

# The BOOKPRESS

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## The Special Persecutor

Nicholas Nicaastro

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*With love's light wings did  
I o'er perch these walls  
For stony limits cannot hold love out,  
And what love can do that dares love  
attempt.*

— Monica Lewinsky's Valentine's  
Day, 1997 *Washington Post* personal ad to  
President Clinton (from *Romeo and Juliet*,  
2.2)

There have been a number of literary parallels drawn to the current Presidential crisis. Bill Clinton has been likened to the flawed and fallen preacher Elmer Gantry; he's also been the Old Testament scapegoat, poised to be beaten off into the wilderness laden with our collective sins. According to a report in *Time* magazine, the President feels kinship toward the wronged hero in Arthur Koestler's anti-Stalinist tragedy, *Darkness at Noon*. The Starr report itself reads like a cheap, point-of-purchase romance novel, with its hasty fumbblings in darkened corridors and the (forgive me) blow-by-blow reportage of what-went-where-when.

For my money, the Lewinsky affair looks most like an infra-Beltway *Les Misérables*. Here's Bill's Jean Valjean, the once and future provincial outsider, daring to actually win public office and, *sacre bleu*, to do a pretty good job. Not surprisingly, his sins and his past come with him. So here comes Ken Starr's Inspector Javert, dauntless and intoxicated with reports of his own integrity, on a permanent quest to discover evidence of "fresh crimes against the State." His report filed at last, the Inspector gives way to the shocked, *shocked* burghers and aldermen, sensibilities rightly ruffled, wondering why they'd been fooled by this miscreant, this *hick*, vowing now (God help us) to repair the frayed fabric of our national neurosis about sex.

It's hard to recognize America these days. To paraphrase *Apocalypse Now*, the stench of phoney sanctimony has wafted so high you need wings to stay above it. When asked on national TV about the uncomprehending European reaction to this latest ejaculation of American puritanism, a U.S. Congressman (in a statement so smugly ignorant I will leave him nameless) replied "Well, Europe gave us Hitler, so we don't need to be taking our cues from them." The plaster saint of the holier-than-thou congregation is Ken Starr himself, who basically took a law intended to protect the country from misdeeds on the scale of Watergate and Iran-Contra, and, after four-and-a-half years and a hefty advance from Congress, delivered a Danielle Steel novel.

Or perhaps that is too much of an insult to Danielle Steel. Starr's report, after all,

makes a surreal attempt to bring lawyerly craft to the description of events that amount to after-hours teenage knee-benders. There's a definite willfulness, if not much art, behind prose so convinced of its own significance that it surges forward without regard for unintentional humor ("...Ms. Lewinsky was extensively debriefed..."). Starr presents his sex scenes in the manner of the most well-behaved grandson setting the dinner table for his Nanna—all conspicuous precision, but without feeling. The whiff of superior incomprehension is unmistakable, as if Clinton were caught demonstrating a new way to pee. Such fussy objectivity would probably make *any* sort of sex appear like so much soiled clothes and sweaty plumbing. In the spirit of Monica's personal ad to

Bill, consider a Ken Starr version of Act II, scene II of *Romeo and Juliet*:

At one a.m. Mr. Montague separated from his staff with apparent intention of resuming intimate relations with Miss Capulet. After gaining entry unobserved into the Capulet garden, he secured Miss Capulet's attention and initiated a further episode of inappropriate sexual banter, coupled with skin-to-skin bodily contact. Though Mr. Montague expressed pleasure with the "softness" of Miss Capulet's tongue upon his ear canal, he intimated a desire for further "satisfaction;" Miss Capulet has admitted to a sadomasochistic pleasure at their "parting." The encounter ended at 1:29 a.m., at which time they promised to resume contact the following day. Upon grand jury subpoena, Miss

Capulet's nurse corroborated her account, testifying that the former appeared to be lingering on her balcony longer than usual...

Style aside, it is interesting that many of the so-called "impeachable offenses" Starr lists were occasioned by the President daring to resist the righteous juggernaut of Ken Starr himself. Bill Clinton dared to assert executive privilege against Starr's subpoena of secret service agents—something no special prosecutor has ever tried, even ones investigating what are unanimously considered the far more serious crimes of Richard Nixon. Bill Clinton dared to dispute Starr's demand to cross-examine the President's own lawyers. Bill Clinton even dared to

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Jack Sherman

# The Special Persecutor

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conceal a foolish, desultory affair with a White House intern. There's something stranger and sicker than Clinton's adultery in these charges—something of the nature of "Lo, he who opposeth me *must* be guilty." To quote another movie, the independent counsel has gotten medieval on us.

Ah, but it's not the sex that matters, some say: it's the *lie*, the perjury. But the virtue-crats need to explain why it is *this* lie, Clinton's, that is indictable, and not the many others that Presidents have told us over the years. Dwight Eisenhower lied to the American people about something that was actually important—the U2 spyplane incident—and everybody knew it. Lyndon Johnson's little lie about the Gulf of Tonkin ultimately led to the deaths of thousands of American young men. Ronald Reagan's fib—about Iran-Contra and the clear and present danger of a Communist takeover of a Grade Z medical school in the Caribbean—were cleanly and completely forgotten in their time. Why?

Perhaps it's because we prefer complicity with lies that make us feel powerful and important. Clinton's peccadilloes, however, just seem to diminish everyone. It's remarkable how the image of a somewhat chunky 21-year old woman, bra-straps flapping, down on her Presidential kneepads, being sexual in the Oval Office, enrages many people. Doesn't Clinton know that Reagan, out of respect for the Presidency, didn't even remove his suit jacket in the Oval Office? Apparently, the Gipper's lies to Congress and end-runs around the Constitution were all in good fun, as long as he kept his suit jacket on. (No word is given about the state of Reagan's *trousers*, by the way.)

It appears there are plenty of lies to go around for everyone these days. There are lies of omission from censorious legislators, standing up for old-fashioned decency while implying that they, in all those late nights on the Hill and lonely motels on the campaign trail, never committed adultery or fondled an attractive employee. There's the bad faith of the TV pundits, bizarrely opining that Clinton should have admitted the affair months ago and "spared the country" the present ordeal—as if *any* admission could have been detailed enough for the current crisis-for-profit news networks to stop covering the story, or for the independent counsel to halt his investigation, or for the Republicans to refrain from gladly and endlessly raking the President over the coals. Case in point: the House Judiciary Committee's decision to release videotapes of Clinton's grand jury and Paula Jones lawsuit depositions. Of course, what the President actually *said* in these testimonies is already a matter of public record. There therefore seems little point in releasing the videos beyond keeping up the hornet's nest of coverage and the taste for details nobody says they want.

Then there are the delusions of Ken Starr, pretending there's no difference between the bare facts and the whole truth, and conveniently postponing any admission that his Whitewater, Travelgate, and Filegate investigations have gone nowhere. Nor is Starr likely to 'fess up that he hit the Lewinsky affair so hard largely because he was frustrated on Whitewater.

This isn't "attacking the messenger;" Ken Starr didn't just deliver his report, he constructed it. Indeed, the most telling remarks about Starr's performance have not come from Senators and Representatives (for whom a certain amount of ethical grandstanding is expected) but from former Watergate prosecutors and ex-independent counsels. Despite the fact that this is a relatively exclusive fraternity, a substantial number of these figures have publicly expressed puzzlement over Starr's tactics, motives, and conclusions. "Sometimes you have to exercise prosecutorial discretion," a Starr supporter-turned-critic told *The New York Times* recently "...the cost to the country far outweighs the value of proving it [Starr's case]." Says another Starr colleague, "Even though Clinton disrespected the dignity of the office...one can argue that Starr contributed to it by making all this public as he did, for the wrong motives."

Many legal analysts agree that very few prosecutors would ever bring indictments based on hearsay, or on "he said, she said" discrepancies, as Starr has. In this sense, it is a *lie* that Starr is proceeding as a dispassionate, objective technician: the entire context for his judgements is profoundly political. Most of his case for impeachment hinges on the idea that a Congressional trial is not a proper court of law at all, and may decide on the basis of evidence that would be thrown out of any court. Joe "just the facts, ma'am" Friday he ain't.

It's worth remembering that this entire mess, though it has tumbled forth with a strange and stupid momentum, was hardly inevitable. The Supreme Court decision that a sitting President would not be unduly distracted by being a defendant in a civil suit over acts alleged to have occurred *before* he became President will not make the highlight reel of American jurisprudence. Likewise for the decision to allow Ken Starr's investigation to metastasize far, far beyond its original mandate. Likewise for the long string of decisions that allowed Starr's subpoenas to trump every countervailing interest. That the independent counsel's maneuvers were answered by a fatally foolish gonadal spasm by Clinton, and then by Lewinsky's boneheaded boasting around the water-cooler, seems fateful in a manner just too perverse to blame on chance. This long chain of events could have been broken anywhere; one suspects that in a less self-absorbed time, with actual adversaries to challenge us, it certainly would have been.

Call me Larry Flynt, but there's something more dangerous than sex and lying about sex that's at stake here. In essence, the Starr debacle has inaugurated a fourth branch of our government—an unelected entity charged with powers of permanent, unlimited investigation. Anyone not actually guilty of crimes can still be charged with not cooperating with their own political execution. Indictments are inevitable because perjury traps are so easy to set: it's merely a matter of obtaining, either legally or illegally (as in the case of Linda Tripp's secret tape recordings of Monica), evidence of some conduct the target is loathe to admit. The victim is then forced into the Hobson's choice of a devastating admission or a lie under oath. The moralistic mullahs of Sunday morning talk TV get to finish the job, tsk-tsking over the "death of outrage" and the need for so-and-so to step aside "for the good of the office." If every US President had faced his own version of Ken Starr/Inspector Javert, very few would have survived to finish their terms.

The common argument for the President's resignation, that he has lost "moral authority" and therefore cannot lead, says more about some Americans' twittering nervousness over sex than Clinton's actual fitness to serve. John Kennedy's tomcatting is a truism. Thomas Jefferson faced charges of gross sexual impropriety—including fathering a child out of wedlock and making a clumsy pass at another man's wife. (He was rebuffed.) Yet no one currently doubts that Jefferson and Kennedy were Presidential timber.

One difference here is that Clinton has, so to speak, been decisively exposed in office. The nation is therefore impelled to face the collision of what it *knows* to be true—that profoundly flawed individuals can be good leaders (and may, in fact, be good leaders because they are flawed)—with what it *wishes* were true—that every President be George Washington, the archetypal warrior/priest, permeated with a simple, absolute, preferably chaste dignity. (In fact, even George himself had difficulty being George Washington, and had profound extra-marital longings. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, was a veritable monk.) Whether or not Clinton will be permitted to lead depends on whether America is willing to give up the sweet illusions of its national childhood.

Then again, to presume the resolution of all this will turn on what anybody "wants"—the President, Congress, the public—is to engage in yesterday's punditry. We're in the grip of a different species of monster these days. Other critics have commented more expertly on the economics of the new "event" journalism (including *The New Yorker's* John Cassidy), where the marketability and narrative of scandal are more decisive than legalisms. Certainly, the public never really lined up to "consume"

the byzantine plot of Whitewater, the low-stakes sitcom of Travelgate, or the painfully abstract Filegate flap. But everyone in the media or who wants to exploit the media knows that with Bill 'n Monica they've got a winner: sex, big stakes, pathos, sex, lies, straightforward "crimes," and sex. Bad, infectious stories drive out good, dull ones. The Clinton videos follow the Starr report as naturally as *The Horse Whisperer* movie follows *The Horse Whisperer* the manufactured bestseller.

It's hard to see how Clinton can avoid impeachment in the deeply partisan House (though his Presidency will likely survive in the Senate by a narrow margin). Ironically, Starr's are not the most serious charges the President has ever faced. Though the quality of the evidence has risen to a new low, the Lewinsky affair is just the latest in a sad, unrelenting series of demeaning personal insults. George Bush asserted his dog Millie would make a better President than Clinton in 1992. A sizable portion of the American body politic still firmly believes the First Couple orchestrated the death of Vince Foster. Self-appointed czar-of-virtue Bill Bennett gladly cast the first stone when he recently called the President "a felon" on Fox TV. Nor have the worst digs come solely from the right wing: the portrayal of Candidate Clinton in Joe Klein's *Primary Colors* (and the movie thereof) as a porky backwoods hustler will probably outlast impressions of his telegenic ease or encyclopedic awareness of the issues. While it's always presumptuous to speak for History, the stature of the Presidency had clearly been shoved downward long before Bill and Monica squared off in the Oval Office. For both Monica and his perennial critics, Bill Clinton simply obliged.

In 1992, Candidate Clinton admitted on *60 Minutes* that he had caused pain in his marriage. Most voters thought they knew what this confession meant at the time; they knew they were electing an adulterer. They apparently never took the other implication of his admission: he caused pain not just because he cheated, but because he had a tendency to get caught. We're all about to learn exactly what pain means.

Nicholas Nicastro is a writer living in Ithaca. He is completing his first novel.

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# In Suharto's Shadow

James Siegel

While Suharto was in power there was practically no one who accused him of corruptly using up the people's money. Were they to have done so, their fate was evident: it is certain they would end up in jail.

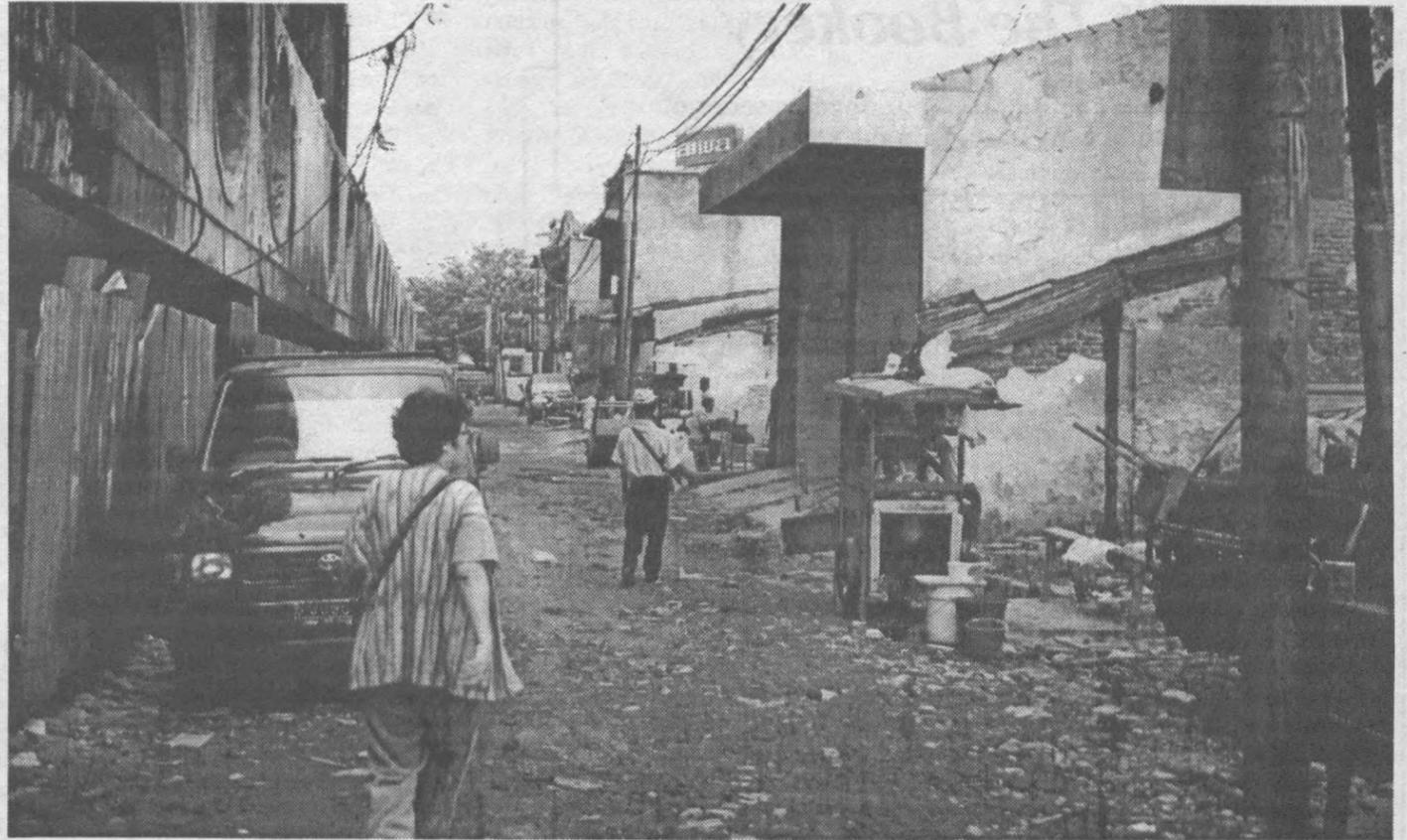
*Haruskah (daripada) Soeharti diadil?* [Must Suharto be brought to trial? Rather than that....?] *Ummat*, 8 June, 1998, p 14.

The artless confession in this news magazine, speaking to and about the middle class, helps in understanding the course of events that led up to the resignation of President Suharto. By May, 1998 Indonesia had shared in the economic difficulties of East Asia for ten months and though a great many people were feeling its effects and there was much political discontent, no one seemed to have anticipated Suharto's resignation. After it took place, however, people in Jakarta, though initially surprised, thought it was easily explicable.

Suharto left office after two violent incidents. Students, who had originally demonstrated against the rise in prices that accompanied the fall in value of the rupiah had begun to demand *Reformasi* (Reform), sometimes in effect taking up the demands of the International Monetary Fund when they asked for "transparency" which, for a while, was an important word of political rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Students at the private Trisakti University, known by the term "mamas' children," because they often came from privileged families, had been late to join the demonstrations. However, they too began protests. On May 12th, in the course of their demonstrations, four Trisakti students were shot dead, presumably by police who were then accused of using real rather than rubber bullets; soon after, it was widely thought that elements from the army had done the shooting. In the afternoon of the next day, May 13th, rioting broke out against Indonesians of Chinese descent in many parts of Jakarta. The riots continued the next day. Students from Jakarta and elsewhere occupied the grounds and the roof of the National Assembly, the military mysteriously allowing them to do so.

On May 17th, Harmoko, the speaker of the Assembly, a long-time servile follower of Suharto, called for his resignation. Subsequently fourteen of Suharto's ministers resigned and he could not find people to serve on the new Reform Commission. A major demonstration was called off on the 20th when Amien Rais, the head of the Muslim organization, Muhammadiyah, announced that a certain general, later rumored to be Suharto's son-in-law, Lt. General Prabowo, had said that it would lead to bloodshed. On the 21st, Suharto resigned. The train of events seemed, to the many people with whom I spoke in June, 1998, self evident. But if so, it is because events which were at first surprising were set within the workings of Indonesian political discourse and made to seem natural.

The students at Jakarta's universities kept themselves apart from other protestors in the



James Siegel

country. There are, for instance, battles for disengagement in the province of Aceh in Sumatra and, at the other end of the archipelago, in Irian Jaya (formerly Dutch New Guinea). In particular there is the long-standing battle of East Timorese against the Indonesian government. Since Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975, some 200,000 people have perished. Jakarta students made no mention of them. They also kept themselves apart from the labor movement and from the underclass who took to the streets in the middle of last May. In doing so, they stayed within the guidelines the army had set in allowing them to demonstrate. That they were willing to do so has much to do with class. Though the students were set on deposing President Suharto, under his regime the middle class to which they belonged had prospered and expanded. Their anti-Suharto protests have to be seen as one element of the middle class against another.

The students who acted in May were new to the political scene—so new, in fact, one is hard put to say who, if any, their leaders were and what it is that they wanted. Interviewed after the National Assembly sit-in, one, a "supply coordinator" for the students occupying the National Assembly, formulated their demands this way: "[We want] to change the regime now in power for a new bureaucratic elite more favorable to the people."<sup>2</sup> One notes the lack of space available for the seething masses. Indeed, the course of events was inflected by the students' mistrust of elements from the street. In addition, the protest was steeped in the commercial culture that had developed in the New Order. In an interview published in an Indonesian women's tabloid, *Nyata*, we see both of these attributes. Alya Rohali, a student at Trisakti University, is also a television actress:

"I really remember how at the time some people wanted us to gather outside of the campus. But we refused. Because of that they [people from the popular neighborhoods, referred to as *massa*, or the masses] started to throw things toward the campus," related Alya. "Fortunately the *massa* actions didn't get any of us," she added.

Alya was worried when she saw that the atmosphere around the campus was tinged with the clash between the *massa* and the

2. "Saya Kurang Ngeriti Politik, tapi...." ("I don't understand politics, but....") *Panji Masyarakat*, 10 June, 1998. This interesting article has much about the students' behavior during their occupation of the National Assembly grounds. *Panji Masyarakat* is an Islamic reformist journal of long standing.

security apparatus. To control the brutal *massa*, the [security] apparatus, indeed, used tear gas.

Indeed, Alya panicked when she was hit by the gas. "In all my whole life, this was the first time I was hit by tear gas," Alya said. "Fortunately, I had on *softlens*," she said with a smile.

[The next day] Alya rushed to get her favorite Cakra sedan and move it to her grandmother's house in Kampung Melayu, Jakarta Timur. It was a good thing Alya's car was safe from the brutal actions of the *massa*. [In fact, 1119 cars were reported burned.] "Boy, if it were burned I would have been really upset. The price of cars these days is out of sight and there are fewer and fewer jobs," she said with a smile.

"It was just like war. But I hope that nothing like that happens again. It really was terrifying...."

"During the demo on campus, I was lucky to be wearing *softlens*. The tear gas could not get into my eyes. It's different from my friends; their eyes stung and watered. So my experience can be a lesson. Whoever wants to join a demo, wear *softlens* to protect against tear gas," said the student from the law School in her 8th semester with a smile when she met Zulkarnaen from *Nyata*.

The day after the shooting of the students, attacks began on Indonesian Chinese quarters. There was extensive burning and looting. Most middle-class people were horrified at these events, especially when, later, it became known that there had been numerous rapes of Indonesian Chinese women. Their attitude was divided, however; though they condemned the rioting, they also saw the underclass looters as acting out of need. Here is what a secretary in her twenties told me:

Some people think the looting was maneuvered by someone or another, but I don't think so. At the big malls, maybe, but not at these small shops. The trouble is that for so long these people have seen on tv, on the news, in the soap operas, how much luxury some people have. Now with the economy the way it is, they have nothing. There is such a gap and they have been patient for so long.

This woman was appalled by the rioting and sympathetic to the rioters. The doubleness of her attitude, never resolved, can be understood by the unclarity of her use of "gap." The gap is between the suffering underclass and the middle class, of which she is a member. But it is often understood as the difference between affluent Indonesian

Chinese and impoverished *massa*, thus concealing the comfortable and sometimes very wealthy position of those Indonesians without Chinese ancestry.

At the beginning of his New Order, President Suharto encouraged the development of Indonesian Chinese business, leading to the formation of world-scale conglomerates. At the same time, Indonesian Chinese were kept out of the government bureaucracy and the army, and out of national universities. Their confinement to an economic ghetto and the prominence of their business activities established them ever more firmly as the possessors of wealth of sometimes magical dimensions, an attitude applied even to small shopkeepers. Like many others on May 14, the secretary above had to walk home from work during the disorders, passing through the rioters. She traversed a place where a woman and her children, amongst others, were carrying out sacks of rice and cartons of packaged noodles out of a shop. Another woman said to them, "What you are doing is shameful. It's not human." The looting woman answered in one word: "Chinese." The observer insisted, saying Chinese, too, were human. But to no avail. "Chinese," or *Cina* in Indonesian, is here a word that means "what I want is available" and "I can take it from Indonesian Chinese."

The inciting of desire—once wealth in shops is seen to be for the taking—is apparent again in this letter to the advice column of the Islamic magazine, *Panji Masyarakat*:

On May 14th I nearly joined the looters. Maybe because of the influence of the masses, I lifted a 20-inch television set in an electronics store. As a matter of fact, for a long time I wanted to change my television, 14 inches [for a bigger one]. But suddenly, both hands and feet started to tremble. I thought of God. "Ya, Allah, how can I take the responsibility for this?" Then I set the thing down again and asked God's forgiveness. Ustadz, is what I did a sin? Can this sin be forgiven by asking forgiveness? Do I have to ask forgiveness from the store owner?

Seen in the soap operas, on tv, the 20-inch television set is a theatrical prop rather than private property. In the context of the riot, the 20-inch set stood out amongst the goods visible through the open facade of a shop. It was, we have his testimony, his wish about to come true. Some shops and some houses were marked "*pribumi* [Indonesians not of Chinese descent] owned" or had *Allahu Akbar* written on them in Arabic script. No one, of course, wrote *Cina* on their own walls. The word itself was the means by

continued on page 10

## Off Campus

## At The Bookery

This presentation is part of our ongoing series of readings and talks upstairs in the DeWitt Mall.

Saturday, October 3, 3:00 p.m.

## Gerald Coles

In his new book, **Reading Lessons: The Debate Over Literacy**, Gerald Coles argues that today's preferred methods of instruction not only fail the children who never learn to read and write, but can also damage the thinking and behavior of most who do. Gerald Coles is the author of **The Learning Mystique** and lives in Ithaca.



Sunday, October 11, 4:00 p.m.

## Is the Constitution Being Eroded?

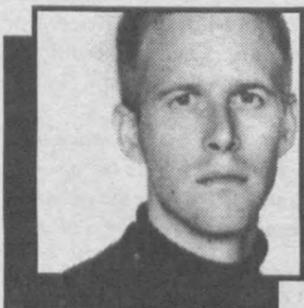
Sarah Betsy Fuller, author of **Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier**, and Harvey Fireside, author of **The Fifth Amendment**, will examine recent decisions in which the Rehnquist court has narrowed rights based on the 1st and 5th Amendments. This discussion is co-sponsored by **The Tompkins County Civil Liberties Union**.

Saturday, October 24, 3-5 & 7-9 p.m.

## Poetry Symposium

Join us for Part 2 of **Mosaic Realities: Peaces of Resistance**, a 2-day event co-sponsored by Cornell University that will bring together four nationally recognized women of color. Reading at The Bookery will be Lorna Dee Cervantes and Toi Derricotte, who will then be joined by Mitsuye Yamada and Elizabeth Woody for a roundtable discussion and book signing.

Sunday, October 25, 4:00 p.m.



## Peter Rock

Mr. Rock will read from his gripping new novel, **Carnival Wolves**, which centers around the relationship between a socially graceless ex-museum guard and his adopted dalmatian. Peter Rock is a former security guard at Cornell's Johnson Museum of Art.

Sunday, November 1, 4:00 p.m.

## George W. Hudler

If you think you know enough about mushrooms—magical, edible or poisonous—think again, and join us for a discussion by George Hudler based on his new book, **Magical Mushrooms, Mischievous Molds**. Mr. Hudler is Professor of Plant Pathology at Cornell University.

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## Articulate

There are too many words to know,  
a long list of languages,  
lexemes of love to send to you,  
carriers of letters leaving  
my longing on your doorstep.  
I would like to say something to you  
where I can use the word  
*bealaithe*, Irish for greasy,  
but we never breakfast,  
and in photos, your hair looks clean.  
*Schade*, all the words  
I wish to wrap you with,  
wind my way into your heart  
as I count to ten in Japanese.  
In Lakota, I am a *wiyan*,  
trying to circumvent this craziness  
the kids call love (at least here;  
Polish kids call it *kochanie*).  
Where will this end,  
my singular syntax of desire,  
*la oficina de correos*  
knows me too well, recognizes my  
handwriting as if the uniformed women  
there open my envelopes addressed  
to you and cry, *dàccene!*  
I am too old for learning new ways  
to speak, a new man to love,  
all this *tohu-bohu*,  
as the French would say. (And since  
they believe they invented love itself,  
who am I to argue?)  
Your reply, *mal sehn*,  
is too German for me, I count  
to ten in Javanese,  
I schlep this heavy heart  
back and forth, buying stamps  
and sentimental flowered letter paper  
only those writing romance  
could appreciate,  
and all I want to really say  
to you over there  
(how many post offices in between?  
how many languages?)  
is simply said in Michif—  
*taweechayweetin*—  
I'll go with you.

—Christine Delea

Christine Delea teaches part-time at Vancouver College in Washington. Her poems have appeared in a variety of journals; two have received Pushcart Prize nominations.

BINGHAMTON  
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## BOOK SALE

The Binghamton University Libraries announce their annual book sale:

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A "Dollar-a-Bag" Sale is planned for Oct. 12, from 9 to 4.

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Fiction

Sam Laybourne

During graveyard shift, a scared motorist lingers by the Slurpee machine. Afraid that someone has been following her, she makes conversation with the clerk. Kids roll joints in the bathroom and a man tears up lotto tickets near the dumpsters outside. On graveyard, a woman fills apple juice jugs with beer in the bathrooms.

Late at night when Sandy is working the register, Hubert Ward goes back to the cooler and lies on the beer cans. After most of the weirdoes have come and gone and before the morning push, he takes his shirt off and spreads out over the Budweiser section. Ninety-six frozen circles dig into his back.

Through the glass doors, Hubert can see the store ceiling. The fake stucco looks like a lunar landscape. Pits and pocks make it difficult for a hatch of moths to land, so they slam silently into each other, circling the middle row of fluorescent lights. The ventilation fans are covered with years of accumulated grime—black from hot dog steam, burnt chili smoke and microwave accidents.

From inside the cooler, Hubert can see almost everything in the store. Through the shelves of beer and Gatorade, he watches Sandy stare out the front window. She sits on the counter next to the lottery, pulling Pick Six cards from the storage box with her toes.

Hubert's co-worker returned to graveyard shift last week, finally off traction and weaning herself from painkillers. Seven months ago, during a snowstorm that dumped three feet on the beach, a Ford smashed through the storefront and blindsided Sandy. Hubert heard the crash from the bathroom, above the labored whirl of a broken ceiling fan. It sounded like nothing more than a bag of potato chips bursting.

When Hubert came out, the counter was ten feet closer to the donut case. A draft of snowflakes cycled through the store, melting under the heat lamps, sticking to the sides of the soda machine. Sandy lay underneath the cigarette racks, pushing Winstons off her face with her tongue and crying. The woman in the car was unconscious under the register. Light shining through the shattered windshield made spider webs on her face. Her tape player clicked at the end of a side.

After a month in intensive care and six months at her mother's house, Sandy has finally come back to work, mostly the same but with a new preoccupation with the traffic outside. She stares and stares and stares, stealing lotto tickets as some kind of reward. Hubert doesn't mind. He sorts through the microwaveable chimichangas until he finds one that's past its expiration date.

By seven, Hubert has stocked the

creamers and straws. Sandy makes extra coffee for the morning push. Beyond the foggy glass in the cooler, Hubert watches a little girl run in ahead of her father. The outside door handle is already hot and she cools her fingers in the ice lumps under the Slurpee nozzles. She waits for her dad to buy beef jerky, sun tan lotion, beer and cigarettes. Tangled in loose bathing suit straps and a wedgie, the little girl hops on the Styrofoam boogie board stack near the register. Her legs dangle like hanging plants. A gorgeous creation, thinks Hubert—a sand castle builder and way-back station wagon napper. Proportionately, her head is too big. Two cords in the front of her neck tighten under the weight, creating perfect mouth-sized ledges. Little girls slow Hubert down.



Sam Laybourne

Now that the register line has gotten too long for Sandy, Hubert leaves the cooler to help. Like an astronaut coming out of deep freeze, cold steam rises from his half-buttoned smock. The latter part of the line moves over to the second register and waits for him. He smiles and pats the girl's head for a wonderful second. She shoves pieces of candy across the beige Formica. The clerk shakes his head and says they're on the house.

\*\*\*\*\*

On its route from JFK to Giants Stadium, a blimp passes over Wildwood. As the sky camera floats up from the vast Delaware Bay, the island doesn't look much larger than a sandbar. The cameraman squints. A spit of land glides through his lens like a paramecium across a microscope slide.

As the cameraman zooms in, he sees another picture. The island isn't a sandbar at all. It's made of asphalt. Oil-spotted pave-

ment runs underneath and around the rows of dilapidated rentals and remodeled Victorians. At the ends of the island, the black surface breaks off into three or four-foot cliffs that overlook the ocean. On one side, Wildwood is anchored to the Garden State and its Parkway by a concrete bridge. On the other, the overdeveloped boardwalk makes the island lopsided. Sand spreads out into the ocean under the collective weight of roller coasters, arcades, 99 cent stores, five dollar T-shirt emporiums and pizza joints.

At eight in the morning, the blimp films Hubert coming home from work. The sky camera tracks his brown Datsun from the 7-11 on Rio Grande. It swivels as he makes a right onto New Jersey, a left on Garfield, a right on Arctic, and a final left on Lincoln. Hubert parks in a half-full lot and steps out



Sam Laybourne

of the driver's side. Hunched over, he hustles down the path to the front gate of Anglesea Pavilion with a shopping bag precariously tucked under each arm. Struggling with a rusty front latch, he loses grip of one of the bags and sends chimichangas and donut holes tumbling across the pavement.

From 2000 feet above, Hubert looks like a used match stick. His lumpy black hair is burnt sulfur against his scrawny white frame. In too-small tennis shorts and a tank top, his angular body looks comic. He yanks the latch with one foot propped against the gate, leaning his 158 pounds in the other direction. Hubert is top heavy and clumsy. He is burnt out.

Back on ground level, Hubert finally jerks the gate open and collects his employee spoils. Clusters of kids watch him from the courtyard, tossing their book bags and wearing free breakfast cards around their necks. A mother smears lotion on her son's elbows with one hand while she fixes her daughter's hair with the other. Her husband scoots by

on his way to work or elsewhere. The woman yells one-word reminders as he sneaks across the courtyard. Milk! Huggies! Bread! Money! The words ring flat against the surrounding buildings like claps in a handball court.

Anglesea Pavilion is an eyesore. HUD's answer to ramshackle beach houses in the seventies, the apartments are functional, sturdy and ugly. The tan, barrack-like structures seem arbitrarily placed—scattered like dice around a muddy courtyard. Each second floor apartment has a stairway with a clumsy sun deck. Every first floor apartment is in smelling distance of one of the two dumpsters, which have become default hangouts for neighborhood men. People living in Anglesea Pavilion see their homes as transitions. To think of them as permanent is to give in.

Hubert is a stranger here. Flying in on his Datsun spacecraft, he feels like an alien among a community of dark-skinned beings. The last time he remembers spending any time with blacks was rifling through Playboys in the middle school machine shop with Marcus and Antoine Smith. In his three years at Anglesea, Hubert has never had a single conversation with his neighbors. He forgets tenant association meetings and skips courtyard kickball. As seen through his wife's drapes and the frosted bathroom windows, the neighbors exist as silent and foggy gestures.

Hubert's mother called Anglesea Pavilion "Black Town" when she made her first and final visit two Aprils ago. Up from Houston on a discount ticket, Gladys Ward stayed in the apartment for a week, spying on children playing freeze tag and men trading stories by the dumpsters.

"You can do a lot better than this Hube," she said, creating a since permanent dip in the right side of his fold-out couch. "Don't you just see it as, well, depressing?"

Out of the corner of his eye, Hubert watched a hornet climb underneath a storm window and rattle against the glass. As he searched around for a boot, he answered. "I'm not depressed or anything."

Hubert's mother had become fat, tearfully conceding three jeans sizes since he last saw her. She spoke in heavy gasps as if she hadn't lived her whole life in one of the hottest, most humid places in the country. "This is the only ghetto in the whole damn town, Hube, and you live here."

"This isn't a ghetto, mom. It's just an apartment complex." Hubert opened the window and flattened the hornet against the glass, its abdomen hanging by a strand of green blood.

Frowning at the underside of her son's Red Wing, Gladys Ward quietly stamped the end of the conversation. "This here, Hubert, is Black Town."

The truth, as Hubert remembered it, was that his mother liked black people a lot. In

continued on page 8

Advertisement for 'The Professor and the Madman' by Simon Winchester. The cover features a dense, overlapping text design. The title is prominent at the top. Below it, the author's name 'SIMON WINCHESTER' is written in large, bold letters. The subtitle 'A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary' is also visible. At the bottom, there are details about the book's length (242 Pages), price (\$22.00 cloth), and publisher (Harper Collins).

Advertisement for 'Erica Jong' by Harper Collins. The cover features the author's name 'Erica Jong' in large, elegant letters. Below it, the text 'what do women want?' is written in a large, stylized font. At the bottom, there are details about the book's length (202 pages), price (\$25.00 cloth), and publisher (Harper Collins).

# Reading Children

## Gerald Coles

My first job as a reading teacher was in Watts, Los Angeles, in 1967. My supervisor, a strong advocate of phonics instruction, insisted that I use an intensive phonics program, some of which required class recitation of consonant and vowel sounds. I complied, the students complied, but not long after beginning the program, the students would groan each time we started a lesson, and jokingly refer to the work as the "ab-dab-blab stuff."

Fortunately, the supervisor's supervision was lax, and I was able to take cues from the students and change to a more participatory way of teaching and learning, related more to their interests and lives. We still



used the "ab-dab-blab stuff," but only when it was directly pertinent to the students' reading problems. Their interest and motivation increased, as did their learning—and as did my pleasure in teaching them. These days I often think about them and wonder how they feel seeing that the direct, systematic, intensive instruction of the "ab-dab-blab stuff" they detested is now legally mandated in California and other states as the "scientifically" verified teaching necessary for learning to read.

In 1993, Ohio became the first state to mandate phonics teaching, providing \$500,000 to train already-licensed teachers who lacked the skill. North Carolina soon followed, requiring teachers (in the words of the bill's sponsor) "to use phonics first, and then if the child fails to read, they may try some other methods."

Since then, a number of states have mandated the testing and teaching of basic skills in reading. In other states, advocates of the direct, systematic teaching of phonics and reading skills continue to organize campaigns for its legislation.

In the New York State Assembly, a "Literacy Restoration Act of 1996" was introduced, requiring beginning readers to learn "direct, systematic, intensive phonics." The bill was not passed but supporters continue to meet with officials in the state government to convince them of the need for such a law.

Accompanying this call for skills teaching have been criticisms of the whole language method, a teaching approach which engages children's interest through the use of a variety of books and writing activities. Skills are learned and taught as they become relevant to accomplishing these endeavors. In the eyes of critics, "indirect" teaching of skills is insufficient—they must be taught directly, explicitly, and systematically.

In October 1997, a number of major U.S. magazines had articles on literacy, almost all using "war" as a metaphor. An article in *Time* began, "A war is on between supporters of phonics and those who believe in the whole-language method of learning to read; caught in the middle—the nation's schoolchildren." Phonics "must be systematic and explicit," the article advised, "if the full

benefit is to be derived from it. To deprive children of that benefit is destructive." Similar statements appeared in *U.S. News & World Report*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Newsweek*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Baltimore Sun*.

A few weeks after these articles appeared, the House of Representatives, with the support of President Clinton, passed a bill called the Reading Excellence Act (H.R. 2514). Formulated in the Committee on Education and the Work Force, the bill provided grants to states for in-service training of teachers, after-school tutoring in schools with high numbers of poor children, and family literacy programs. Although many of its aims were commendable, its explicit definitions of reading, reading instruction, and "reliable" research,

made it clear that its intended impact on literacy education was to promote skill-based instruction. Beginning reading, for example, was defined as "the ability to use phonics skills, that is, knowledge of letters and sounds, to decode printed words quickly and effortlessly, both silently and aloud." Instructional practices were defined as those based on "replicable, reliable" research, a term that at first glance might seem reasonable. But upon examining who was asked to testify during the committee hearings, and which research the committee thought "replicable and reliable," it was clear that the term meant only research believed to demonstrate the need for early, direct instruction of skills.

Bob Sweet, former head of the Moral Majority in New Hampshire, and a member of the Reagan administration, left his post as executive director of the politically conservative National Right to Read Foundation—which, among other agendas, promotes a narrow phonics approach—and joined the Committee on Education's staff to help draft the legislation and move it through Congress. In the "Right to Read Report," describing the phonics advances and the possible significance of the Reading Excellence Act, he wrote with millennial exuberance:

[T]he new legislation just passed in California that codifies systematic phonics training for teachers; the definitive research [emphasizing early skills instruction]; the avalanche of state legislation requiring systematic phonics; the publishing companies gearing up to produce new phonics programs for school children; and the constant barrage of press accounts trumpeting the return of phonics as the first step in teaching children to read. Such is the situation less than three years before a new millennium dawns.

Passage of the "Reading Excellence Act" can become a major catalyst in the national effort to restore sound reading teaching practices to our schools.

As Sweet's appraisal suggests, the Reading Excellence Act was intended as a catalyst—a standard for instruction deemed valid by the federal government and, therefore,

deserving of funds, and a model of educational definitions that could go into other federal legislation.

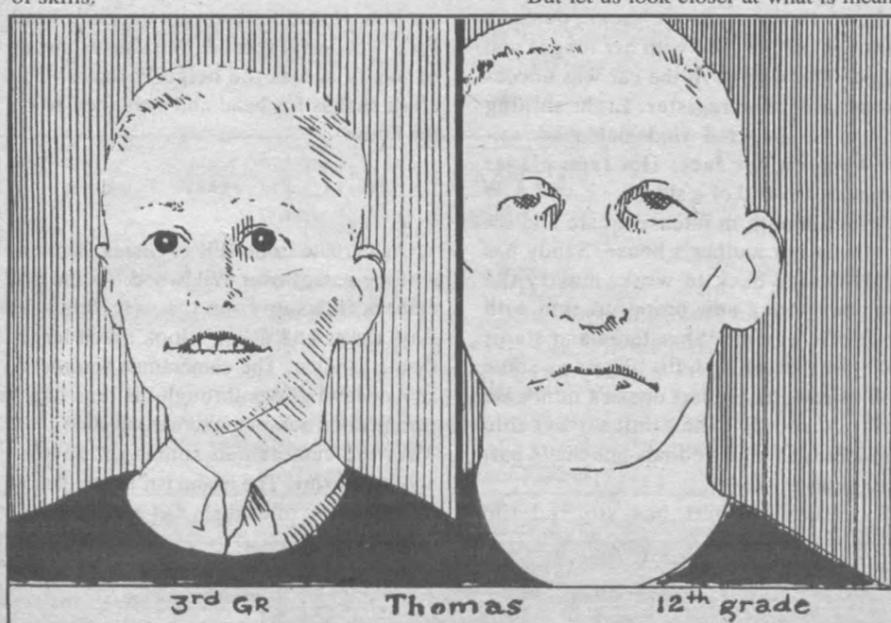
Although the act did not go through Congress this past session, there are many indications that a version of it will be reintroduced in the present congressional session. At the very least, the fact that the act could go as far as it did in Congress indicates the power and single-mindedness of the skills-first side to dictate the terms and outcome of the debate over literacy.

### BEHIND THE "WAR"

What is behind this "war"? Is it really about skills and how to teach them? When one looks at the research, there is no evidence that teaching skills through top-down "direct instruction" is superior to teaching skills as children need them to master written language.

If youngsters arrive at school needing more competence in written language skills, the research shows that these skills can be learned in various ways. Can they be taught through a skills training program? Yes. Are these skills learned better through a training program? Not necessarily. They can be learned as well "embedded" within an array of literacy activities. The research also shows that although children may learn isolated skills in training programs, many do not transfer these skills to learning to read words and stories.

Rather than being causal in learning to read, many skills, especially those of hearing and manipulating individual sounds in words (phonemes) or associating letters and sounds, are learned deductively through reading and writing both before and during formal schooling. Children's competence with important skills can be regarded as a marker of rich written language experiences (such as storybook reading, games, and high-quality pre-school programs). If anything, the consistent connection found between the attainment of early reading skills and rich written language experiences supports the concept of whole language teaching, rather than the direct instruction of skills.



### IF NOT SKILLS, WHAT?

If the problem is not skills, what are the issues ingrained in this fractious debate? One concerns goals for children's development. Accompanying the call for the direct instruction of skills is a managerial, minimally-democratic, do-as-you're-told-because-it-will-be-good-for-you form of instruction. Educational outcomes are narrowly instrumental, focusing on test scores and predetermined right answers to comprehension questions. It is a scripted pedagogy for producing compliant, conformist, competitive students and adults. It is a pedagogy driven by a relentless—but unsubstantiated—insistence that it "works."

It is not a pedagogy that explicitly asks, "How do we want children to think, feel, and act as they learn to read?"—questions always

implicit in, and inseparable from, reading instruction. And it is not a pedagogy that addresses the adjoining question, "How do we want teachers to think, feel, and act?"

In her book *Stages of Reading*, Jeanne Chall, a long-time advocate of skills-based education, asks, "How, in essence, do readers change as they advance from *The Cat In The Hat* to the financial pages of *The New York Times*?" Her answer is that readers move through a developmentally preprogrammed, hierarchical progression of stages, each with a distinctive cognitive structure.

According to Chall, in Stage 1 (corresponding approximately to grades 1 and 2), children are trying to gain control of the correspondence between symbols and sounds. Little attention should be paid to the meaning of stories during Stage 1 because until children master symbol-sound basics, meaning cannot be achieved; consequently, thinking about meaning can only interfere with learning at this stage.

With the mastery of basic sound-symbol relationships, Stage 2 (around grades 2 and 3) begins and meaning can be introduced. However, says Chall, because of children's cognitive limitations, no more than a small amount of meaning should be allowed through the instructional gates; to prevent overloading a child's mental processes, meaning must be controlled, confined primarily to content with which the child is already familiar. In Stages 1 and 2, "very little new information about the world is learned from reading."

Because Chall's progression of stages is based on an idealization of the long-standing dominant form of education, it is not surprising that she points to traditional educational practice itself as a "proof" of the validity of her theories. Without question, Chall's "stages" do dovetail with a system of education that has "worked" for many years for many millions of children in terms of reading test score achievement (and has not worked for many millions of others).

But let us look closer at what is meant

by "worked." A system of early education based on Chall's theories would encourage: little participation in initiating and creating learning activities; inattention to self; no exploration of multiple views; little experience making choices and solving problems; minimal experience developing, expressing, and contesting a viewpoint; knowing only the status quo in the world and opinions about it; constricting emotions in learning experiences; and constricting creativity.

These are hardly qualities to help children understand their own thoughts and emotions, feel secure about themselves, assess accurately the views of others, understand the world, or make sound judgments.

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# The "Business" of School Reform

Denise Gelberg

In 1988 I took a leave of absence from my public school teaching job to pursue a doctorate in industrial and labor relations at Cornell University. I had been a teacher of young children for fourteen years. Although I loved working with my students, the environment in which we had to work was almost antithetical to the complicated job of teaching and learning. The seemingly arbitrary and often counterproductive edicts that came from central office or the state education department often wasted precious time. They diverted attention from the important work of tailoring instruction for my students. There seemed to be a rift between my goal of educating youngsters and the reality of the organization's functioning which made me question whether I could continue to teach. I left for Cornell unsure of my future.

I would like to share with you some of what I learned during my years of doctoral research. On a personal level, the knowledge I gained during my doctoral studies allowed me to return to my young students calmed and focused on their needs. The research also led to my book, *The "Business" of Reforming American Schools*. From a policy perspective, my unique angle of vision may inform and guide citizens, practitioners, researchers and policy makers in their efforts to create school organizations that foster serious teaching and learning.

When I did my research in the bowels of Cornell's Mann Library, reading books, articles, and primary sources written more than eighty years ago, I was stunned by the contemporary ring of the charges of school failure and the call for school reform. A 1905 example comes from Frank Vanderlip, a man who was to become the president of the largest bank in the nation. Mr. Vanderlip tied the economic prowess of Germany to the German system of education, i.e., vocational education for the masses. According to Vanderlip, the school master held the keys to Germany's economic success. The president of the New York Central Railroad, W.C. Brown, joined in this opinion by warning that should the American schools fail to provide vocational education, ". . . it is only a question of time when this country must surrender its place as a leader among the great manufacturing nations of the world." The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) championed this argument. The elite old guard of the National Education Association, consisting of university presidents, education professors, and big city school superintendents, joined forces with the NAM. In short order, vocational education was widespread throughout the United States, spurred on by the Smith-Hughes Act passed by Congress in 1918.

Does this sound at all familiar? Think back to 1983 when *A Nation at Risk* asserted that "Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world." The report likened our "mediocre educational performance" to an aggressive act by an unfriendly foreign power. The message was clear: unless we overhauled our school system we were essentially sealing our doom. We would lose our economic standing in a world of global competition. In the 1980s, Japan was seen as the number-one challenger to our nation's economic status. Many a researcher has since spent time studying precisely how the Japanese schools operate—assuming a priori their operation is directly linked to the performance of the Japanese economy. Just as American schools at the beginning of the twentieth century were told to adopt vocational education based on the German model, schools at the end of the century

have been told to fashion themselves after the schools of our economic competitors—be it a longer school year, multifarious school-to-work programs, or national standards.

As I did my research what became apparent was that over the last century, in times of internal societal crisis and fear of international competition, education has been seen as both a causal factor in the country's problems and a means for their alleviation. Whether it be the internal threat of an unraveling social fabric



Illustrations by Don Karr

due to the dislocations associated with industrialization, urbanization, and mass immigration at the turn of the twentieth century—or the breakdown of "family values" in the 1980s—the education system of the time has been deemed a contributor to the perceived crisis of the era. Systemic reform has been characterized as essential to reestablishing equilibrium and stability in society.

The link between the social crisis and global economic competition has been consistent, as well. The argument goes as follows: the institutions that prepare the new generation for the future are in disarray. Schools are singled out for particularly harsh criticism. Our competitors, on the other hand, are seen to have far superior school systems, turning out youngsters who are ably prepared for their roles in the economy. The contention is that if we as a nation do not radically change our way of running schools, our children will not be ready to take their places as employees in the nation's business enterprises. Our firms will be unable to compete successfully with their international rivals. As a result, our economic standing in the world will crumble.

How, exactly, education should meet the crisis has, time and again, been strongly influenced by the latest industrial management models of the era. Throughout the twentieth century, the business community has promoted the idea that schools would become more productive places if school managers used "universal" management principles developed in industry. Corporate forms of organization have consistently been proposed for use in education. Thus, 80 years ago Ellwood Cubberley, one of the most influential school reformers of the time, confidently recommended consolidation of small rural and urban neighborhood schools into large, centralized organizations. Characterizing these small, locally controlled schools as backward, Cubberley and other efficiency-minded reformers promoted a centralized, bureaucratic governance structure based on the corporation: a president, board of directors, and full-time administrative staff. The president—known as the school superintendent—would have complete control of the organization. The board's role would be purely advisory, with all professional functions left to this "captain of education" and his assistants. Just as the corporate board of directors had little power to influence the day to day management of a firm, the school board would defer to its hand-picked educational executives—the superintendent and his administrative staff. Cubberley wrote that it was in the:

Interests of efficient administration for the board to leave all executive functions to carefully

chosen executive officers, who act as its representatives. In this regard the evolution of city school control has kept in touch with the best principles of corporation management and control.

Organizational reform was the first in a two-step process to make schools function more like efficient corporate enterprises. Once ensconced in power, the professional school administrator applied production principles developed in manufacturing. Frederick Tay-

lor's scientific management principles—complete with time and motion studies—were employed in the classroom. The hallmark of Taylor's approach was to end improvisation by people throughout the organization, replacing it with rules developed by management. These rules were to be based on the "science" of the job to be done. Conformity by people at all levels of the organizational pyramid to the central authority at the top was key to this system.

The reforms put in place by Cubberley and his cohorts have been remarkably hardy, enduring, in large measure, to this day, despite challenges to their dominance in the second half of the century. In the 1960s, parents, teachers, and students, explicitly placed on the bottom of the centralized school organizational chart by the early reformers, rose up in protest. Many parents fought for local control of their city schools. Student protests called for more progressive and less authoritarian forms of education. Teachers engaged in crippling strikes in order to become equal partners with school management in terms of deciding how education would proceed. A focus of my research has been "the teacher rebellion" of the 1960s, i.e., the numerous prolonged and rancorous strikes by teachers across the nation. In the centralized, bureaucratic school model, teachers were seen by school managers as labor, performing predetermined tasks in a prescribed way. Obedience to authority was the first rule of efficient service. Management always had the ultimate right to say "no" to any suggestion for educational change coming from the teaching staff. Teachers in the 1960s emphatically repudiated this model, stating that they could not be responsible for educational outcomes if they had no decision-making authority. Here is the argument made by Albert Shanker in the sixties:

Teachers do not want the power to be heard and then turned down; they have long been listened to and consulted...Now teachers are demanding for themselves the equivalent power of saying, "No." This power intends to ensure decision-making in consort, by working things out together.

How did our society choose to meet the challenge presented by teachers? It relied on the business model of dealing with labor unrest. It selected industrial relations experts to craft legislation that allowed teachers to bargain collectively—like factory workers—over their wages, hours, and conditions of employment. Using the National Labor Relations Act as a model, the resulting statutes left issues such as curriculum, teaching methods and materials, hiring, and scheduling wholly with-

in the realm of managerial prerogatives. They would not be subject to negotiations between teachers and school management. The teachers' quest for shared decision-making power was defeated.

The 1980s brought recession and the rise in the intensity of global economic competition. Once again, schools were called on to remake themselves in the image of industry. Business consultants entered many school districts aiming to transform them into "high performance organizations." They sought to restructure and flatten the bureaucratic hierarchy, and implement the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM). Adoption of this latest management theory promised greater school productivity as we approached the new millennium.

Effects of this *fin-de-siècle* attempt to reorganize and redefine schooling can be felt today. This latest reform movement ostensibly aims to make schools more "entrepreneurial," giving local school sites some decision-making authority to fashion education for their clientele. Ironically, this latest reform attempt also aims to institute some of the recommendations of early progressive reformers such as John Dewey—rejected in totality by efficiency-minded reformers at the beginning of the 20th century. Critical thinking, cooperative learning, and child-centered education have been adopted by contemporary reformers as useful in creating schools for the twenty-first century.

Much has been written since *A Nation at Risk* about how our schools are similar to factories, turning out grown children rather than manufactured products. Today there is much lip-service paid to the idea that this is an inappropriate model. But listen to the rather present-day sound of this statement by Ellwood Cubberley in his 1916 treatise, *Public School Administration*:

Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of twentieth-century civilization, and it is the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down.

Isn't this the very model that is in operation today?

While the "specifications for manufacturing" may have changed from those demanded in 1916, the model has remained vigorous. In the national crisis of confidence following Sputnik in 1957, the factory model persisted throughout the reforms that followed. The specifications were altered, however, to require a larger output of college-bound students headed for the field of engineering. In the recession of the 1980s, when Japanese quality circles, autonomous work teams, and TQM were seen as tickets to corporate success, the school-as-factory changed a bit. Schools were told to produce a new output: graduates who could work as team players in order to solve workplace problems. If you were wondering where the impetus for cooperative learning came from, you need wonder no longer.

In the current era of reform, Eastman Kodak has been instrumental in defining the specifications for student outcomes in the Rochester, New York area. These specifications have become the foundation for systemic change in the region's public school curriculum and instruction. The hoped-for result is to provide a competitive workforce for the Greater Rochester Area, headquarters of Xerox, Bausch and Lomb, as well as Kodak. The school system is seen as the supplier for employers who seek what Kodak calls, "the competitive employee." Here is a partial listing of Kodak's view of this employee's characteristics. She or he should be able to plan work by:

- setting goals with measurable outcomes;
- making decisions using factual information and logical reasoning;

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# Must Get Wing Lee

*continued from page 5*

addition to the dog-eared collection of Sammy Davis Jr. album covers she proudly displayed in the Houston apartment, she spent afternoons watching black men roof houses across the street. Through the keyhole on her bedroom door, Hubert saw his mother sitting in front of the window with a glass of apple juice and a Mandingo novel.

Hubert Ward climbs a flight of rickety stairs and opens the door of apartment B7. Once inside, he empties the bags into the freezer and stands in front of the AC. On max., the air conditioning drowns out the noise from the courtyard. He looks over the apartment. Wing Lee had cleaned the place just fifteen minutes before he arrived. Although Hubert seldom sees his wife in the daytime, her tidiness reminds him of her. She was just here, wiping lipstick from her coffee cup with her thumb, standing in the center of the TV room. He feels her presence in the silk flower arrangements and neatly tucked plastic couch covers.

In the thirteen months that Wing Lee has been married to Hubert, she has transformed the one-bedroom apartment. A lavender toilet seat cover and a Canada goose coat rack have replaced his stash of Hustlers and his cottage cheese drinking containers. Potpourri in every corner, a huge lace doily over the bed, clowns holding toothbrushes, discount knick-knacks from work—Wing's aesthetic judgment had taken over. Hubert hums softly with the AC, pondering for a moment his amazing luck. Going to the chapel and we're going to get married. Going to the chapel of love.

Sometimes it's hard to tell where memories come from. Like forgotten roach traps, they sit in unswept corners until our search for something else reveals them. Johnny Cash records spun fast by accident sound like Randy Travis records and Randy Travis records remind Hubert of growing up in Houston. So when he carelessly bumps Wing's turntable into 45 after breakfast, he pictures his mother wearing out Randy Travis records with Du-Wayne Rue.

They always danced after Margarita Wednesdays. With half a cheese casserole still sweating on the kitchen table and five Budweisers crumpled next to Du-Wayne's plate, they left Hubert at the table and headed to the TV room. Their slow dancing soon turned to grinding as Du-Wayne's heavy hands clamped down on Gladys's bottom like a vise grip. Hubert kneeled on his telephone book booster seat and watched the spectacle. Du-Wayne crooned along with Randy Travis—singing Randy and getting randy.

After stopping the Johnny Cash record altogether, Hubert carefully peels the lace doily off his bed and lies on top of the covers. Even with the shades drawn, light fills the room. A dull amber glow makes the laundry hamper fade into the walls. The air conditioner drones softly. The leak in the bath-

room has miraculously stopped. With his eyes closed, Hubert sees warm red. For a second, he wonders if he can actually stop thinking. Or, if he tries, does he end up thinking about the very act of not thinking. Hubert's arm twitches in a half dream, his lips and eyes loosen and he falls asleep.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hubert Ward sits in his Datsun, waiting for the air conditioning to take hold. Although it's the beginning of June, Beach Weather 105.5 says the temperature will be climbing to 90. Last week, during a scorcher, a woman fainted in a Wildwood T-shirt Emporium dressing room, strangled by a stubborn tank top.

This is almost Houston hot, thinks



Sam Laybourne

Hubert. He remembers the cold baths he used to take every night so he could sleep. Completely under water except for his eyes, Hubert pretended that he was a Navy SEAL. He surveyed the compound, on a covert mission to spy on his mother's boyfriend as he peed. The little boy wondered if he needed his silencer or just a swift blow to the back of Du-Wayne Rue's ruby-colored neck.

In this heat, it is better not to move unless forced. Hubert imagines that he is an android at rest, unable to function until someone stimulates his sensors. The smallest impulse will send his milk-white blood through a system of processes and reactions. Becoming rigid in his seat, he flexes his pitched forehead and tightens his lips. He releases his breath in mathematical portions. In the middle of his head a weighty microchip pulses into the surrounding brain tissue. Must get Wife. Must get Wing Lee.

MustgetWingLee. Must...get...Wing...Lee. She gets off in 663 seconds, calculates Android 355XJT.

Amused, Hubert breaks android mode and lets his seat back five clicks. The disappearing sun reflects off his rear-view mirror, casting a bright sting into his eyes. He closes them and dozes.

Hubert's penis is suspended in bath water like a little pink buoy. Du-Wayne gurgles through a mouthful of toothpaste, "Hey small dick." A pinch upon Hubert's neck, joint smoke lipping against the mirror. Gladys is crying, punting at the mildewed center of a bath mat. Grandma showers on a lawn chair, stretching the pink straps so suds run through. Mom's bedroom keyhole shines directly into his pupil. Du-Wayne's silhouette barking, pulling, chewing at his mother's feet.

Three kids bang on the Morey's Pier employee entrance, interrupting something of a dream. One kid bounces a tennis ball while the other two trade fucks and shits, hitting the door with their fists. Hubert guesses that they're trying to get free passes from an older sister or someone. They eventually tire and shuffle across the parking lot. Dressed in sagging jeans and extra extra large T-shirts, they look like strange monks.

"Shitty-ass no name car," one kid says as they pass Hubert's Datsun.

Hubert shakes his head and realizes that the kids weren't even around before Datsun became Nissan. It seems crazy to him. Nonetheless, shitty-ass is a fitting description. Hubert's car looks like an injured bison—collapsed under the only working light in the parking lot, catching its breath through a bug-covered radiator grill.

Long shadows have dissolved into the greater darkness of the parking lot. The blinking face of Hubert's digital watch reads 8:00.

Boardwalk attractions are beginning to cast light into the clouds overhead. In the year-and-a-half that Hubert has been picking up Wing, she has never been late. Now she is three minutes late and counting.

Finally bringing his seat to a full upright position, Hubert shifts back and forth. The boardwalk swells with weekenders. Over the AC, he can hear the five dollar store advertisement repeating over and over: "Everything in the store is five dollars. Five dollars for everything. Come in and check it out. Any T-shirt, Five dollars. You sir, five dollars." There's an occasional zoom of roller coasters and the screams of its passengers. The voices of carnival game operators rise and trail off. "Two to race." "Flip the froggy win a doggy." "Somebody wins every time, toss that dime. Toss that dime!"

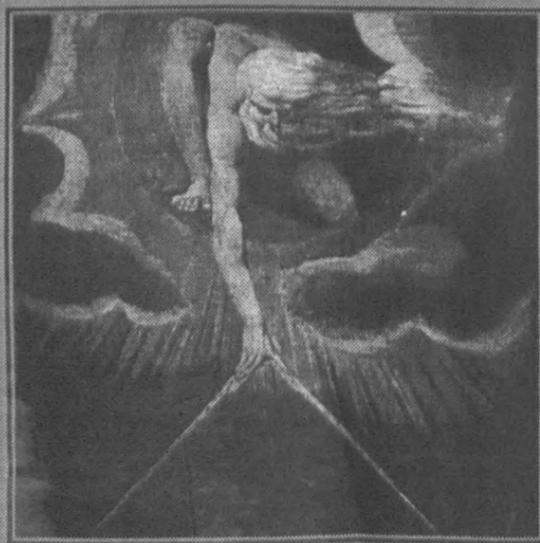
Hubert thinks about the first time he met Wing, at a Filene's Basement Supersale. He noticed her as he stepped out of the dressing room wearing a pair of red spandex bike shorts. Wing sat on a display cabinet in the wedding dress department, peacefully arranging piles of clothing and ignoring the mad rush for bargains. Surrounded by short-tempered women hurrying about in brassieres and unbuttoned dungarees, she seemed unnaturally peaceful and small—like a half-human sage. As two ladies wrestled for a yellow satin dress, Wing Lee watched—cupping an elbow and concealing a half-smirk—quietly above it all.

On purple nights like this, when the sky above Wildwood absorbs the Ferris wheel light, Hubert imagines Wing swimming from one side to the other—paddling through gray water, surviving on brine and seaweed, crossing a sea to be with him. Naked and wet in their bed at night, sweating under the sometimes faulty air conditioner, she looks like the same tired swimmer.

Although they've been married for a year, Wing never mentions China. Hubert wonders if he can remain happy without knowing her story. He pictures her as a screaming village girl, draped over her tortured father, or as a disheartened Geisha, fleeing a world of drunken Karaoke and opium-crazed businessmen. Stupidly, Hubert can't think of anything but POW movies. Mosquitoes bump their faces against his windshield and he looks into the purple sky.

At 8:07, Hubert begins to worry. Bucking the driver's side door open, he paces around the Datsun a few times before sitting on the front hood. He bounces his legs and rubs his thighs—something his mother used to hate. During Sunday services in Houston, she used to grab both his legs and look sternly in his eyes. Her hair fell over her eyes like a passionate conductor. Hubert would crack a mischievous smile

*continued on next page*



DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

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# In Suharto's Shadow

continued from page 3

which an element of scenery changed its setting, moving out of the theater but not out of a theatrical or imaginary realm. Its new setting was "Chinese," which meant at that instant, "what I have been wishing for," "wealth" and "here waiting for me."

A wish, till then "for a long time" realized only by someone else someplace else, on television in fact, snaps into place in the immediate present. The snap comes with the word "Chinese." Just as quickly, the moment disappears. The man put the television down. It is quite likely that the woman carrying off the sack of rice buys her daily rice from the same merchant. She is likely also to have had cordial relations with him and will have such again in the future when her present supply of rice runs out.

By early June, rumors circulated in Jakarta of rapes during the riots. Shortly thereafter, the news media carried stories about them. As time went on, elements of the army were blamed for having incited the riots. Stories were told of soldiers in mufti instructing local *massa* in rape. Here is one account published in a popular weekly, *Aksi*:

A young woman, call her Joana, 25 years old. The young mother of an 8-month-old child never imagined that the place she lived, Cinere, South Jakarta, would be the target of rioters, much less that she would be the victim of rape by savage humans.

In the blink of an eye her house, neatly arranged and cleaned, was in complete disorder. The glass was smashed. Her things were all taken out. Joanna and her husband were in a panic. They screamed for help. Useless. Their voices were lost in the tumult of the *massa*.

Carrying their little one, her husband tried to save himself and looked for Joana, she was not allowed to get away. Someone grabbed her arm and pulled her out of the room. Joana's husband was not able to help. While others were busy looting, someone unknown tried to let loose his cruelty by staining Joana. Joana was pushed outside by several people before she was raped by one after the other. Her screams of pain went unnoticed.

At that moment the light of Joana's life went out. There is not a drop of happiness left in her life. She is in trauma. Shock has flooded her life.... Though the doctor has allowed her to go home, her friends still testify that Joana is gloomy and abstracted. Occasionally her face will show the depths of her sadness. In fact, she once wept and wept, lamenting her fate. Actually Joanna is reluctant to see her husband. There are only a few people she will see....

For Joana what she experienced is a stain, a shame which cannot be forgiven, but has to be obliterated, so that her descendants after her will not be ashamed.

The bitterness Joana is going through is not only the bitterness of Chinese women, but of women in general...

There is no doubt about the shock these stories caused. Here is a commentary published in an economic weekly by a well-known figure from television, Wimar Witoe-lar, a critic of Suharto:

I think the biggest tragedy, greater than the ruin of the economy and the political disorder is our lack of morals as a people who clearly allowed savage (impolite) behavior toward those equally human. The issue of rape and looting is much bigger than the obvious fact we have the same citizenship and is far removed from the racial friction of the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia. How could we act toward other humans in that way? How could we allow torture, rape, and murder of other humans? In part, the lack of civilized behavior is a product of corrupt and unbalanced political and economic development; in part it comes from the low morals and stupidity of people who still harbor very primitive racial instincts.

As time went on, the conviction grew that the riots, including the rapes, had been instigated by the military. At the time, President Suharto was in Egypt. It was widely thought that, in the face of disorder, he would be called on to institute a state of emergency, thus reestablishing his authority, and that he had planned the riots for this purpose. His agent was said to be Lt. General Prabowo, his son-in-law. Such stories are common whenever there is disorder in Indonesia, which does not make them less likely. Here their significance is that they show the complications of the political sentiments of the middle class. They fear the underclass whose savagery is demonstrated by the rapes (if they are solely responsible for them). They could, till now, be counted on to support a regime which keeps this class in place. But this time, instead of appealing to the government to keep order, they called for a change of regime.

Since the change of regime, the government has done everything possible to deny that rape took place. There have been no complaints to the police, the victims being too ashamed to do so. Numerous people however have testified to the Indonesian Human Rights Commission about the rapes of their daughters, wives and sisters. Women's groups have done much to aid the victims who have remained in the country. Many of the stories published in the newspapers come from them or from testimony to the Human Rights Commission.

The government, which could look into the allegations, has not done so. Only when the Chinese government made a strong complaint did they acknowledge something had occurred. Thereafter they said that reports had been exaggerated. The reputation of the army, damaged already by the revelations of mass murders in Aceh and of kidnapping and

torture of government critics, is at stake. Even though there has been a change of government, and even though Lt. General Prabowo has been dismissed from the army, the standing of the army, which remained high because of its role in the revolution and in the massacres of Communists in 1965, is at risk.

Here is one account taken from the weekly tabloid, *Nyata*. It is the only first person account I could find. Shortly after it came out a short story appeared on the internet with a plot similar to it:

Really, I don't want to tell anyone about this shame. Life has no meaning for me all the more so since my boyfriend no longer sees me. He seems to be disgusted.

But, okay. I will start this story on the 6th floor of my office building at 10:30 a.m. (Thursday, May 14th) when I saw Jakarta thick with smoke.

Many nearby buildings were on fire. I quick got my things together and phoned home. My servant told me that in Pluit where I live it was still quiet.

As soon as I got out of the office in the areas of M. H. Thamrin [Street; one of the major areas of international business], I raced my car north heading for the toll road in front of the Metropolitan Police. It turned out there were no toll collectors so I didn't pay anything. I kept racing on north and got out at Jembatan Tiga [in one of the major older Chinese quarters] because I saw smoke coming from Pluit. I turned onto Jl. Bandengan Utara. But from behind the steering wheel I saw the *massa* hurling things at the buildings. The glass was shattered and along the street you could see lots of groups of people carrying all sorts of goods. It felt like customers could suddenly buy everything cheap.

Without being aware of it, all of a sudden my car was near this swarm. Some of them saw me and yelled out, "Gina! Get Out!" I was scared to death and couldn't drive the car because in front the *massa* blocked it with wood and metal.

I stopped the car. This *massa* then threw things at it and struck it with metal and wood. The glass in front and back shattered. Feeling really afraid, I got out and asked for mercy.

As soon as I started to move, several people pushed me. Someone took my purse with a handphone in it and about Rp 2,000,000. The *massa* then got at the accessories in the car like the tape recorder, a doll and so on. I said to them, "Take it all, but just don't burn the car."

Because I gave an order, someone hit me. Others of the *massa* did the same. Then they took my jacket off. Then a whole lot of them pulled off the rest of my cloths.

I was forced to stay on the side [of the road] in front of the car by the *massa*. At the time I was wearing a bra and underpants. A group of them pulled off my red blouse and short blue skirt and the office uniform jacket. I cried and asked for mercy but they paid no attention and they savagely attacked me.

Before that while I was still conscious, several big men pulled me by the legs and one after the other they raped me. After that I lost consciousness.

I only regained consciousness when an ambulance came and several attendants lifted me up from the side of the street. My body was without clothes and covered with paint. I had a chance to see the carcass of the office car, burned and shapeless.

The attendants brought me to the hospital. My body was weak and hurt in the part where I guard my respect.

I was cared for for a week in the private hospital on Jl. Pangeran Jayakarta. I was really traumatized and even now I see it in front of me.

My boyfriend who knows what happened wept several times. On the day it happened he called me several times on the handphone but a man answered. Then he hung

up. I am sure that the guy was the one who looted my telephone.

I had been going with my boyfriend for six months. We even planned to marry next December. Really and I swear it, up till now I never had any physical contact. In the sense that my status before I was raped, I was still a virgin.

Now I don't ask what my relationship will be. It's clear though that for a week, since I have been out of the hospital, my boyfriend hasn't gotten in touch with me or come to the house. In the meantime, every day I have to take medicine and get antibiotic shots because the doctor said there are patients who went through what I did and then died of infections of the womb and reproductive system.

Fortunately, my boss is paying for the medicine. He and his wife are the ones who visit me most often in the hospital. And he is trying not to say anything about this to the other employees. And my brothers, afraid to leave the house, send their wives or servants to look after me.

In fact, I don't want to be interviewed and have it in the paper. What for? What good does it do me? It's just one more burden for me. I am ashamed in front of people, especially my friends.

I also refused when some people from a Jakarta foundation said they wanted to help. Help how? I know, that foundation will get a fee from the donors just as soon as I register with them.

I know that nothing can clear this up. I don't know the ones who did it; there were a lot of them. If I go to the authorities even before I make a charge my face will be on tv.

So far as I am concerned, that isn't important. Let the Almighty God answer for what they did. They're religious people, right? They have a God. Their God surely didn't want to see this happen. The law of karma will always work. Whoever sows the seeds, he will reap the fruit. I know that's the most just law.

I still have lots ahead of me. As a girl of 26, I still have lots of chances to find a better life. But not in this land where I was born.

After I get well I plan to go to Australia via New Zealand. As someone who is wrapped up in the business world, I think the next ten years our economy won't be stable.

But I love Indonesia, the land of my ancestors. My mother is of Chinese descent, but my grandparents were born and raised in Bengkalis, Riau.

You have to put down that I never felt China was my land, all the more so since my grandparents were *pribumi*. It's true we still use *ghe*, but only sometimes.

In Sungau Pakning, Bengkalis Regency in Riau, our house is surrounded by *pribumi* immigrants. We all know each other and on certain occasions we work cooperatively outside the house.

The groups trying to force the government to take action against those who caused the riots estimate that over 1200 people were killed in the two days of violence. (Sometimes this figure is given just for Jakarta, sometimes for all of Indonesia, there being serious violence in other cities as well.) Probably most of these were rioters trapped inside shopping centers when they were set afire. There are reports of about 130 rapes made either to the Human Rights Commission or to women's groups. Jakarta is a megalopolis, yet the rioting started in Indonesian Chinese quarters in various places distant from each other in the city at more or less the same time of day, evidence of the riots being planned. Rapes occurred only in these areas. The head of one women's organization told me that, this being the case, she thinks many more probably took place in these areas but have not been reported. How much damage was done

continued on next page

## A NEW CRIMINAL TYPE IN JAKARTA COUNTER-REVOLUTION TODAY

JAMES T. SIEGEL

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*continued from preceding page*

to property I cannot say, except that one finds the scars of destroyed shops, shopping malls and homes throughout the city. I rode for a day and half without viewing it all.

The reactions to the physical damage varies. Some shopkeepers I spoke with, while bitter because they had not been protected and had lost their entire stock of goods, were confident that after their shopping center is rebuilt, their creditors would allow them to reenter business. Others are less optimistic. Here is the most despairing account I came across. It is from Hadi Wijaya, an Indonesian Chinese optics store owner in the weekly news magazine *Forum Keadilan*:

At the time of the crisis, I gave basic goods to the poor. But now it's me that gets donations of basic goods from the *vihara*. That's the fate of my family since these riots.

Now, where the shop which used to be so busy was, there is nothing but the stench of smoke and stifling, stinging ashes. The passage ways are deep in darkness. In the corners, the only thing to see are pellets of debris which used to be merchandise. There are sacks of the remains of contact lenses, all ruined, and contact lens bottles heaped up in what used to be a kiosk.

What can I say to my three children who are nearly adult now about this tragedy? Thirty years of work gone in a day. I never felt exclusive and better than others. That I worked hard and got to be what I am today is only the result of never-ending struggle. From the time I was ten, I was selling on the street corners. Often enough I was picked up by the police, beaten, and lifted into a truck [to be brought to jail for selling without a license, presumably]. Even while selling on the street, I kept going to school till I had finished junior high school. I mixed with the other street sellers who were mainly *pribumi*.

How is it my business prospered? It's because I really worked. Not only that, I didn't fool around. Once in a while, a friend would say we should go somewhere, but I always refused. It's better to save your money. Even eating, I always ate at home. With what I save, I opened an optical store in the shop house near where we live in Taman Harapan Indah; it's run by my brother in law.

At the time of the riots, the 13th and 14th of May, both optical shops which took me decades to build were gone in a second. Our store in Harapan Indah was smashed and looted on the 13th of May. I saw with my own eyes, with my wife and children, how the *massa* smashed and ruined all our wealth. My child who is now at the university can't even get up from seeing this brutal, brutal looting....

At the time of the events, I tried not to weep in front of my wife and kids. But after I sent them off to the house of my relatives in Angke, I wept till I had no more tears. Speaking of being afraid, we are still in the grip of fear. It's true, in the day time we dare to go out, but as soon as it gets dark, no one thinks of leaving the house. Trauma isn't easy to get rid of. And what's more, the government still hasn't guaranteed our security, us the "descendants." [Keturunan, used now to mean of Chinese descent.]

Finally there is the following. It is distributed on the internet and also in various

Indonesian cities. It is widely believed to be a falsification. It pretends to be from a private organization but is likely to be from elements in the army. Distributed recently, it indicates that the violence has not ended. As, indeed, it has not, with reports of rape continuing. The document is addressed to Indonesian Chinese and takes the strange format of an official document, divided as it is into numbered sections:

**RETURN OF ANCESTRAL WEALTH-STOLEN BY VARIOUS CHINESE**

Goals: 1. The enjoyment of this life:  
a. Visit your friends and relatives, b. Do what it is you want to do (that you haven't yet done), c. Ask pardon of PRIBUMI (i.e., Indonesians not of Chinese descent) whom you have injured. (Employees and so on)

Plans: 2. We have already decided that within a short time we will take back OUR ANCESTRAL WEALTH, by these means:  
a. Burning Chinese HOUSES and WEALTH, b. Cutting off men's PENISES, c. Stripping naked men and women, d. Raping Chinese GIRLS

Desirable: Making Chinese males our chauffeurs, Making Chinese women our servants,

There is no other way to wipe out Chinese ARROGANCE, so long as [your] WEALTH and lives still exist, it cannot be done, [therefore] we have planned this as carefully as possible and now wait for the right moment [to carry it out]. We wish you peace in using well what life remains to you.

NB: Photocopy this for other Chinese  
For Miss Pretty Chinese we will use a curtain rod as a LAMP WICK (we do not want to dirty our own goods).  
Respectfully, Pribumi Fighters

James Siegel is Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies at Cornell, and the author of *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today; Fetish, Recognition, Revolution; Solo in the New Order and other books on Indonesia.*

*This article is a revised and greatly abbreviated version of "Early Thoughts on the Violence of the 13th and 14th of May, 1998 in Jakarta," to appear in the journal Indonesia, Oct., 1998, published by the Cornell Southeast Asia Program.*

**Crossword by Adam Perl**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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**Across**

1. Basics
5. All \_\_\_\_\_
10. Try
14. Stew
15. Green
16. Have one too many
17. Hit song of 1899
20. Curve
21. Paintings
22. Top
23. Joint property
24. Early riser
26. Actress Blake of "Gunsmoke"
29. Movers' pals
32. Infamous violinist
33. Stage
34. Where to get a horse
36. Hit song of 1912
40. Airline stat
41. Inefficient speed?
42. Off the table
43. Just says yes
45. Paroxysms
47. Tips
48. Director Egoan
49. Mason player
51. Broken, essentially
52. Electric alternative
55. Hit song of 1929
59. Greenland?
60. This \_\_\_\_\_ a drill
61. Solo
62. Infamous Rose
63. Snorkler's havens
64. Kind of ticket

**Down**

1. Zenith
2. Sign in a high school
3. Some hippos
4. Go downhill
5. One of the Gandhis
6. Many are common
7. What some put on
8. VIII x VII
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Mis
10. Shot
11. Roger Rabbit, e.g.
12. Part of a basilica
13. Contest
18. Garish
19. Online miscreant
23. \_\_\_\_\_ about
24. Rub
25. Oven
26. Help the kitty
27. Superconductor?
28. Math concerns
29. Rounds
30. Cameos, e.g.
31. Kind of heat
33. Raid targets
35. Places for roses
37. Milky Way relative
38. Smooth
39. West of Hollywood
44. Collected
45. Shorebirds
46. Model
48. "That's all I \_\_\_\_\_ you"
49. Endured
50. Platoon
51. Clearasil target
52. Grounds for an "R"
53. Where most people sleep
54. Stamp
55. Cool
56. Anthony Hopkins for one
57. Do drugs
58. Computer stat

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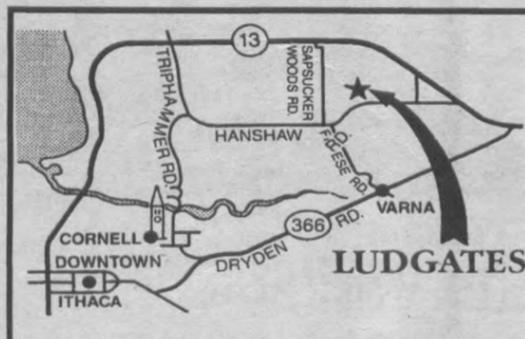
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# Reading Children

continued from page 6

## IDEAS AND EMOTIONS IN CHILDREN'S LITERACY EDUCATION

The emphasis on skills in beginning reading instruction has also contributed to the exclusion of questions about what *ideas* should be part of children's literacy education, despite arguments and evidence from educators, such as Paolo Freire, that even the most rudimentary texts contain ideas and views about people and the world.

The terms of the literacy debate have been limited to the cognitive dimensions of learning to read; whole language has been belittled as "touchy-feely" because of its attention to children's emotional well-being. Neuropsychological researchers, such as Joseph LeDoux and Antonio Damasio, have demonstrated that cognition and learning are always intertwined with, and never independent of, emotions, but those who have established and maintained the terms of the debate seem impervious to this knowledge.

Educator James Beane has emphasized that "Education must be affective and cannot be otherwise. Affect enters the curriculum in any experience that influences (or attempts to influence) how young people see themselves, the world around them, and their place in that world." However, there appears to be no room in the literacy debate for introducing questions such as the following: What emotional states facilitate or impair learning? What should students feel strongly about? What should they care about? How are certain emotional states tied to or in opposition to the prevailing social order?

Barbara Foorman, a researcher whose work has been widely cited as evidence of the need for "direct instruction" of skills, predicted, in the January 4, 1989, *New York Times*, that cooperative learning "is doomed to failure" because it conflicts with the American economic and social system. "It goes against the American grain, the individualism that creates the entrepreneurship we as a people have historically espoused. In a utopia it would be wonderful," she conceded, but then went on to evoke "reality": "education should prepare kids for life in a particular culture. In reality, the name of the game is dog eat dog. Kids have to learn that you get something through your own smarts."

## WHAT'S NEEDED FOR LITERACY LEARNING?

The current debate turns on the question, "What is the best way to teach reading?" What should be asked is, "What needs to be done to ensure that children learn to read?" This second question encompasses the first, but unlike the first, includes the array of influences, both inside and outside the classroom, that contribute to literacy success and failure.

The advocates of skill-based instruction offer a "magic bullet" answer to that first question that disregards the influence of political, economic, and social forces on literacy achievement. Much of the research on instructional programs using direct instruction of skills has been done with poor children. Implicit in these research models is the acceptance of poverty and all its harmful influences on children's learning. It is not only poor children for whom this instructional approach is deemed potentially sufficient, however; for practically all others, as well, it is regarded as the wholly effective road to literacy. This is one reason conservatives love skills-first instruction; it demands no changes in the distribution of wealth and power, or in the resources available to schools, classrooms, children and their families. It is a minimally expensive "bootstrap" vehicle to a better life in a presumed meritocracy.

The argument has been made that money does not matter—that there is already too much money spent on public education, with poor results. This contention has been refuted by several studies, such as those by educational researchers Larry Hedges and Rob Greenwald, who found "that school

resources are systematically related to student achievement and that these relations are large enough to be educationally important." These positive relations occurred not only for per-pupil-expenditure but for teacher experience, and teacher/pupil ratio. For instance, a \$500 increase in per-pupil-expenditure was associated with a statistically substantial improvement in academic achievement.

## CONCERN FOR CHILDREN'S ENTIRE LIVES

Asking the question "What needs to be done to ensure that children learn to read?" introduces the need for adequate resources to promote the cognitive, academic, and literacy growth of all children. Does money matter? The Children's Defense Fund answers with an emphatic "yes."

—Money buys good food. Moderate undernutrition can make children sluggish and distracted; iron deficiency can impair problem solving, attention and concentration.

—Money buys safe and decent housing. High housing costs can reduce a family's money for food, which in turn can cause the aforementioned learning problems. Frequent moves from house to house disrupt schooling. Poor housing conditions are linked to health problems that in turn interfere with consistent, attentive learning.

—Money buys opportunities to learn, such as stimulating toys, books, and high-quality child care.

—Money buys transportation and communication. Decreased mobility may hamper a family's ability to reach child care, medical care, and other services, contributing to the health and developmental problems that impair learning.

The emphasis here has been on poor children and families, but increasing numbers of families living above the poverty level are also finding it difficult to meet basic needs. For these children, as for all children, there is much, much more to ensuring literacy achievement than instructional method.

In this, the world's richest society, money could be made available for high-quality literacy education and the basic needs of all Americans. Locating these resources requires understanding the policies that support the present distribution of wealth, and how resources are allocated for public and private purposes.

For example, the military budget, presently at about \$265 billion, will exceed more than \$1.6 trillion between 1996-2002. (This figure does not include other military-related categories in the budget.) This \$265 billion compares to approximately \$27 billion for education, \$17 billion for housing, and \$24 billion for health.

## "BALANCED" INSTRUCTION

Last March, the National Research Council (part of the National Academy of Sciences) issued a report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties In Young Children*, that many educators interpreted as a call to "end the reading wars," supposedly because it recommended a combination of skills and good literature in beginning reading. Others, such as myself, saw the report as continuing to overemphasize skills, despite its attempt to achieve some kind of consensus among divergent views. This report is one of several efforts to devise "balanced" literacy instruction by taking the "best" from both skills and whole language teaching.

Any real "balance" between the current approaches to literacy education is unachievable, I believe, not only because the debate continues to be shaped by the relentless clamor for an early emphasis on skills teaching, but because, as I have argued, the focus on narrow instructional issues leaves untouched the more fundamental issues of children's literacy and the irreconcilable realities surrounding it.

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# "Business"

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- organizing and prioritizing information;
- identifying and allocating resources appropriately.

While early reformers wanted schools to produce employees who were punctual, neat, submissive to authority, able to follow simple directions, read, write, and do arithmetic, today's reformers have raised the ante. They want graduates who can manipulate data and ideas. This type of education, which had previously been reserved for society's elite, is now supposed to be available to children from every social, racial, ethnic, and economic group. Today's reformers insist that this must be done, or our dominance in the world economy will erode as more and more jobs fall into the realm of "knowledge work."

Thus, throughout the century seemingly different reforms have generally had the same purpose and relied on like means to fulfill that purpose. Most major reform proposals have had the overarching aim of producing graduates ready to be employed by our nation's businesses and industries. The efforts to meet this goal have been modeled on our nation's corporate attempts to root out waste and improve performance in industry. Many school reformers have had strong ties to the business world. Some, in fact, have been businessmen, whether J.P. Morgan in 1905 or Chris Whittle in 1995. Reformers' reliance on business models of management and production processes has been one of the most longstanding, powerful forces shaping the environment in which our children have been educated over the last one hundred years.

Through its influence and power, the business community has long dominated the education debate. In every period of major reform, business has leveled criticism at the schools for failing to prepare children for their roles as future employees. It has sponsored surveys aimed at revealing the failings of the existing system. The business community has campaigned for systemic education change through public relations and use of the media. It has used philanthropy to support examples of preferred models of education. Business leaders have often formed alliances between themselves and school officials. They have lobbied legislatures to reform the schools in accordance with business goals. At the beginning and at the end of the 20th century, education has been the business of business.

The current debate on school reform, therefore, is not new. It is a replay of a debate on the purposes and methods of educating the nation's youngsters that took place nearly 100 years ago. The choices offered to policymakers at the turn of the century have again been offered to our current leaders. They can resolve to educate youngsters primarily to become useful employees in the economy. Or, alternatively, they can revisit the near-century-old writings of progressives such as John Dewey and resolve to meet a moral commitment to develop each child's intellect and talent. Policymakers can choose to

institutionalize corporate organizational structures and management principles in the schools, or encourage the development of organizational models that are uniquely suited to the exigencies of teaching and learning. Despite the passage of nearly one hundred years, the choice is between the same two visions: education as a tool for economic supremacy, or as a moral obligation to children.

Because I am both a researcher and a teacher who works every day with children, I cannot be an impartial observer in this latest reform debate. I have a clear preference between the two visions of education. The dreary instrumentality of educating children for jobs in the 21st century ignores many other powerful reasons for educating youngsters. It also diverts us from the pressing problems that confront our nation's youngest citizens today. With nearly a quarter of our children living under the poverty line, with the racial divide thwarting the possibilities of so many of our young, with 30% of our babies being born to single mothers—I wonder about the priorities of reformers who aim to create "competitive employees." Too many children are living precarious lives. These children come to our schools each day unable to take advantage of even the best educational opportunities. Their priorities are getting through another day: getting their next meal, figuring out where they will sleep that night, trying to stay safe.

In wistful moments I sometimes envision a publicly funded school organization structured to ensure that each adult's efforts would be centered on doing the right thing by the children—all of the children; where the energy and resources would be spent on realizing each child's special gifts and helping each child conquer the things they find difficult or even painful. It's a simple wish, but one I fear cannot often be realized in the school enterprise we have—one that is organized as a quasi-corporation, where students, parents, and teachers remain at the bottom of the organizational pyramid.

Thus, the next time you hear of the newest research or recommendation aimed at reforming our schools, think about the way it corresponds to how the business world operates and to what the business world wants from our schools. But think, too, about how it will affect the little boy or girl who lives across town, down the street, or perhaps under your own roof. I suggest the efficacy of any proposal be measured by how well it will allow that child to be educated—not only for the world of work, but also for the world of the arts, serious inquiry, exploration of the world about us, and democratic living with other complicated human beings. After all, isn't that what education in this country ought to be about? Isn't that what every child deserves?

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