa argues, has long been aligned with imagined utopias. “For more than a century,” Villaraigosa argues, “Los Angeles has been synonymous with big dreams.” McClung writes that this is because “Los Angeles” has long hovered above the heads of men as an idea rather than a space. “For much of its recent history,” he says, “Los Angeles has been narrated as an ‘other-place, an island of the mind if not of the map.” Villaraigosa himself acknowledges the disconnect between the physical experience of Los Angeles and the idea of Los Angeles. Los Angeles, Villaraigosa says, “...is the destination of people’s imaginations, all around the world, whether or not they ever set foot here.”

Only once in his speech does Villaraigosa mention a particular location in the city; “I’ve lived here all my life, and there are many places I love around the city. But whenever I go through South Los Angeles, I always try to catch a glimpse of Nuestro Pueblo, which is Spanish for ‘Our Town.’ It describes a series of towers that rise over Watts like some improbable dream.” The Watt’s Towers are this “improbable dream,” a utopia invented and then actualized. A 33-year creation of the Italian artist and immigrant Simon Rodia, the spires of towers are made of bed frames, bottles, broken glass, scrap metal, potshards, ceramic tiles and thousands of other found objects.

And yet, while human hands made the towers, the edifices are composed of found, cast-off objects: objects discovered. “When I see those towers soaring over Watts,” Villaraigosa says, “My thoughts always return to the pieces that make up that beautiful whole...Fellow Angeleans, I will never forget where

The mayor’s inaugural address conjures a utopian vision of Los Angeles drawing on both the invented and the discovered. This vision, both spatial and social, is a self-conscious product of a particularly Angeleno imagination.

I came from. And I will always believe in the value of every Angeleno. This is truly our town.” Villaraigosa’s Los Angeles utopia is the sum of both the invented and the discovered. It is a product of many different dreams, many different “L.A. stories” united in a single mass. Only upon close inspection can one see “the pieces that make up that beautiful whole.” From a normal view, the towers simply look big, like a hyper-extended metaphor. Yet the nuance can be found in the detail. This utopia is at once created and found.

Villaraigosa quotes Rodia on the meaning of his work, “I had in mind to do something big, and I did it.” Rodia had a utopian vision of grandeur. He actualized this vision by using that which the city cast off—the remnants of an old city— to create his utopia.

For Villaraigosa, Los Angeles is a palimpsest. It is a landscape of the invented and the discovered. Plans for increasing low income housing, policies for improving the air and decreasing traffic have been discarded, lying around Los Angeles for years like Rodia’s pieces of shattered glass. Villaraigosa’s plans for improving skid row are not new. As Los Angeles county’s chief administrative officer, David Janssen says, the plan has been a year in development taking its source from ideas from all five of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors. But as Rodia articulated, in order to build towers, there must be something “in mind.” Villaraigosa has something in mind, and it’s big. Using both the discovered and the invented Villaraigosa dreams to build utopia. Part of that his vision of the city, low income housing, has recently been set into action. On March 13, Villaraigosa awarded $50.6 million to 14 projects building 687 units as part of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Villaraigosa’s own towers are on the rise. As he says in his speech, “Let’s do something big for Los Angeles. Let’s raise our eyes skyward. Let’s imagine the pinnacles that we can reach together.”
Capturing the Other in Iraq
Abu Ghraib and the Experience of Anonymous Suffering

by Mario Diaz-Perez

“How does one man assert his power over another, Winston?”

“By making him suffer,” he said.

“Exactly. By making him suffer. Obedience is not enough”

-George Orwell, 1984

For those capable of overcoming their immediate revulsion when faced with representations of suffering, the latest round of pictures from Abu Ghraib Prison (released February 2006) provide some rather foul food for thought. While many have referred to the playful and burlesque poses struck by the US Army officers involved as evidence that these crimes are the work of ‘a few rotten apples,’ the prisoners’ masked faces tell a different story altogether. The ruthless activities shown in the Abu Ghraib photographs are actually standard ‘interrogation’ techniques used by the CIA, about half a century in the making. In a phony war (that is, the “war on terror”) which denies any humanity to the United States’ suspected enemies, several bona fide torture chambers have been set up under the supervision of the CIA. Yet while these photos have appeared in the media, the reactions of most Americans have been confused and muted at best. Why are so many witnesses to these atrocities unmoved by the obvious suffering of innocents? Perhaps the answer lies in the pictures themselves. These ghastly deeds and the anonymity of the victims express the stark reality of American political culture which has reduced the Arab to a faceless, unapproachable object, altogether less than human.

In his recently published book, A Question of Torture: CIA Interrogation from the Cold War to the War on Terror (2006), University of Wisconsin history professor Alfred McCoy demythologizes and explains the CIA’s study of torture as part of a long-term research project. Throughout years of funding such projects, the military, politicians, and several universities have been complicit considerable guilt. It is not incidental that all detainees at Abu Ghraib have bags over their heads: it is an integral aspect of the CIA’s well-documented and quite methodical ‘interrogation’ system. The CIA has studied and perfected the use of sensory deprivation and over-stimulation in interrogation procedures. This technique has apparently reached the level of standard procedure since most detained Iraqis are forced to wear bags over their heads from the moment they are arrested. Every private in the Army or Marines who has had to handle prisoners is likely to have participated in this first step of a whole cycle of techniques.

Consequently, the most famous picture from Abu Ghraib - the hooded man standing on a box with fake electrodes attached to his fingers — is more than just an image of humiliation. It represents a long history of CIA research into the most effective and reliable methods of gathering information from resistant human sources. The picture indicates strategies of sensory deprivation, the use of fright for heightened disorientation, and self-inflicted pain. The victim is forced to stand on a box for extended periods of time or until he gives the desired information. The point of the procedure is to make sure that the subject knows that he or she is doing this to themselves. In other images, people are chained to beds or forced to carry boxes for long periods of time and, in some, forced to perform sex acts. They have been forced to perform sexualized acts: fellatio, sitting on top of each other, and in one, sticking a banana up his own rectum.

McCoy also describes some of the psychological research projects spearheaded by the CIA and conducted at North American universities, most notably psychological experiments at McGill University in Canada. Outside of the university, the CIA also conducted its own field research. Many may know that some of the first uses of LSD were for use on unwitting American citizens who were drugged at parties and brothels in the San Francisco area, as part of a CIA project to figure out the best ways to disperse the drug in food or through ‘weaponized’ vapor sprays. Others were conducted on Army personnel themselves, though they rarely knew the what they were ingesting. In the end drugging and hypnosis proved to be too unreliable for regular use in interrogation. They produced erratic behavior and outbursts of fantasy rather than reliable intelligence. The most reliable and efficient techniques (usually taking only 48 hours) involved a simple mixture of sensory deprivation and over-stimulation.

Perhaps some might say that this kind of torture is just ‘torture-lite’ or a more humane form since it doesn’t involve the breaking of bones or removal of finger nails that action movies have taught us to expect. The truth of the matter is that psychological torture is just as damaging, if not worse, than physical torture. Republican Senator John McCain, a supporter of the war on terror yet opposed to the use of torture due to his personal experience of it, has said that he would prefer the worst kind of physical torture to psychological torture.

A typical interrogation might begin with the covering-up of the suspect’s head from the moment they are arrested. Once interned, the typical detainee might go through a process of more intense sensory deprivation. Their eyes might be covered with painted-over goggles, their ears ensonced with earmuffs, and their mouths covered, unable to speak. After many hours of this treatment, the victim will then be subjected to a sensory overload: usually bright lights or music played at high decibel levels. These techniques reduce the victims to a shell of their former selves, usually so disoriented that they become just what they were meant to be — entirely dependent on their tormentors and ground down to a mere animal existence.

But why are these American soldiers having so much fun? Have Iraqis been so dehumanized in our culture? Could one year in boot camp be enough to make you hate all Iraqis? I think not. One would be hard-pressed to find the average American say: “I hate Iraqis” or “Iraqis are the scum of the earth...” Moreover, for those in the military who believed that they were risking their lives to “bring freedom to Iraq,” it would be entirely ludicrous for them to also believe that Iraqis are subhuman and simultaneously capable of inheriting that great legacy of the Enlightenment. I believe the American soldiers in these pictures are horrible people, there’s no getting around that, but they are also the victims of a political discourse that has dominated this country’s way of thinking for far too long.

The victims at Guantanamo are “unlawful combatants.” Denied the status of “enemy combatant” and all its humanitarian dressings, the “unlawful combatant” is considered an enemy of peace and a scourge upon humanity. Yet while those detained at Abu Ghraib have the status of POWs or enemy combatants, their treatment has been just as brutal and dehumanizing as if they were caught. They were simply caught doing what most Iraqis want to do and many have done, namely, resisting a truly criminal occupation. Moreover, many of them are entirely innocent. These ‘enemy combatants’ have been criminalized and subjected to a kind of guilt by suspicion which gives the US military a procedural justification for treating them far worse than any Nazi officer was treated after 1945. This aura of ‘criminal’ or ‘terrorist’ which surrounds the debate of the Occupation of Iraq is so pervasive and blinding that people could not understand the resistance to it two years after Shock and Awe. Instead of a

continued on page 8
resistance movement attacking an occupier and its collaborators, resisters were called ‘terrorists’ and ‘jihadists.’ It is of course difficult to discuss the Iraq resistance here, since it is all chaos. The United States and Great Britain have so many ‘black operations’ going on it is impossible to ever know who is hitting who or for what purposes.

And so, with the right to defend one’s country from invaders now seen as illegitimate and the Geneva Convention’s ban on torture now seen as inexpedient, it is obvious that we would disavow the humanity of suspects. It is only logical that we would turn them into mere instruments of morbidity perverse pleasure. Yet, if we are to come to terms with these ghastly practices and move beyond these inhuman politics, we have to first engage our experience with the pictures. It is not enough to engage torture on the level of ‘security’ or ‘the national defense.’ We must look torture and human suffering right in the face because this is exactly where the warmongers don’t want you to look.

Yet these sufferers have no faces, they resemble nothing more than a void, a formless military green withholding limitless suffering. These masks are more than simple tools in a dubious CIA strategy; they hide a face which many US citizens refuse to recognize. They conceal the face’s expression of suffering and thereby sever the connection of sympathy drawn from the observer to the victim. For this reason, covering the face inevitably leads to such abuse. The mask which inflicts a symbolic violence upon the face only invites the physical brutality we see in these images.

Perhaps the masks allow these military personnel to disavow the pain and humiliation they bring to the detainees. By obscuring the face, the officers will not observe the expressions of pain, discomfort, psychic disturbance, and ferocious anger which undoubtedly follow these unspeakable acts. The masks block the reflection that they would inevitably see of themselves clubbing, slicing, and sodomizing their prisoners (with broomsticks and chemical lights). Isn’t this why executioners either wear masks or place masks on the executed? By trying to sever the face’s quintessential channel of empathy, the executioner both disavows ethical responsibilities and dramatizes the violence committed.

At this juncture, it is useful to engage the philosopher of the face of the Other: Emmanuel Levinas. Are these pictures from Abu Ghraib not the perfect example of what Levinas means by the ethical call of the face of the Other and its attempted disavowal as the essence of human violence? According to Levinas, we encounter another human face in a way entirely different from the way we encounter other objects in our lives. We have a conscious intentional relation to things like lamps and cars, but the human face defies containment and exceeds any representation of it - even a photo of the face cannot capture the alterity or otherness of the human face. This irreducible uniqueness constitutes a primal experience that is both prior to and ultimately constitutive for all possible moral or political systems. In the pictures taken by the torturers, we are witness to human suffering without access to the face. Since suffering means nothing unless it has witnesses, we should ask ourselves what responsibility we have to both the persecuted and persecutor. What is the primal experience involved in observing these photos?

There is an immediate significance for us (observers of the photos) that the victims’ faces are concealed. The covered face is in itself a symbol of violence, either violence already committed or imminent violence. Since covering the Other’s face is already a disruption of our own ethical encounter, already a statement on suffering, we should register that any representation of these atrocities will have already been appropriated by political rhetoric. It is in fact the product of a political discourse that reduces the enemy to the ultimate enemy of ‘security,’ ‘civilization,’ and humanity. Once reduced to this zero-level of humanity, the detained combatant becomes nothing more than an object for our psychological experimentation and scatological revelry. In these Dantesque snapshots, military personnel are recognized by posing with the thrill of victory and soldiers gave thumbs up in front of single dead bodies and piles of motionless but still living bodies. There is an orgiastic joy in all these photos that is difficult to comprehend, but let us try.

The covering of the face amounts to an attempt to sever any proximity we might have towards the Other. While this is a comfort to the torturer and executioner, the spirit of the pictures represent the real meaning of suffering - meaninglessness. As we move towards some understanding of these acts, as we gauge our rising emotional response, we ought to ask ourselves if we are looking at them in the right way. These pictures, as representations of human suffering, are framed and wrapped in the inhumanity of their photographers (US soldiers) and the inhuman politics of which they are an extension. The ruthless political circumstances of our times show their contradictions and doublespeak by virtue of the anonymous horror and suffering they create. If we recognize the violence done to our encounter with the Other, and recognize it as a political consequence, how can we deny our responsibility for what we see? Those who see nothing more than masked victims and uphold the language of the ‘war on terror’ are incapable of the most basic level of empathy. They are ultimately responsible.
Headaches for the Hague Tribunal

by Suyeon Khim

How does the world deal with a man who armed and incited forces to rape, murder and “ethnically cleanse” hundreds of thousands of people?

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is the first international body for the prosecution of war crimes since the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials following World War II. Established in May 1993 by the UN Security Council, it has jurisdiction over individuals responsible for war crimes — grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, violations of the laws or customs of war, genocide, and crimes against humanity — committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991. The maximum sentence is life imprisonment.

The ICTY brings to trial only the most senior leadership responsible for ordering war crimes. Although thousands of soldiers and civilians partook in the violence intercalating the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, ICTY prosecutors regarded former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, called by some the “butcher of the Balkans,” as ultimately responsible for the decade of bloodshed that crippled Yugoslavia and eventually tore it apart.

Milosevic’s trial began in February 2002. He faced three indictments: one relating to crimes against humanity in Croatia between 1991 and 1995, involving the expulsion of 170,000 non-Serbs from their hometowns and the murders of hundreds of civilians, another alleging genocide of thousands of Muslims and Croats in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995, most notably in the July 1995 massacre of 8,000 at Srebrenica, and the third relating to atrocities in Kosovo in 1999, including the deportation of some 800,000 Kosovo Albanians and the murders of at least 600 ethnic Albanians. Milosevic was tried as the leader responsible for the extermination and deportation of non-Serbs in pursuit of an ethnically “pure”, greater Serbian state.

The four-year trial was rocked by the suicide of its star witness, Serb nationalist war criminal Milan Babic, on March 5th, and ended in anticlimax on March 11th with the death of the man whom Babic testified against in 2002, Milosevic himself. Autopsies have revealed Milosevic’s death to be a natural one, debunking the motley rumors: that Milosevic deliberately tried to strengthen his case for release by taking un-prescribed medications to exacerbate his high blood pressure, that Milosevic ended the trial on his own terms and got the better of the ICTY by committing suicide, or that he was poisoned. But the fact remains that Milosevic, like Hitler, met no verdict.

Milosevic’s recent untimely death was the nadir of the troubles that have fraught the ICTY since its inception. Polls indicated a generally negative reaction to the tribunal among the Serb and Croat public, and thus, in hindsight, a failure on the part of the ICTY in the early stages to engage the people in the Serb Republic with the developments of the trial in the distant Hague. Many Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Albanians, and legal experts in the international community consider the ICTY to be a political puppet court and thus incapable of impartiality. The ICTY has not prosecuted the citizens of any NATO countries because of NATO’s involvement in the Kosovo conflict. A disproportionate number of those indicted are Serbs, while very few indictments have resulted from crimes committed against Serbs. Moreover, Serbian indictees tend to be of higher rank and faced with broader accusations than indictees of other nations. Critics question whether or not the ICTY exacerbates tensions among the warring sides for which it was conceived to promote reconciliation. Intellectual elites among the Serbs and Croats resent that the Hague-based court presumes to pass the final verdict on their national histories, and do not intend to accept the verdict.

Milosevic’s own trial was a farce of procedural wrangling. In a much-publicized December 2003 court exchange, Milosevic was denied the right to question General Wesley Clark, who had spoken with Milosevic for more than 100 hours as the head of the U.S. military team during the Dayton Agreement negotiations and as NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, on anything at all about the war waged by NATO against Yugoslavia on a technicality. In turn, Milosevic challenged the legal authority of the ICTY, which was established by the UN Security Council, since the UN Charter gives the exclusive right to establish organs for restoring international peace and security to the General Assembly.

As the first sitting head of state to be indicted for crimes against humanity, had the trial been seen to its completion, it would have been a landmark case. As it stands, the death of Milosevic severely diminishes the potential legacy of the ICTY and incurs skepticism for the success of other international courts, such as the International Criminal Court. In the absence of Milosevic, the ICTY must place their next targets on trial, Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, indicted for atrocities during the 1992-1995 Bosnian war. However, they are among the many fugitive ICTY indictees that NATO forces have failed to apprehend after numerous raids. To add to the ICTY’s headache, there are murmurs that Milosevic, suffering from a heart condition and high blood pressure, died prematurely as a result of the ICTY’s decision not to allow him to undergo treatment in Moscow — an accusation that, at the very least, is difficult to prove one way or the other.

Perhaps the dispute of Milosevic’s historical legacy is the least of the ICTY’s worries. While Milosevic may not be remembered for his peacemaking sallies — a Bosnian peace deal with the US, and ordering the release of hundreds of French and British peacekeepers taken hostage by the Bosnian Serbs — he will not be forgotten for his concentration camps, genocide, murdering his former President, Ivan Stambolic, stealing billions of dollars from his country, starting and losing four wars, losing two-thirds of his country’s territory, and ultimately leaving the Serbs impoverished and among enemies. If aspiring to be remembered as something more than a bureaucracy or a show, the ICTY would do better to seek speedier closure for criminals in the trials to come.
Behind the Headlines, a More Dangerous World for Journalists

by Ali Winston

“Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.”

-Napoleon Bonaparte

After three months of being held hostage by Iraqi insurgents, freelance reporter Jill Carroll was released unharmed on March 30th. Sadly, the fate of dozens of other journalists who shared Ms. Carroll’s misfortune tends to resemble that of Steven Vincent, another kidnapped American freelance who was murdered along with his translator in August 2005. Since the commencement of hostilities in Iraq over three years ago, 86 media workers have been killed, making it the most deadly conflict for the press since the Algerian civil strife of 1993-1996. Such circumstances are by no means unique to Iraq, In a Post-9/11 world fraught with transnational terrorism, geopolitical uncertainty, and governments intent on controlling the information to which its population has access, journalists occupy an increasingly precarious position.

Though reporting is a hazardous occupation, the trends of the past two years are particularly alarming. For journalists, 2004 was the most dangerous year over the past 20 years: 53 individuals died on the job. Despite a decrease in the overall number of deaths in the industry in 2005 (47), the proportion of media workers that were murdered rose to 3/4 from 2/3 the previous year. This tally doesn’t take into account instances of kidnapping, imprisonment by authorities, or forced closures and intimidation of media outlets. While countries on every continent are involved in restricting and intimidating the press, over the past year China, Russia, Mexico, and the United States (at home and in Iraq) are guilty of the most egregious abuses.

China’s government may have embraced free-market capitalism and opened its economy to the outside world, but the authorities still maintain a stranglehold on the information which their population can access. Internet access to news is filtered with the convenient aid of Google and Microsoft, and “undesirable” articles bring serious repercussions, as evidenced by the imprisonment of New York Times researcher Zao Yan since 2004. Endemic rioting across the Chinese countryside, such as the December 6th 2005 demonstration in the village of Dongzhou, where clashes between security forces and protestors left over 20 people dead, is downplayed in the state-controlled print and broadcast media. Currently, 34 reporters are being held by China’s government, 2/3 of the 125 reporters worldwide who were thrown in prison for their activities.

After the libertine, anything-goes atmosphere of post Soviet-Russia in the 1990’s, in which independent journalism (and rampant corruption) flourished, the election of President Vladimir Putin in 2000 ushered in a new era of increased emphasis on the primacy of the Kremlin in everyday life. This had significant consequences for freedom of the press. State-run print and broadcast media threw their weight behind the government, as exemplified by their unabashed campaigning for Putin’s party, United Russia, in the parliamentary elections of 2003. More alarmingly, the confrontational attitude of Russian authorities towards the media coincides with the murder of 12 journalists and editors since 2000. All these killings have been contract-style hits with apparent links to the victim’s occupation. The most prominent case is that of Russian-American Paul Klebnikov, the editor-in-chief of Forbes magazine’s Russia edition. An outspoken critic of graft and all-too-common illegal business practices, Klebnikov was presumably silenced for his investigations of ties between post-Soviet “robber baron” businessmen and Chechen Mafiosi. There are also hints of official complicity in the murders of reporters: none of the 12 cases have been solved, and investigations are characterized by constant shuffling of police officers, prosecutors, and judges.

Closer to home, Mexico is currently experiencing a rash of anti-media violence linked directly to the burgeoning drug trade. Despite the overshadowing of the “war on drugs”by the American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, the rapidly growing and lucrative U.S. market for cocaine and now crystal methamphetamine has fostered intense competition between cartels.

The city of Nuevo Laredo is critical to main land routes that carry, according to the New York Times, about “77% of all the cocaine and 70% of all the methamphetamine sold in the United States”, and the presence of rival trafficking gangs has led to a surge in...
crime. 1,000 people have died since 2003. Murders, kidnappings, and extortion are commonplace: even the arrival of federal police has been ineffective. Journalists working in Nuevo Laredo have acutely felt the trafficking-fueled violence. The local paper El Mañana limited its organized coverage of the trade after editor Roberto Garcia was stabbed to death in 2004. This February, the paper’s office was raided in broad daylight by gunmen who sprayed the newsroom with automatic weapons, killing reporter Jaime Tej. Coupled with the April 2005 murder of radio reporter Guadalupe Garcia for her investigations of drug-runners, the attacks on El Mañana are indicative of a growing lawlessness and deterioration social situation along the US-Mexico border.

In spite of the grave circumstances for reporters in China, Russia, Mexico, and other points of conflict worldwide, the American media faces unprecedented obstacles while covering U.S. troops in Central Asia and Mesopotamia. Since the invasion of Afghanistan, the embedded reporter has become a prominent fixture in our public consciousness. The lack of military experience in America has fostered an attitude of “respect” and “support” for servicemen overseas (as well as a profound unwillingness to condemn their frequent transgressions), and over the

In a Post-9/11 world fraught with transnational terrorism, geopolitical uncertainty, and governments intent on controlling the information to which its population has access, journalists occupy an increasingly precarious position.

past few years this outlook has expanded to include combat correspondents. Such individuals occupy a prominent enough place in America’s collective imagination to be the protagonist of a comic book, Brian Wood’s new series DMZ, which is centered on a rookie reporter caught in the no-man’s-land of Manhattan in a fictional civil war between the East Coast and the rest of the country.

While Wood’s comic goes out of its way to lend an edge of cool to reporting, it also comments on the harsh reality that today’s “journalists and media staff are victims of unprecedented levels of brutality.” In spite of the extensive security precautions and hostile-environment training that major American correspondents receive, they are still vulnerable targets. Bob Woodruff, the co-anchor of ABC’s World News Tonight, and cameraman Doug Vogt were severely injured in January 2006 when the 4th Infantry Division humvee they were traveling in hit an improvised explosive device. Journalists are among the favored kidnapping targets for insurgents, demonstrated by the case of Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, two French journalists held hostage for four months by an insurgent group. In total, 38 journalists have been kidnapped since the initial invasion in 2003.

The United States military bears an equal amount of responsibility in creating a hostile working environment for the press. Arab satellite news networks such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya have long incurred the wrath of U.S. officers for their “negative” and “unfavorable” coverage of occupying coalition forces in Iraq, demonstrated by the U.S. force’s (shelling of the Palestine Hotel in April 2003 which killed an Al-Jazeera correspondent), the closure of Al-Arabiya’s Baghdad offices in November 2003, and allegations in late 2005 that President Bush advocated bombing Al-Jazeera’s Qatar headquarters (in November 2001, USAF bombers destroyed a clearly marked Al-Jazeera bureau in Kabul). A disproportionate number of journalists from the Arab media have been killed or injured while on assignment in Iraq and Afghanistan. What’s more, an al-Jazeera assistant cameraman, Sami al-Haj, has been held in Guantanamo Bay’s camp X-ray since December 2001. Al-Haj faces no formal charges: the U.S. military, whom the cameraman accuses of torture, has spent the past four years “trying to get Sami to become an informant against Al-Qaeda.”

America has considerable problems at home as well regarding freedom of the press. The most public cases have been those involving the disclosure of confidential sources, such as the New York Times’ Judith Miller and Time magazine’s Matthew Cooper. Although these cases involving staff reporters at major publications are notable for the threat they pose to the capability of news organizations to operate independently from constant government scrutiny, American freelancers are currently the hardest-hit segment of the United States press corps.

Over the past twenty years, as media ownership has sought to prioritize cost efficiency and profitability as business enterprises, freelancers have been increasingly relied upon to provide a significant proportion of news copy. Overseas bureaus have been especially affected by this development, as well as the growing disinterest of many Americans in foreign affairs. Consequently, American media organizations turned to employing writers on a temporary basis as their foreign bureaus shrank. This is not a new phenomenon: the subject has received considerable attention since the early 1990’s, especially during the First Gulf War. However, the current American occupation of Iraq and our significant military presence in Afghanistan has stretched the capacity of news organizations to cover events. As a result, the freelancers who have shouldered the lion’s share of newsgathering have been left exposed by a lack of proper hostile-environment training, and hung out to dry by their employers who oftentimes refuse to cover a reporter’s field insurance.

Organizations do exist for the explicit purpose of protecting the livelihood and well-being of reporters around the world, but they are a mixed bag. The International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) is a global network of 72 non-governmental organizations dedicated monitoring press freedom and treatment across the globe. Within this network, two groups stand out for their resources and/or political leavings. The Manhattan-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), founded in 1981 by foreign correspondents, is one of the most active such groups, organizing protests and lobbying politicians to act against the mistreatment of media workers.

Reporters Sans Frontieres (Reporters Without Borders) is a similar Paris-based organization run by the Doctors without Borders patron Louis Ménard. While its protests, publications, and lobbying are flashier and much higher profile than CPJ, American and Western European governments provide 19% of RSF’s total funding. Moreover, Ménard’s organization has close ties to anti-Castro groups seeking to destabilize Cuba, which RSF has ranked as one of the worst environments for press freedom since the inception of its “press freedom index” in 2002. RSF has also been accused of following the lead of the American Department of State in leveling criticism against the government of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela.

Although some press advocacy groups such as RSF have engaged in controversial behavior, the majority of such organizations are doing an admirable job in raising the public’s consciousness of the heightened risk present in news-gathering work today. Charters and bills of rights for freelance writers are being produced and distributed widely by groups like the International Federation of Journalists and CPJ. On a more practical level, trusts and scholarships such as the Rory Peck Trust and the Kurt Schork Memorial Fund have been established to sponsor hostile environment training and educate the public about the dangers faced by journalists in the field. These funds, established in memoriam of reporters killed on assignment, are sponsored by major news organizations such as Reuters and the Associated Press, and are widely praised. While such efforts are

The lack of military experience in America has fostered an attitude of “respect” and “support” for servicemen overseas (as well as a profound unwillingness to condemn their frequent transgressions), and over the past few years this outlook has expanded to include combat correspondents.
World Baseball Classic: Post Mortem
Success or Failure?

by Michael Cam-Phung

In the most unlikely of outcomes, Japan defeated Cuba in the first ever World Baseball Classic. In the process, both Japan and Cuba showed the world that not all of the world’s best players compete in Major League Baseball. Nonetheless, the WBC’s MVP, Daisuke Matsuzaka is expected to join a major league club soon. The WBC undoubtedly showcased international baseball talent, but the absence of players like Hideki Matsui, Gary Sheffield, Eric Gagne, and Rich Harden threatens the continued viability of the event. Above all, it lacks the incentives to motivate future participation of MLB players. Nonetheless, the WBC was relatively successful, but lacks the incentives to sustain the future participation of major league players.

With only 2 major leaguers between both teams, both Japan and Cuba beat the star laden rosters of the United States, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic to make it into the finals. The United States did not even make the semi-finals. Still, American baseball enthusiasts should rest assured that while the US might not have the best baseball team, the best baseball players always eventually come to the US. Just ask Jose Contreras what he was thinking after winning the silver medal in 2000. Or, ask WBC MVP, Daisuke Matsuzaka, about his plans after the next season.

Matsuzaka, who becomes a free agent after the 2008 season, has already expressed interest in playing on this side of the Pacific. Most recently, he asked his team, the Seibu Lions, to “post” him, which would have allowed him to negotiate a new contract with an American club. If posted, the Seibu Lions would sell exclusive negotiation rights in a blind bid auction. After the auction, the winning club has a limited amount of time to structure a new contract with Matsuzaka. This is how the Seattle Mariners were able to acquire Suzuki Ichiro five years ago.

If Matsuzaka enters the MLB, he would not be the first to capitalize on exploits in international competition. Jose Contreras went a combined 7-0 with 0.59 ERA and 66 strikeouts in 66 innings in the 1999 Pan American games, 2000 Sydney Olympics, and 2001 World Cup. Like Contreras, Matsuzaka has also blossomed on the international stage, going 3-0 with a 1.38 ERA, while striking out 10 in 13 innings. Matsuzaka was also a key member of Japan’s 2000 and 2004 Olympic teams. Beyond dominating international baseball, both Contreras and Matsuzaka share similar pitching styles, with fastballs in the mid-90s and good sliders. Contreras’ success in international baseball eventually led to his defection in 2002 and a bidding war between MLB franchises that ended with the Yankees on top. Two seasons and $14 million later, the Yankees decided that Contreras was just not worth it, and offloaded him to the Chicago White Sox in 2004. That being said, Matsuzaka, who is currently 25, is a lot younger than Contreras was when he defected, and therefore has the potential for a long career in American baseball.

In addition to bringing more stars to the US, the WBC has also given American players the opportunity to play for foreign teams. Under WBC rules, players can play for any country in which their parents or, in some cases, grandparents were born. Because of this rule, Italy’s national team invited both Mike Piazza and Mike Mussina. Unfortunately for the untalented Italian team, Mussina is actually a Slavic name! Mike Piazza, on the other hand, decided to join 17 other Americans on Italy’s 30-man roster. Alex Rodriguez, who was born in New York City, also considered playing for the country of his parents’ birthplace, the Dominican Republic, but eventually joined fellow Yankees teammates Johnny Damon and Derek Jeter on the American team.

Undoubtedly, the WBC has been a success on the international stage. But many key stars, citing injury concerns, chose not to participate. The absence of players like Hideki Matsui questions the WBC’s legitimacy and threatens its future success. Fortunately, the WBC has only claimed one casualty this year, Luis Ayala, Ayala, who signed a 2-year, $2.2 million contract with the Nationals this past off-season, suffered an elbow injury that will require reconstructive surgery, sidelining the setup man for the entire 2006 season. However, beyond injury concerns, many players also opted out of playing due to the lack of monetary compensation.

The lack of incentives for players, combined with the financial success of the WBC, suggests a growing asymmetry reminiscent of the imbalance between players and franchise owners. According to Smith College sports economist Andrew Zimbalist, since the 1996 lockout, MLB revenues increased by an annual average of 14%. However, under the current collective bargaining agreement, player salaries have only increased 2.7% annually, barely above the rate of inflation. Thus, MLB owners have benefited far more from increased franchise revenues than players. This growing asymmetry has also shown itself in the WBC. With strong ticket sales and TV ratings abroad, the WBC is expected to net around $10 - $15 million. Half of these profits will be split between MLB franchise owners and players, with the rest apportioned to participating national leagues. Given that the average player salary is over $2.5 million, the money a player could receive from participating in the WBC is inconsequential. For owners, this is less true, since there are fewer owners with whom to share the profits.

In addition to lower payouts, players also take on a larger burden from injury risk. All owners insured participating players, which dramatically limited the financial costs of paying players who would get injured. However, a season-ending injury could permanently damage a player’s career. For instance, Luis Ayala will not suffer any financial setbacks this year or the next, since he has a guaranteed contract. However, once Ayala becomes a free agent after the 2007 season, his value will be adversely affected. Unfortunately for Ayala and all players, there is no way to insure against the lost income from a future contract that has not yet been negotiated. So in the long run, players take on huge financial risks, while owners take on little.

In light of the high participation rate of players this year, the problem of asymmetrical risks and compensation was not a problem. This time, nationalistic euphoria trumped economics. But this effect is only a novelty and cannot be relied on for the future. After all, if nationalism could really be a sustained incentive for participating in the WBC, then why isn’t the Baseball World Cup popular? The little known Baseball World Cup has existed for over 75 years and has the same participating countries as the WBC. The World Cup is even sanctioned by the same governing body, the International Baseball Federation. Furthermore, the World Cup typically takes place in the off season, right after the MLB playoffs, a far more convenient time for major leaguers. Yet, few major leaguers have actually played in the past 35 World Cups. Thus, player interest in the WBC is more appropriately attributed to a novelty effect. Without a novelty effect in 2009, the WBC’s organizers will need to produce more tangible incentives to ensure that the world’s best players (who nearly always eventually come to the US) continue to participate.
Non-Proliferation on the Brink
India’s Nuclear Deal

by Andrew Stecker

Anyone who has glanced at the newspaper headlines over the past few months will have noticed the shift in American attitudes towards isolationism. Disillusionment with the war in Iraq now transcends party lines, and popular outrage against a routine lease of U.S. ports to an Arab shipping company led to a rebellion against President Bush from within his own party. It is in this political environment that the Senate will have to debate a groundbreaking nuclear energy agreement that President Bush signed with India last month. The deal was first announced last summer, when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the U.S. Since then, the deal has been solidified, but many elements are controversial, both in the U.S. and India.

The deal contains several key points. India will receive nuclear technology from the U.S., which is intended for use in its civilian nuclear energy program. In exchange, India’s civilian nuclear plants will come under international inspection. Military facilities, however, will remain free from inspection. India also agrees to stop testing nuclear weapons, and will strengthen the security of its nuclear weapons arsenal. Additionally, India will formally announce its support for non-proliferation, although it will not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed by most countries.

The deal would improve various points of nuclear security. Nuclear experts, including the head of the IAEA Mohammed Elbaradei, have supported the deal, pointing out that it will bring inspectors to previously un-inspected facilities, and it will bring India, which already has a good record on non-proliferation, into the community of non-proliferation countries. But the pact also has many shortcomings, which have been criticized by security experts, as well as members of Congress. The deal would not cover the old fissile material in India’s military facilities, nor does it place any limits on nuclear weapons production. One criticism voiced throughout Washington, and internationally, is that the Bush administration developed this treaty with very little research, review, or debate. It is this recklessness, a fixture of Bush’s foreign policy, that characterizes this decision.

In the short-term, ratification of the treaty with India will improve U.S.-Indian relations and gain a valuable ally for America. There are enormous strategic benefits in having India on our side of the ring. Some politicians have expressed concerns about the growing power of China, and a strong India, with both a flourishing economy and nuclear weapons program would help maintain balance in Asia. Also, in the case of future military conflicts involving the U.S., it would be helpful to have India as an ally. This point was highlighted three years ago, when the Bush administration failed to persuade India to join the coalition invading Iraq.

But the Bush administration appears to be seeking India’s assistance for one specific issue: Iran and its nuclear program. Iran and India have a history of cooperation, and energy-hungry India has turned to Iran as a source of oil and natural gas. As a result of the U.S.-Indian nuclear pact, India may change its position and adopt a tough stance against Iran’s effort to develop nuclear weapons. This line of thinking fits with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s stated belief that Iran poses the single greatest challenge for U.S. foreign policy.

When the Bush administration formulated this treaty, it only considered its own narrow agenda, focusing on Iraq and Iran. The long-term effects of the deal on non-proliferation efforts and international politics were not taken into consideration. For decades the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty succeeded in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons technology to dangerous regimes. While India may have a good history on non-proliferation, neighboring Pakistan’s is abysmal. But this didn’t stop Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf from telling President Bush that his country would like the same deal that India received. A fundamental problem with the ratification of this treaty is that many countries will view India’s nuclear path as exemplary. Essentially, India developed nuclear weapons on its own, and managed them responsibly enough so that when it became a useful ally for the U.S., it lost its pariah status.

So if India can do it, why not Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey? While the Bush administration views Iran as a serious threat, Pakistan actually poses a greater danger in terms of nuclear proliferation. That country is already a nuclear power, has a history of selling nuclear secrets, and is highly unstable. Many observers believe a stronger India will stabilize relations with China. But it could also further destabilize India-Pakistan relations. Pakistan may feel pressured to step up its own nuclear program and become more aggressive to its neighbors. Or it could seek out a major nuclear power other than the U.S., like Russia or China, to provide it with its own arrangement of nuclear cooperation. In light of the Islamist presence in Pakistan, that would be very dangerous for the U.S. The Bush administration tried to convince us that Iraq was al-Qaeda’s means to nuclear weapons, but, in fact, Pakistan’s arsenal is the risky one. Helping India acquire even more nuclear capabilities will only increase the hazards surrounding a nuclear Pakistan.
Super-Languages: Now Serving 6 Billion

by Niko Kontovas

On February 24th, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) sponsored the eighth annual International Mother Language Day. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO since 1999, released a message three days in advance, urging “the prime movers in the political and economic world and civil society” to advance the cause of linguistic diversity, in part by encouraging the representation of minority languages on the internet and in printed media.

Slowly losing smaller languages to massive super-languages is problematic — both overly-simplistic in that it ignores phenomena like language genesis and true bilingualism, and tainted with a lingering post-colonial guilt. Languages are dying, and if, as UNESCO claims, some 96% of the world’s languages are spoken by only 4% of its people, language as we know it is changing.

According to UN estimates, one language disappears every two weeks. It is no wonder then that organizations such as UNESCO are concerned about preserving languages with small numbers of speakers, such as Manchu, a once-imperial language of China whose fluent speakers now number somewhere in the fifties. You can rationalize your indignation however you like: pointing out the roots of linguistic globalization in the bloody practices of colonialism, equating the death of a language and its culture with the death of a person, or simply noting that the diversity of cultures makes the world less boring.

You can rationalize your indignation however you like: pointing out the roots of linguistic globalization in the bloody practices of colonialism, equating the death of a language and its culture with the death of a person, or simply noting that the diversity of cultures makes the world less boring.

But for all our SOSC readings, it seems some students can’t apply these theories to real-world situations. Say you’re in a place where your native language (whatever that might be) isn’t the dominant one. You’re in a café or sitting in a town square, and all of a sudden a complete stranger next to you starts speaking your language. This might not seem like much to people who have never been in this sort of situation, but if you have been living in Siberia for a year and you just spent a half hour trying to ask for a Coke, no ice, with a twist of lemon, in Buryat Mongolian, you will welcome the sound of your mother tongue, and will most likely try to strike up a conversation. Now, imagine being in that café all your life without the coincidental encounter, and you may begin to see what speakers of minority languages are feeling.

Apart from the commonly cited purpose of referencing the outside world, language also serves to remind everyone – including yourself – how you identify, how you see the people around you, and what you think about the situation you’re in. In the Dune series of sci-fi novels by Frank Herbert (meant to portray a possible distant future for human kind), the face of human language has indeed changed. Almost all people in the Dune universe are capable of speaking the language of the “Imperium”, but a host of separate languages have remained or been developed for specific purposes: hunting, increasing group solidarity, or hiding information from all but a select few.

We may not be heading in that direction, but the societies in those books seem to display an awareness of the multi-functionality of language that we (even academics) all too often forget. And in our rush to make sure that our Big Macs are gherkin-free, we seem to glance over the fact that we are communicating a whole wealth of information about ourselves, what we think, and how we construct the world around us. Not just our hatred for pickles.

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The Center for American Progress has chosen to include Diskord in its Campus Progress network of student publications at universities and colleges across the nation. Campus Progress, an effort to strengthen progressive voices and counter the growing influence of right-wing student groups, will provide Diskord with a grant of $3,000 for the 2005-2006 academic year, opportunities to bring speakers and film screenings to campus, ties to other publications at schools such as Harvard, the University of North Carolina, Dartmouth, and the University of Wisconsin.

For more information, visit www.campusprogress.org
Art Theft and the Cultural Identity of the West

by Emily Warner

On February 21st, the Metropolitan Museum of Art announced that it would return six art objects from the ancient Greek world to Italy, among them the famed sixth century B.C. Euphronios krater, a highlight of the Met’s collection. The agreement with the Italian Ministry of Culture concludes lengthy negotiations centered around the suspect acquisition and ownership history of several pieces. It appears that the objects were excavated and exported from Italian soil illegally, and the question is to what extent the Met knew about, or turned a blind eye to, such history when the objects were acquired. The Met denies any wrongdoing, stating that the objects were acquired “in good faith.”

The agreement, a landmark one with potentially unnerving consequences for other museums, occurs over a backdrop of recent museum scandals and accusations. Italy is also demanding the return of some 42 objects from the J. Paul Getty Museum, whose former curator Marion True is on trial in Rome for conspiracy to traffic in stolen antiquities. Greece has demanded the return of artifacts from the Getty as well. At the de Young museum in San Francisco, a celebrated gift of Melanesian objects, the Jolika collection, has recently drawn criticism for the suspicious origins of some of its items. Peru has declared that it will sue Yale University for the hundreds of objects excavated from Machu Picchu that are currently owned by the University’s Peabody Museum. The list goes on and on. In one case close to home, victims of a terrorist bombing in Israel purportedly sponsored by Iran are claiming to the Getty as well. At the de Young museum in San Francisco, a celebrated gift of Melanesian objects, the Jolika collection, has recently drawn criticism for the suspicious origins of some of its items. Peru has declared that it will sue Yale University for the hundreds of objects excavated from Machu Picchu that are currently owned by the University’s Peabody Museum. The list goes on and on. In one case close to home, victims of a terrorist bombing in Israel purportedly sponsored by Iran are claiming to the Getty as well.

There are many issues at stake here, and legality is not the least of them. We do not want items excavated or exported illegally, because such actions violate national and international law and their negative impact on the archaeological record. But more profoundly, the Met’s decision and other cases call into question our notion of cultural property – what it is, what to do with it, and, most importantly, who owns it.

In a recent essay in the New York Review of Books, Kwame Anthony Appiah describes what he sees as two distinct, but conflated, conceptions of ‘cultural patrimony.’ On the one hand, cultural patrimony can be viewed as a property of the physical objects that
to that group; it can be seen or even appreciated by others, but it belongs at home, on its native soil.

Appiah draws out some important problems with this latter conception, which is gaining in international currency. Many poorer nations simply do not have the resources for the upkeep or housing of cultural artifacts. More importantly, Appiah advocates the embracement of a cosmopolitan, universal culture over the divided ‘cultures’ of nations. Indeed, seeing art objects as the unique property of one culture has had some bizarre implications in the radically changed cultural landscape of the twenty-first century. With respect to Italy and the Euphronios krater, Appiah writes, “I confess I hear the sound of Greeks and Etruscans turning over in their dusty graves: patrimony, here, equals imperialism plus time.” Appiah’s arguments are convincing, and he speaks from experience. He has seen the latent barbarism of artifact collecting firsthand, in his hometown in Kumasi in Ghana. But I believe that Appiah’s argument leaves out some important considerations.

What these considerations come down to is the specter of ownership that pervades the museum and, indeed, all art collecting. In the museum, this is perhaps less obvious than it is in the realm of the private dealer or collector; cool white walls of exhibition space have increasingly replaced the extravagant halls of mansions-turned-museums, layered with their accretions of capitalist expenditure. But the aura of property persists. John Berger, for one, reminds us that “all museums are haunted by the ghosts of the powerful and the wealthy.” When infected by the dichotomy of global North-South relations, this specter takes on a more sinister tone.

Many of the currently contested artifacts come from nations with some history of colonial presence or rule. This is certainly the case with the Machu Picchu artifacts from Peru or the Melanesian objects from Papua New Guinea. Appiah’s wry statement concerning ‘imperialism plus time’ rings true here. It is difficult, for example, to conceive the Peruvian government as the direct cultural heir to the Incas without some sort of historical amnesia regarding the Spanish conquest and the contemporary array of mixed ethnicities. But America and the Western world in general has a history of colonial presence and mentality that pervades its acquisition and ownership of other cultures, no matter how earnest the aesthetic or ethnographic appreciation of such objects may be.

Historically, the museum’s role has certainly been related to conquest. Appiah notes the Aban in Kumasi, or Asante in modern-day Ghana, a palace with an outstanding collection of international artworks and artifacts, many doubtlessly “war booty” themselves. The Aban was in turn stripped by the British expedition of 1874 and its treasures given to the British Museum. In modern America and certain European countries, the systematic collection, organization, and possession of ‘primitive,’ ‘traditional,’ or otherwise ‘Other’ artworks shades into a kind of colonial-like conquest of culture. The Oriental Institute, with its archaic and Eurocentric name, is a case in point. Perhaps more obviously kitschy is Doris Duke’s Shangri-La in Honolulu, with its lush vision of the Islamic world.

The Other Culture has played its own role in Western cultural identity, providing artists and collectors with a perceived return to some sort of natural state or creative potential. One thinks of the Romantic tangle and despair of Delacroix’s Death of Sardanapalus, or Gauguin and his sexualized projections of fantasy onto Tahitian villages. This ‘Othering’ is more than merely superficial; it is demeaning and dangerous. In the words of Ernesto Pujol, “no people should be condemned to be another’s performative facilitator.”

This is not to discount the breadth and quality of countless American collections, or to ignore the positive role they play in cosmopolitan culture, aesthetic experience, research, and, yes, even tolerance and understanding. Nor is it to suggest that all cultural objects should be shipped back from whence they came. But it complicates our picture of what it means to ‘own,’ however properly and respectfully, another’s culture. The results of the Getty’s case in Rome and Peru’s case against Yale will certainly play an important role in defining our evolving notion of cultural patrimony and its legal and ethical boundaries.
Snap Culture: American Apparel

by Chris Ross

In a 1981 self-portrait, the photographer Nan Goldin lies nude on a bed cluttered by notebooks, a tape player, a dial phone, and blankets, staring absently into the tawdry mess of her room. Even with a full breast exposed, Nan appears completely unselfconscous, almost bored with the camera's voyeurism, despite the stained sheets she lies on and her imperfect complexion. This picture, like almost all of Goldin's photographs, displays a kind of intimacy, often sexual, with her subjects. Her pictures are generally of close friends and family members, and they are portrayed without embellishment, without stylization, without beautification, even when Goldin captures them in their most intimate moments: stepping out the shower, making love, crying.

Commenting on what is today America's largest clothing manufacturer, American Apparel, many critics have noticed strong parallels between the raw, grimy photography of Nan Goldin and the images that make up American Apparel's advertising. In both Goldin's photos and American Apparel's ads, the traditional boundaries between viewer and subject are all but dissolved. Looking at AA's images, you feel as if you've just stepped in on a roommate with her boyfriend: all flushed cheeks, coy smiles, various stages of undress.

The advertising photography communicates a kind of tongue-in-cheek sexuality, but also a dirtier, more realistic and for this age apparently, also more attractive image of sex — a kind of post-coital portrayal. In one set of pictures, Lauren W., pulls at her lower lip with a single finger, lies in bed looking giggly and guilty, and gazes into the camera with a look that manages to be both a come-on and a dare. The advertising sells customers on sly decadence and wryly acknowledged hedonism. Even the innocuous grey hoodie becomes morning-after wear; in one picture, an unwashed young man leans in a doorway, wearing only a slim hooded sweatshirt with the hood up and a pair of American Apparel's colorful, Y-front briefs. In an interview with the Guardian, the company CEO said, “Fashion is all about sex and function. You want to look attractive, and attractive is just another way of saying sexy. Even if you don't want the person, you want them to be attracted to you. Even among other men we want to look attractive and dapper. That's still driven by our sex drives.”

Like the early editors of Playboy, American Apparel understands that sometimes the hint, the smile, and maintaining some degree of mystery is more alluring than outright nudity and complete exposure. But for American Apparel, highly fluid interpersonal relations don't stop at the camera: this company has been relaxing the limits between management and staff, customer and cashier, public image and private image since its inception.

The story of American Apparel is a story that ultimately begins with a man named Dov Charney. Charney, like the company he started and runs today, employs a kitschy, retro sensibility in his public appearance. While the walls of his stores wear old Playboy covers and overexposed Bar Mitzvah polaroids, Charney sports a moustache which appears to have been transplanted off the face of a sweaty 1970s porn star, sitting thick and heavy on his upper lip. In photos, he stares intensely out of large, wire-framed glasses. No understanding can come about American Apparel without some understanding of this man, Dov Charney; he is inextricably tied to the company's public image, and sells himself in much the same way he sells the company.

Born in Canada to an architect and painter, Charney began selling T-shirts in his youth, eventually dropping out of school to pursue his own business. Unlike the CEOs of other major clothing companies, Charney is front and center in the company's public image, garnering a controversial reputation for himself in the past few years. Famously, in 2004 Charney did an interview with Jane reporter Claudine Ko over the course of two months. Throughout this time, Charney masturbated several times while being interviewed, and, “put on a show,” with a female employee in front of Ko. This extreme transparency between the public consciousness and Charney himself carries over into Charney's relations with his staff. American Apparel takes a laissez-faire approach to work places relationships, and this policy applies also to Charney, apparently, who has dated multiple female employees of the company.

A liberal attitude towards sex is only one half of American Apparel's progressive policy, however. The other half, advertised just as much if not more, stresses the company's anti-sweat shop environment and, “vertically integrated manufacturing,” which means that all levels of the company, including design and manufacture, fall under one roof. Namely, the roof of a pink seven-story warehouse located in downtown Los Angeles, adorned with logos such as, “Legalize LA,” and, “American Apparel es una compania rebelde.” Inside the warehouse, workers are allowed privileges that sound exotic when compared to workplace conditions of other businesses: phone service and internet are provided for free, massages are available at no cost, and the work floor is well-lit, clean, and sparse. There is a year-long waiting list to get a job.

Yet, the relaxed, fluid atmosphere of the American Apparel company seems more suited to a small business, and indeed has caused complications as the company expands, now employing over 50,000 workers and competing with such corporate giants as Haines, Fruit of the Loom, and Gap. Three sexual harassments suits have been filed against Charney; by now all charges have been dropped or overturned, but the darker side of the company's liberal, edgy approach has been more than revealed. And even American Apparel's shining claim to progressive fame, its anti-sweatshop labor policy, has been tarnished by the well-publicized fact that American Apparel does not have a union. Three years ago a garment worker's union ran a drive to incorporate the American Apparel workforce, but the venture failed, due either to apathy on the part of the workers or discouragement from management. Whether this issue will be raised again remains to be seen, but as the company grows it does not appear far fetched to imagine that a close, one-to-one relationship between management and the workforce might be comprised.

Thus, American Apparel occupies a unique position in the worlds of fashion and business, straddling two contentious progressive platforms: sex and labor. The question, though, is whether either of these issues really matters to customers. Despite the sexual harassments suits and questionable behavior of the company's boss, despite the raunchy advertising, despite the lack of unions, American Apparel remains an enormously successful company. Although only two years old, one hundred American Apparel stores inhabit global, trendy locations such as London, Paris, New York, Berlin, and Tokyo. Fifty more are planned to open this year. The company warehouse is capable of producing over 1.3 millions garments a week. American Apparel has become a top of the list destination for young shoppers, who, in response to the racy, dirty advertising and complicated labor policy, either shrug or smile before pulling out a credit card. Walking into an American Apparel store, you get the sense that the company's philosophy very nearly mirrors this generation's cultural values: under the colorful, evocative clothing lie clean white walls and a pristine conscience.
**Passings**

**Denis Donaldson**

(1950-2006)

Denis Donaldson, a celebrated member of the Provisional Irish Republic Army who was exposed as a double agent for Britain's MI5, was found shot in a remote County Donegal cottage on April 4, 2006. In his youth, he was a renowned militant and Sinn Féin politician who went on a hunger strike with the legendary Bobby Sands while incarcerated in Long Kesh, colloquially known as the Maze.

October 2002 marked the beginning of the end for Donaldson's double life, when he was arrested in a raid by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) on Sinn Féin's offices and charged with directing a Provisional IRA “spy-ring” within Ulster's parliament. The PSNI subsequently raided Donaldson's home, discovering and confiscating thousands of documents in the process.

Though charges were dropped on December 8, 2005, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams announced on December 16 that Donaldson had acted as a MI5 spy for over twenty years. In an appearance on Radio-Television Éire (RTE), the double agent confirmed Mr. Adams' statement, admitting that he had been turned by British intelligence in the mid-1980s while serving as an IRA intelligence officer.

After his public confession, Donaldson withdrew from public life to the isolated cottage in Ireland's west, where he lived for several months without electricity and running water. Two shotgun cartridges were found on the scene, and a postmortem revealed that he died from a shotgun blast to the chest. Though the Provisional IRA has denied any involvement and Sinn Féin has condemned the murder of their former colleague, Ulster loyalists and members of the British media have stated that “eyes will be turned towards IRA/Sinn Féin on this issue.”

**Yuan Baojing**

(1950-2006)

Once one of China's fastest rising young entrepreneurs and the country's richest man, billionaire Yuan Baojing, was sentenced to death by firing squad on October 15, 2005, the date passed without incident. It was subsequently discovered that the day before the execution Yuan's wife, Zhuoma, had transferred ownership of $49.5 billion yuan worth of shares in his assets to the government, including a 40% stake in an Indonesian oil company: Born into a working-class family in the northeastern city of Liaoyang, Yuan accumulated the lion's share of his wealth in the Chinese stock Market in his astonishing rise to prominence. At the time of his death, Yuan's net worth was estimated to be in the region of $1.5 billion, which will all be inherited by his wife.

**William Sloane Coffin**

(1924-2006)

In an age when the word 'activist' calls up as many images of high-profile partisans and violent protesters as it does of peaceful marches and architects of lasting change, it's worth remembering someone like William Sloane Coffin. Long-time Senior Minister at New York's Riverside Church and accomplished radical instigator in civil rights and antiwar movements alike, Coffin dedicated his life to reasoned dissent. A latecomer to the clergy, Coffin served as in the army as an infantryman during World War II and subsequently worked for the CIA in Germany before resuming his education at Yale's Divinity School. As Yale University's Chaplain from 1948 to 1976, he was a firm believer in the power of civil disobedience, and participated in Freedom Rides through Jim Crow Southern states. Coffin's opposition to the Vietnam War attracted considerable attention because of his approval and advocacy of draft evasion amongst Yale's student body, for which he, Dr. Benjamin Spock, and several others were put on trial (but never convicted) by Lyndon B. Johnson's government.

Appointed the fourth Senior Minister of Riverside Church in 1976, Coffin dedicated himself to addressing issues such as peace, nuclear disarmament, poverty, homelessness, and environmental awareness. In 1979, he was one of five clergymen who flew to Tehran on their own expense to help the hostages being held in the American Embassy to Iran celebrate Christmas. Coffin spoke out against the 1991 invasion of Iraq, though his actions decreased during the 1990's. In the spring and fall of 2003, Coffin voiced repeated criticism of President Bush's second invasion of Iraq, warning his constituents of the dangers latent in post-9/11 jingoism: "Patriotism at the expense of another nation is as wicked as racism at the expense of another race." Reverend Coffin died at his home in Strafford, Vermont, on April 12, 2006.

Write for Diskord!

We are always looking for submissions. Please contact Ali Winston at ali.winston@gmail.com or Julie Fry at juliquah@gmail.com.
Travels 2000-2005
Photos by Liliane Kang
Sunday, April 23rd

The Smart Museum and the Oriental Institute invites you to examine the relationship between texts and objects during a special joint tour of both museums from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. The afternoon begins at the Smart, with the Greco-Roman objects in the exhibition “GRAPHIKE.” Richard Neer, Chair of the Art History Department at the University of Chicago and curator of the exhibition, will discuss the ways in which words are incorporated in the artistic design of several selected works from antiquity. Then, the tour continues with the rich collection on view in the Oriental Institute’s Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. Emily Teeter, gallery curator, will reveal the special connection between art and writing in ancient Egypt, with comparative examples from other ancient Near Eastern cultures. The event is free, but advanced registration encouraged, as space is limited. Contact the OI at 773.702.9507 for more information.

Tuesday, April 25th

The University of Chicago Center for Latin American Studies will hold a presentation from Harper Montgomery, PhD student, Art History, University of Chicago, entitled “New Venues, New Audiences: Avant-Garde Strategies of Display in Mexico City, 1921-1928.” Montgomery will present part of her dissertation research on how artists during the 1920s adopted experimental strategies for displaying and exhibiting their work in Mexico City. She will discuss the activities of the muralists, the estridentistas, and the 30-30! group between 1921 and 1928. The event will take place at Kelly Hall 114 from 12:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Friday, April 28th

The University of Chicago Department of Slavic Languages and Literature is honored to present Adab Zagajewski: A to Z — an International Conference on the Poet’s Works. This event will be held in the East Lounge at Ida Noyes on Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Friday, April 28th & Saturday, April 29th

The Chicago Society along with the Center for East Asian Studies, the Center for International Studies, the Department of History, the Department of Economics, and the Department of Political Science presents China and the Future of the World: A Spring Colloquium at the University of Chicago, a two-day conference at the University of Chicago’s International House will feature academics, journalists, writers, and politicians from the United States and China. Topics will include the political and social challenges facing the People’s Republic of China, China’s increasingly confident involvement in international affairs, and the implications of China’s economic liberalization both for the Chinese people and for the rest of the world. The event will occur both days at the International House, 1444 East 59th Street, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Monday, May 1st - Monday, May 29th

Doc Films begins its 5-week long screening of the 10-part Dekalog, Krzysztof Kieslowski’s monumental cinematic adaptation of the Ten Commandments. Each Monday between May 1 and May 29, two of the ten films will be screened. Although each hour-long segment brings a different story — and a different commandment — to life, the series as a whole follows a sweeping arc that culminates with Thou Shalt Not Kill in Episode 5. Series curated by Ethan Stanislawski. All films in Polish, with English subtitles. For more information, call 773-702-8757, visit http://docfilms.uchicago.edu/ or pick up a calendar or pamphlet from Doc’s Max Palevsky Cinema on the ground floor of Ida Noyes Hall.

Thursday, May 4th & Friday, May 5th

The University of Chicago Program in the Poetics as well as the Department of Germanic Languages and Literature is proud to present poet Durs Grübein. He is the author of nine volumes of poetry: Ashes for Breakfast was the first of his collections to be published in English. He is also the author of essays and translations from the Greek and Latin. His work has been awarded many major German literary prizes, including the highest, the Georg-Büchner-Preis, which he won at age thirty-three, and the Friedrich-Nietzsche-Preis, which he won in 2004. Grübein has lived in Berlin since 1985. Grübein will be giving a reading on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in Social Sciences 122, 1126 East 59th Street; a lecture will follow on Friday at 1:00 p.m. in Social Sciences 122, 1126 East 59th Street.

Saturday, May 6th

So far Chicago has hosted two Forums (‘04 and ‘05), each drawing more than 500 people. The Chicago Social Forum is one of a number of regional and local social forums being organized throughout the world. At the forum, organizations, groups and individuals are able to build alliances and coalitions that strengthen their ability to make more positive changes in their communities. There will be an opportunity to volunteer at the Third Annual Chicago Social Forum from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. at Roosevelt University, 400 South Michigan Avenue. Interested parties should contact Leo at lgertner@uchicago.edu. There will be free admission for volunteers and a volunteer orientation a week prior to the event.

Saturday, May 6th

The University of Chicago Community Service Center will hold a Chicago-wide Day of Service: Immigration in Chicago. Interested parties should contact Zack Hill (put Attn: Zack in the subject line) at HYPERLINK “mailto:uczse@uchicago.edu” ucsce@uchicago.edu. Participants should plan to meet in front of the Reynolds Club at 10:00 a.m. and return at 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 10th & Thursday, May 11th

The University of Chicago Program in the Poetics as well as the Renaissance Society proudly presents Lyn Hejinian. Poet, essayist, and translator, Hejinian is also the author or co-author of fourteen books of poetry. She lives in Berkeley and teaches at the University of California. She was Guest Editor of The Best American Poetry 2004, and since 1981 she has been the co-editor of Poetics Journal. She is also the co-director of Atelos, a literary project commissioning and publishing cross-genre work by poets. Her honors include a Writing Fellowship from the California Arts Council, a grant from the Poetry Fund, a Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, and a Fellowship from The Academy of American Poets. Hejinian will be giving a lecture entitled “A Return of Interruption” on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. in Rosenwald 405, 1101 E. 58th Street; she will give a reading on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. in Social Sciences 122, 1126 East 59th Street.

Thursday, May 11th

East Asia: Trans-Regional Histories Workshop presents Professor Chris Issett who will be giving a lecture entitled “Growing Pains: Were people getting taller or shorter in the Qing and what might that tell us about standards of living?” at the John Hope Franklin Room, SS 224, from 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 11th - Sunday, June 11th

Court Theatre will end the 2005-2006 production season with the production of Lettice and Lovage, directed by Lucy Smith Conroy. Lettice and Lovage tells the story of Lettice Douffet, a tour guide of Fustian House, the most boring stately home in Britain—until she begins to embellish her tours, which become more interesting as they stray further from the facts. Charlotte Schoen, sent by the Preservation Trust to investigate, is not amused and fires her. But Charlotte’s passion for history draws her to Lettice’s romantic world-view and the two women forge an unlikely friendship in the face of their dreary modern lives. This charming and hilarious British comedy won two 1990 Tony awards.