

philosophy, aesthetics, literature, language  
trends, breakthroughs

ideas, criticism, culture, history, music, art  
disputes, gossip

# Arts & Letters Daily

A service of The Chronicle of Higher Education



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Monday, June 20, 2005

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## Breaking News

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The Australian  
Beirut Daily Star

## Articles of Note

Intellectuals love **Kurt Gödel**. The trouble is, says Rebecca Goldstein, they take him 180 degrees in the wrong direction... [more»](#)

**Comic strips** often stay in their originators' families. The craft of cartooning makes it rather like a medieval guild... [more»](#)

Roosevelt **made a martini for Stalin**, apologizing for the lack of a twist. The next morning Stalin had a full-grown lemon tree flown in... [more»](#)

The **glaciers of the Alps** have shrunk to

## New Books

“What did one know of him? He gave nothing away.” **Eric Hobsbawm** does give part of himself away. Not always the best part... [more»](#)

**Henry Sidgwick** spent his life on one of philosophy's most difficult problems: how can we be happy and at the same time pursue fairness?... [more»](#)

## Essays and Opinion

**Should Jews try to fit** into the culture of America, even at the cost of violating Judaism's most sacred beliefs, or of vanishing altogether as an ethnic group?... [more»](#)

“No one is a mere instrument, no one a serf,” said **Friedrich Schiller**. Freedom was his highest ideal, achieved not with violence, but with education... [more»](#)

Liberty and responsibility really do go together, says **Virginia Postrel**. The more freedom we have, the more virtue in learning to make responsible choices... [more»](#)

For more than half a century, German

Boston Globe  
CS Monitor  
Chicago Tribune  
Financial Times  
Globe & Mail  
Guardian /  
Observer  
Ha'aretz  
The Independent  
Indian Express  
Jerusalem Post  
London Telegraph  
London Times  
Los Angeles  
Times  
Moscow Times  
New York Times  
New Zealand  
Herald  
SMH  
USA Today  
Washington Post

**Nota Bene**  
**Marx the**  
**greatest?**

Father's Day  
Ruse on evolution  
Einstein's brain  
Carlo Maria  
Giulini R.I.P.  
Darwin, me and  
the Big C  
Haruki Murakami  
Miracle drug?  
M.J.'s hidden  
accuser  
Loan rangers  
Fiction and social  
gap  
Jerks at work

almost nothing ten times since the last Ice Age, say researchers. Hannibal never even saw them... [more»](#)

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Some **art forgers** try to enter the "soul and mind of the artist." Succeed or not, they can become very rich... [more»](#)

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When Khomeini took over in Iran, no one welcomed the new power of radical Islam with such portentous lyricism as **Michel Foucault**... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

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Students, here's how to get to the **top of the class**: study, study, study. And if that doesn't work, then sue... [more»](#)

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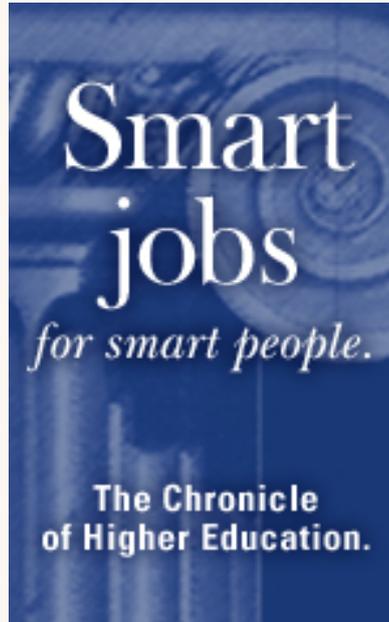
"What if Nietzsche (or Poe, or whoever) had taken Prozac?" Praise **anti-depressants** and sooner or later you're asked the question... [more»](#)

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The **American Black and Scots** cultures are an ocean apart. But in Gaelic psalms and gospel singing they achieved a fusion... [more»](#)

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To be a **young Mozart**



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Sure, **Billie Holiday**'s voice cracked in her last years and she lost buoyancy. But she was down to the true core of her art... [more»](#)

---

Is it possible to be both a **man of science and a man of God**? Yes, though it does not follow that people will be convinced by what you say... [more»](#)

---

Darlin Cromer, a white woman, kidnapped and strangled a 5-year-old black boy, hoping to ignite a race war. **Was she mad?** Seems not... [more»](#)

---

Christians on the socialist Left are unhappy to see a theology tailored to the booming markets in **avarice, pride, and fear**... [more»](#)

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By the **middle of this century**, we may be as

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discussions of the Third Reich have focused unremittingly on the crimes of the Nazis. But the **Nazis were not the only criminals**... [more»](#)

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Teratoma tumors are quite natural: a dense ball of teeth, hair, and skin, a ghastly grab bag of organs like **some random Frankenstein**. Perhaps the ugliest thing in medicine... [more»](#)

---

**Arthur Miller** had the curse of empathy, even for the enemy. Humans justify themselves, even bad humans, and he always wanted to know how and why... [more»](#)

---

On the day **Terry Schiavo** died the unthinkable questions could for the time being remain unthought. No longer need to confront them: just back to the old positions... [more»](#)

Postmodern Brad Pitt  
In love with words  
Indians can spell  
Follow the money!  
Samir Kassir R.I. P.  
Your male/female brain  
"I'm Deep Throat"  
What Wolfowitz faces  
*Femme couvrante*  
Forever Beethoven  
Virtuous Canada!  
Brand Hillary  
Pulping the Koran?

## Magazines

American Conservative  
American Enterprise  
American Heritage  
American Journal  
Rev  
American Outlook  
American Prospect  
American Spectator  
Art News Online  
Artforum  
Boston Globe  
Ideas  
Boston Review  
The Bulletin  
Chronicle Higher Ed  
CIA Studies  
City Journal

today is nothing like the 18th-century: "Then the market demanded such a talent; now, the market is hostile"... [more»](#)

Geeky teen Joel Clark, fingers flying over the keyboard, sits at his computer and goes for the kill. This is **no video game**... [more»](#)

You are what you eat, and that **includes your brain**. So what then is the ultimate mastermind diet?... [more»](#)

**Fortune cookies** must present ten-word sentences that are both precise and vague at the same time. Someone has to write them... [more»](#)

"The couple in the waiting room looked up at me. It was awkward. They were there to buy sperm, **I was there to sell it**"... [more»](#)

Let's face it: if you are paying \$28,000 a year for university study, **you deserve to get all As**. To be given a B is to be slapped in the face... [more»](#)

"Nobody ever saw a

blasé about genetically modified humans as we are about pierced ears... [more»](#)

Who was **Jane Austen**? Prig or rebel, Tory or Jacobin, the woman remains opaque. Yet readers feel a bond... [more»](#)

**Oppenheimer** was brought down by puny men with sordid motives. But he made bad political choices and then tried to obscure them... [more»](#)

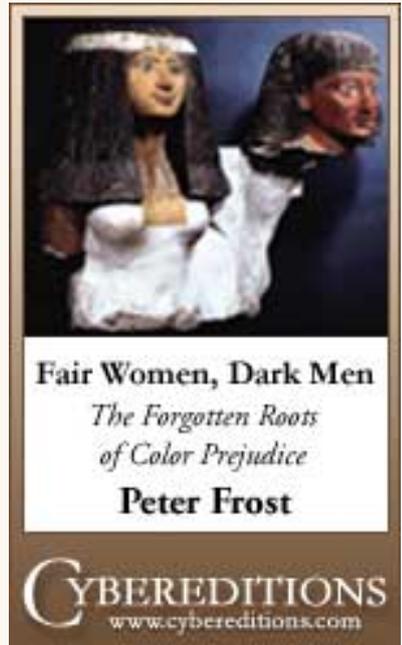
**North Korea** is a bizarre mish-mash of Stalin, Confucius, ultra-nationalism, and hyper-elitism of the ruling class... [more»](#)

Can we travel in time? Is oil *not* a fossil fuel? Human evolution a fluke? Maybe cancer is an infectious disease. **Calling all skeptics**... [more»](#)

P.T. Barnum made a buck or two exhibiting the monkey-fish and other odd creatures. And he did not yet have TV or the **genetics of tomorrow**... [more»](#)

Mrs. Mortimer, Victorian lady, had stern views of foreign nations, such as the **clumsiest people in Europe**... [more»](#)

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday tear away the



Buy the paperback from **Barnes & Noble** or **Amazon**

*Don Quixote* shows us a new kind of terrain that came to define modernity: in it, very little is certain and much is lost... [more»](#)

"A form of reason," wrote **Pope Benedict** "that can acknowledge only itself and the empirical conscience paralyzes and dismembers itself." He meant Jacques Derrida... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

**Portrait of the artist as a young mess**. Skill is out. What counts is a muddle of attitudes, theories, and press releases from hot galleries... [more»](#)

"Unhappy women! How many of them I've known," writes **Edmund White**. "Sniffing or drinking with big reproachful eyes"...

Columbia Journal  
Rev  
Commentary  
Common-place  
Cross Currents  
Discover  
Dissent  
The Economist  
Far East Econ Rev  
FAZ Weekly  
First Things  
Foreign Affairs  
Foreign Policy  
The Gramophone  
Granta  
Hoover Digest  
Hudson Review  
In Character  
Independent  
Review  
In These Times  
Le Monde Diplo  
Monthly Review  
Mother Jones  
Ms. Magazine  
The Nation  
National Journal  
National Review  
New Criterion  
New Humanist  
New Left Review  
New Republic  
New Scientist  
New York  
Magazine  
New York  
Observer  
New York Press  
NY Times  
Magazine  
New Yorker

dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another,” wrote Adam Smith.

But **capuchin monkeys...** [more»](#)

The 14-volt power grid from your car’s battery is giving way to a new 42-volt grid. We are at the start of an **electrical revolution...** [more»](#)

Not one business **founded in France** in the past 40 years has broken into the ranks of the 25 biggest French concerns, while in the U.S... [more»](#)

China has been preoccupied in the 20th century with a sense of **weakness, insecurity, and humiliation** – feelings it must overcome... [more»](#)

Can everyday rudeness be seen as putting us on a road to Auschwitz? Some **memorial museums** want to make such connections... [more»](#)

**Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau:** “It is not good to be 80. I did not like being 70, and I like being 80 even less. It is the start of the final episode”... [more»](#)

masks and lies to reveal the true face of Mao: one of the **great monsters of the 20th century...** [more»](#)

“Hitler and his generals are not so foolish as to start a two-front war,” Stalin said. **“Hitler would never risk it”...** [more»](#)

Isidor Rabi called him an enemy of humanity; he captivated Ronald Reagan. Between the two extremes stood the real **Edward Teller...** [more»](#)

**Religion** is the key to history, Lord Acton wrote. But in some parts today, it’s more like the skunk at the garden party... [more»](#)

Physicist **Erwin Schrödinger** was, whether cat lover or not, a muddled, cowardly, and self-deluding human being... [more»](#)

To think that **Beluga caviar** was once dismissed as fodder for poor folk, pigs and cats, or tossed in the garbage... [more»](#)

Most **utopias** map an odorless, antiseptic future, intolerably streamlined and sensible, with splendid plumbing... [more»](#)

Of all murderers, observes P.D. James, the **secret poisoner** has always been regarded with particular

[more»](#)

Just as hypocrisy is the compliment vice pays to virtue, so, **Christopher Hitchens** thinks, “bipartisanship” is a smarmy tribute and parody of American diversity... [more»](#)

With **Beethoven**, music did not grow up, it regressed to adolescence. He was a hooligan who could reduce Schiller’s *Ode to Joy* to madness, bloodlust, and megalomania... [more»](#)

Hungry, terrorized children of Africa are again called upon to rescue the sagging reputations of a needy group of **balding, clapped-out rock stars...** [more»](#)

Imagine trying to capture on film **Heidegger**’s “political metaphysics of the homeland and its failed, deadly ideology of autochthonic exclusion.” Cut!... [more»](#)

**Want that rebate** on your appliance purchase? Easy! Simply fill out this form. There are a few requirements. And we don’t just mean your mother’s maiden name... [more»](#)

“A single verse by Rimbaud,” writes Dominique de Villepin, the new French PM, “explodes

Newsweek  
Philosophers' Mag  
Philosophy &  
Literature  
Philosophy Now  
Physics Today  
Poets & Writers  
Policy  
Policy Review  
The Progressive  
Prospect  
Public Interest  
Quadrant  
Reason  
Salon  
Scientific  
American  
Sign and Sight  
Skeptical Inquirer  
Slate  
The Spectator  
Der Spiegel  
Threepenny  
Review  
Tikkun  
Time Magazine  
US News  
Utne Reader  
Village Voice  
WSJ Opinion  
The Walrus  
Washington  
Monthly  
Weekly Standard  
Wilson Quarterly  
Wired

**Book Reviews**  
BBC Books  
Books & Culture  
Bookforum

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When **Charles Dickens** and **Hans Christian Andersen** met, they delighted in each other's company. But things soured... [more»](#)

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Liberal parents who tolerate sex, drugs, and rock are hard to shock. Here's an idea: **why not become a Neo-Nazi?**... [more»](#)

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Many on the Left now think that after years of **relying on courts to expand legal rights**, it's time to go to the court of public opinion... [more»](#)

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**Umberto Eco** made his name and fortune as thinking man to the masses. Not that you'd understand what he rattles on about most of the time... [more»](#)

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Suppose they invent a drug that enables your child to learn to play piano quickly and easily. Would you give your kid the **piano pill?**... [more»](#)

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**James Dean** was lucky, dying before he could fail, before he lost his hair or his boyish figure, before he grew up... [more»](#)

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abhorrence... [more»](#)

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**John Carey**: the rare academic critic who writes shrewdly and wittily on books and ideas. His favorite tool might be called Occam's Machete... [more»](#)

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For **Søren Kierkegaard** each person was engaged in an individual quest for truth in the stages along life's way... [more»](#)

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**Christopher Hitchens** writes with an elegiac sense that we come after a line of political and literary giants. We won't see their kind again... [more»](#)

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**Spitting on traditional social rules** may win an intellectual his bohemian spurs. So is this what unskilled workers and welfare recipients need?... [more»](#)

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**History of ideas** has a history of its own, and it is not long. It begins with Francis Bacon... [more»](#)

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A history of **barbed wire** may well be all about "structures of power and violence." But then again, so may be a history of shoelaces... [more»](#)

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Ought English departments to be abolished? A recent guide to **literary theory** makes the notion rather

all limits, draws the eyes to other heavens." So okay, **Rimbaud, meet Rambo**... [more»](#)

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Mark Felt was convicted by Carter's DOJ for illegal searches, but was pardoned by Reagan. What if Reagan had known he was Deep Throat? **John Dean** wonders... [more»](#)

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"Atheism Lite," seeks to negotiate a truce between religious and pagan world views. It's feeble balderdash, argues **Salman Rushdie**... [more»](#)

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What made hunter-gatherers into such effective participants in the market society? It's the ability to calculate and to act in reciprocity, says **Paul Seabright**.. [more»](#)

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Getting the *NY Times* to explain **social class in America** is like giving your parents exclusive license to explain sex to you: too many deep conflicts prevent a reliable account... [more»](#)

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**Low self-esteem** among girls is a big problem, says the Girl Scouts. The solution: "Uniquely ME!" tells girls of their own "amazing" specialness. Plus, the "Me-O-Meter"... [more»](#)

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**Inheritance tax** has been

Boston Globe  
Books  
Chicago Trib  
Books  
Chronicle Review  
Claremont Review  
Common Review  
Complete Review  
CS Monitor Books  
Globe & Mail  
Books  
Guardian Lit News  
Guardian Books  
Independent  
Books  
January Magazine  
Kirkus Reviews  
London Review  
London Times  
Books  
Los Angeles  
Times  
Melbourne Age  
New Republic  
Books  
NYRB  
NY Times Books  
Newsday Books  
Philly Inquirer  
Books  
Salon Books  
SF Chronicle  
Books  
Spectator Books  
Telegraph Books  
The TLS  
Village Voice  
Washington Post  
Washington Times  
Wilson Quarterly  
Yale Book

Imagine being a **movie star all your life**, and barely as a matter of choice. Could be a vastly annoying prospect... [more»](#)

**Gerhard Schröder's political death**, says Charles Hawley, will force some warm air on frozen relations between the U.S. and Germany... [more»](#)

**Mathematicians** move around in a reality parallel to the rest of us: they see numbers where we see words, equations where we see poetry... [more»](#)

Philosopher **Paul Ricoeur**, who wrote about metaphor, time, and the best way to live, is dead at age 92... [more»](#) ... [more»](#) ... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

**Lucian Freud's** pitiless view of a tangled armpit, of pubic hair and raw genitalia, sits oddly alongside his bashfulness... [more»](#)

"The net interprets **copyright** as damage and routes around it." The Chinese government is doing a great job of disproving this theory... [more»](#)

appealing to one critic... [more»](#)

God's handiwork it may be, but who really likes the **dark of night** except vampires and people with sensitive retinas?... [more»](#)

Does time in the end defeat our attempts to fix reality, facts? Maybe, but **Simon Blackburn** is not yet ready to ditch the idea of truth... [more»](#)

Can all stories, from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to *Hamlet* to *Red Riding Hood* and *Lord of the Rings*, be reduced to **seven basic plots**? Likely not... [more»](#)

**Consumerism** to its critics means the foolish masses are not using their money to buy the gloomy, learned books that those critics write... [more»](#)

**Sloth** is not a word much used nowadays: people are lazy or indolent or a total slacker. But if sin still exists, so does sloth... [more»](#)

If Russia were ever to solve its problems, three groups would suffer most: corrupt traffic cops, oligarchs, and **satirists**... [more»](#)

Tackling the pro-pimp lobby. Can **Catharine MacKinnon** fight

the most progressive part of the U.S. tax system: the wealthy few, if they won't give their money to charity, cannot pass all of it to their heirs... [more»](#)

Freedom from complete disaster was the standard for a good concert a century ago. Thanks to **sound recording**, perfection is now the standard. Is music better off?... [more»](#)

**Karl Marx's** lost *Manifesto* for the age of the iPod and the second home has recently been recovered. The class struggle is over. You won. David Brooks explains... [more»](#)

Eastern Europe could not be saved with diplomacy, and military action was inconceivable, says **Arthur Schlesinger Jr.** This was what FDR faced at Yalta... [more»](#)

What is the least damaging way to tax the media and entertainment industry? But wait. Why not find the most damaging way? **P.J. O'Rourke** has some advice... [more»](#)

Individualism animates the west, now more than ever, says Martin Jacques. But Japan is a **dense lattice-work of obligations** in family, workplace, school, and community... [more»](#)

Review

**Columnists**

Eric Alterman  
Anne Applebaum  
Timothy Garton  
Ash  
Bruce Bawer  
Alex Beam  
James Bowman  
Robert Boynton  
Samuel Brittan  
David Brooks  
Art Buchwald  
William F.  
Buckley  
Jon Carroll  
Noam Chomsky  
Alexander  
Cockburn  
Joe Conason  
Miranda Devine  
E. J. Dionne Jr.  
Michael Dirda  
Maureen Dowd  
Roger Ebert  
Michael Elliott  
Robert Fisk  
Thomas Friedman  
Robert Fulford  
Frank Furedi  
Malcolm Gladwell  
Ellen Goodman  
Victor Davis  
Hanson  
Johann Hari  
Jeet Heer  
Nat Hentoff  
Jan Herman  
Jim Hightower  
Christopher

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EuroDisney, Freedom Fries – how much worse can U.S./E.U. relations get? Well, how 'bout **Google digitizes the libraries** of Europe... [more»](#)

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Kick first, ask questions later: **martial arts films** were once seen as a minor diversion. Today they are much more... [more»](#)

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In baseball, “It ain’t over till it’s over,” but it will end, later or sooner. In **mathematics** things aren’t so simple... [more»](#)

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The **first Godzilla** showed up in Flammarion’s 1886 Earth history: an Iguanodon taking his lunch from the fifth floor of a Paris apartment... [more»](#)

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**After years of AIDS fear**, life is less inhibited. Syphilis is up by 400% in the past five years in NYC. Gay men account for virtually all the rise... [more»](#)

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“Women and men are set to become more alike in today’s liberated, unisex

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inequality by controlling men’s fantasy lives?... [more»](#)

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Dashing, leaping, pratfalling, catapulting, being flattened by bullies. Or taking a motion picture camera apart. **Buster Keaton** could do it all... [more»](#)

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A German Shakespeare, Dante, and Pushkin rolled into one, **Goethe** is a randy iconoclast, a pure spirit who made language dance... [more»](#)

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The modern European family system is based at its core on **romantic freedom**. Is this idea bound to spread across the world?... [more»](#)

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The contemptuousness of **Thomas Frank**’s analysis of gullible red-state voters does not make it wrong. They may well be “deranged”... [more»](#)

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Plan as you may, prepare to be disappointed: there is an **iron law of failure** which governs all human effort... [more»](#)

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From the political low of Suez in 1956 to the aesthetic high of the Beatles, **1960s Britain** at last figured out how to enjoy life... [more»](#)

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“Germany, Faithful Friend

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As the fog of literary theory begins to lift, we can more clearly see that novelists actually show us human reality, says **Morris Dickstein**... [more»](#)

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A continuously renewing society needs to foster innovative, versatile, and self-renewing men and women. For Keith Thompson that means **leaving the Left behind**... [more»](#)

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The creationists are at it again in Kansas, and **Richard Dawkins** has a word or two for them. Creationism, after all, is God’s gift to the ignorant... [more»](#)

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“You get arts journalists together these days,” says Doug McLennan, “and it’s what they talk about: their declining influence.” **Is criticism on a slide?**... [more»](#)

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The preening, rotund pomposity of your typical U. S. senator is no match for the feisty, uniquely repellent **George Galloway, M.P.**... [more»](#) ... **So who is this Galloway chap?**

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**Rock music** is so “antithetical to the Christian concept of redemption and freedom” must be excluded

Hitchens

David Horowitz

Molly Ivins

Jeff Jacoby

Leon Jaroff

Robert Kagan

Tony Karon

Mickey Kaus

Michael Kinsley

Joe Klein

Martin Kramer

Morton Kondracke

Chas

Krauthammer

Paul Krugman

Howard Kurtz

Norman Lebrecht

John Leo

James Lileks

Kevin Maney

Salim Mansour

Paddy

McGuinness

Mark Morford

Robert Novak

Brendan O'Neill

Daniel Pipes

Katha Pollitt

Virginia Postrel

William Powers

Dorothy

Rabinowitz

Jonathan Rauch

Roger Sandall

William

Shawcross

Sam Smith

Thomas Sowell

Mark Steyn

Andrew Sullivan

Tunku

world.” What codswallop! Let’s read a little fiction with **David Sexton**... [more»](#)

**It’s brutal, the poetry world.** Corruption, back stabbing, fraud – much of it exposed by a chipper and rather dangerous librarian... [more»](#)

Will the 21st century end up smokeless? **Will smoking be re-glamorized** as the bad habit of a few criminal holdouts?... [more»](#)

**Rudeness among the young** is now endemic in Japan. Why, they cross their legs on the subway and even eat in public. As for umbrellas... [more»](#)

Britons consume **online music** in a big way. But why are only 4% of the downloads initiated by women?... [more»](#)

Einstein’s  $E=mc^2$  is like all **great equations**: it’s a magic trick. You start with one thing and then transform it into something quite different... [more»](#)

What distinguishes “a clump of cells in a

of the Soviet Union.” That’s what **Russian soldiers** had been told, so they mothballed their tanks and howitzers... [more»](#)

**Tallulah Bankhead**: a star more than an actress, a personality more than a star, a celebrity almost before the idea existed... [more»](#)

Hollywood and New York are fading as **creative capitals** of the world. The action’s moving to Sydney, Dublin, and maybe even Tallinn, Estonia... [more»](#)

Is homework worth it? Maybe kids who **fire up video games** when they come home from school will end up just as smart. Or smarter... [more»](#)

“The writer must not allow himself to be transformed by institutions.” **Jean-Paul Sartre** really meant it, and turned down the Nobel Prize... [more»](#)

Sleeping with the enemy is not **women’s biggest problem**; it’s getting the enemy to take out the trash and do the laundry and dishes... [more»](#)

In the film *Iris*, he came off as befuddled and cuddly. But the furry paws of the real **John Bayley** hide the sharpest of talons... [more»](#)

from the Church “on principle,” Pope Benedict once wrote... [more»](#)

“He was a strange and great human being,” said Goethe. “Every week he was a new man, each more perfect than the last.” **Friedrich Schiller** is a new man still... [more»](#)

Many who will never read George Eliot are now familiar with a version – or a dilution – of *Middlemarch* by way of **television**. How bad is this?... [more»](#)

“It is not moral absolutism,” writes **Norman Mailer**, “but theological relativism we would do well to explore if our real need is for a God with whom we can engage our lives”... [more»](#)

**Chess** was once linked with the cold war and the Soviet Union’s giant investment in the game. That sense of menace is now gone, and with it a certain fascination... [more»](#)

If a prisoner has gold teeth, he’s a drug dealer, if he’s reading Wittgenstein, he’s in for fraud. Now **literary fraud** is rather different... [more»](#)

When the cannons roar the muses are silent: **war and art cannot coexist**. Oh,

Varadarajan  
David Warren  
Margaret Wentz  
George Will  
Jonathan Yardley  
J. Peder Zane

## ***Favorites***

Art & Cognition  
Andante  
Beliefnet  
Big Eye  
Butterflies &  
Wheels  
Context  
CounterPunch  
Daily Gusto  
Debka File  
Drudge Report  
Economic  
Principals  
Edge  
Ethics & Policy  
Eurozine  
Exquisite Corpse  
FrontPage  
Globalist  
Greenhouse Fiasco  
I Want Media  
Ifeminists  
Improbable  
Research  
Killing the Buddha  
Logos  
MediaNews  
MEMRI  
Mr. Beller's 'hood  
Nationmaster  
Nerve  
New Partisan  
Newtopia

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petri dish” from “early human life”? You might ask a scientist – or **perhaps a novelist...** [more»](#)

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Nature vs. nurture, women vs. men, Summers vs. his faculty. And now to debate the issues face to face, **Steven Pinker vs. Elizabeth Spelke...** [more»](#)

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What with the internet and all, fewer newspapers are being bought by folks. Fools! Don't they realize that **you can't swat a fly with a computer?...** [more»](#)

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He's either a plain-spoken man who is right for the U.N. or a bad choice at the wrong time. **John Bolton** is one or the other... [more»](#)

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The posterior hippocampi of **the brains** of average London cabbies grow the more years they clock up on the job. As for Tibetan monks... [more»](#)

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They began as “chow-chows” for Chinese laborers. Today there are three times as many **Chinese**

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**Steven Levitt** aims to show us the freakish truth about the way the world actually is, whether we like it or not... [more»](#)

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**The Butcher of Amritsar.** Gen. Dyer wanted to shoot a few hundred unarmed civilians in 1919, and he needed the right troops for the job... [more»](#)

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Young men attracted to the excitement of being a part of a select fugitive family, seeking adventure, purpose. **Perfect chaps for al Qaeda...** [more»](#)

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Semi-capitalist China will not replay Soviet censorship, but free spirits in China are still short of enjoying free speech. **Witness Mo Yan...** [more»](#)

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No matter how intelligent the students, generous the salary, lovely the setting, or light the teaching load, **academics are always unhappy...** [more»](#)

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Every loopy idea he ever had has been vindicated. Maybe **Einstein's biggest gamble**, his repudiation of quantum theory, will be too... [more»](#)

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Not just an intellectual, **Josef Stalin** was a compulsive editor who corrected for style and grammar any manuscript

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really? Consider art born against a backdrop of anti-aircraft fire in World War II... [more»](#)

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Jared Diamond's rhetoric of **risk and collapse** does not convince: he gives only one side of the balance sheet, ignoring the human benefits that go with environmental damage... [more»](#)

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Should the **Runaway Bride** pay for the time wasted by police searching for her? But those hours of police time were wasted before she broke any law... [more»](#)

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**Deliver us from Wal-Mart.** The Lord rebukes “those who defraud laborers of their wages” as well as those who “failed to pay the workmen who mowed the fields”... [more»](#)

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A polarized electorate? That's what many observers would say of U.S. voters after the election of 2004. **Alan Wolfe** is not sure the differences are all so deep... [more»](#)

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The Germans at least learned a thing or two from the Second World War. The British, on the other hand, still prefer to **wallow in triumphalism.** Time for them to grow up... [more»](#)

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**Star Wars movies:** Post-hippie, pre-New Age, a

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**restaurants** in the U.S. as McDonald's outlets... [more»](#)

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World War II had an enormous influence on the place of technology in our lives, from air travel to **microwave ovens**... [more»](#)

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Most **conspiracy theories** rely on eyewitness testimony. Take for instance that fluffy white dog sitting next to JFK when he was shot... [more»](#)

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**The Flynn Effect:** human beings are genetically the same stock as ever, but across the earth IQs have been rising for a hundred years... [more»](#)

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*The Public Interest* is closing, and founders Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer reflect on the magazine that spawned the neocons... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

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**David Horowitz:** single-minded, feisty, and like many a prof, a man who loves to lecture. He wants open universities for people like himself... [more»](#)

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Fewer than one in ten climate scientists thinks climate change

that crossed his desk... [more»](#)

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**Jared Diamond** seems to think that the entire planet is headed for a Malthusian crisis. But is this view defensible?... [more»](#)

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**Russians once ruled** half the world. Today their economy is still slightly larger than that of Los Angeles County... [more»](#)

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**Ludwig Wittgenstein** scorned the science of aesthetics, but still thought philosophy ought only to be written as a form of poetry... [more»](#)

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**Salvador Dalí's** paintings show his feeling for a crust of bread, the soft light of dawn or dusk, the brilliant sun of a summer afternoon... [more»](#)

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Poet **Jorie Graham's** resumé is impressive, but her kudos were not bestowed by Apollo: they were handed out by regular old human beings... [more»](#)

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Lit professors routinely assure us they "love language," but only the rarest of them prove it by their own writing. **Camille Paglia** is one who can... [more»](#)

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Schoenberg hoped the 12-tone row would keep

bathetic mix of teddy bear warriors and a Muppet Zen master, plus the kitschiest pseudo-revelation in modern cinema... [more»](#)

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**Try these fun hoaxes!** Order chili in a restaurant and when served angrily complain that there is no human finger in your chili, despite the fact that you asked for one. Or... [more»](#)

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The media treat the Vatican as an alluring postage-stamp monarchy, a mini-Monaco with nice old chaps in splendid regalia. **We should think a little deeper**... [more»](#)

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More French collaborated with the Germans than resisted in the 1940s. But quiet, please. Don't contradict the **lovely legends of World War II**... [more»](#)

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In the **sweatshops** of Africa and Asia, workers toil for meager pay to sew clothes for the rest of us. Better than whoring or picking garbage, perhaps, except... [more»](#)

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"I don't worry about right-wingers on AM radio," says **Garrison Keillor**. Their audience is stuck in rush-hour traffic, and hating liberals is not as bad as road rage... [more»](#)

Revolution  
Healing Iraq  
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Carl Zimmer

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is caused mainly by humans. Huh? Where'd you read that? **Not in *Science*, not in *Nature*... [more»](#)**

**Michael Ruse** believes those who now reject Darwinism will accept it when they realize it doesn't threaten their social and spiritual values... [more»](#)

**Vaudeville's** ghost haunts the television screen to this day. Vaudeville may be dead as a stage art, but *Requiescat in video*... [more»](#)

Promoters and musicians worry about how to sex up the staid world of **classical music**. Here is an idea: try sex... [more»](#)

Give **little boys and little girls** a choice of toy cars or dolls: is what they reach for dictated by culture? Okay, now try it with vervet monkeys... [more»](#)

The long-term fate and **future of Taiwan** is being twisted by manipulative great powers and murky local politics, argues Wang Chaohua... [more»](#)

German music dominant for another century. How wrong he was, writes **Richard Taruskin**... [more»](#)

**Soccer fandom** can be an outlet for values forbidden by polite society. It's a perfectly healthy safety valve... [more»](#)

Abolitionist visionary, a man who saw feminism before its time, eloquent speaker, and also violent terrorist. **Weird John Brown**... [more»](#)

Horrifying. **Thomas Friedman** is let loose to ruminate for 500 pages on the theme of *flatness*. Like letting a chimp loose in the NORAD control room... [more»](#)

Lisbon, Warsaw, and Naples vie for the title of grimmest city in Europe. But they'll never match Istanbul, says **Orhan Pamuk**... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

"Come writers and critics who prophesize with your pen," urged **Bob Dylan** in *Times They Are A-Changin'*. They came, and keep coming... [more»](#)

**South Park** is a vulgar, coarse, and fully offensive television program. So why are so many political conservatives tuning into it?... [more»](#)

A tolerance for eccentricity and a sharp sense of irony were once deep features of the British character. No longer: today Britain prefers **utopian dreams**... [more»](#)

As the government TV newsman was reporting the Ukraine election victory of Pres. Yanukovich, the **deaf signer in the corner of the screen** told another story: "It's all lies"... [more»](#)

A glint of light on a barbed wire fence, the synchronized turn of a flock of starlings, or a dark moon can knock you across the room when described by **Annie Dillard**... [more»](#)

Thirty years after the war, Vietnam has never acknowledged the exodus of a million Vietnamese, the "boat people," says **Pham Thi Hoài**. It is as if they are excommunicated... [more»](#)

There are as many Second World Wars as there are countries that fought in it. In these matters, **history tends to get buried in mythology**, argues Adam Krzeminski... [more»](#)

**Hans Christian Andersen** created a world that had no inanimate objects. Every pebble and weed, every scab on a stone fence was

C-SPAN Streams:

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Bulletins:  
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In Peru, Sicily, or Iraq, as you read this some criminal is using a backhoe, chainsaw, shovel, or crowbar to destroy a **priceless piece of antiquity...** [more»](#)

“Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine / There’s always laughter and good red wine.” Or maybe a **stein of Bavarian beer...** [more»](#)

Those know-it-alls of Malibu and Manhattan, the liberal elite sip their lattes and lord it over the peasantry. **Thomas Frank** analyzes a perception... [more»](#)

Poor **Genghis Khan**: he uses the most intelligent strategies, conquers armies of the world, and in the end gets played by John Wayne... [more»](#)

*Appointment in Samarra* was a big hit for **John O’Hara**. But as his fame and wealth grew, so did the quality of his fiction decline... [more»](#)

The Colombian and the Korean happily chat away in what they think is English – but

**Movie out of focus**, image dingy in that new multiplex? If you complain, they’ll insist they are fine and *you* need glasses. Liars... [more»](#)

Can Western democracies live without “the transcendent moral reference points for ordering public life that **Christianity offers?**”... [more»](#)

*The Noodle Maker*, like *The Master and Margarita*, uses **wild imagination**, man’s most subversive tool, to undress political repression... [more»](#)

When the U.S. invaded Iraq its popularity dropped everywhere **except in France**, where it was already so low it could fall no further... [more»](#)

If you’re the *Times* **food critic**, the restaurant treats you like royalty, of course. If you’re an English teacher from Saginaw... [more»](#)

**Teller and Oppenheimer**: two men, both of them insecure, cruel, hungry for power, and holding the world’s future in their hands... [more»](#)

America likes to talk about family values. **Europe doesn’t just talk**: it uses tax monies to pay for

alive, writes Harold Bloom... [more»](#)

For **Antoine Saint-Exupéry**, flying at night, each tiny light on the ground was a sign of consciousness: “the flame of the poet, the teacher, or the carpenter”... [more»](#)

“Enlightenment is man’s leaving his self-caused immaturity,” Kant wrote in 1784. The perfect literary exemplar of this ideal was **Don Quixote...** [more»](#)

Redneck culture is a major handicap for all who absorb it. Liberals don’t celebrate its white exponents. Nor, says Thomas Sowell, should they celebrate **black rednecks...** [more»](#)

With its ancient coins, astrolabes, sea shells, library, and exploration chronicles, what does the British Museum’s oldest room have to do with **Liberace?**... [more»](#)

Capitalism has not destroyed the legacy of **Bertholt Brecht**. For that we can thank the hagiographic, banal, and fussily philological books and articles of academics... [more»](#)

Savor that extra croissant, pour that fourth glass of wine. Mother Nature

Windows

## ***Diversions***

Scarlatti Sonatas

Bad Writing

Contest

Blackjack

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## ***Classics***

Francis Fukuyama  
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History

Amartya Sen on  
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Robert Kagan on  
Power and  
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*New York Review  
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The Russian  
Empire, 1910, in  
full color

Andrew Delbanco

you can't grasp a word.  
**What tongue are they  
speaking?...** [more»](#)

Many authors toil to  
get out a few sentences  
in an hour. Other  
damnable types can  
pen **3000 words in a  
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The tsunami generated  
many a horror story  
out of Thailand. So  
does the **Thai sex  
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really "the brothel of  
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Ukraine's **Orange  
Revolution** is bound to  
have a direct impact on  
Putin's moves to  
oppose democracy.  
Having a free press  
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"We're trying to turn  
this thing around,"  
says the head of **Black  
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struggle to attract  
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Lost writings of  
**Sophocles, Hesiod,  
and Euripides** have  
been recovered in just  
the past few days and  
more is on the way.  
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Adjust disposable

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Do you secretly desire some  
**Hollywood heartthrob?**  
Sure, you're a pitiable  
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No city has burned in  
nuclear fire since Japan in  
1945. This would have  
come as a surprise to  
**Robert Oppenheimer...**  
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**Actresses and whores:** it  
seems we're ambivalent not  
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theatre and film workers,  
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**Samuel Johnson** hated  
slavery and so despised  
Americans. "How is it that  
we hear the loudest yelps  
for liberty among the  
drivers of Negroes?"...  
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"Studying **Ronald Reagan**  
is not for the faint-hearted –  
or the untenured." Gil Troy  
knows the rewards, and the  
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**Literary works** are never  
fully intelligible in  
themselves. They belong to  
a global literary space,  
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Far from advancing  
materialist tyranny,  
**neurobiology** is now

doesn't want you thin as a  
rail. She wants you like that  
nice Mr. Brooks: **just a  
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As Aristotle might say, sex  
should be pursued with the  
right person, for the right  
reason, at the right time, in  
the right way, and to the  
right degree. **Can this be  
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There was no good military  
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and Hiroshima and  
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The motive for these  
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The population depletion of  
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From "Thank God!" to "Oh  
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Julian Simon,  
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George Orwell:  
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World's Worst  
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If Americans come  
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It is not tariffs and  
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**Pleistocene porn:**  
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**Pet theories:** dogs act

starting to provide us with a  
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Not easy to stomach  
someone who sees herself  
as the red-hot center of the  
universe, even if she is so  
smart, and ever so fetching.  
**Jane Fonda**... [more»](#)

America's **messianic  
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Globalization's first phases,  
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Al-Ahram Weekly  
Arab News  
Command Post  
Daily Star (Beirut)  
Dawn (Karachi)  
Debka.com  
The Iranian  
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Al Jazeera  
Kurdish News  
Jane's Defense  
Middle East MRI  
Military.com  
Pentagon  
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Moore ... Daniel Johnson ...  
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Once an Internet leader, the  
United States has fallen far  
behind Japan and other  
Asian states in **deploying  
broadband**. This lag will  
cost it dearly... [more»](#)

Until the link between  
**women and child rearing**  
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corporate boards nor the  
MIT math faculty are likely  
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Russians don't really want  
to return to Stalinism, says  
**Roy Medvedev**. But Stalin  
remains for Russians a sad  
focus of lost glory and



smart because they read people. Or because they fool people into thinking they can read them...

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“Microsoft Word Grammar Checker Are No Good, Scholar Conclude.” Yeah, and that **cleared the grammar checker** too... [more»](#)

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Yes, people are primates related to other great apes – gorillas, chimps, and bonobos. The idea never bothered **Ernst Mayr**... [more»](#)

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**Oh, no!** Your children, made violent by TV, will die of melanoma. If a supervolcano doesn't kill them first... [more»](#)

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In the 1970s, New York was for many a “ruined and broken city.” To **Rupert Murdoch** it was the chance of a lifetime... [more»](#)

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Pianist **William Kapell**: brash, nervous, cocky, funny, thin-skinned. Not an easy man, but a pianist to rival Horowitz... [more»](#)

**Turkish Press**  
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**Disappointed Democrats** might try to find a winning election strategy. Or they can turn to therapy, psychobabble disguised as politics... [more»](#)

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An indomitable belief in the value of freedom sustained **Natan Sharansky** during his long years in captivity. It still does... [more»](#)

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France, but not England, had a revolution in 1848. The French, you see, read Racine, while the English read **Shakespeare**... [more»](#)

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Bauhaus intended to supply simple, cheap, mass-produced shelter for wretched proletarians stuck in 1920s rat-infested tenements. Is this an **architecture we still need?**... [more»](#)

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Literature now competes with an enormous array of electronic media. Bad news for reading and for books, says **Dana Gioia**... [more»](#)

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Humanity owes Gorbachev a vast debt, says **Eric Hobsbawm**. “All the same, if I were a Russian I would also think of him as the man who brought ruin to his country”... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

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**Legalized abortion** was the single biggest factor in ending the crime wave of the 1980s, controlling crime before the crims even reached the cradle... [more»](#)

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From Pushkin to Dostoyevsky to Brodsky, the scolds and prophets of the **Russian intelligentsia** have always seemed almost at their last gasp. Almost, but... [more»](#)

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**Anti-Americanism** is a family quarrel, as far as France is concerned. How hard for France, now a much smaller power, to accept without gritting its

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Albert Speer and his boss had their notorious plans for Berlin. Less known are Josef Stalin's **unrealized plans for Moscow...** [more»](#)

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**Saul Bellow**, who brought to his fiction immigrant's hustle, bookworm's brains, and high-minded ideas, is dead... [NYT](#) ... [SF Chron](#) ... [Reuters](#) ... [FT](#) ... [Guardian](#) ... [Wash Post](#) ... [Houston Chron](#) ... [Boston Globe](#) ... [Xan Brooks](#) ... [London Times](#) ... [Chic Sun-Times](#) ... [Le Monde](#) ... [Jon Yardley](#) ... [Dan Cryer](#) ... [Lorin Stein](#) ... [Christopher Hitchens](#) ... [Chic Tribune](#) ... [Independent](#) ... [Telegraph](#) ... [WSJ](#) ... [Carlin Romano](#) ... [Tom McBride](#)

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Have newborn babies look at machine mobiles and human face mobiles. Do **boys and girls** react the same, or not?... [more»](#)

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The lifelong friendship of **Paul Nitze and George Kennan** began by accident on a train. In the end it defined U.

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teeth the triumph of America... [more»](#)

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Gay marriage may be the current hot-button topic, but more basic are questions about love, sexuality, and family in a free society. **Do we even need marriage?**... [more»](#)

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**Saul Bellow's** best America would be a Times Square version of a German university, with intellectual rigor on one side and scrambling freedom – sex included – on the other... [more»](#) ... [more»](#) ... [more»](#)

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“Let's be clear,” sighs Aime Guibert, amidst a **damp row of Bordeaux vines**, “wine is dead.” Tell it to a *vigneron* of the Napa Valley, Australia, or New Zealand... [more»](#)

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Dickens's Mr. Podsnap fretted about bringing a blush to the cheek of a young person. Podsnappery, U.S. style? Not printing the title of Harry Frankfurt's **On Bullshit**... [more»](#)

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Anton Chekhov felt there was “more love for mankind in electricity and steam than in chastity and abstinence from meat.” He meant Leo Tolstoy. **Two different writers**... [more»](#)

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How do you bring coherence to a pragmatic,

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What a dullard the Victorians made of **Charlotte Brontë**. She was in truth a filthy genius, the sex-obsessed grandmother of chick-lit... [more»](#)

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Technology? The web is more than that: it's now an **ideology of "freedom" – and theft**. It may take Justice Scalia to sort it out... [more»](#)

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In **mathematical proof** you take one big, non-obvious step and reduce it to a bunch of smaller, obvious ones. Now, enter the computer... [more»](#)

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**Nostalgia for the 1960s** as a time of heroic activism may tempt progressives to recycle those protest styles today. Bad idea... [more»](#)

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For a young Indian woman in New York, what's best? Dating service? Singles bars? Your parents choosing a **vegetarian husband** for you?... [more»](#)

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Subjectively, we all

cautious, and moralistic political left? Begin by stressing the critical value of equality, says **Michael Walzer**... [more»](#)

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**Nostalgia** goes back a long way, says Roger Sandall, 10,000 years, in fact. People have been looking back at a better past for as long as there's been a past to look back at... [more»](#)

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Showman, playwright, philosopher, mystic: **Karol Jozef Wojtyla** was a towering force of humanistic and spiritual thought who compelled a noisy world to pay attention... [more»](#)

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From Aristotle to Bernard Shaw and beyond, they were always there. Now they've disappeared. We have major playwrights but **no major drama critics**... [more»](#)

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Has a rational, enlightened Europe figured things out, once and for all? Can people live content in a paradise of material pursuit? **Nicolas Sarkozy** has his doubts... [more»](#)

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What do Americans want? **Freedom**, say conservatives. Liberals will not win the debate, or the next election, by trying to change the subject, argues William Galston... [more»](#)

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think we are free to act as we choose. But thinking does not make it so, **B.F. Skinner** insisted... [more»](#)

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No sooner does it seem that the novel is safely dead than someone comes along and flogs the poor old horse to life again. Holding the whip: **Michel Houellebecq...** [more»](#)

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Since **anyone can write a weblog**, why is the blogosphere so heavy with white guys? Steven Levy worries... [more»](#) ... So does **Heather Mac Donald**.

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There were 7,258 multinationals in 1969. By 2000, there were 63,000, with 80% of the world's industrial output. And that's just for starters, says **Peter Drucker...** [more»](#)

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