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The glaciers of the Alps have shrunk to

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Liberty and responsibility really do go together, says Virginia Postrel. The more freedom we have, the more virtue in learning to make responsible choices...

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For more than half a century, German
almost nothing ten times since the last Ice Age, say researchers. Hannibal never even saw them... 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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To be a young Mozart

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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today is nothing like the 18th-century: “Then the market demanded such a talent; now, the market is hostile”... more»

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dog make a fair and deliberate exchange of one bone for another,” wrote Adam Smith. But **capuchin monkeys**... more>

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**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>

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When Charles Dickens and Hans Christian Andersen met, they delighted in each other’s company. But things soured... more

Liberal parents who tolerate sex, drugs, and rock are hard to shock. Here’s an idea: why not become a Neo-Nazi?... more

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

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

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

James Dean was lucky, dying before he could fail, before he lost his hair or his boyish figure, before he grew up... more

abhorrence... more

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

For Søren Kierkegaard each person was engaged in an individual quest for truth in the stages along life’s way... more

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

Spitting on traditional social rules may win an intellectual his bohemian spurs. So is this what unskilled workers and welfare recipients need?... more

History of ideas has a history of its own, and it is not long. It begins with Francis Bacon... more

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

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

Mark’s 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

“Atheism Lite,” seeks to negotiate a truce between religious and pagan world views. It’s feeble balderdash, argues Salman Rushdie... more

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

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

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

Inheritance tax has been
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 **censorship** as damage and routes around it.”

The Chinese government is doing a great job of disproving this theory... more>

appealing to one critic...

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>
EuroDisney, Freedom Fries – how much worse can U.S./E.U. relations get? Well, how ’bout Google digitizes the libraries of Europe...  

Kick first, ask questions later: martial arts films were once seen as a minor diversion. Today they are much more...  

In baseball, “It ain’t over till it’s over,” but it will end, later or sooner. In mathematics things aren’t so simple...  

The first Godzilla showed up in Flammarion’s 1886 Earth history: an Iguanodon taking his lunch from the fifth floor of a Paris apartment...  

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...  

“Women and men are set to become more alike in today’s liberated, unisex inequality by controlling men’s fantasy lives?...  

Dashing, leaping, pratfalling, catapulting, being flattened by bullies. Or taking a motion picture camera apart. Buster Keaton could do it all...  

A German Shakespeare, Dante, and Pushkin rolled into one, Goethe is a randy iconoclast, a pure spirit who made language dance...  

The modern European family system is based at its core on romantic freedom. Is this idea bound to spread across the world?...  

The contemptuousness of Thomas Frank’s analysis of gullible red-state voters does not make it wrong. They may well be “deranged”...  

Plan as you may, prepare to be disappointed: there is an iron law of failure which governs all human effort...  

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...  

“Germany, Faithful Friend 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...  

As the fog of literary theory begins to lift, we can more clearly see that novelists actually show us human reality, says Morris Dickstein...  

A continuously renewing society needs to foster innovative, versatile, and self-renewing men and women. For Keith Thompson that means leaving the Left behind...  

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...  

“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?...  

The preening, orotund pomposity of your typical U.S. senator is no match for the feisty, uniquely repellent George Galloway, M.P....  

So who is this Galloway chap?  

Rock music is so “antithetical to the Christian concept of redemption and freedom” must be excluded...
world.” What codswallop! Let’s read a little fiction with David Sexton... more»

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Einstein’s E=mc² 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,
petri dish” from “early human life”? You might ask a scientist – or perhaps a novelist... more»

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»

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»

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»

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»

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

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

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

No matter how intelligent the students, generous the salary, lovely the setting, or light the teaching load, academics are always unhappy... more»

Every loopy idea he ever had has been vindicated. Maybe Einstein’s biggest gamble, his repudiation of quantum theory, will be too... more»

Not just an intellectual, Josef Stalin was a compulsive editor who corrected for style and grammar any manuscript really? Consider art born against a backdrop of anti-aircraft fire in World War II... 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»

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»

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»

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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Restaurants in the U.S. as McDonald’s outlets... more>

World War II had an enormous influence on the place of technology in our lives, from air travel to microwave ovens... more>

Most conspiracy theories rely on eyewitness testimony. Take for instance that fluffy white dog sitting next to JFK when he was shot... more>

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>

The Public Interest is closing, and founders Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer reflect on the magazine that spawned the neocons... more> ... more>

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>

Fewer than one in ten climate scientists thinks climate change that crossed his desk... more>

Jared Diamond seems to think that the entire planet is headed for a Malthusian crisis. But is this view defensible?... more>

Russians once ruled half the world. Today their economy is still slightly larger than that of Los Angeles County... more>

Ludwig Wittgenstein scorned the science of aesthetics, but still thought philosophy ought only to be written as a form of poetry... more>

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>

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>

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>

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>

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>

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>

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>

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>

“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>
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 newsmen was reporting the Ukraine election victory of Pres. Yanukovskyh, 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
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**...

“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...

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...

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...

When the U.S. invaded Iraq its popularity dropped everywhere **except in France**, where it was already so low it could fall no further...

If you’re the **Times food critic**, the restaurant treats you like royalty, of course. If you’re an English teacher from Saginaw...

**Teller and Oppenheimer**: two men, both of them insecure, cruel, hungry for power, and holding the world’s future in their hands...

**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...

Savor that extra croissant, pour that fourth glass of wine. Mother Nature
Arts & Letters Daily - ideas, criticism, debate

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**Diversions**
Scarlatti Sonatas
Bad Writing
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The Russian Empire, 1910, in full color
Andrew Delbanco

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you can’t grasp a word. What tongue are they speaking?... more»

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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 lust?... more»

There was no good military reason to destroy Dresden and Hiroshima and incinerate 100,000 souls. The motive for these unspeakable raids was to teach Stalin a lesson...

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Arab News

Command Post

Daily Star (Beirut)

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Jane’s Defense

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