PERSONAL ADS
by The Blue and White Staff

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
by Anand Venkatesan

A CONVERSATION WITH
PROF SARAH COLE
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On the Cover:
"Alma, hotter" by Lara Weibgen

Typographical Note
The text of The Blue and White is set in Bodoni Old Face, which was revived by Günter Gerhard Lange based on original designs by Giambattista Bodoni of Parma (active 1765–1813). The display faces are Weiss and Cantoria.
owadays, it seems like the line between reality and fiction is in imminent danger of disappearing. Having survived the recent epidemic of ‘reality-based’ television, the staff of The Blue and White was happy to turn to the relative stability of literature. Fiction. Non-fiction. Even magic realism. All neatly labeled and ready to enjoy.

But alas, a new genre of literature has announced itself: fictional non-fiction. Indeed, within the last year, it’s been nearly impossible to pick up a newspaper without stumbling across the “creative liberties” taken by unintentional fictionalists such as Joseph Ellis, Stephen Ambrose, or Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Certainly, it is easy to castigate those who use their fictive tendencies to reckless ends, but do we really want to dispense with fiction altogether? Fiction, in its many forms, plays a powerful role in our lives. Fantasy. Tall tales. Certain social customs (“Of course you don’t look fat in that dress!”). Yes, fiction can be a most effective palliative.

So, in salute of these exemplars of fiction, we present you with our “Fictions” issue. Along with our customary treats, we’ve tossed in a bouquet garni of fiction. Fiction’s delicate spices infuse our personal ads, its fragrance wafts through the Editor-at-Large piece, and its tasty effects linger throughout our Conversation with Professor Sarah Cole. Even Verily has joined the fun, with a plagiarism-themed dispatch!

In the closing of his poem, “To the One of Fictive Music,” Wallace Stevens writes:

"On your pale head wear
A band entwining, set with fatal stones.
Unreal, give back to us what once you gave:
The imagination that we spurned and crave."

God forbid that we stop listening to our muses, for we are, in a very real way, what we imagine. May the works within inspire your own flights of fancy.

@
Editor-at-Large

Absolute power corrupts absolutely, but what does the heady rush of running an insolvent undergraduate magazine do? A peek into the inbox of The Blue and White's new Editor-in-Chief...

From: Anne Doe
To: Anand Venkatesan
Subject: hey

hey anand,

it's anne, from your creative writing class. do you want to meet up over coffee or something and talk about our upcoming project? write me back.

anne

From: Anand Venkatesan
To: Anne Doe
Subject: Re: hey

Anne,

Thank you for your submission. I am, to state things mildly, at a loss for words. Where to begin? Ah, yes...the subject line of your electronic correspondence. But I have said enough already, I suspect.

There are, of course, greater issues in your writing that must needs be addressed. In lieu of typing up my rather lengthy comments, I have taken the liberty of sending you my newly-completed treatise on the prose form, with which I trust you will acquaint yourself. It is, in the spirit of Plimpton, a compendium of the wit and wisdom that I've picked up in my time as a gentleman of letters.

Do not give up. As I once told Nabokov over petits fours in a Paris patisserie, the most important thing to do is simply to write and write often. (Nabokov is, incidentally, a dreadful tipper.) The job of the writer is a thankless one. But fear not - with effort, we will make a writer of you yet!

Yours faithfully,

Anand Venkatesan
Editor-at-Large

P.S. Capitalization, like a well-knotted bow tie, is always appropriate.

From: Anne Doe
To: Anand Venkatesan
Subject: RE: hey

anand,

what the hell is wrong with you? i didn't "submit" anything to you - i asked you if you wanted to meet about our portfolio project, and what are you talking about? you're not the editor of anything...you weirdo.

anne

From: Anand Venkatesan
To: Anne Doe
Subject: BRAVO!

Dear Anne,

Bravo! I see you have taken my counsel to heart. Your latest installment was an emotional tour de force...I was riveted to my seat! However, your opus suffers from conceptual confusion: it is frightfully unclear why your rather crude character is so confused and indignant. Maychance you could send over the entire manuscript, instead of these tantalizing snippets?

And let us not forget Aristotle's dictum - “Something which, whether it is present or not present, explains nothing [else], is no part of the whole.” I trust that the meaning of this is transparent.
Cremation

The horoscope is trash. In the village they burn effigies and your wax-paper likeness goes up in licks. It's a grand funeral, yours: that drawn progress of acrobats and necromancers, gulls flapping over rickshaws and wagons, yew sprigs on the pyre.

The tarot cards fail to foretell such demise: the slow breaking of toes, sudden cracks, frozen limbs, the parting of waves, the hard splintering of organs. Pulled out cold from the tundra, your body, hardly body, gleams blue -- opaline and Arctic, translucent in parts. The mortician dumps your frame on the table and leaves you there sprawled, hands and legs melting, limpid as a flounder. Mid-thaw, your pale eyes burn jellyfish-neon.

— Lara Weibgen
URH Service Desk
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Fax Services
Quarter Rolls & Stamps
Columbia Card URH Access

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Mayhaps you have seen the J of late as she flutters around the campus, gently overseeing the frazzled freshpeople, full of childish seriousness, as they express their concern over the pernicious matter of course selection. ‘Twere enough to make her beak curl with a chuckle, were it not that she has, alas, been somewhat less than perfectly preened herself these days, brushing wings with so many of the hoi peteinoi. Yes, Blue J has discovered that the consequence of a fine taste in classes is that half of her fellow Morningside Heights citizens want to take them with her. This situation is clearly unacceptable!

Columbia U is, to everyone's chagrin, not the largest campus on the island. As a result, space is limited. What is more, word of the truly phenomenal professors available has spread far and wide. Fortunately for Blue J, morning calisthenics should correct the mild scoliosis she’s developed from sitting on the floor in Dalton’s Political Theory. But fans of Intro to Psychology or most Economics classes may have no such luck, particularly if they are of the Columbia stripe and must face heavy competition for Barnard’s Yoga offerings. The J feels most sorry, though, for the assorted mockingbirds who attempt to learn new songs: language classes are always hideously overenrolled, and if any discipline’s pedagogy suffers from too many students and not enough instructors, foreign language would be it.

Alas, what can be done? One thing is clear: the administration’s current efforts aren’t succeeding. Even the most callow sparrow or finch knows that you can’t tell how well a nest works for you until you’ve seen it through that first rainstorm, but these days it’s only the early bird that has the chance to fly away. And our hearts beat faster than the Public Speaking enrollment (10 of 10) fills, as we make the uninformed decision to drop a class or stick it out. Unless Columbia is intent on raising the timid followers of tomorrow, more attuned to caution than the real learning experience, we must find a different solution to this problem.

And, unfortunately, that solution will probably require the University to part with a piece of its endowment. Imagine how much less crowded it could all be, if there were more professors and more classrooms; imagine a world where any interested party, regardless of field of study or class rank, could sit in on a lecture and learn something: a world where even the Exchequer realized that rigid and punitive registration systems are counterproductive! This J knows that classroom crowding is unpleasant, and contrary to the academic mission of our institution too. But professors and buildings cost money, and the budgetary dragons do not willingly give up parts of their hoard. Avians and saurians are not known for peacefully sharing the skies, but any gold-guarding lizard would do well to note the wisdom of keeping its customers satisfied. Happy fledglings bring back lots of shinies with them to the old nesting grounds, but too many birdies in one small room means just one thing: permanent migration.

If you support the J in her quest, please let us know: theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

Illustrated by Craig Hollander
On the Nature of Things
by Vijay Iyer

The Botany of Desire: A Plant’s-Eye View of the World
By Michael Pollan.

Michael Pollan premises his latest book on a flaw of mankind that has gone largely ignored since Darwin’s publication of *The Origin of Species* in 1859. It is the phenomenon of eco-centrism, the feeling of exclusivity and separation of the human race from the plants and animals around us, and more importantly, from the larger scheme of evolutionary biology. The human desire to control nature is as old as the myth of Prometheus, and has its contemporary descendants in the form of designer crops and genetic engineering. However, Pollan points out that coexisting with man’s impulse to master the wild forces around him, there has been a subtler, more significant desire to foster a symbiotic relationship with nature, fed by similar passions and ignited as much by plants as by humans themselves.

The author chooses four representative plants to highlight specific interactions of human desire and plant cultivation, which have produced “fruitful” relationships for both partners—the apple and sweetness, the tulip and beauty, the potato and abundance, cannabis and intoxication. The subtitle of the book is “A Plant’s Eye View of the World,” so the garden-author approaches each subject with an aim to show how the plants have co-evolved to seduce humans and thus ensure their continued survival. As he puts it in his introduction, “we automatically think of domestication as something we do to other species, but it makes just as much sense to think of it as something certain plants and animals have done to us, a clever evolutionary strategy for advancing their own interests.” The creative use of this original perspective is enough to make the book an enjoyable and informative read, but Pollan combines it with a fascination bordering on wonderment of the plants he is studying, which adds an endearing human component to the writing.

Throughout the book, Pollan ties the allure of each plant to the ancient Greek concept of Apollonian and Dionysian virtues of being. This flighty but quite profound thesis pits the cool traits of Apollo against the wilder characteristics of Dionysus, with the most successful plants finding the right balance of order and disorder to satisfy human urges for sweetness, beauty, et al. Pollan effectively uses this higher notion of a competition for natural balance as a welcome philosophical counterpoint to the pages of descriptive botany for each plant, but occasionally he causes the reader to wonder about the possible ill effects of cooping oneself up with an inanimate object for too long.

DON’T FORGET...SPRING 2002 CHECK-OUT

Thurs, May 18th – Non-seniors must check out by noon.
Sat, May 23rd – Seniors must check out by 4:00 p.m.

Record these dates so you can make travel plans now.
There will be NO extensions.

University Residence Halls

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“Could that be it—right there, in a flower—the meaning of life?” Fortunately, that sentence comes at the end of a chapter on the tulip, and surprisingly enough, before the chapter on marijuana.

This section, all stoner jokes and elbowing-in-the-ribs aside, happens to be the most intriguing and well-written chapter in a very engrossing book. After tracking the course of John Chapman (a.k.a. Johnny Appleseed, who

Illustrated by Adam Wolofff

Pollan savagely detaches from his Disneyfied aura of innocence—worth the read in itself) and Amsterdam tulip barons of the seventeenth century, the author turns to a plant that involves large portions of desire and danger, risk and reward, mental and financial pain and gain. He relates the hilarious story of his own attempt to grow cannabis in his backyard and reveals how witches came to be associated with “flying broomsticks” (more than worth the read—less Halloween than Walpurgisnacht in Goethe’s Faust). Moreover, he informs us that, “many of the important thinkers of classical Greece, including Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Aeschylus, and Euripides” used hallucinogenic and/or mind-altering drugs—probably not something the venerable Columbia trustees were aware of when planning the façade of Butler Library. And these anecdotes are just for starters. Pollan gives a short history of the war on drugs (recently declared a failure by the Bush administration) and his vote for legalizing marijuana, talks with eminent scientists in the field of cannabis research, explains the difference between two very different strains of the plant (indica and sativa) and visits pot-growers in Amsterdam, whom he calls “the best gardeners of my generation.” The author even offers an elegantly written editorial on why we as humans are attracted to marijuana and other natural mind-altering plants, aiming not to convince or argue, but simply to try and understand.

Pollan concludes with a chapter on the potato that illustrates both the attractive and disturbing aspects of the modern approach to nature. As the author points out, “It has become much harder, in the past century, to tell where the garden leaves off and pure nature begins,” as humans have come more and more to dominate, rather than cooperate, with the world around them. Genetically engineered potato plants disinfect themselves of pesticides, remove unsightly blemishes, and most distressingly, can even turn off their own reproductive capabilities, denying the essential work of sex and diversification in the name of corporate gain. Alternately, these crops do away for the most part with expensive and harmful pesticides, and so far have proven to be both economical and safe for cash-strapped farmers. There is a catch-22 at work here, and Pollan realizes there is no easy solution. But as a passionate gardener and humanist, his prescription is one of co-evolution and symbiotic possibilities over potentially destructive manipulation. It is only to be hoped that the eloquent and inspired message of The Botany of Desire reaches audience enough to make good on its warnings.
Dear Dean Yatrakis,

As you may be aware, with the graduation of this year’s senior class, I will become the only Ancient Studies major in the senior class. Should no members of the class of 2004 declare Ancient Studies, I will be the lone undergraduate in the program. In the event that I am indeed the only Ancient Studies major, I have prepared a list of suggested emendations to the Columbia College Bulletin, for the sake of clarity, precision, and concision.

1. The sentence on page 153 reading, “The purpose of this program is to enable the student to explore the cultural context of the ancient Mediterranean as a whole while concentrating on one specific Mediterranean or Mesopotamian culture,” should be emended to read: “The purpose of this program is to enable Adam B. Kushner to explore the cultural context of the ancient Mediterranean as a whole while concentrating on Greek and Roman cultures.”

2. The next sentence, reading, “Central to the concept of the program is its interdisciplinary approach, in which the student brings the perspectives and methodologies of at least three different disciplines to bear on his or her area of specialization,” should read: “Central to the concept of this program is Adam’s interdisciplinary approach, in which he brings perspectives and methodologies of history, language, and philosophy to bear on the study of Greek and Roman cultures.”

3. The list of departments contributing faculty to the program may be cut down, as I have not taken nor will I take courses in the Anthropology, Religion, or Middle East and Asian Language departments. I find them tedious, frankly.

4. The sentence reading, “The culmination of the course comes in the senior year, when students with different areas of specialization come together to share their ideas in the senior seminar and then to write a substantial piece of original research,” should read: “In his senior year, Adam will take the senior seminar, and share with himself his ideas while writing about Aristophanes.”

5. For the degree requirements and the list of courses approved for the major, please see my attached transcript.

6. The senior seminar should be retitled, “The Adam B. Kushner Seminar.”

7. Likewise, the sentence on page 154 reading, “Those who miss the opportunity to take courses on a diverse set of ancient cultures may find themselves at a disadvantage in the major seminar” should read, “Thankfully having taken courses on a diverse set of ancient cultures, Adam will be well prepared for the Adam B. Kushner Seminar.”

8. The section entitled “For a Premedical Concentration in Ancient Studies” may be stricken, as the sight of blood makes me queasy.

9. Prof. Eleanor Dickey’s title, now “Director of Undergraduate Studies,” should be changed to “Adam’s Personal Tutor,” or, if you feel that to be too informal, “Kushner’s Personal Tutor.” Let decorum reign in our small but happy program.

The Ancient Studies major, or should I say the Adam B. Kushner major, is an important one to the university. As such, it should be represented accurately and clearly in the bulletin and in other literature. With the emendations I have indicated, I believe that the bulletin will more effectively convey the type of knowledge that Adam B. Kushner needs to know about his major. Furthermore, I have enclosed my bank account codes, so that the undergraduate community-building funds may be transferred directly to me. I plan to buy a Playstation and take myself to Le Monde.

I thank you for your time in this matter, and remain, as ever,

Yours,

Adam B. Kushner
President and Quorum
Ancient Studies Student Association
Recently, The Blue and White has derived great amusement from eavesdropping upon the cell-phone conversations that vociferous Columbia students conduct loudly in the public arena. Curiously, all of the following statements were made during the openly broadcasted conversations of one particularly ardent cell-phone conversationalist. Perhaps you know him.

“What do you mean you live in Queens? That is the WORST borough! You are clearly a fool!”
“I’m saying, I want you to make a website with...with my name on it!”
“What am I doing? I am enjoying the weather as it lasts. This is a spring thaw, as they say, in January!”
“Well, quite frankly madam, I don’t give a damn what you think!”
“Why are you changing the dates? And why are you LYING TO ME?! Why are you changing the dates and why are you lying to me?! Don’t you fucking lie to me!”
“You’re a communist! Do you know how to say communist in Spanish? Comunista!!”
“I don’t care; if he touched your vagina, it’s rape!”
“I’m in charge now, I want my people, so you can tell them that they’re all fired!”
To a sing-song melody: “You’re miserable, you’re horrible...”
“Are you saying that you don’t understand how to take cab? Is that what you’re saying? Oh shut up!”
“I have all the necessary documents, and am ready to proceed. Be at the Federal Plaza at noon tomorrow.”
“It’s for national security purposes, and I’d doubt you’d object to that. Or would you? What!!”
“‘Should’? ‘Should’?! WE do not SAY ‘Should’! We say ‘OUGHT’!!”
“DON’T GIVE ME THAT! THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS POLICE BRUTALITY! THERE IS EITHER JUSTICE OR LAWLESSNESS!”
“I’m like the banality of evil.”
“They’re offering one you should take next semester! It’s called GERM WAR­FARE!”
“No, I’m not nice! You want nice? Go to DIS­NEYLAND!”
“It says CLEARLY in the bylaws that a gentleman is entitled to TWO helpings of brandy before the exam­ination!”

Illustrated by Adam Wolkoﬀ
THE CROCODILE'S REBUKE

Crocodile, you've left your husk
wound up like a caul at the end of my sickbed.
One more slip and I'll give you the noose.
Loveless as he is, even Anteater knows
not to abandon his armor back here in my room
and then go about bald, open as a hearth,
mincing and coy while the big moon
snuggles up in her hammock.

The nerve of some creatures!
You sit kingly by the door, peering at me
through that metal-rimmed porthole
you've put through my wall.
Sinking, dying a little, I say
"Be gone!" and you smile,
baring those crocodile-teeth
I've grown to detest. You're plumb cruel,
Crocodile, roosting there by the lamp,
smoking cloves till the place
becomes foggy as milk. Learn a lesson:
love kills. I'm a lover. I know.

Oh, sure, I said love. Surprised? Crocodile,
you've got volumes to learn
ere this parable's up. I met a gypsy in Kyoto
who gave me malaria
the first time we made love
in her four-poster bed.
I know Cain. I've picked cotton.
Crocodile, I've walked shores
of platinum sands
with the great tzars of Dublin.
There's a lot you don't see
through that porthole of yours,
a lot you forego
when you're skinless and gray
in a city chock full
of kind-hearted people.
Take your cassock back, put it on,
go to church, read the Psalms:
I'm all right without you,
skimming the Catechism.

—Lara Weibgen

INTERNSHIP: A POEM CYCLE

Male Merge
You showed me how to do it
Three times this weekend
So I when I went into the office I'd be ready
I was nervous
But prepared
I didn't know it could be like that
Have you ever done it with people watching?

Waiting to Excel
If they want me to print out these labels by lunch
They need to get more computers

An Internship Is A Learning Experience
I was French-kissing
The twenty-seventh envelope
When it hit me:
Maybe
I should marry
Someone rich.

SECOND THOUGHTS OF AN ENGLISH MAJOR

I never weighed the relevance of poetry until
I saw, between the green
grass fields by College Walk, a red dump truck
holding brown dirt for
flowers.
So much depends, I thought, upon this paper
due Monday.

—Emily Erstling
LANDSCAPE WITH NAPKINS
AND FIRMAMENT

It's funny when you're striped
in one direction and you love
in another. I might have to
have a piece of manifest cake.
Is this a Saturday to tilt in?
Wainscotings, aspidistra, history.

I am uncouth and tangent to where
they went in Jules Verne. Assassinate
me, Friends of the Watermain!
They'll still petition me for snap­
shots from the mantle and neat
old ways to say "you're stocky

and beautiful. That gash wasn't
there before. As for the interim,
there's a pantry in the quandary:
fix it whenever's convenient. So.
Row with me someplace convenient
like a sink or the Chicago Fire."

Brigadiers, fill your buckets
with me, these your instruments:
clangor, Heraclitus, invierno.
Go. Leave this squat tableau.
Don't leave me in this squat
tableau: there must be brick-red

without brick. Plenty salty,
nothing can resemble prismatic.
Use your helmets to spell, tell
me once again about flapping
and leave me in the competent

-Michael Paulson

MIRABEAU BRIDGE

Beneath Mirabeau bridge runs the Seine
And our love
Must memory remain
For joy forever followed after pain

Let the night come and the hour sound its name
The days flow by I remain

Hands held in hands let us stand face to face
While there beneath
The bridge of our embrace
The waves of endless gazes weary race

Let the night come and the hour sound its name
The days flow by I remain

Love moves on as the waters flow
Love moves on
As life is slow
And violent is the only Hope we know

Let the night come and the hour sound its name
The days flow by I remain

Days pass weeks pass as slow time turns
Not time gone past
Nor love returns
'Neath Mirabeau Bridge the Seine churns

Let the night come and the hour sound its name
The days flow by I remain

-translated from Apollinaire by D. Jeff Soules
Conversations

Fiction and Fictions: Prof. Sarah Cole

In the spirit of our “Fictions” theme, The Blue and White recently sat down for an interview with Professor Sarah Cole, assistant professor of modern British literature in the English department. We thoroughly enjoyed the conversation, and hope you do, too.

BW: What is your impression of Columbia so far?
SC: Well, when I was able to get the position at Columbia, I felt really privileged to be here. So I came in with—I guess, as I said, a sense of sort of gratitude to be here. It really hasn’t let me down; I love teaching here. I’ve found the students to be really... kind of ideal. Columbia students, as you probably know, are a little bit feisty. They have their own opinions, and they’re willing to argue back a little bit. They don’t simply want to know what I think so that they can repackaging it for me in the form of a paper or an exam. And there’s some of that, and some of that is good; I mean, that’s partly what learning is.

So it’s a place of sort of genuine intellectual restlessness, which I love. And the graduate students are wonderful—we have great graduate students. They’re very serious, very committed to the field. And there’s some of that, and some of that is good; I mean, that’s partly what learning is.

BW: You describe yourself as “a good old-fashioned seventies-and-eighties feminist.” What’s it like for you to teach Hardy, to read Hardy’s descriptions of women, or to teach Eliot and think about Eliot’s background and anti-Semitism. How do you reconcile your own ideas and enjoy the literature you teach?
SC: It’s a really good question. I think the corollary of your question would be, how can you, or I, or one, get pleasure - great pleasure - out of reading or teaching literature that you also find to be unbelievably obnoxious and harmful in some way?

I can’t answer that question, really; I can just tell you that I think as a woman you recognize very early on that if you’re going to enjoy Western culture, you just have to find a way to almost enjoy the politics of exposing. At the same time, I mean, you go to an art gallery and it’s all naked women posing on front of invisible male artists! And you think, well, is this going to ruin my day at the Louvre? And it’s not going to - you can’t let it, and I don’t want to let it.

I can also understand also the perspective of the people who become angry and that that’s the dominating perspective. [But] if I threw down every book that had demeaning images of women, I couldn’t read anything that was written before 1980, you know?

And I suppose as a teacher, you get to teach your students how to think in those terms anyway, so it isn’t entirely a matter of erasing what you don’t like, because you’re actually trying to help your students go through these very same kinds of questions.
BW: As someone who's studied war, and as someone of your academic background, what are your feelings about the recent foibles of Joseph Ellis, Stephen Ambrose? Is there something about war in general that causes... SC: (Laughs) ...people to plagiarize?

BW: (Laughs) Well, not plagiarize, but... wars seem to have contributed a lot to fiction building and invention of memory, in the sense that they are disturbances of experience on such a fundamental level...

SC: I would be very wary of saying that war somehow invites it. I think that wars are enormously galvanizing cultural events; they are very compelling. I started reading about World War I in the context of my dissertation, which is now a book I'm getting ready to publish about male friendship and male intimacy and comradeship and so on. I ultimately became interested in the war in a much broader context, and then in the idea of war, the problem of war, more generally.

There is something incredibly compelling about these events, more than maybe any other single kind of event that I can think about. So in that sense it may be that the identification and the false identification can sort of accrue around war. The sense of victimhood and victimization... The thing about the Vietnam War from the American perspective -- and the idea of the Vietnam veterans as themselves victims -- is that victims became a very important part of the sort of cultural discourse about Vietnam.

So the idea that you could at once identify as a kind of warrior and also as a victim of the sort of horrors of the twentieth century -- that's a very compelling position. So I can see how, if he [Ellis] spent years and years reading about and teaching and thinking about this subject, he would become identified with it. Still, there's a very big difference between that and either believing yourself to be or falsifying yourself to be a person who was in a war. To me, that's a relatively major and clear divide.

BW: There's been a pretty public debate going on recently about high and low literature and art -- I'm thinking primarily of the Jonathan Franzen and the Oprah Winfrey debate. I wonder what you have to say about those issues, whether you think they're artificial or whether they have a place.

SC: Well, the first thing I would say is that they're not new. In fact, the period that I've spoken on, the modernist period in the early 20th-late 19th century, is a kind of an important moment in setting up the notion of a divide between high literature and popular literature.

In the period that I've worked on, that kind of complementarity between popularity and acclaim came under a lot of scrutiny, and there was a lot of anxiety. So you get writers like Woolf or Joyce or Eliot, who are specifically not writing for a mass public, and in fact they load their texts with a kind of difficulty that makes them unavailable to many readers.

In terms of the contemporary story, I think there are writers like Toni Morrison who are sort of universally viewed as literary writers -- she teaches at Princeton, she won the Nobel Prize, her books are widely taught -- and I think the fact that somebody like Oprah can also promote 'Toni Morrison doesn't mean that Toni Morrison isn't in fact the sort of darling of a certain kind of academic readership.

So I don't particularly feel vexed about this issue. I thought the Franzen thing was kind of courageous, because most people -- there's so much fear in the postmodern period to ally yourself with elitism, and so to be able to say I actually don't want that kind of press struck me as -- I gave him some credit for that! On the other hand, obviously nobody wants to affirm...
that divide in a rigid way, and I think readers should be able to read across all different kinds of textual types.

BW: What's on your nightstand right now—what are you reading?

SC: What is on my nightstand right now? Gravity's Rainbow. It's been there for a while.

BW: (Laughs) Okay.

SC: Gravity's Rainbow is very heavily sitting on my nightstand! (Laughs) Well, I was reading it over break, and I didn't quite finish it, and I feel that I need to finish it now, so I'm kind of working my way through it. I love Pynchon, but I've never really loved Gravity's Rainbow—so it's a bit of a struggle for me.

BW: Let's do some fictional situation questions, just for fun. If you could switch jobs with anyone in the world, who would you switch with and why?

SC: Hmm... if I could switch jobs with anyone in the world? My job with tenure, that would be my fantasy job! Aside from that, what I want is to be one of the regular Op-Ed people at the New York Times. Gail Collins has now left—she was my hero, she's so funny—but if I could have Thomas Friedman's position, I'd be very happy. I'm a news-hound, and I read the newspaper every day, and—they have so much power, and they get to just pick whatever is outraging them in the world, and share their outrage.

BW: You're president of the country. What writers—dead or alive, of any nationality—do you name to your cabinet? What positions would you give them?

SC: (Laughs) Right. Dead or alive? Oh my goodness. I mean, you could really make this an insane country—you could turn things upside-down. I never think on these kinds of terms, you know? I keep thinking of all these crazy things, like having Heller be the Minister of the War—or, they're not called the Minister of the War, they're called the—BW: Secretary of Defense.

SC: Secretary of Defense! Or Salman Rushdie be the Chief of Immigration, or...

BW: Foreign Policy.

SC: Right, Secretary of State!

BW: If you were a rap star, what would your name be?

SC: Oh, I can't do that!

BW: It's what The Blue and White readership wants to know, Professor Cole.

SC: No, I can't—I'm taking the fifth on that. I don't want to incriminate myself! 
Upon learning that his son had decided to major in Classics, Ted Turner's father sent him the following letter (courtesy of the Classics Department newsletter):

I am appalled, even horrified, that you have adopted Classics as a Major. As a matter of fact, I almost puked on the way home today.

I am a practical man, and for the life of me, I cannot possibly understand why you should wish to speak Greek. With whom will you communicate in Greek? I have read, in recent years, the deliberations of Plato and Aristotle, and was interested to learn that the old bastards had minds which worked very similarly to the way our minds work today. I was amazed that they had so much time for deliberating and thinking and were interested in the kind of civilization that would permit such useless deliberation.

I suppose everybody has to be a snob of some sort, and I suppose you feel that you are distinguishing yourself from the herd by becoming a Classical snob. I can see you drifting into a bar, belting down a few, turning around to a guy on the stool next to you—a contemporary billboard from Podunk, Iowa—and saying, 'Well, what do you think about old Leonidas?'

It isn't really important what I think. It's important what you wish to do with yourself for the rest of your life. I just wish I could feel that the influence of those odd-ball professors and the ivory towers were developing you into the kind of man we can both be proud of.

I think you are rapidly becoming a jackass, and the sooner you get out of that filthy atmosphere, the better it will suit me.

Your loving Father.

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MAY 2000
CULINARY HUMANITIES

Alex Muñoz's Cookies

Cookies have become increasingly important at recent *Blue and White* meetings, and in recognition of this *The Blue and White* baking staff launched an investigation into the cookies of our Morningside campus. We found gingersnaps, butterballs, and iced sugar wonders; mint crisps, macadamia mounds, and the tried and true Tollhouse. One cookie, however, appeared to be a rack above.

Originally developed by the brother of Alexander Van Ness Muñoz, Columbia College senior, these cookies have appeared at marching band events and undergraduate plays across campus. Their daily sale once financed the purchase of high school Prom tickets and a rented tuxedo in rural Pennsylvania. Last summer, the cookies went international and were baked in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

And now, *The Blue and White* baking staff is proud to present the recipe for Alex Muñoz's Cookies:

In large bowl, mix:
- 1 1/4 cups brown sugar
- 1 1/3 cups white sugar
- 2 sticks of butter (or approximately 17 of those little patties that one can easily swipe from certain campus eateries) melted in oven at lowest possible temperature.

In separate bowl, combine:
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 eggs

Let butter and sugar mixture stand to cool for minimum of 2 hours. (Mr. Muñoz suggests a nap at this point.) Stir and stir some more and add flour. Add lots of flour. Add 1 or 2 cups at a time until the batter becomes a fairly non-sticky dough. (Mr. Muñoz could not specify the exact measurement of flour because the amount varies greatly according to the season, much more being required in hotter months (*The Blue and White* baking staff recommends approximately 4 1/2 cups flour for the month of March).

Every Muñoz cookie is individually rolled. Approximately 17 chocolate chips form the center of the layer of dough that is wrapped around them as they’re molded into small spheres. (To be done properly, the process requires 1 minute per cookie when one has a paper due the next morning; at other times 45 seconds is sufficient.)

Bake for approximately 6 minutes at 325 degrees Fahrenheit or until golden brown.

Makes approximately 100 cookies.
It would seem incongruous amidst her many forays into the filthy rich underworld of drugs and prostitutes, to find Foxy in a working class dive of a bar, where, in a sudden departure from the film’s plot, she proceeds to duke it out with a hoard of inexplicably angry butch white lesbians. This is, however, precisely the situation Foxy Brown finds herself in during one scene of this seventies classic of female blaxploitation.

I mena, why not me. I was honest. I wasn’t drunk. And yet, still them. I won’t understand. I never will. But ill always understand fur elise. The music makes sense in my mind. Sometimes it makes too much sense in my heart. Of course. That’s all im good for, to read your papers. Dude, what the hell is up with that.

Quining the Wrong Qualia: Dennet’s misapplied account of taste qualia

Slackfaith is a web magazine of the Writing Division of Columbia University’s School of the Arts. Of that, if little else, we’re sure.

This is a revision. I say that almost more as a reminder for me than for you. What do you care that this is a revision?

As an undergraduate cutting her teeth on her thesis, I cannot help feeling myself inevitably allied with the “infant squib of the Inns of Court, that hath not half greased his dining cap or scarce warmed his lawyer’s cushion, and he to approve himself an extravagant statesman, catcheth hold of a rush, and absolutely conclude th it is meant of the Emperor of Russia and that it will utterly mar the traffic into that country if all the pamphlets be not called in and suppressed, wherein that libelling word is mentioned” (Nashe 443).

CURLY drops the photos on Gittes’ desk. Curly towers over GITTES and sweats heavily through his workman’s clothes, his breathing progressively more labored. A drop plunks on Gittes’ shiny desk top.

Gittes notes it. A fan whiffs overhead. Gittes glances up at it. He looks cool and brisk in a white linen suit despite the heat. Never taking his eyes off Curly, he lights a cigarette using a lighter with a “nail” on his desk.

Curly, with another anguished sob, turns and rams his fist into the wall, kicking the waste-basket as he does. He starts to sob again, slides along the wall where his fist has left a noticeable dent and its impact has sent the signed photos of several movie stars askew. Curly slides on into the blinds and sinks to his knees. He is weeping heavily now, and is in such pain that he actually bites into the blinds. Gittes doesn’t move from his chair.

GITTES All right, enough is enough—you can’t eat the Venetian blinds, Curly. I just had ‘em installed on Wednesday.

Curly responds slowly, rising to his feet, crying. Gittes reaches into his desk and pulls out a shot glass, quickly selects a cheaper bottle of bourbon from several fifths of more expensive whiskeys.

Gittes pours a large shot. He shoves the glass across his desk toward Curly.

CURLY (drinking, relaxing a little) She’s just no good.

The media had a huge problem with separating people’s pubic and private lives and continues to have the same problem.

A walk with a baby taught me that there’s more to life than just achievements and goals; there are smiles.
I searched the faces of the incoming people again. Their faces were familiar and yet very much unknown. In this foreign country I was anonymous. An island, free to recreate myself, to paint myself before their eyes as a young poetess, not a silent shy teenager. The excitement of sacrificing myself in front of the audience began to pull on my insides, like the thrill of a roller coaster, a little bit of thanatos, the death wish. It’s the only way I can explain the zing of electricity that passed through my hands to my heart as I signed my name on the burnt paper.

Diana was the best looking girl in the university, and there were thousands of girls. She was the head cheerleader. She dated the captain of the football team. She was president of her sorority and homecoming queen. Her father was filthy rich. And she was a total BITCH!

Her face looked like it would explode. She was sweating like a pig! Like the pig she was!

Philosophy is a subject that interests me greatly. My father tells me that as a young man of Norwegian descent, I am doomed to scour my nebulous conscious for answers to the great questions of enigmatic being, plagued by the fact that I can never fully understand life, death and consciousness.

“Unconditioned” simply means that the stimulus and the response are naturally connected. They just came that way, hard wired together like a horse and carriage and love and marriage as the song goes. “Unconditioned” means that this connection was already present before we got there and started messing around with the dog or the child or the spouse.

My role as a resident advisor has awakened the teaching bug within me. Although, I have not taught my residents in the form of a lecture, I have had to use my creativity get them to participate in floor and campus wide events.

Bits of chicken noodle soup almost came sputtering out of my nose. “It’s all over now,” I said. I shook my head. A Lawyer and a Priest. It was like some Korean Parent’s wet dream. No, not even a wet dream. That was too tame. Being even one of those things was enough to gain my parents’ arousal. I would be rich! I would be saved! Hallelujah! I wiped a bit of carrot off my chin.

(TWO MIDDLE-AGED MEN, JOHN AND BILL, ARE STANDING AROUND A KITCHEN)

JOHN: Bill, I really am sorry I killed Sparky.
BILL: John, I just can’t figure out why you would have done that. I loved that dog more than anything, and as my best friend this is, like, the worst thing you could have done to me.
JOHN: Well, Bill, the little bastard just wouldn’t shut up while I was fucking your wife.

While reading a poem of Celine’s Voyage au bout de la nuit, where the poet talks about an imaginary trip, I had this idea that we, human beings, are constant travelers of ourselves. Just as if we would constantly bump into different mirrors where we would apparently always see the same, except that every mirror would be every time in a different place. I believe that, right now, this image doesn’t make any sense. But the fact is that the same idea came up again to my mind when I read “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”

have a big’s pokemonball, Have you a bes-ball? Yes I have. please

We consider dogs, cats, and horses to be expressive, intelligent. A cow, on the other hand, expresses emotion in a somewhat different manner, and we often consider their faces to be blank or to indicate stupidity.

Nitrous Oxide: No Laughing Matter
TOLD BETWEEN PUFFS

Verily Veritas finds himself abroad at present, embroiled in intensive researches into the Indonesian Macassar oil that Tsar Nicholas I massaged into his scalp in imitation of Alexander, and other intensive researches into such women as can be intrigued with the practice of intensive researches. V. V., whose devotion to Science must have precedence over his occasional journalism, cannot provide his usual item for this number. In its stead, he offers a paean, an Epistle Dedicatory, to his faithful readership. It is composed in the manner of Sir Thomas Browne, a man who, three centuries dead, should appreciate the gesture, and very much in his tone of persistent crypto-vegetarianism. In the tradition of eminent American scholars like Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin, Verily affirms that the following, championing the nobility of the canny Blue and White reader, flows from his pen alone. All responsibility for any acclaim accruing to the below resides wholly with the author.

Quid Quincunce speciosius, qui, in quamcunque partem spectaveris, rectus est?—the rascally QUINTILIAN.

§

You have wisely ordered your vegetable delights, beyond the reach of exception. The Turks who passed their days in gardens here, will have also gardens hereafter, and delighting in flowers on earth, must have lilies and roses in heaven. In garden delights 'tis not easy to hold a mediocrity; that insinuating pleasure is seldom without some extremity. The ancients venially delighted in flourishing gardens; many were florists that knew not the true use of a flower; and in Pliny's days none had directly treated of that subject. Some commendably affected plantations of venomous vegetables, some confined their delights unto single plants, and Cato seemed to dote upon cabbage; while the ingenuous delight of tulipists, stands saluted with hard language, even by their own professors.

That in this garden discourse, we range into extraneous things, and many parts of art and nature, we follow herein the example of old and new plantations, wherein noble spirits contented not themselves with trees, but by the attendance of aviaries, fish-ponds, and all variety of animals they made their gardens the epitome of the earth, and some resemblance of the secular shows of old.

That we conjoin these parts [a reference to the structure of Verily's 1658 edition, but to be read with profit here, out of context, for the admirable word order] of different subjects, or that this should succeed the other, your judgment will admit without impute of incongruity; since the delightful world comes after death, and paradise succeeds the grave. Since the verdant state of things is the symbol of the resurrection, and to flourish in the state of glory, we must first be sown in corruption: besides the ancient practice of noble persons, to conclude in garden-graves, and urns themselves of old to be wrapt up with flowers and garlands.

Nullum sine venia placuisse eloquium, is more sensibly understood by writers, than by readers; nor well apprehended by either, till works have hanged out like Apelles his pictures; wherein even common eyes will find something for emendation.

To wish all readers of your abilities [ye noble Blue and White subscribers], were unreasonably to multiply the number of scholars beyond the temper of these times. But unto this ill-judging age, we charitably desire a portion of your equity, judgment, candour, and ingenuity; wherein you are so rich, as not to lose by diffusion. And being a flourishing branch of that noble family [of Blue and White cognoscenti], unto whom we owe so much observance, you are not new set, but long rooted in such perfection [having read The Blue and White for some time]; whereof having had so lasting confirmation in your worthy conversation, constant amity, and expression; and knowing you a serious student in the highest arcana of nature; with much excuse we bring these poor maniples to your treasure.

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

VERILY VERITAS.

Who promises Low Delights in a forthcoming number.
**Personal Ads**

**SEEKING WOMEN**

Tall, brown haired, hazel eyed post-Zionist jock seeks graceful, intelligent not-too-Jewess to light his yiddishe neshama on fire. Must be low-maintenance, trust fund baby willing to finance my PhD in comparative literature and patron my other creative projects. Unearthly beauty a must, love of travel, Coen Brothers movies and Radiohead equally appealing. Failing that, great sex goes a long way. Lerner 4217.

Wizened old Chinese man trapped in the body of a freakishly tall Brahmin youth seeks down-to-earth intellectual giant trapped in the body of a supermodel. Our first date will be an architectural tour of Spain; our second, a culinary tour of France; our third, a sartorial tour of England. I, being comfortable with my masculinity, will allow you to pay. Must be tolerant of those with a tenuous grasp of reality. 5899.

Into sex? Me too! 3090.

An informal study showed recently that 80% of women mention baby names while on dates with me. If you’re in that minority 20%, and don’t want to talk about wailing infant beauties just yet, drop me a line. Brown hair, blue eyes and warm arms await. Appreciation for long walks, reading, Evensong, red wine and Anglican trivia all plusses. Should not be turned off by Mac users, prospective seminarians. 4011.

SWM ISO DINK for R&R, B&B, S&M and Q&A. I enjoy NFL, BBC, WWF and CNN. FYI, I like to LOL but am often SOL. Write me and I’ll KIT even though my IBM is a POS. 1148.

Do you like chocolate? Is it the “Mocha” in Java that gets your juices flowing? Do warm earth tones set your heart afire? If so, is for you, respond to box 3106.

Do you remember me? We met on the 1 train, you headed uptown, me downtown. You wore mylar, and braided your hair in cornrows, I wore a wetsuit. We discussed Sinatra, Hegel, and my recent divorce; you were unsympathetic. I regret parting company without asking for your fax. Everyday I weep that you are not yet in my life. 3090.

Asexual libertine seeks female whose naked body he will elegize with “hoof and snout” metaphor. He will supply the monoxidil, she the caviar and toasts. 5889.

Beleaguered and mildly anemic European diasporate, male, seeks intellectual, articulate, considerate woman for laughter, progressive political action, philosophizing, companionship, and candlelight dinners in Butler Reading Rooms. Must have sense of the absurd; angst, dreams, and knowledge of foreign languages a plus. We’ll have something to learn from each other? 5520

Perpetually intoxicated Frenchman seeks sublimely voluptuous woman as anodyne for crushing ennui. Our first date we will meditate on spleen and the ideal and then smoke opium. Our second date we will prowl the streets of Paris and then smoke opium. Our third date we will drink absinthe, indulge our carnal passions, and then smoke opium. Hypocritical readers and hideous women need not apply. Lesbianism a plus. 3243.

I despise you. You leave me cold. I’m not available. 3758.

Loquacious Jewish male, redo­lent of Xeryrus Rouge, seeks breathtaking shiksa goddess to help reenact the Civil War in its entirety. Must be fond of Yoo-Hoo, boxed wine, Simpson reruns, and heavy petting to the stirring melody of John Denver’s “Thank God I’m a Country Boy!” No Yankee fans or French women please. 3595.

Frustrated, freshly-dumped male seeks rebound relationship. Buxom blonde with an insatiable sexual appetite and a high tolerance for self-destructive behavior desirable. Lavish ego-stroking a must. After we discuss the depravity of womankind, I will despairingly call out my former girlfriend’s name during sex. The reasonable and self-respecting need not apply. 2431.
Shnookums seeks cuddlebunny. Must enjoy soft pillows, friendly dogs and medium to heavy petting. We will frolick in the fields of love, eat ice cream and giggle uncontrollably. One summer night, you will seduce me but I will be gentle. After hours of blissful tumbling, you will conceive quickly, bear painlessly. If you believe in footsies, low taxes and marital bliss, drop your perfumed letter off at Box 1148. Jaded folk need not apply.

They say good things come to those who wait. I say, screw it. In this workaday world, who has time to wait? You've got to settle, settle, settle. That's where I come in. I'll pick you up, I'll hear out your troubles and I'll pay for your dinner. I might even throw in a quick massage. Nothing fancy. But then again, you wanted to keep it simple, right? Go ahead, drop me a line at Box 1148. It's that simple...

Coltish Jane Birkin-type with girl band fantasies seeks soft-eyed babydyke for Sapphic experimentation. Looking forward to nuzzling at the bar at Meow Mix and passionate discussions on patriarchy. Hey, doesn't every girl try this in college? 1892.

Erstwhile editor, termed our favorite collegiate Anglican* by the Journal of the Anglican Society, seeks perky young thing with pouty lips and curvy hips for a discussion of the liturgy. Nocturnal hours, enjoyment of baths, and a steady supply of tobacco all preferred. Must be willing to tell me I look good wearing a yarmulke. 4011

Do you have a fetish for Czar Nicholas II? I am he. 3090.

Mentally unstable and large-eared artist seeks female companion to witness the birth of genius. Must be willing to spend long, emotionally grueling hours cooking, cleaning, and supporting the creation of awe-inspiring works. Long, drawn out features and a penchant for melancholy diatribes on the inscrutability of abstraction required. The self-respecting and gifted need not apply. 1829.

Verbal abuse turn you on? Into cell-phone sex? I will satisfy these two desires, and you WILL like it. Charges may apply. Box 1; Pueblo, Colorado.

Well-dressed but pierced young undergraduate ISO Art History doctoral candidate with whom to read out loud from Clausewitz, Gramsci, and select comic books before a session of savage lovemaking set to the music of Scott Joplin. Interest in buggery a plus. 3090

SEEKING MEN

Lithe Californian of Swedish-English ancestry seeks male companion for tea, conversation, occasional pokie and respites from Borges. First date: pleasantries. Second date: nuzzling. Third date, if you make it that far: I'll let you count my freckles. Interested parties must be prepared to fight a duel with current suitor. 1751.

Barely-legal pseudo-blonde Valley girl seeks beach-bunny buddy for casual rolls in the sand. Like, c'mon, take me seriously! 2875.


Future female psychiatrist with excellent hygiene seeks male partner in crime for dessert wine, trespassing, and Julia Child impersonations (naked). Party should know how to flip a pancake, enjoy giving deep tissue massage, and not mind dancing in grocery stores. Those who voted for Bush need not apply. 4946.

Curly-haired cutie pie seeks gentleman friend to explore funhouse “Hall of Mirrors,” and other optical delights with. You will whisper sweet nothings about your favorite typeface and the importance of amper-sands. I will change my middle initial, frequently. We will both passionately invoke the heroic prose of Ben Greenman. Must not be allergic to the smell of curry. McIntosh 4477.

I feel pretty. Oh so pretty. I feel pretty, and witty, and gay. 3897

Join me for a medieval rendezvous! We'll meet in the 12th century and dine on brown bread at a 3-star monastery in France. After some soul-searching conversation, we'll promenade to that mountain called Purgatory and stroll hand-in-hand to the summit, renowned for its views of glorious sunsets and beatific visions. Appreciation of Snoopy essential. 6143.
Song of the Seasonal Lover
by Emily Voigt

2/13
Seeking largish male for two month fling to entail
Public displays of affection,
Clingy types preferred, hairy fellows not purred,
Groping will meet no objection.
Whene're I go out, follow me about,
Tag along on all errands and chores.
Then late at night, hold me quite tight
'Neath mounds of toasty covers.
Some ladies prize looks or knowledge of books--
Not my current criteria.
Rather you stand the best chance for my deepest romance
If you hail from northern Siberia.
Do you give bear hugs? Are you looking for love?
Write! Oh, do not tarry!
For it is body heat more than size of feet
That I value in February.

5/4
In search of a mate with whom to create
Perfect, balanced babies.
Must be dashingly male, from head to tail,
With stellar social graces.
Sandpaper stubble on chin (cleft not double)
Should sprout each day by three.
Four minute milers and disarming smilers
Given priority.
Facility is preferred with sums more than words--
I'll cover the gene for rhyming.
Without shame I require hard proof that you'll sire
Brainy, brawny offspring:
Send a vile of sweat overnight to abet
Pheromone evaluation.
For ducklings make way! Oh, I feel in May
The urge for propagation.

6/26
I'm looking to try an unusual guy,
To experience liminal love,
On a three month recess from conservatiness,
To admire piercings unheard of.
Work in the line of spelunking is fine,
As is a brief stint in the circus.
Hare Krishnas, rock stars, sexy life forms from Mars,
Will all serve my present purpose.
Nothing's more erotic than an air of the exotic!
So promise not to doubt or abuse
My French accent affected, and consider accepted
Tales of your boyhood in Belarus.
You must first agree to anonymity
To avoid parental shock;
Then after a torrid July, you'll remember me by
The tattoo on your right buttock.

9/5
Are you a slight or slender pro-chess contender,
A fragile, cerebral breed?
Do you frequently lapse in breaking your fast
After nights of poring o'er Bede?
If you're a sensitive wreck with a pale, swan's neck,
Oblivious to the needs of your biceps,
Reply, I command! Meet my urgent demand
For awkward, inhibited sex.
To rare manuscript shows at museums we'll go,
My sweet, anemic asthmatic.
My girlfriends shall croon, "He's so wonderfully puny!
What's your secret, your trick?"
"Hands off!" I'll reply, "he's exclusively my Devoted love pet, my doll!"
You see each September, most women remember
How much they despise football.
36 Things I Learned While Traveling in Europe
by Anna Judith Piller

1. Customs officials will always think your vitamins and birth control are narcotics.
2. The price of a Big Mac combo is a country's best economic indicator.
3. It really is called a “Royale with Cheese.”
4. There is no such thing as a reservation in Italy.
5. There is no such thing as reserve in Italy.
6. Upon arriving in a country, find out how to say “Excuse me,” “Thank you,” and “I’m sorry” in the local tongue. Write them on your hand, and use them profusely.
7. Harvard students can't write travel books. Let's Go manuals should be burned immediately upon arriving home.
8. Any guy who uses Picasso's guide to Europe knows the way to my heart.
9. Every hour is happy hour in Munich.
10. It's against the law to kick a pigeon in Italy. Kicking people is okay.
11. Traffic lights in Naples are decorative.
12. It’s easier to fall in love than to find your way in Venice.
13. Certain masks are better left on.
14. It's easier to outrun a nudist if you don't look back.
15. You've never been truly confused until two Latvian strangers have a fistfight about you on a moving bus, and one of them is the driver.
16. It may take four trips to Budapest to find what you’re really looking for.
17. You can't have your mouth and your ears open at the same time.
18. If a gypsy throws a baby at you . . . don't catch it!
19. You can only ride public transit free for so long.
20. It is against the law to sit in the grass in a French park. Why? . . . because that would ruin the grass and then nobody would be able to sit in it!
21. Never confuse a Kiwi with an Aussie, a Canadian with an American, or an Italian man with the true head of the household.
22. Taking pictures makes you see everything in a funny little box. Plus it ruins the moment and clouds the memory, so do it sparingly. The general rule is: If there's a postcard of it down the street, don't take a picture; yours will be worse.
23. After 4 days in your backpack, dirty clothing cleans itself.
24. One pair of pants can go a long way. If they can't stand up on their own, they're clean enough to wear.
25. Buses should be either smoking or nonsmoking. Half and half does not work at all.
26. Regardless of what the maps say, Italy is still 3 distinct countries.
27. The Mafia is the only consistently helpful institution in Italy.
28. When receiving a massage naked from a large Hungarian babushka, heavy armor would NOT be overly cautious.
29. In the average Turkish bath, there are more floating chess boards than swimsuits.
30. Communication can be a lot clearer without words getting in the way.
31. Ladies, be wary of Canadian musicians.
32. If you go to other people's countries to gawk at them, don't be upset when they gawk at you.
33. If by "blondes" you mean Scandinavians, then yes, they do have more fun.
34. It's never too cold for ice cream or skinny-dipping in Copenhagen.
35. The Swedes have surpassed us in everything except arrogance.
36. Chess is the only universal language; be fluent.
Seeking to cement its place among the preeminent institutions of “Higher Education,” Brown University has taken its campaign straight to the web. While trolling their website, one astonished visitor stumbled upon the image of a behatted laddie, clad in plaid, in the midst of a vigorous game of hackey-sack. The kicker? The image is animated: rolling one’s mouse over it causes the hackey-sack to move up and down, simulating the ‘excitement’ of a real hackey-sack game. The strict rationalists here at The Blue and White willingly concede the superiority of Providence to New York...as a hackey-friendly environs, at least.

For those left unsated by Butler’s quirky everyday magic, an anonymous Oompa-Loompa has amended a sign in the South-East elevator. The proclamation now reads: “by order of willy wonka, THIS gilded ELEVATOR DOES NOT STOP ON THE FIFTH FLOOR.”

Yet another indication that Oxonian lexicographers do, in fact, have emotion: “Is there anything more astounding in the history of language than that German Pferd should come from paraverdus?” — A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D., Compiled by Alexander Souter, OUP, 1947, p. vi.

History Professor David Greenberg was spotted speaking with his identical twin, writer Jonathan Greenberg, in Butler Library of late. The Blue and White finds this curious, for, as far we are aware, only one of the Greenberg boys has access to the library. Perhaps in the case of twins, the ID office should reconsider its paltry $10 fee for “lost” IDs.

Professor Eric Foner, acclaimed Civil War historian, could not resist singling out a student named Robert E. Lee in his “American Radical Tradition” class. The Blue and White has learned that Lee, or “Bobby” as he likes to be called, is not, in fact, named after the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, but takes his first name from his father, Robert, and his middle name from his grandfather, Edward.

Single and lonely fellowship applicants surfing the Student Affairs website should pay especial attention to the bio of administrative assistant Ms. Anabella Martinez. “Outside from work,” Ms. Martinez would like you to know, “she enjoys aerobics, merengue and salsa dancing, going to the movies and cuddling up to a good book on a rainy evening.” Those interested should submit a personal essay of no more than 500 words to the Fellowships Office, 403 Lerner.

The B&W’s inside source at the library reports on a certain Columbia hip-hop superdiva and her overdue book fines: “I have incontrovertible evidence that Ms. Hill owes the CU libraries $74.00.”

A wit to the last, Professor Bernstein remarked to his “Life Cycles of Communist Regimes” class that “The highest state of socialism is alcoholism.” The B&W humbly suggests that the ISO takes Prof. Bernstein’s advice to heart—who needs flyers and pamphlets when all it takes is a little Jack Daniels to usher in the Revolution? Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your sobriety.

A Recent Butler Renovation Note:

“CHOPPING on the 5th floor will be audible in Room 402 & 403.”

What, is a team of beavers building a damn or something?

Craig Hollander...he’s hot hot hot!

The Blue and White
As Columbia undergraduates, we are rarely called upon to remember our prelapsarian days of high school. Only the occasional campus tour, bringing a rush of fresh-faced youth to our campus calls back, like Proust’s madeleine, those heady days. In an attempt to rekindle my high school fire, I visited a recent information session and campus tour.

By the time I found the group of pre-matriculators in the trustee room across from the admissions office, it was already my turn to introduce myself. “I am Brian,” I declared, “from Greenwich Village.” Prospectives turned to their parents to ask, in hushed tones, whether I looked old. This was New York, one father explained to his daughter. Things are different here. If she could not handle it, he advised, perhaps she should look toward smaller and more manageable schools, like Smith or Wesleyan.

Confident in my own chances at admission, I surveyed the room. The students looked young and scared, and their parents did not seem any more confident. Mothers held tightly onto the hands of their husbands, who in turn huffed heavily in their winter jackets. Tension mounted further when the admissions representative said that Columbia’s admissions percentages were the third lowest in the nation. She listed the three most important factors that contribute to Columbia’s popularity: its location, its “Ivy League academics,” and the Core.

When considering a school of Columbia’s caliber, she explained, it is necessary to think carefully about the ways in which we differ—from Brown, from Harvard, and from Yale. A hush silenced murmuring parents at the invocation of the grands écoles and Columbia’s position among them. She highlighted the core as what set us apart, stressing our dissimilarity from Harvard and Yale in favor of our shared tradition with St. John, the University of Chicago, and Santa Fe.

The information session ended after an hour and we met our tour guide, who vaguely resembled Ben Affleck, though somehow more tense. He wore a brown collarless long-sleeve shirt and sneezed whenever he glanced toward the sun. Although we were not taken inside, he assured us that the interiors of St. Paul’s, Low, and Butler were “kind of cool.” Other observations included, “People think Low Rotunda is majestic, but I don’t know why,” and the grammatically parallel, “People like to study in Butler, but I don’t know why.” Disheveled Asian fathers in dangerous plaids furrowed their brows when our guide informed us that students are required to learn about “other major cultures from their own, like Asian, Native American, or Chinese.”

But the tour guide did not matter; I had already found the breath of high school that I was seeking. Before my eyes, as we walked around campus, the girls metamorphosed into beautiful sensual, heroin-chic porting butterflies. Danger was in the air, and I was part of it. Announcing our presence with a flourish of strumpets, our group turned more than a few heads from books to more libidinous thoughts. Our guide’s “go to the Lou Gehrig” bathroom pun rang on deaf ears. We had arrived.

A small community unto ourselves, we were ready to begin Columbia together, seeing for ourselves a home within a sea of diversity and opportunity. I ended the tour ebullient, with nothing but fond memories for my high school days. I rejoiced in the prospect of being an upperclassman to the incipient class of 2006.

“Hey babe,” I can already hear myself saying, “can I show you where the dining hall is?”

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Illustrated by Mischa Byruck
CAMPUS GOSSIP

It was a heady day for the editor of a certain cheeky magazine, when what began as a haircut ended up a brush with power. Walking in to the Westsider for his monthly trim, he was seated in the chair next to that of President Rupp. His head was shampooed simultaneously, his locks were snipped in unison, and his hair tousled in harmony, with that of the distinguished gentleman. President Rupp maintained his trademark decorum, remaining largely silent throughout the procedure, saying only in reply to an admonition not to work too hard, “Okay. See you soon.” Contrary to scurrilous rumors, no scotch was involved in the process.

This Ash Wednesday, The Blue and White was delighted to receive an e-mail from Novi advertising “Gym Hours Survey/Confessions Tonight/B-Ball Mixer on Friday.” The timing of the event causes The Blue and White to wonder whether Novi will absolve us of our sins if we confess all. Further amusement comes from the body of the e-mail, which offers more details on Confessions, including “GREAT PRIZES FOR THE BEST STORIES.” Free chicken wings? Who needs church?!

While indulging in afternoon saunters through Riverside Park, The Blue and White often encounters a delightful assemblage of youthful unicyclists practicing in the courtyard of Grant’s Tomb. At four o’clock every Sunday, the three dozen members of this one-wheeler team gather to rehearse an impressive repertoire of moving tricks. The team members range in age from six to forty-eight; no correlation seems to exist between maturity and riding skill, and the patient observer can often catch first-graders one-wheeling nimbly down steep concrete steps. The Blue and White admires and congratulates the young cyclists—and hopes fervently that they continue to wear their safety helmets.

A Bad Day for the Poli Sci Department:
One recent Friday night found a mischievous young mathematics student of Middle Eastern descent cozying up to the bar at SoHa, seeking the warmth of both whiskey and woman. He had already found the former (several times), when the latter, a Barnard political science student, approached and struck up a conversation:

BPSS: “So, what’s your name?”
MYMSOMED: “(laughs) Umm, it’s the Ayatollah Khomeini.”
BPSS: (cooing) “That’s a beautiful name...it’s so exotic!”
MYMSOMED: “(in disbelief) Thanks.”
BPSS: “Where are you from?”
MYMSOMED: “Umm, I’m from Iran.”
BPSS: “Is that near Kandahar or something?”
The “Ayatollah” exchanged pleasantries with the innocent politico for a minute more, and began to make his way to the exit. But hark! a familiar voice was calling after him across the room: “Ayatollah, wait! Where are you going?” Somehow, MYMSOMED had remembered to procure her number, and later that night his thoughts turned to her again. He called, informed her that his full name was in fact “The Ayatollah of Rock and Roll-ah,” promptly hung up, and wandered off to bed.

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