love it or leave it. That's what they say about New York, and with good reason. After all, this isn't the kind of town you can leave on a whim - there are trains to catch, bridges to cross, and tolls to pay. So if you stay you'd best be prepared for everything New York has in store. Yes, that includes the best entertainment and cultural opportunities in the world, and you can read all about them in your *Fodor’s*. But this is no guide book. It's *The Blue and White* and we can be as brash, stimulating, and downright amusing as the city we like to call home.

Let's not forget that, unlike the *B&W*, the city isn’t free. In Kelly Swanston’s article, you’ll learn that some benches in Central Park can be adopted for $25,000 each. Thankfully, there are cheaper spots to relax while reading this issue. Of course, the Blue J is hardly cooing about having to pay an additional 50 cents in getting to many of them by subway. But, it’s as Jacob Shell illustrates in his “Last Façade” – the greatest city does not always have the greatest city planners. Sometimes, we need to escape its endless rows of skyscrapers and miles of concrete. So if you’re feeling a bit confined or claustrophobic, why not hightail it out of town with the *B&W* staff on its “Road Trip?”

Soon, we’ll all go home and sleep off final exams. Sometime around the summer solstice, we’ll awake from our slumber and realize that life’s pace is far too slow where we are. We’ll miss the City, and begin to ponder the various activities that we simply must do there during the next semester. But for the Class of ’03, there won’t be a next semester here. That is why our seniors are sharing their personal “Reflections on NYC” with us in this issue. The *B&W* bids an affectionate farewell to Anand, Vijay, Alex, Erica, D. Jeff, Elisa, Steven, and Nick. We know that Manhattan has lost some of its brightest lights.
Jonathan Manes

Upon first glance, one would be prone to suspect Jonathan Matthew Manes ’03 of manic, geeky obliviousness. All the familiar fatal flaws are in evidence: the Einsteinian hair, the fidgety energy, the darting, distracted stare. And let’s not forget the quirky, rubbery, bulbous shoes. But Jonathan, a senior majoring in philosophy, proves instead almost unnervingly retiring and attentive. Meeting me in the Broadway lounge, thesis “on natural kinds” in hand (or perhaps two hands, given its imposing girth), Jonathan took a while to come to grips with the demands of celebrity, however limited. In fact, it required the Herculean efforts of no less than two of our illustrious staff to get him to relent in nervous fiddling with his cell phone and to fiddle (conversationally) with us. But upon opening up, Jonathan at once became surprisingly genial and self-effacing, even though his honors — to say nothing of his oddities — often come along with a pernicious superciliousness in others. With respect to his life’s résumé, Jonathan is remarkable. Possessing stupefying smarts (which have earned him, among other things, a Columbia senatorship and a Kellett Fellowship to Oxford), as well as broad musical talents — he maintains familiarity with the violin, the guitar, the piano, and, most importantly, the oboe — he is also a near-champion of field hockey. Yes, indeed. Field hockey.

Having recently been nominated for the senior class prize for Mind & Character, Jonathan shamefacedly admitted that he was at a loss as to what among his features of character his comrades had noted, finally settling on those facial in nature, he smiled broadly, if cautiously, and declared, “check those dimples.” Wishing to inquire further into Jonathan’s character (or perhaps simply his cheeks), this reporter was reluctantly compelled to attend the Varsity Show, but he left Jonathan deep in discussion with his fellow interviewer, the conversation having extended far beyond its projected length. Looking back as he exited the Broadway dorm, he felt certain that, for all his demurrals, Jonathan’s thesis was in superb hands — those of one at once both unsuassingly natural and kind. —CV

Denise De Las Nueces

When Columbia is only a few subway stops downtown, leaving for college is just a step in the process of leaving home. Having grown up on 161st Street in Washington Heights, Denise De Las Nueces ’03, has been making the trip up and down Broadway for years, traversing a familiar fifty-block stretch between two unfamiliar worlds. Washington Heights has provided a unique perspective of Morningside Heights; Columbia was a hospital and a neighbor for Denise before it was a home.

It is perhaps an elegant symmetry that Denise was born at Columbia Presbyterian; now, as a pre-medical student majoring in biological sciences, she performs research in the pathology lab of Physicians & Surgeons. Indeed, there is a serendipitous quality to the storybook arc of her Columbia career. Denise first began coming to campus regularly in the eighth grade, as part of the Double Discovery Center’s Talent Search program. Suffice it to say that her efforts were successful: during her senior year of high school, she was named a New York Times Scholar — one of only six in the Tri-state area — an award that brought her back to campus permanently. After moving in freshman year, she moved up to a tutoring position at the ncc, and eventually became a member of the Center’s student outreach program. The two of us stop by the ncc office in Lerner one afternoon, a home away from home for her, and everybody has a smile and a hug for Denise; as with everything she undertakes, her involvement with the ncc has been marked by deep loyalty, quiet commitment, and impressive achievement. She’s also worked for the Alumni of Color Outreach Program, and volunteered at St. Luke’s, served as a Program Coordinator for Project Health’s Diabetes program, all while balancing her research and coursework.

And, in keeping with the name of the program that first brought her to campus, she finds that her service has been a process of double discovery: in helping others, she’s come to find herself, and her calling. Finding “people who really believe in me and care about me so much” has been inspirational, and critical in her decision to move away from research-based science, which she aspired to as a freshman, and towards a future as a pediatrician. A closet suburbanite, I am captivated as she graciously tolerates my naïve badgering on her New York childhood. Listening to her reminisce, it becomes apparent that her youth, steeped in the culture of her family and neighborhood, has created an intense connection with the people and places she grew up with. At Columbia, as mentee and now mentor, Denise has spent four years deepening her connection to the city she’s spent her entire life in, with the exception of a one-week vacation. As she notes with a laugh, “Queens is far for me.”

Which brings us back to moving on. Rare enough as her tireless work ethic and academic achievements are, they are rarer still for the uncommon grace and quiet dignity by which they are been attended. Currently, both Cornell and Harvard medical schools are awaiting word from Denise. It’s hard to see how she can make the wrong choice. —AV
Tenturing spreads, but also for unctuous prunes and the oldest of French spirits, Armagnac. Expanding on a friendship first sown at Columbia, they started D’Artagnan in 1984, named for Alexandre Dumas’ heroic fourth musketeer, with the purpose of “loyalty to the end” and “food for the beauty.” D’Artagnan’s interest in the hefty gander also brought to the American market fresh duck fat, leg confit, gizzard confit, and magret, the ultra lean meat of the foie gras duck. While maintaining their swashbuckling drake mascot, the conglomerate expanded their product range to include wild boar sausage, free range chickens, skinned rabbits, fresh morels, and summer truffles (www.dartagnan.com).

The duo’s commitment to locating products fit for a petit court of Louis xiv has made them purveyor even to New York’s most varied and demanding clientele. The first week of each month, Mario Batali, the Food Network’s clog-wearing, orange tufted Italian demagogue, joyfully butchers in the back of his Union Square wine shop a 575 pound D’Artagnan distributed pig that in its last days feasted to the chef’s specifications on walnuts, apples, and cream (www.italianwinemerchant.com). From the plum, plumped pig Mario slices perfumed, rosy cuts of salami, satiny prosciutto, pepper coppa and other pork products cured, Italian style. Ah, how easily the glory of fragrant fat translates from French to Italian! Lardo – literally fat from the back of the pig – is served up to unsuspecting diners at Babbo under the pseudonym prosciutto bianco. Feasting recently on his savory, albeit French influenced creation, I spotted Batali from across the room as the shifting smoke settled; in a ‘Brooklyn tracksuit and torn jeans’ I spotted an old friend, the architectural historian Edward C. Cullinan: “I will tell you. I have the right of one of wall-scapes; architecture is but theater for stories – and of modern ones too – will you agree? You said you would live in a row along the sidewalk, waiting their turn for digestion. Over here is the mossy exuberance of the Gothic (Saint John the Divine, you anachronistic absorption of these ancient stories – and of modern ones too – will you ever be complete like Chrysler?); over there are the chocolate loops and curls of the Beaux Arts; the vernal buds and sinews of the Art Nouveau emerge ahead, at the best of wall-nifestyles: they have disintegrated before the barren steel musculature of Modern Buildings.

Where AMERICA does not build, we do. No one builds them anymore. You, Will, built right there at 42nd and Lex Manhattan’s last great façade – its last great work of street-wall architecture. The wall of Chrysler – the gargoyles, the pulsating Art Deco verticals, and ah, the strange and dazzling pinnacle (the otherworldly stuff of which dreams are made) – tell a wondrous and lyrical story, a story which, like great symphonies, offers no human actions or events; only wondrous, irresistible emotions. The old façades are like that in this town. Strolling down the avenue is like turning the pages of a book of strange tales, all lined up in a row along the sidewalk, waiting their turn for digestion. Over here is the mossy exuberance of the Gothic (Saint John the Divine, you anachronistic absorption of these ancient stories – and of modern ones too – will you ever be complete like Chrysler?), over there are the chocolate loops and curls of the Beaux Arts; the vernal buds and sinews of the Art Nouveau emerge ahead, at the best of wall-ni-}

The Chrysler Building opened in 1928, when you designed for Mr. Chrysler his headquarters, you were not so new at this game you took ancient wonders – visions of Arcadian olive groves and shrieking Baltic goblins. They are Gothic, sir! With a capital G! Right out of a tale from the Brothers Grimm!

Stuff meant to give kids nightmares!

Just drift up one of those torquish crosswinds above Forty-Second Street (you are dead and above Forty-Second Street, my dear boy, you are dead and above Forty-Second Street) – light the open plan: the wall-less room, the story which, like great symphonies, offers no human actions or events; only wondrous, irresistible emotions. The old façades are like that in this town. Strolling down the avenue is like turning the pages of a book of strange tales, all lined up in a row along the sidewalk, waiting their turn for digestion. Over here is the mossy exuberance of the Gothic (Saint John the Divine, you anachronistic absorption of these ancient stories – and of modern ones too – will you ever be complete like Chrysler?), over there are the chocolate loops and curls of the Beaux Arts; the vernal buds and sinews of the Art Nouveau emerge ahead, at the best of wall-ni...

Ariane Daguin and friends who met at Columbia, George Faison, who must live with your legacy. Despite my sincerest effort, I took the trouble of misspelling them, after all) they have disintegrated before the barren steel musculature of Modern Buildings. Façades, you see. They’re dead. No one builds them anymore. You, Will, built right there at 42nd and Lex Manhattan’s last great façade – its last great work of street-wall architecture. The wall of Chrysler – the gargoyles, the pulsating Art Deco verticals, and ah, the strange and dazzling pinnacle (the otherworldly stuff of which dreams are made) – tell a wondrous and lyrical story, a story which, like great symphonies, offers no human actions or events; only wondrous, irresistible emotions. The old façades are like that in this town. Strolling down the avenue is like turning the pages of a book of strange tales, all lined up in a row along the sidewalk, waiting their turn for digestion. Over here is the mossy exuberance of the Gothic (Saint John the Divine, you anachronistic absorption of these ancient stories – and of modern ones too – will you ever be complete like Chrysler?), over there are the chocolate loops and curls of the Beaux Arts; the vernal buds and sinews of the Art Nouveau emerge ahead, at the best of wall-ni...

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It will come as no surprise to you, loyal reader, that your humble Blue J has been on occasion described as light of purse. An educated bird can become many things in this land of opportunity, but wealthy, thus far, is not one of them. This sad circumstance is in large part the explanation for the choler aroused in the J’s three-chambered heart over the mta’s subway fare hike.

Despite the economy being nothing to tweet about, the mta, thanks to enormous post-terror grants, has been operating with a budget much larger than its revenue intake would normally allow. To compensate for its budget mismanagement, the mta will increase its fare by one third, from $1.50 to $2.00. Yet the most appealing aspect of subway travel is its affordability. Today, many subway passengers are not in enviable fiscal shape, and an increase in cost will have an adverse effect on the frequency with which they choose the train over their feet (or wings).

Granted, avoiding the subway has its advantages: no delays, no rerouting for repair work, no fifteen minute waits on the platform next to a schizophrenic with a nasal drip. But, for most of us, the subway is a crucial transportation artery with the world outside of Morningside Heights. The more expensive the subway gets, the less accessible New York becomes to us. Sure, the J can fly. And you can walk. But she’s willing to bet that additional 50 cents that you don’t relish the prospect of starting off in the late am for a dinner date downtown any more than she enjoys the thought of traveling to Central Park for a much needed birdbath by flapping her wings.

Far be it from the J to sully the reputation of this publication with unfounded criticisms of city planning, but there does seem to be something suspect about a mass transit system with an underground transportation monopoly that cannot break even. No transportation service can possibly compete with the mta for volume of passengers. And, almost every time the J’s has taken the subway this year there has been some point along the route where construction or expansion was underway. How can a business that constantly needs to expand to accommodate more customers have such serious financial problems?

The Blue J has proposed this question to various subway riders. The most interesting, noteworthy, intelligent reply was “Koronets.” Indeed, the pizza joint is a long time favorite of third shift mta workers and some believe the inspiration for the fare hike. “Everybody knows mta workers fantasize about working for Koronets,” said one source. “They spend all the time they’re not at Koronets trying to model their own workplace after the pizza joint. You know, by raising prices at whim.” And thus the Blue J comes to her true point.

Let us all, brothers and sisters, college students and mta workers, unite for the common good. Let us take to Broadway with courage, stand firm and say with one voice, “We will not be crushed by the forces of economic necessity. We want pizza for $1.50 a slice.” And together we will usher in a new era, your humble Blue J at the fore, where all your dreams will come true. Because who really cares about reasonable subway fare, anyway.
Senior Reflections on NYC

As the Class of '93 readies itself for graduation, The Blue and White's seniors offer their own personal reflections on living in New York during the last four years.

It didn’t take long for me to realize I was far from home. “Why don’t you talk funny?” and “Do you ride a horse to school?” were two (serious) queries during orientation. You see, I am from Texas—the only state which was once a diplomatically-recognized country of its own. Even today we maintain a proud sense of independence, and resist fiercely outside attempts to change our peculiar ways.

Reading over that last sentence, and reflecting on my four years here, I realize that the same could be said about New York City, and New Yorkers. We are both outsiders in a sense, but outsiders by choice. Sure, we’ll participate in the normal routine of things, for the most part, but just you try and tell us we’ve got to follow the rules like everyone else. Nuh-uh. Not happening. The best way to describe it is a difference of attitude.

At first, the New York attitude struck me as abrasive, sometimes even rude. A door slamming shut in front of your face because the person ahead wasn’t holding it open for you. Starting at a sea of indifferent faces when it’s obvious you’re lost and could use some help. Car horns blaring noisily, asserting their right to the road. Running in one room, and to the perfect place to escape to, to redefine oneself in. To be a New Yorker. I’ll miss both, dearly.

—Anand Venkatesan

I spent my spring semester junior year in Spain and found that the “culture shock” I was warned I might experience, worked in reverse. After five months of adapting to the leisurely Spanish lifestyle, I was thoroughly shocked by the memories of the manic Manhattan I had escaped from. I overstayed my semester in Spain by three months, crashing with friends, taking long siestas, and moving sluggishly through careless avenues, without a care in the world. When it finally came time to catch a plane back home, I wandered aboard the crowded, neurotic streets of New York when I could have been in the heart of Spain, cradling a baguette and a perfect New York summer moment.

On landing at JFK, I spent several dollars and many profane phrases on the new 50 cent payphones, trying to call Erica and get directions to her highly populated Williamsburg safehouse. Far too fast for me to translate, a cab found me Erica and busy hipsters running to and fro, with evening plans, errands to run, and no time set aside for napping or languid musing. It was a brutal awakening, as the day reintroduced me to a sense of responsibility, ambitious peers, sarcastic, cynical banter, and senior year fast approaching. By the time my evening plans found me hauling ass to Prospect Park for a Yo La Tengo concert, I was deeply regretting repatriation. And then the music started, and the stars came out, and I sank down onto the blanket with my carefully-smuggled beer, and began to experience a perfect New York summer moment.

The kind of moment I’d forgotten, where your heart slowly winds down, and the crowd fades into background, and the peace is the best you’ve ever felt, cause it’s yours and it’s rare.

—Elisa Bargain

Perched on the rooftops of this adopted city, I have been peering down with a growing sense of loss. Not for the immensity of the whole, with its inscrutable nooks and crannies, nor for the multitude of individuals, each of them so utterly unknowable. This is part of it too, of course, but I’ve gotten over it. It’s the awe of the place that I am afraid to miss.

Leaving New York feels like leaving the better part of myself behind. I dread losing touch with this discriminating, tolerant, chameleon, the one who calmly, fashionably reels in among the skyscrapers, and it would be a nonstop spectacle. The one who’s found of pizza, the best secret rooftop, best show in town, the best spot in the Park. The one who eyes “Tokyo, Paris, New York” on a box of cologne and knows without hesitation which one he prefers.

Even at the end, it is hard to see the beginning of things. What biological compass first compelled me to come here? Back “home” there had been nothing to fall in, and lilacs in the spring, and the ten most important people in my life. Yet my suburban flight remains well documented. It could have only been New York — “N-Y” streaking before my eyes with the brilliance of a marquee and the speed of a subway car—and, frankly, nothing else. I became a part of it before I ever knew it.

Immediately upon arrival, my friends and I grew perfectly unable to sit still. During the day, the city pounded in our blood and drove us. At night, as we would drift to sleep, the horns, the cars, the laughter from the bars pulled us away from empty idyls, and made even our dreams into a nonstop spectacle. Everpresent, everchanging, New York offered us a standing invitation to engage.

On other nights, a bitter wind would screech among the skyscrapers, and it would be...
two-thirty, and if we came out of the Vodka Room with some cash left to our name, we could take a cab uptown, or downtown, or cross-town even, if the going was good. The city let us spend our money and our youth, flattered us with choices. It put fantasies into our heads and the firmest ground beneath our feet.

After four years on these streets, certain impressions still refuse to succumb to cynicism and experience – to me, New York remains the seat of ambition, the modern Babel, the ironies and sharp contradictions. It is our oh-so-mutual home. It is a miracle.

Once last summer, I was motivated to take a walk. When the mood caught me, it was four in the morning and I was sleeping fitfully in a ridiculously ritzy apartment on 62nd Street, but that never stopped anyone with a traveling foot before. All summer, the air had been sluggish as sewage except at night, and it felt good to get out. I walked through Times Square as empty as I've ever seen it, the neon ads cackling senselessly over the sky. I figured, sitting on a bench along Avenue of the Americas, that I could take a cab uptown, or downtown, or cross-town even, if the going was good. The city let us spend our money and our youth, flattered us with choices. It put fantasies into our heads and the firmest ground beneath our feet.

That summer I was living in Brooklyn; and on 1020 Prospect Park West, one could take a cab uptown, or downtown, or cross-town even, if the going was good. The city let us spend our money and our youth, flattered us with choices. It put fantasies into our heads and the firmest ground beneath our feet.

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To a murky puddle at the end of the sidewalk, looking down on Bedford. Halfway across, at the East River, starting at Delancey and touching down on Bedford, Hallway across, at the highest point in its trajectory, I turned around and watched by jewelry, my heart filling with corporals. Sap could bray.

To Jacques Barzun, decadence, Diderot and dildos. To Edward Lysistrata, Dick Bulliet and dildos. To cynics and postmodern formalist art criticism. To Frederick Garcia Lorca and the discovery of sundials. To Prometheus notes, Balzac and Labyrinth Books. To Barnard women – hear me roar! To tired roses, love letters and dandyism. To umbrella busters during a Broadway downpour. To the conformed orange plastic seating on the s/t. To Edward Said strolling down Riverside Drive on 9/11. To Simon Schama napping in Fayerweather Hall at midday. To Mark Van Doren, Wordsworth and thoughts for a life in London. To Austin Quigley sweat-suited in Riverside Park with unleashed dogs. To Eric Kandel, suits with Big, Dirty, Rotten, Noisy, Crowded, Obnoxious and Beautiful Apple; and some things, I hope, will never change.

To be read with emphasis, beer in hand.

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Verily P. Veritas cannot but plead guilty to a great many of the charges that are often leveled against him: he is an intemperate lush, an incorrigible student, an improbable capitalist, an inveterate gambler, an intractable companion, an impractical consumer, an imprecise philosopher. But above all, he is an incurable commitmentphobe. VV can’t even so much as commit to a cheeseburger without wondering what might have been.

Which is a shame, and for reasons extra-gustatory, too. If there is one inescapable truth that VV has uncovered in his itinerant investigations, it is this: women, unlike cheeseburgers, tend to value commitment. This is one reason that Verily is a perennial selection for Granta’s 50 Most Grammatical Bachelors competition. Granted, there are others. VV was once enjoying a piece of the old raspberry chiffon pie in the old hot tub with an old friend when she tilted her head back and let out a laugh. She told him that before Verily could fall in love with someone else, he’d have to fall out of love with himself. But that’s beyond the pale, and the point.

It’s not just women that have been problematized by a lack of commitment to commitment. To wit: the walls of Verily’s room are completely bare right now, and it’s not because he’s getting a jump on moving out. His room remains in the same, Bosnian war-zone state it was when he first moved in. It is not aesthetic indifference that is responsible for the ramshackle state of affairs, to the contrary, it is the crush of possibility. There were so many potential styles to select from in decorating his dream room that he ended up unable to choose between: a St. A’s atmosphere of old boys and older scotch; Bauhaus Frathaus (VV, a mere mortal, cannot resist a Gropius joke here); a heavily-umlauted German industrialist something-or-otherist design; or perhaps the recycled cardboard wonderland look of enviro chic? As the designer Philippe Starck once remarked, it’s “easier to live in an empty space than to compromise.”

The chubby Frenchman has a point, of course, the significance of which extends beyond cheeseburgers and chintzy decorations. Possibility, like a double-edged sword, is a double-edged sword. And the problem with it, bungled metaphors aside, is that, paradoxically, it’s so restrictive: if you wait too long for the perfect castle, you’ll end up living in the moat, or at least in a barren room in ec.

All of this navel-gazing comes for a reason: Verily now finds himself at the wrong end of his college career. With only three laps in Levien standing between Verily and a veneer of respectability, one world of possibility is closing just as another is opening. Now, looking back on a college career that has been governed by the tyranny of possibility, Verily finds occasion for reflection.

VV thinks of the wonderful riposte delivered, with characteristic French superciliousness, by Charles de Gaulle: “Brazil is the country of the future, and will always be.” In retrospect, college has always been the Brazil of Verily’s imagination: a tropical fantasyland of possibility, a dream vacation of sorts. But with the promise of unlimited possibility has been the frantic attempt to collect on it, to wring every last drop out of Columbia in the time here. Now, rather than despair at missed opportunities, Verily meditates on an idea introduced to him by D. Sepinuck Immerwahr, a friend and former B&W staffer: that of making the most out of college, even after college. Revisiting favorite texts. Pursuing interests piqued while here. Building on friendships first kindled here. This has been a comforting thought.

College can be a whelming – and sometimes even an overwhelming – experience, even without the pressure of having to fulfill all of the possibility it promises. So while it’s important to be harmless and gruntled and ruthful here, at Columbia, you needn’t worry about the missed opportunities. The vacation to Brazil may eventually end, but you’ll have a lifetime to savor the suitcase of slides. —Verily Veritas

alumni@columbia

A graduation present: your Columbia e-mail address!

With alumni@columbia, the University’s e-mail forwarding service, you keep your Columbia e-mail address for receiving mail. E-mail is forwarded automatically to any other e-mail address you have registered, for as long as you choose. When you change jobs or Internet Service Providers, please be sure to provide us with a new forwarding address.

May 2003 graduates will be eligible to join after July 4.

To learn more, visit the Development and Alumni Relations Web site:

www.columbia.edu/cu/alumni/forward
West Coast
Bothell, WA: The coffee pours like rain, and the rain pours like . . . 200 days a year. Bothell, like a certain cigarette brand, has come a long way, baby. The town was originally referred to by its Native American residents as “Squak,” a tribal word denoting its status as a lowland basin ideal for logging. While the lumberjacks may have vanished, the Native Americans have lingered – at least at the card room they operate at the town’s bowling alley. So if you’re eighteen and have five dollars, you’ll always be welcome at the table. If you’re after a more wholesome time, then stop by the Rancho Drive-In for a milkshake and then stroll to the waterfront landing or Pop Keeney Stadium, where you can take in a Huskies football game and feel better about the relative prowess of cu’s gridiron gents. And worry not: none of Bothell’s small-town charms seduce you, Sir Mix-a-Lot’s Seattle is only a half-hour drive away. —Anand Venkatesan

San Francisco, CA: The Heart Depository/Repository/Suppository of the Universe, or the Quinlingul of Emanently Enjoyable Retreats (queer for short). This town prides itself on misnomers (an orange bridge with no perceptible gate) and unmissed roamers (many of the world’s unformed – or oblivious - children of the 60s and 70s have put down roots and grown weed[s]). A bastion of tolerance, San Francisco has formed amidst shameless hills its own most peculiar eluson - that of the inclusive. We take pride in our accep- tance of all comers (from wherever and upon whomsoever). SF natives unrelentingly and unrepentantly take solace in their city’s beauty, calm, and unaffected joyfulness. Or at least that’s what they tell me, as I shied most of my time in my room, with the lights out, the shades down, and the doors locked. I will not let those hippies steal my precious essence. —Caleb Voguin

Milwaukee, WI: Ah yes, the Gathering of the Waters. This summer marks the Mil-town-based Harley Davidson’s 100th anniversary. Downtown (if it can be called such) will be overrun by overweight 55-year-old real estate agents who trade in their cotton for rawhide, at least for a weekend. The bad boys proudly mount their motorized steeds, each with a housewife in tow. After a few hours of enjoy- ing Milwaukee’s Best, “The Beast,” they take to ambling around Wisconsin Avenue. Once

The B&W Road Trip

Columbia students have a long tradition of being on the road (See Jack Kerouac in Columbia for details). So if you grow restless this summer, The Blue and White staff suggests that you take a road trip. According to the critically-acclaimed film Road Trip, hilarious misadventures will likely ensue, especially if perchance you visit our home towns, starting with those on the...

Winnetka, IL: Thirty minutes north of the busle and bustle of Chicago sits this quaint suburban town of around 12,000. Its name, according to legend, comes from an Indian word meaning “beautiful land” – although the Winnetka Historical Society has admitted that no trace of the expression (or even the now-surely-extinct-or-relocated tribe) has ever been revealed. Regardless, Winnetka is indeed a bella terra, boasting acres of pristine parks, one of the highest per capita household incomes west of the Mississippi, and some of the best views of Lake Michigan this side of Lake Michigan. However, travelers beware: if excitement, diversity, or even a medium of culture is what you’re after, Winnetka might be a hair unsatisfying: its number of ethnic restaurants and permanent residents who consider themselves “of color,” number around zero and zero respectively. So what sets Winnetka apart from every other wealthy white suburb in America? Well, we’re the holder of the Guinness World Record for “Biggest Garage Sale” (bestowed in 1994 when the Winnetka Congregational Church raised over $200,000 in a single day) and the filming location for “Home Alone” – a fact that has prompted not a few spunky, precocious youngsters to exclaim such witticisms as, “Hey, Caucasian affluence! Had enough, or are ya thirsty for more?!” —Zack Bendiner

Wisconsin Dells, WI: When a Eurowienie tries to tell you that America doesn’t have a culture, take out a map of the U.S. locate the state of Wisconsin, and stick your thick, hard-working, Saddam-butt-kickin’ finger right smack into the middle of it. You’re pointing at the Wisconsin Dells, foggy, and that’s where America vacations. You’ve got your fancy museums across the pond, sure, but are any of them Tommy Bartlett’s Robot World, featuring diorama after diorama of shiny robots performing household chores and talking (talking! robots!) of the wondrous future that awaits us in 1987? Or Ripley’s! Believe It or Not? Museum? Or even Circus World Museum? I think not! And you’ve got your palaces, sure, but how about a House on the Rock? It’s goddamn built right into the side of a mountain! With glass floors and a three-story carousel in the dining room – now if you ask me, that’s opulence. Sure, you’ve got your smooch-wooby gondolas, but how about a fleet of Duck-shaped car/boats to take you Motorodge hopping from the magnificent Undiscovered Atlantic Ecomoking Motel & Suites to the Kingdom Camelot Hotel & Suites? And you eat, right Napoleon? Well forget your bries and tarts and snowshoe your way over to Paul Bunyan’s Restaurant (you can’t miss our 70 ft tall Paul Bunyan statue, can you, four-eyes?) for all the buckwheat flappacks and glazed bearcwals you could ever eat! Now I’d buy that for a dollar (Or $11.95 God-fearing American dol- lars Monday through Saturday). —Felis Demo

Dirty South, Y’all
Atlanta, GA: Originally known to the neighbors as Terminus, Atlanta burned to the ground in 1864, and has had a fiery Southern history ever since. Atlanta is home to the Cyclorama, a cylindrical building housing a 22,000 sq. foot painting of the Battle of Atlanta – and who says movies are better? Tom Wolfe memorialized Atlanta’s racial divide in A Man in Full (to the great chagrin to a lot of old-money white ladies who allowed interviews), but we Southern-ites are fast disappearing. What you’ll find instead is drawl-free yuppie Northerners relocated for the business boom, double-parking their swmws on tree-lined streets. But scratch a little and there is Margaret Mitchell’s childhood home flanked by 30-story buildings downtown, and the best fried chicken in the world on Ponce de Leon Avenue (still solidly pronounced ponceh.LEEun, all one word). Yankees come and go, folks, but poor pronuncia- tion endures. —Cara Rachelle

Plano, TX: It’s been called "the Beverly Hills of Texas." It’s also been called "the heroin capital of the U.S."

Plano, Texas is very much an enigma. Yes, Plano, Texas is very much an enigma. Well, actually, the people there are pretty damn ordinary, considering they’re from Texas. Then again, most of the people in Plano nowadays aren’t even from Texas at all. They come to work at Dr. Pepper, JC Penney’s, or Ross Perot’s zax, all of which are based here (so if you’re looking for...
Greenville, SC: You’ll find Greenville, SC, fondly called “G-Vegas,” comfortably situated beside the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. And the town locals aren’t called “green” for nothing, for you’ll find trees aplenty, carpeting hillslopes that roll down the horizon. Greenville’s home to Michelin, and the illustrious Bob Jones University. However, I should especially mention the many Waffle Houses in Greenville, there for all your 24-hour waffle needs. You’ll be called “darlin’” and “y’all” while having cheese grits and “green” for nothing, for you’ll find trees and the illustrious Bob Jones University. And, thanks to a new light-rail system, we’re now only a quick 20 minutes away from downtown Dallas, possibly the most underrated sophisticated city in America. So y’all come on down now, y’hear? — Vijay Iyer

Holland, PA: The best thing about Holland is neighboring Newtown. Only ten minutes by car, this sleepy borough boasts an annual antique car show, the highest gas prices in Pennsylvania, the illest Atomic Sundae in the tri-state area, and a kitschy motto that reads “Newtown – A Good Place to Live, Worship and Shop.” It’s also the headquarters of the American Bar Association, and the place where Mel Gibson filmed “Signs.” Holland, for its part, has a drug store, a pizza shop... and an inferiority complex. It’s a nice place to get water ice or lose your virginity, but make sure to watch out for the feral cattle. And if perchance you find that the local police aren’t your fancy, remember the second-best thing about Holland – it is only 35 minutes from downtown Philadelphia, which brims with cheesesteaks, historical lore, and actual postcards. — Jared Spencer

Westminster, MA: There’s no abbey, and even though a big red building labeled “Westminster Crackers” still stands on Main Street, the crackers are now made in Vermont. However, Wachusett Mountain and Wachusett Brewery offer some excitement, and downtown, there is a rent-one-get-one-free video store/ice cream stand – Kim’s should take note. The Berkshires and Beantown are just an hour away on Route 2, but more intriguingly, the neighboring towns promise to be “the furniture capital of New England” and the birthplace of Johnny Appleseed. But then again, why would you ever leave Westminster – one of central Massachusetts’ many self-proclaimed “bedroom towns” – in other words, Westminster’s best kept secret. — Danielle D’Onofrio

Marlborough, MA: Close enough to Massachusetts’ largest city to allow residents to claim they’re “from the Boston area.” Marlborough will remind you of rural Montana. That comparison is perhaps unfair, for while that western state’s intellectual activity runs the gamut (however limited) from Ted Turner to Bo with yor name own it. — Erica Grieder

Center of the Universe (East Coast) Brooklyn, NY: Manhattan’s “girl next door.” Why not check out neighborhoods like Flatbush, Brighton Beach, and Dyker Heights? And don’t forget about our newest neighborhood too (the acronym stands for Down Under the Manhattan Bridge, and the “O” was added because one wanted to live in among its immediate neighbors). Don’t miss the city’s most attractive garden – the center median of Interstate 495’s Exit 23c. — Allen O’Rourke

Baltimore, MD: You’ve arrived at Charm City, USA, baby – where the crabs have crabs, the water tastes like Old Bay seasoning, and the waitresses call you “hon.” Enjoy the Preakness Stakes by blowing your money on a horse that barely managed to finish the race, but had a really witty name. Then be sure to check out beautiful Camden Yards, home to our talent-challenged Orioles and a sassy bat. If you have a horse that’s not so talented, then do not go to Pimlico. Yes, in the words of director John Waters, “I would never want to live anywhere but Baltimore. You can look far and wide, but you’ll never discover a stranger city with such extreme style. It’s as if every eccentric in the South decided to move North, ran out of gas in Baltimore, and decided to stay.” So come downy B’More, der’s a case a Natty Bo with yor name own it. — Nick Stankoich

Frankfurt, Germany: The financial capital of central Europe! Goethe was born here, but, since you are either a business traveler or only passing through Frankfurt’s huge airport you probably won’t have time to visit his house. Our red light district conveniently surrounds most of the main train station, and is growing to encompass most of down-town. Frankfurt is best used as a hub for travel: Abacse-Lorraine, a “traditional” German “travel destination,” is a mere two hour Autobahn drive (please take note: the trip could last longer if traveling by rail). — Daniel Paluch
BOOZE HUMANITIES
The Tippler Tales

T
here are those of us whose lives are
limned in temptation and perversity; from
amongst this undeserving throng of sad souls
and college students, “spotters” emerge as
singularly sinned against. They are roused at
ungodly hours by irate owners, and hassled
by embodiments of incomprehensible, pulchritudinous men. While
bearing in mind that the profession, at the
outset, seems to resemble in these deficiencies of a male submissive, it is important to
note that even these misfortunes fail to
allude to the central, agonizing aspect of a
spotter’s duty: Spying on bartenders, for bar
owners, drinking for free – and then writing
a detailed and exacting report on the tender’s
does not receive this treatment. She is also a rabid
alcoholic aspirant. Mus explains that his father’s rationale for ignoring his
daughter’s well-being involves an inability
to believe that “his little princess” would ever
touch the stuff. Thank God for small favors.

1 Names have been changed to protect both
Mus’ sister, by his account, did
did not receive this treatment. She is also a rabid
alcoholic aspirant. Mus explains that his father’s rationale for ignoring his
daughter’s well-being involves an inability
to believe that “his little princess” would ever
touch the stuff. Thank God for small favors.

Part the First – The Tippler Taught
Mus is of Asian extraction, and his father
was an extraordinarily taciturn, strict busi-
nessman. This imposing man, one summer’s
eve, summoned a young Mus to one of the
exquisitely ornate Japanese-style dining
rooms, (the type at which one kneels rather than sits)
that dotted their house, and began to give him
a seemingly innocuous talk about the perils of
drinking. Mus, sixteen, expected nothing more
than a formalized, cautionary tale when, from
underneath the table, his father produced a
large bottle of vodka. Telling his son that he
would rather have him embarrass himself
in front of the family than in public, his father
demanded that he consume the bottle in its
entirety. Mus, stunned, could only comply.
After a few finger’s worth, his body began to
droop, his head to spin, and his tongue to loll.
Without warning, his father reached under
the table again, coming up with a large stick,
and struck Mus across the face with blinding
speed. Mus was shocked back into full alert,
and, at a glance from his father, began drink-
ing again, this time to imprecatory shouts
detailing what would happen to him if he
ever lost face. To this day, Mus cannot lose his
composure while drunk; in fact, it has often
been noted by his friends that he becomes
markedly more jovial and convivial. Due in
large part to this deftly falsified sobriety, Mus
was able to surreptitiously scan bartenders
while thoroughly soused. Success, and a pay
raise, was soon to follow.

As something of an aside, it is interesting
to note that Mus’ sister, by his account, did
not receive this treatment. She is also a rabid
drinker, but cannot hold her alcohol. Mus
explains that his father’s rationale for ignoring his
daughter’s well-being involves an inability
to believe that “his little princess” would ever
touch the stuff. Thank God for small favors.

Part the Second – The Tippler Triumphant
Mus’ climb up the ladder reached its most
attractive apex upon his being assigned to watch
a new bartender at S___, perhaps the swanki-
est, most exclusive bar/club in all Manhattan.
Upon reaching the door, what can most suc-
cinctly be described as muscle masquerading
as man prevented his entry. Shabbily dressed,
impenorous, and dismissive, Mus did not meet
with this man’s approval, and was subjected
to a round of escalating physical and verbal
abuse. The monolith was unruffled upon find-
ing Mus’ name on the guest list, and was prov-
ing to be quite an obstruction. Luckily, Mus
was also furnished with a detailed set of
relevant contacts: dialing the club’s owner on
his cell phone, the man treated Mus’ oppressor
to a barrage of virulently odious rhetoric
that, upon removing the velvet rope, muscles quivering,
the man-mountain was begging Mus in a sub-
stantially more jovial manner to put in a good word.
Mus spent the next three hours dazzled by
the unceasing attentions of unimaginably beautiful
women, until coming to the sharp realization
(admittedly diluted by hard liquor) that every
one of them simply suspected that, due to his ease of entry and undignified attire, he must
have been someone famous.

Part the Third – The Tippler Toppled
Mus grew up in LA – he is no stranger to the
strange. However, his tolerance – so to speak
– only extended so far; he eventually drew the
line and withdrew from his job. The story is a
touchy one. His agency received requests from
all sorts of bars, catering to all sorts of clien-
teles, and, one night, Mus was unlucky enough
to draw the short straw that would break his
back. Or, more accurately, the crooked straw.
Or, still more accurately, the straw that sent him
to a gay bar. Lying low is not one of Mus’
forges (he stands a muscular six feet tall), and
the amount of requests he received to do just
that – admittely in a different context – likely
ameliorated his sour, sleepless mood. Neither,
for that matter, did his recognizing a sizable
amount of students from his own school, play-
ning Greek sons to prospective sugar daddies.
His temperament tested in all senses, he reached
his emotional nadir as he rejected for the 10th
time the advances of one man (whose head
Mus dragged off his shoulder by one of the
nine rings gracing his left ear), and turned to
the bartender for some semblance of succor.
Mus was aware that bartenders are not neces-
sarily hired because of their similarity to their
clients, and was hoping for a degree of sympa-
thy. Instead, he received an affected, inflected
intimation “oh, the boys here can be sooooo wild when
they’re drunk.” Mus had reached his limit – it was
only so long until his level of incitement
impelled serious consequences, too horrifying
or mortifying to contemplate. Mus left the bar,
and the profession. His nights are now spent
drunk on Keynesian Economics. But if, per-
chance, you are challenged to a shot contest
by a towering, pugnacious Asian fellow already
into his cups in some dive at 3 a.m., resist the
impulse. He’ll drink you under the table, and,
unless you come back up with a stick, he’s
likely to drink you straight down to Hell as well.

Symptoms: Headaches, Nausea, Vomiting, Recurring Nightmares
about Moving, Refusal to Leave the Room

Diagnosis: URH Separation Anxiety

Cure: Check-In Thursday, August 28

Columbia University Student Services

Illustrated by Cara Rachele

May 2003

The Blue and White

145
The Kings of East 12th Street
by Erica Grieder

I founded Alaska one hundred and forty days ago. People keep asking me why at parties and bars and I lean my head back, exhale all sexy-like a big cloud of smoke and say, “I love New York. But the fishing’s terrible.” I’m a big hit at parties. People think I’m primitive.

The real reason that I founded Alaska was that it was an emergency. I was living in a comfortable brownstone on East 12th Street with Gordon and Carol King and their toddler son, Jonathan. Gordon’s an old college friend and he likes me terrifically, because he thinks I’m living his dream life. His dream is to be a very famous writer and to wear a long scarf and brown pants; and to smoke and drink and have fashionable salons at his house. Gordon could talk about Somerset Maugham all day.

But it’s too bad for him. He’s a god-awful writer. And he was raised a Baptist and married this woman Carol, who is short and stocky and loafing. Carol was getting sick of me but she’d just wear a hat and gloves like a lady?”

“Every day I wish that, Bud,” he said. “Leave the kid alone, Mack,” I said, “You’re right,” I said, “You’re right.” I thought Jonathan was all right and said, “C’mon, kid, let’s go to the park. I’ll buy you a balloon and maybe an ice cream.”

“I asked, tickling him, “Are you going to be big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and big grizzlies…"


“Me!” “You’re right,” I said, falling back in exhaustion, “Right you are.” And I picked up a stick and began to draw in the dirt. I was making myself busy with drawing a map. I have to draw maps to make myself feel better. The truth is I’m a god-awful writer. You wouldn’t guess that because Gordon and all of them think I am the toast of the cat’s meow. But of course you couldn’t expect them to know any better.

Neverminding that, I’m still a very important person and gifted in the following respect: No one draws better maps than me. I can make totopographical maps, maps colored based on population density, treasure maps, radiation maps—whatever the situation calls for. And right then I decided to make a map for Jonathan, because his mother had frizzy hair and his dad needed to have some sense knocked into him, and because being a king of East 12th street will only get you so far. I made a map that looked like a fist with the pinky sticking out, and put mountains and rivers and old-growth forests in it. The rivers jumped with red salmon and there were big grizzlies in the woods, and caribou and heaps of snow. “How do you like that?” I asked him. He giggled and looked around. “Look.” I bestowed him, tapping the ground with a stick. “It’s called Alaska and I made it for you. It’s there if you need it,” I said, and I slung Jonathan over my shoulder and carried him home.

Postcard from Paris

While studying abroad at Reid Hall this semester, staff poets Michael S. Paulson and Davey Volner relied on Craig Hollander to serve as their trusty housing proxy. When Hollander informed the two that he had selected an impressive suite in Woodbridge for them to live in next year, Volner replied with the following:

Truly Craig, you are like some kind of flying house or electrical station. Do you know what a pangolin is? It is a fantastic beast that grows to the size of an ant-eater and is clad in armor; it is like this, the pangolin, that you are.

Thank YOU for our dorm. It is a victory. Its full potential needs to be explored, give us the courage! Right now we are living by our wits. You have to imagine Paris to see it. Yes, we are the scourge of Christendom. Me. I wash the dishes.

I wish you were here biting my pillow with me. I keep hearing things about the greatness of your magazine from Columbia people visiting France, though I really must admit that I myself have never read it and have no idea what it is about. Isn’t it some kind of religious publication?

We are in your DEBT. Our first job will be, to get you drunk, so drunk you will wear a collander [sic] on your head and caper around singing “Feliz Cumpleanos” to fire hydrants. THIS WILL COME TO PASS— I owe you organs and semi-precious stones,

Crackerjack
Ian David Volner
April 8, 2003
**Empire Stated**

by Max DiLallo

*Empire City: New York Through the Ages*
Kenneth T. Jackson & David S. Dunbar, eds.
Columbia University Press, 2002

For nearly four-hundred years, New York has been a worldwide symbol of nearly everything from affluence to penury, glitz to ghettoization, American supremacy to America’s Achilles’ heel. As a result, the city has been the inspiration for countless poems, novels, short stories, essays, and one recent anthology compiled by Kenneth T. Jackson and David S. Dunbar entitled *Empire City: New York Through the Ages*.

*Empire City* is one of the few Gotham-themed collections that may actually be worthy of the label “complete.” Undoubtedly a subtle reflection of the enormity of the metropolis itself, the work is a staggering one-thousand pages. And much like the city’s incredible diversity, the pieces have been culled from over two-hundred of the finest (and most eclectic group of) writers and thinkers of the last four centuries, including Alexis de Tocqueville, Theodore Roosevelt, Herman Melville, E. B. White, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and even Columbia’s own Jack Kerouac – just to name a very tiny handful.

Overall, the collection is truly astounding in both its breadth and its thoroughness. Jackson and Dunbar artfully trace the history of the entire five boroughs, seemingly leaving no facet unexplored nor a single avenue or cross-street uncharted. As any ex-Lit-Hum-er might notice, their exhaustive anthology reads like a memoir on Robert Kennedy – although the perspective feels…well, like that of a wealthy white man.

Jackson, the current President of the New York Historical Society and a professor of history at Columbia, also – albeit quite slyly – manages to slip in a bit of his own work into the anthology. Indeed, just a few short pages from a piece by James Fenimore Cooper, Jackson has inserted a somewhat older essay of his own pen, on the subject of Bedford-Stuyvesant, originally featured in a memoir on Robert Kennedy – although the language of the piece feels somewhat stilted, and the perspective feels…well, like that of a wealthy white man.

Though Jackson and Dunbar do, in the preface, admit to having exercised just a smidge of “editorial voice” when compiling their book, their occasional yet not-so-subtle anthological omissions are one of the work’s few annoyances. For instance, the vast majority of contributing authors is Caucasian, and an even vaster majority is male. While pieces by the venerable Langston Hughes, Chinese journalist Wong Chin Foo, Spanish beat poet Federico Garcia Lorca, and novelists Cynthia Ozick and Joan Didion are included in the collection, the New York minority and female voice is almost silent. (This is not to say, though, that issues of gender and racial discrimination are absent from *Empire City.* Included is a rather poignant essay on the past indifference of Bedford-Stuyvesant, originally featured in a memoir on Robert Kennedy – although the language of the piece feels somewhat stilted, and the perspective feels…well, like that of a wealthy white man.)

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element in humor. Incongruity Theory serves to best describe the cause of laughter.

It is no small occasion when a group of men come together and found a country. The Federalist Papers, penned by John Jay, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton collectively, as a unit, are a brilliant defense of their constitution which is one of the de facto matters in the establishment of their United States of America.

So you’re going to send an e-mail out being like, ‘Guys, there’s poultry in the shower stalls, beware!’ I asked.

“You, this is what they get, I guess, for having so much sex in the shower.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Sex! These kids, always having sex, all the time, whenever I’m trying to pee.”

“That’s sort of unpleasant,” I said.

“Right, of course.”

“Well, anyway, now we have chucking instead of bestial mating, which I guess is an improvement,” she reasoned.

The rest of the essay explains why ice-nine is not possible and than it suggests its significance in the world of chemistry.

Whether religious or not, the idea of morality has been ever shrouded in a cloak of sacredness. Either given to us by God, or discovered through reason, the laws of a moral code have been considered absolute truths, whose existence and validity cannot be denied.

The piece that we chose to perform is called “Cry Me A River.” It was sung by Justin Timberlake. There were a couple of reasons why we chose this song. First, the song is a perfect song to dance to because its slow melody allows the dancers to move their bodies in rhythm with the music. Second, we chose this song because it contains a lot of emotion. And rhythm with the music. Second, we chose this perfect song to dance to because its slow melody and accent thick. He is, save for his taste for human blood, a gentleman.

The quote I selected does a good job of crystallizing the multifaceted points of her essay in a couple of lines. My ultimate goal with this assignment is for the student to realize, “Hmm, that’s pretty interesting and effective technique. How can I do the same thing in my papers?” Pretty lofty of me, I admit.

Blood is literal and it is a metaphor. It is both real and the stuff of fantasy. It has worked its way into our vocabulary with such expressions as bloodbath, cold-blooded, and bloodthirsty. It is no surprise that blood’s turbulent flow through culture and the arts has a long history.

We are already faced with two forms of displacement, one for the bulls who have lost perspective on their own world while gaping at another (stupulaeae), the other a physical displacement of an entire body of water. Both events are at best, disruptive and at worst, catastrophic. Poetry is not held up as a potentially dangerous entity.

First I have to say that I am really enjoying this book. I love the way it is written; from the introduction/disclaimer I can almost place myself in the shoes of the woman who is there doing the field work and see her placing herself in the shoes of the women she is studying.

Now that I am back in New York, I find myself listing for Paris. Paris is more feminine, the Seine running through the center of everything, the streets a web of desire, and New York is phallic, unforgiving, fast and hard and long.

When I told my dad that I was headed the Apollo for Amateur Night, he jealously remarked, “You little shit!”

The Blue and White

LECTURE NOTES
History’s Future

The historian is a naturally suspicious type. Devoting himself to the objective study of the past, he adopts the skepticism necessary to debunk the myths and long-held notions of history. His work is often ignored or misinterpreted by the public, who favor the generalizations and shortcuts he abhors. Yet he presses on with his mostly-fruitsless endeavor for what? In an eloquent lecture last month, Prof. Eric Hobsbawm offered an explanation. Hobsbawm, a professor emeritus at Birkbeck College, London University, known to scholars and students for his many books and essays on topics from the rise of capitalism to the Jazz Age. However, he devoted his lecture to discuss “Politics, Memory, and the Revisions of History at the Start of the 21st Century.” More broadly, he addressed the question “Does History Still Matter?” Hobsbawm’s answer was a resounding yes – and he had no lack of examples to prove it.

Hobsbawm began by referencing Francis Fukuyama’s 1992 article, “The End of History?” In that widely read essay, Fukuyama proposed that the fall of the Berlin Wall, signaling the demise of communism, marked the global triumph of the Western liberal-democratic/capitalist tradition. While pockets of resistance would remain, Fukuyama believed that, without a coherent ideology in opposition to it, the West would ultimately spread its values and institutions across the world, eliminating the fault-lines for past conflict (religion, authoritarism, and the like). In lieu of destructive wars and senseless fighting, the world would collectively progress to its full realization, in a Hegelian sense – meaning that history, as the product of nation-states, conflict, and ideology, would effectively be subsumed.

Hobsbawm offered three contemporary examples that would seem to prove Fukuyama’s assertion premature. He noted the Taliban’s attempt to eradicate the Buddhist traditions of Afghanistan, destroying ancient statues and temples to “prove” the country’s unblemished Islamic lineage, the Hindu Nationalists waging an insidious campaign to eliminate the role of Muslims in Indian history through the mass distribution of “updated and revised” school textbooks, and how the in regions of Northern Italy self-proclaimed patriots are seeking to create an “authentic” version of Italian history to justify independence. Hobsbawm dismissed these efforts as “about as real as the Marx Brothers’ State of Freedonia” – but, more seriously, pointed out that their very existence, at the highest levels of government in some countries, illustrated that people still care about history, and would resort to physical destruction to enforce it. “Historians are monopoly supplies of the past,” Hobsbawm affirmed, and therein lay both their power and their responsibility.

In direct contradiction with Fukuyama’s thesis, Hobsbawm suggested that the end of the Cold War actually initiated a greater need for history than ever before. Suddenly, many countries that were defined almost entirely in the framework of a geopolitical, ideological struggle, found themselves without identity in a new world order. Countries which had vital importance in a Cold War world – Poland, Afghanistan, many nations of Latin America – discovered repressed instabilities and factions that had to be integrated. “A great void of thought and memory now has to be filled,” Hobsbawm asserted, and it fell to historians to ensure an objective approach toward that end. Unfettered by the over-arching dichotomy of...
Central Park Turns 150ish
by Kelly Swanston

The City purchased the land for Central Park in 1856, and it took the next twenty years (as well as ten million wagonloads of New Jersey topsoil) to transform it into New York’s oasis. This year, however, overzealous park officials have decided to forego historical accuracy and declare 2003 as Central Park’s 150th anniversary.

MasterCard International, emphasizing the Park’s “priceless” qualities, is the official sponsor of the birthday celebration on Saturday, July 19. The scheduled festivities in which you can participate include a dog parade, bicycle race, playground party, world championship archery competition, discovery hunt for children, Revolutionary War encampment on the Great Hill, and music and dancing provided by Jazzmobile and Count Basie Orchestra. On September 15, the Empire State Building will be bathed in green lights.

But your party won’t end with the warm weather. On the contrary, Central Park’s Winter Festival will bring hordes of your fellow New Yorkers off the streets and inside the Park’s six mile perimeter, where Ski Vermont and Killington Mountain snowmakers will provide a fresh coat of powder so that the Urban Park Rangers can lead snowshoeing expeditions. Should you fail to win the snow sculpting contest, you can still take solace in the free samples of Hormel deli meat before heading to the World Chocolate exhibition at the New York Botanical Garden. The ecologically-minded among you can bring your holiday trees to the annual MulchFest to dispose of them properly. In recent years, the MulchFest has become wildly popular. A record 10,461 trees were recycled during last year’s festival, and the Urban Rangers assure The Blue and White that even more trees will be processed in 2004. Bring a bag to the event and a free bundle of hewed wood chips or fir bough will be your reward! Although the organic matter has not yet decomposed into nutrient-rich organic soil commonly known as “mulch,” the Rangers encourage participants to use the chips to line street tree pits.

Sadly, Brooklyn’s annual Poop Pick-Up in Fort Greene Park was somehow left off the Park’s 150th celebration. But, veterans of the annual March festival insist that the trip to the southern park is worth the free entry into the Poop Pick-Up competition and prizes for the “largest collection.” If you prefer to remain within the confines of Central Park’s 843 Acres, you’ll have to settle for the New York Cares’ Spring Clean-Up Day on May 3 or the “It’s My Park!” celebration on May 17.

Want to ensure yourself a prime viewing spot for the festivities while memorializing yourself for time immemorial? Adopt one of the Parks’ 8,968 benches! Prices range from $7,500 to $15,000, and there are a variety of bench styles from which to choose. The most expensive design is the handmade Rustic Cedar Bench, which is found in Central Park’s Woodlands, and a few other particularly picturesque areas (this author is partial to the basic Central Park Settee, but the Wood and Concrete style bench is not without its charm). Every adoption comes with an engraved plaque and the satisfaction that weary park visitors and pigeons will be resting on your bench. Past engravings have included marriage proposals and, on one bench located across from the Museum of Natural History, a woman’s loving tribute to her favorite pets, “Dinky, Canis Optimus, Stuella, Cunicula Dulcis.”

Previous donors have not limited their generosity to the inanimate; Generals Custer and Sherman donated an African Cape Buffalo and a rattlesnake, respectively, to the Central Park Zoo. Regrettably, the Park Rangers insist that the Zoo isn’t looking to expand its menagerie this year, but you can still contribute to the Anniversary spirit by participating in the various celebrations.

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Lecture Notes Continued on page 151
Letter to the Editor

I recently had the good fortune to pick up a copy of the April issue of the B&W (there were 10 or so copies scattered throughout the Spectator office, which I was visiting — indicative of an admirably thorough distribution network).

I was puzzled by something in Erica Grieder’s “Games People Play”: her Super Mario Bros. 3 piece refers to Luigi’s assertion of stomping “duck shells.” Once before I’ve heard someone refer to what are clearly turtle shells as “duck shells,” but this was by someone who was not a native English speaker and despite his assertions otherwise did not have a “masterful” grasp of the language. But now I’m full of questions — are Koopa Troopas really ducks? Why do they have shells? Needless to say, this changes everything. Kudos on a thought-provoking issue.

—Jeff Posnick C’02

Dear Jeff,

It should come as no surprise that I often bring up Super Mario 3 in conversation. I’ve found that, in general, I can refer to the Koopa Troopas as turtles, as ducks, or as such, and be understood, unless the person I’m speaking to hails from old age or a former Soviet Republic. Confident in the sense of my reference, I called the shells “duck’s shells” because I deemed ducks, those algae-ridden bread-bobbers, the funniest of the three. The slowness and smokes a cigar.)

Koopa Troopa

Literary devices aside, I thought it clear that the shells in question are, in fact, neither turtle nor duck shells — they are Koopa Troopa shells. Being a journalist of rigorously high standards, however, I enlisted a research assistant to make some discreet inquiries into the background of the Koopas. He returned with the following, from the game’s instruction booklet: “One day the kingdom of the peaceful mushroom people was invaded by the Koopa, a tribe of TURTLES famous for their black magic.”

Imagine my shock and chagrin at this discovery! Long had I labored under the misconception that Koopas were mythical creatures like unicorns or angels. Koopas are turtles: I suppose that answers your first question. As to your second, it seems that Koopa, much like people, have shells for protection. I always appreciate being led from the cellar of ignorance to the attic of sagacity, but it does sting when my guide is the instruction booklet. No one reads those but nerds. Not since a marine biologist left me over my ignorance of the difference between puffins and penguins has a gap in my general zoological knowledge caused me such embarrassment! When I was already know this, Jeff, but a penguin stands about two feet tall and is food for seals, whereas a puffin wears a bowler hat and smokes a cigar.)

Koopa KoopaH!,
Erica Grieder C’03

The following note was found in an elevator in Plimpton: “Children of the Earth, please recycle your papers. Save a tree because bombs destroy trees.”

The latest from the John Jay cafeteria FEEDback board (And you wonder why the B&W renewed its meal plan):

Comment: Who’s got the cookies?
Response: Joe has them.

Comment: NEED MORE BLAZ HANLEY
Response: Yes, we agree/He is the man.

Comment: The butter needs to be churned better.
Response: ?

Prof. Mike Tuts, a particle physicist, was revealed recently to have discovered a new Fountains of Youth. He remarked to his class, “I will answer the question you’ve been asking yourself since the start of the semester: How do I keep my youthful appearance? The answer is that I fly to Chicago every week.”

According to his order-of-magnitude calculation, while his students are wasting away doing problem sets, Professor Tuts is traveling at 500 mph for four hours per week, which means that he is about 4 nanoseconds younger than his chronological age for every trip he makes to Chicago. Hey, when you’re old, every little bit helps.

Overheard during a brief, tangential discourse by Prof. James Shapiro on the application of literature in society: “Literature is often used as a stick … to hit things.” The class, despite this revolutionary assignation, seemed nonplussed, though our staff is now seeking a publishing internship in an effort to forestall inquiries about his own violent tendencies — after all, befelst ist/sind befel.

May 2003

As Columbia’s self-proclaimed most-popular literary magazine, the B&W receives many interesting invitations. This one, in particular, caught our attention:

To: Undisclosed Recipients
Subject: Mustache Party

On Saturday, April 26th, ec! 1602 will hold another massive party. But this party will be different: it will be a mustache party. I repeat: a mustache party. Attention ALL partygoers: begin growing your mustaches now. Please note that mustaches may be hidden as beards until April 26th, when the mustaches will reign.

Grow what you can. Any and all contributions to the mustachivity of the party will be appreciated.

Thank you,

The Management

Highlights from the Undergraduate History Council’s panel discussion on Affirmative Action: Michael Dorf, a professor at Columbia law, confessed to the audience: “Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and ask myself, why the hell am I doing this? What is the point of studying constitutional law? And then I realize what it really boils down to: trying to read the mind of Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.” Commenting on the impact of affirmative action on the college admissions process, American History Professor Eric Foner maintained: “When I came to Columbia in 1959, our whole class benefited from affirmative action. Since only white males were eligible at the time, we all had an advantage. Without that, I mean, who knows, we all might have ended up at nyt.”

In a Housing Jumble?

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The Blue and White

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Student: “So Nietzsche is like that joke where three blind men feel different parts of an elephant and think it’s three different things?”
CC Prof. Brian Soucek: “Yes, except with Nietzsche there is no elephant.”

From Iron, Nature’s Universal Element, Columbia’s most overly dramatic chemistry textbook: “Armed with hemoglobin’s ability to protect its iron atoms from oxidizing, every vertebrate on Earth could defy the ancient, ironclad rule of inorganic chemistry that iron in the presence of oxygen must rust irreversibly away… Despite their fearsome jaws and teeth, crocodiles often rely on their hemoglobin to help kill prey.”

In April, two live chickens were found in Wien (aka “Fort Awesome”). In an e-mail to her floor, one Resident Advisor had this to say on the matter:
“As many of you have observed today, we have (live) chickens in one of the showers. Yeah. I have no idea where they came from, how they got past the guard, or how they got into our shower. I’ve learned from various people that they were seen yesterday in the courtyard and that (an anonymous) someone decided to bring them in from the cold. Now as much as that is a noble effort, if anything like this happens in the future, I encourage you to call the animal protection people instead of bringing them upstairs. Or at least tell the security guard or call h-appy. Our floor cleaner, Clarissa got quite a surprise this morning when she went to clean the shower and there were two large, white birds sitting there… Take care, Robyn …and no Khalid, we are not having roast chicken at the next floor event…”

While scouring Carman for Digitalia late into the fire-alarm-plagued night, one B&W staffer encountered a paper entitled “Money, Sex, and Education.” At this point, his fellow B&W peer at the adjacent terminal glanced over, mumbled “Pop quiz, hotshot: name three things I don’t have in my life right now,” and resumed his idle double-clicking.

John Corigliani, C’59, one of this year’s John Jay Award winners, on winning the Pulitzer Prize in music: “When I won the prize,” Mr. Corigliani said, “I had already worked myself into a rage that morning, because I knew it was Pulitzer day, and I knew they weren’t going to give it to me. When I got the call, I said, ‘What am I going to do? I’m so furious!’”

Professors Say the Darndest Things Dept, starring Professor of English Stanley Crouch: Crouch on Duke Ellington as a cultural icon: “Y’see, Ellington could always be a cultural hero, so long as he wasn’t tomming it up. You all know what tomming it up means, right? (blank stares from students) I mean, you DO KNOW, right? (slow noddings from a few students) You with yarmulke, you look like an attentive Jew, what does tomming it up mean?” Attentive Jew: “Kissing up to white people?” Crouch, slowly nodding approvingly: “That’ll do. In fact, I’m going to write that on the board so you all can think about it.”

In an e-mail to his class, Crouch stressed the following to his pupils: “My preference is not to pop the whip but to see you whipping yourselves forward based upon THE WILL TO KNOW. In the future, two more forbidden words: empower and subvert. When I read them I feel like reaching for a water pistol. Cheers, S.C.”

The Blue and White would like to congratulate Prof. Robert O’Meally for winning the Mark van Doren Teaching Award this year. Congratulations are also in order for Prof. William V. Harris, whose recent book, Restraining Rage, won the Lionel Trilling award for best book published by a faculty author. Both awards are given by a student committee.

Class of 2004… They’re Seniors!

THE BLUE AND WHITE